

Federal Emergency Management Agency
PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA)
for the Proposed City of Bentonville
Improvements to Lake Bella Vista Dam
Benton County, Arkansas

Beginning on April 23, 2011, many communities in Arkansas sustained extensive damage from severe storms, tornados, and associated flooding. Subsequently, a Presidential Disaster Declaration, DR-1975-AR, was signed for this event. Significant flooding that occurred along the Little Sugar Creek during this time resulted in the Lake Bella Vista Dam overtopping and causing erosion along the entire 410-foot long downstream slope. This dam, owned by City of Bentonville, Arkansas, poses a serious safety risk in the event of another flood and overtopping event such as what occurred on April 19, 2013 when heavy rains caused Little Sugar Creek to flood resulting in a second overtopping of Lake Bella Vista Dam. Another overtopping event on August 12 and 13, 2013 resulted in two Jersey barriers on the top of the dam being moved by the powerful currents of the floodwaters. The dam is classified as a small, high-hazard structure under dam safety regulations of the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission.

The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by this event in Arkansas. Interested persons are hereby notified that the City of Bentonville, Arkansas has requested funding (Project Worksheet 1562) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Public Assistance Program to restore the dam's function, long-term usability, and safety by removing and replacing the existing structure. Lake Bella Vista Dam is located in Lake Bella Vista Park, along US Route (US) 71, within Bentonville's city limits in northwest Arkansas. Its central coordinates are at 36.43270, -94.23091.

The proposed project would include the removal of the currently existing Bella Vista Dam and replacing it with a new dam structure constructed within the footprint and at the same height of the original dam. The new dam design would prevent normal flows from sweeping and eroding the toe of the dam. The conceptual replacement dam design would not alter the capacity or normal operating elevation of the lake or impact surrounding infrastructure. The proposed dam replacement project would also maintain the hydraulic characteristics of Little Sugar Creek, both upstream and downstream of the dam during flood events in order to preclude significant changes in flood elevations.

The conceptual design of the dam's principal spillway is a reinforced concrete overflow weir, with reinforced concrete-lined approach section and discharge basin and reinforced concrete sidewalls. The dual outlet gates in the spillway weir section would be provided for lowering the lake level when necessary. The City of Bentonville has identified a borrow pit for fill material located in Benton County, approximately 9 miles southwest of the project area (36.351147, -94.358624). There may be a need for a temporary cofferdam and the dewatering or drawing down of the lake during construction. Also, the dam will be constructed in two stages to manage the flow of Little Sugar Creek. The existing west spillway would be used to temporarily divert Little Sugar Creek during the eastern half of dam construction. The western half of the dam would be completed by allowing the stream to use the newly constructed east spillway. The spillway structure would be spanned by a pedestrian bridge with reinforced concrete abutments. As part of the proposed dam construction, 0.7 acres of trees and brush would be removed adjacent and north of the dam. The specific purpose of the proposed project is to

restore the function, safety, and long-term usability of Lake Bella Vista as a park amenity and to satisfy current dam and spillway design criteria of the Arkansas Natural Resource Commission.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the implementing regulations of FEMA, a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed action on the human and natural environment. The Draft EA summarizes the purpose and need, alternatives, affected environment, and potential environmental consequences for the proposed action. The Draft EA is available for comment and can be viewed and downloaded from FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents>. The Draft EA can also be viewed at the Bentonville Public Library located 405 South Main Street in Bentonville, AR 72712 between the hours of 9:00am to 8:00pm Monday through Thursday and between the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm Friday and Saturday. The library is closed on Sundays.

The comment period will end 30 days from the initial notice publication date in the newspaper. Written comments on the Draft EA can be mailed, emailed or faxed to the contact below. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA will become final and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued for the project. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in the final documents.

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VI
c/o Alan Hermely
800 North Loop 288, Denton, TX 76209
Email: Alan.Hermely@fema.dhs.gov
Fax: 940-297-0152