After a series of disastrous floods during the mid-1800s and early 1900s, high priority was given to flood control projects. The worst flood in the history of the Lower Mississippi Valley occurred in 1927. The Great Flood spawned a comprehensive program for flood control along the Mississippi River and its tributaries and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers became the planners, designers and builders of the flood control projects.

Engineers determined the headwaters of the Yazoo River contributed to or caused much of the flooding that occurred in Mississippi's Delta region. In addition to the construction of levees along the Yazoo River, four flood control reservoirs were constructed in north Mississippi as part of the Yazoo Basin Headwater Project. Arkabutla Dam, the second of the dams to be built, was constructed on the Coldwater River.

The development of Arkabutla Dam even required the relocation of an entire town. In 1942, the U.S. Government moved the town of Coldwater and approximately 700 residents at a cost of $250,000 to its present location 1 mile south of the original site. Today there is a monument dedicated to the old town of Coldwater just west of the Coldwater exit off Interstate 55. There you can see a few remnants of the old town; however a majority of the site remains underwater year round.

When completed, the Yazoo Headwater Project will protect 1,209,000 acres of land against flooding and will partially protect another 303,000 acres. Benefits of the Headwater Project are reduced flooding around the cities of Greenwood, Yazoo City, Belzoni, and other smaller communities within the Yazoo River Basin and increased agricultural and industrial productivity because more land is available for these purposes. As a result, the region's national and international markets for produce have greatly increased and families have benefited from the growing job market.

Flood Risk Management

After a series of disastrous floods during the mid-1800s and early 1900s, high priority was given to flood control projects. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers became the designers, planners, and builders for these flood control projects. The worst flood in the history of the Lower Mississippi Valley occurred in 1927, after which a comprehensive program for flood control along the Mississippi and its tributaries was begun.

Work on Arkabutla Dam was completed in 1943. Arkabutla Dam, along with three other flood control lakes in North Mississippi plus other Yazoo Basin Headwater Projects, was built to reduce flood damage in the Yazoo Basin. When completed, the Yazoo Headwater Project will protect 1,209,000 acres against flooding and will partially protect 303,000 more acres. Flooding has been reduced around the cities of Greenwood, Yazoo City, Belzoni, and other nearby communities. The area's industry and agriculture have greatly benefited because more land is now being utilized for these purposes. The region has been able to produce more agricultural products, thus increasing the national and international markets for these products.

Arkabutla Lake is part of the comprehensive plan for flood control on the Yazoo River and tributaries above the head of the Mississippi River backwater area. The project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 15 June 1936 (Public Law 678). Although flood control was the authorized purpose of the project, additional resources created by the lake have resulted in important regional benefits from recreation, fish and wildlife, conservation, and forestry. The lands surrounding the lake, acquired as part of the project, are now being managed for public recreation, habitat improvement, forest resources, and preservation of the biological resources.

Arkabutla Lake Flood Damage Reduction Facts

Natural Resource Management

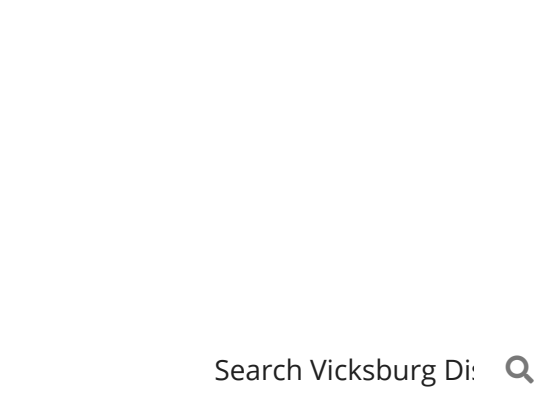
The Army Corps of Engineers is the steward of the lands and waters at Corps water resources projects. Its Natural Resource Management Mission is to manage and conserve those natural resources, consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations.

In all aspects of natural and cultural resources management, the Corps promotes awareness of environmental values and adheres to sound environmental stewardship, protection, compliance and restoration practices. We manage for long-term public access to, and use of, the natural resources in cooperation with other federal, state, and local agencies as well as the private sector. By integrating the management of diverse natural resource components such as fish, wildlife, forests, wetlands, grasslands, soil, air, and water with the provision of public recreation opportunities, we are able to conserve and protect natural resources as well as provide public recreation opportunities that contribute to the quality of American life.

Skip to main content (Press Enter).

