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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announce Dam Safety Program initiatives for Somerville 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 Somerville Dam. The dam is not in imminent danger of failing, is currently performing its intended function and there are no plans to change the operations of the dam.

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 classified the dam as having Moderate to High Risk characteristics. The Moderate to High Risk classification is a result of potential issues of seepage, piping, and erosion. Consequences include potential lives lost, economic, environmental, and other impacts.

"Somerville Dam is operating as designed but is approximately 45 years old. Therefore, we will continue to assess and ensure its safe operation," 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.

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. Somerville Dam was screened in 2008 that considered both performance and consequence of failure (risk-informed screening).

"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," Muraski said.

Somerville Dam was placed into operation in 1967 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 45-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 and SWF Face book at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Worth-District-US-Army-Corps-of-Engineers/188083711219308>