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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For Immediate Release: NR11-003
October 13, 2010

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announce Dam Safety Program initiatives for O.C. Fisher Dam

FORT WORTH, Texas – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District officials met recently with local cities and water utilities to discuss the Corps' plan to improve safety at O.C. Fisher Dam. The dam is not in imminent danger of failing, but Corps officials will be implementing interim risk reduction measures, which are short-term solutions, while pursuing long term solutions. Studies of the long term solutions will take about three years and are scheduled to conclude in 2014.

A risk informed screening process, which considers current dam behavior, how well the dam meets current design criteria, as well as the potential consequences of dam failure were recently conducted. The screenings rated the dam as having very high risk characteristics. The very high risk classification is a result of confirmed and unconfirmed issues and downstream consequences. Consequences include potential lives lost, economic, environmental, and other impacts.

The Corps' engineers, however, say the dam is currently performing its intended function but that interim risk reduction measures and further studies are warranted. No changes in operations of the lake are anticipated while the interim risk reduction measures are implemented and studies are being conducted.

"O.C. Fisher Lake Dam is operating as designed but is almost 60 years old and we continue to assess and ensure its safe operation. We will continue to keep our congressional leaders, stakeholders and public informed of our actions to keep the dam structurally sound for all Texans. Safety above all, is our number one priority," said Col. Richard J. Muraski, Jr., Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District.

The Fort Worth District operates and maintains 25 flood risk management dams in Texas providing approximately 35 percent of the quality water supply for the state. As part of the responsibility in managing these dams, the Corps has a comprehensive dam safety program that has public safety as its primary objective. Corps dams are routinely inspected and continually evaluated for safety in accordance with the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety issued in 1979.

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In 2005, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began performing Screening Portfolio Risk Analyses allowing USACE maintained and operated dams nationwide to be prioritized. O.C. Fisher Lake dam was screened in 2006 that considered both performance and consequence of failure (risk-informed screening).

O.C. Fisher Lake Dam was placed into operation in 1952 and serves the citizens of Texas providing flood risk management, quality water supply, environmental stewardship and recreational opportunities. The Corps of Engineers tests, evaluations and subsequent required work are ongoing to ensure that the 58-year-old project will continue to safely provide these important services.

For more information contact the Public Affairs Office, 817-886-1306.

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About the Fort Worth District: The Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was established in 1950. The District is responsible for water resources development in two-thirds of Texas, and design and construction at military installations in Texas and parts of Louisiana and New Mexico. Visit the Fort Worth District Web site at: www.swf.usace.army.mil.

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