Quail, Squirrels and Whitetail Deer.

Prescribed Burning: Prescribed burns are used to control undesirable vegetation and are the most natural tool that can be used for managing habitats. Forest fires have occurred naturally in most ecosystems for thousands of years and some vegetative areas must have prescribed burns in order for them to survive. Prescribed burns increase the amount of available sunlight that reaches bare soil and will promote new growth of forages for deer, turkey, and quail. Burned areas will provide important bugging, nesting, and brooding areas for wild turkeys and quail. Prescribed burning may also be used as a means of site preparation for the planting of any trees located within an area.



Disking/Strip-disking: Disking is an effective management tool that creates soil disturbance and causes a change in plant communities. This technique is used in moist soil management areas (MSMAs) and in strip-disking areas. Disking also reduces woody vegetation and promotes the growth of annuals to increase seed production and availability for wintering waterfowl. Disking in 5 of the 10 moist soil management areas is implemented annually during the spring after water levels decline enough to facilitate equipment use. Disking in these areas is alternated with a scheduled flooding regime and implemented on approximately 360 acres of MSMAs.

Strip-disking procedures are completed on higher elevations of the landscape during the fall months. This causes similar results to habitat as previously mentioned with the disking of MSMAs. However, strip-disking also provides nesting, bugging, and dusting areas for quail and turkey. This technique creates diverse habitats for a variety of upland wildlife species. Strip-disking is performed in strips approximately 30 feet wide, which are disked on an alternating 3-year rotation. Each area will have been completely disked by the end of the third year.

Nesting Structures: Some of the practices we implement around the lake include the placement of nesting structures, such as Martin houses, Wood Duck boxes, Bluebird houses, and Bat houses. Quite often federal, state, and local agencies, along with local citizens, assist with the placement of these nesting structures.

Environmental Stewardship

Stewardship can be defined as the personal responsibility for caring for another individual's property. In our case, environmental stewardship can be looked upon as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Arkabutla Lake and local stakeholders jointly caring for the environment for our Nation's present and future generations. Environmental stewardship incorporates both hands-on and passive management techniques in order to sustain healthy ecosystems, biodiversity, and conserve natural resources so the conditions of our lands and waters will be left in an equal to or better status than when they were first acquired.

We serve as the stewards of the lands and waters at the Arkabutla Lake Project. Environmental stewardship has always been an essential component between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Arkabutla Lake and the citizens of the lake's surrounding communities. Working alongside local citizens, Federal, State, and local agencies and groups, there is a continuous effort to improve upon the quality of the natural and water resources of the Arkabutla Lake area.

The US Army Corps of Engineers is the steward of nearly 12 million acres of public lands and waters. The mission of the program is to manage and conserve natural resources consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations. The management of natural resources by utilizing a stewardship concept ensures the conservation, preservation, and protection of Corps land and water resources.

Environmental Stewardship at Work

Fish Habitat Day: Every year around January the staff at Arkabutla Lake promotes Fish Habitat Day. This event requires the cooperation of lake employees, local volunteers, and local businesses' contributions that are vital to the success of this annual event. While lake employees and local volunteers actually place the habitat structures throughout the lake bottom; local businesses furnish the much needed supplies such as Christmas trees and stakes. The donated Christmas trees and stakes are placed in various areas within the lake bottom that typically don't have any natural structures for fish to utilize as protective cover from predators, areas to feed around, or spawn. These three needs are provided by the placement of Christmas trees and stakes in the lake bottom while vastly improving the quality of fish and the fishing experience at Arkabutla Lake.

Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey: The purpose of the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey is to monitor the status of Bald Eagle wintering populations in the United States by estimating national and regional count trends. Each January, several volunteers and Arkabutla Lake employees monitor various areas around the lake and tally the number of Bald Eagles identified. The information collected is sent to the U.S. Geological Survey to include in the National Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey.

Outdoor Education Day: In conjunction with National Public Lands Day, the annual Outdoor Education Day at Arkabutla Lake serves to educate local youths about important environmental and natural resources issues. The event has helped to build partnerships between the local community, other Federal and State agencies, and other organizations that share a common interest in the enhancement and restoration of the public lands at Arkabutla Lake for outdoor recreation and conservation. Topics of discussion during the event include learning about the importance of conserving water, reducing pollution and energy wastage, recycling, forest conservation, soil conservation, learning about native flora and fauna, water/boating safety, and hunting safety.

Outreach Interpretive/Educational Programs: For decades the staff at Arkabutla Lake has educated local citizens through outreach programs. These programs vary from interpretive/educational topics about Mississippi's native flora and fauna to boating and water safety. Every year thousands of people are enlightened through these programs. The programs often take place at local schools, churches, and even at the swimming beaches at the lake.

Senatobia Wetlands Project

The Senatobia Wetlands project was created as a cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tate County Economic Development Foundation, and Duck's Unlimited in an effort to revitalize a declining wetland area. Restoring the wetland area includes conducting continuous environmental research while also managing fish and waterfowl populations. It is also an aesthetically pleasing area where visitors can sit down and observe wildlife and waterfowl in the wetland area. There are interpretive educational panels located at the observation site that list some of the animals and waterfowl one might see while overlooking the wetlands.

Askew Wildlife Management Area

In 1943, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers-Vicksburg District purchased the Askew Wildlife Management Area as part of the Yazoo Headwaters Flood Control Project. The authorized project purpose of this land was to serve as a water detention basin. This area was expected to control excessive or peak runoff from uncontrolled drainage areas located below Arkabutla Dam. The frequently flooded property later became a part of a mitigation plan for the Yalobusha River and Tallahatchie River channel maintenance projects located in the Yazoo Basin of Mississippi.

The main objective for the area was to provide an effective bottomland ecosystem that was capable of supporting similar habitats and wildlife populations that existed prior to the channel manipulations that occurred in the Yazoo Basin. The alternative was to reforest 980 acres and develop approximately 400 acres of moist soil areas at Askew as a result of an environmental analysis based on an environmental assessment completed during April of 1994. This mitigation alternative was completed in 1996.

Management of the property is performed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers-Arkabutla Lake Field Office. The area consists of approximately 4,305 acres of bottomland habitat located within the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley. The area requires an adaptive management approach, which will allow certain management practices and techniques to be changed in response to changes in plant and animal populations. Existing habitats in the management area include bottomland hardwoods, moist-soil areas, forested wetlands, transitional bottomland hardwoods, open-aquatic and riverine systems. In 2003 Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers formed a partnership to improve the area's waterfowl habitat. A large portion of the area is dedicated to the management of waterfowl by implementing the use of moist soil management areas and green tree reservoirs.

Skip to main content (Press Enter).

A scheduled flooding regime is implemented for some areas at Askew: the 2 greentree reservoirs (GTRs) and the 10 moist soil management areas. Both reservoirs consist primarily of oak species along with a variety of other bottomland hardwood species. These impoundments are managed to mimic natural events that would normally occur in bottomland ecosystems. Excessive flooding and droughts occurring at different times during the dormant season is the primary occurrences that will be implemented in the GTRs. This flooding regime allows natural regeneration to occur and will ensure the future existence of the bottomland hardwood ecosystem. Mast producing plants have become established and provide diverse food sources of seeds and acorns. A scheduled series of alternate flood/drought periods has been developed to accomplish this strategy throughout the management of this area. Openings within each GTR are created or maintained every other year.

The water management of the moist soil management areas (MSMAs) is performed by flooding all ten of the MSMAs during the winter months for wintering

waterfowl. Five of the ten units are drained between 15 April and 15 May to allow disking to occur, while the remaining five impoundments will hold water until about 1 July. The units that hold water until July will benefit numerous wetland species throughout the mid-summer months. These units are drained slowly to encourage the growth of preferred waterfowl forage. After a slow drawdown has occurred, these moist soil areas may be planted. During dry periods, MSMAs are pumped from a nearby irrigation source if possible. Inundation of desirable vegetation should not occur for more than three to four consecutive days. Long durations of flooding during the summer months may promote the growth of less desirable plant species. In areas without any source of flooding, water control structures are boarded up soon after drawdown has occurred and equipment is no longer needed in the management unit. This procedure allows the moist soil areas to retain moisture during the summer months since artificial flooding is not possible.

The Askew Wildlife Management Area also offers some of the best and diverse hunting available in the area. The area provides some great opportunities for deer, rabbit, bird, and waterfowl hunting. Askew Wildlife Management Area does have special hunting requirements. Please select the link below to view the area's hunting regulations and requirements.

Click this link to download a PDF of the **Askew Wildlife Management Area Hunting Regulations and Maps.**

Click **HERE** to view the 2016-2017 US Army Corps of Engineers hunting regulations for all North Mississippi projects.