



**Lakewood**  
Colorado

**Office of the Mayor  
Adam Paul**

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June 10, 2022

US Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District  
Attn: CENWO-PMA-C (Bear-Creek-Study)  
1616 Capitol Avenue  
Omaha, NE 68102

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers,

As the elected officials representing the residents of Lakewood, we are grateful for the opportunity to weigh in on the feasibility study currently underway to examine the potential addition of water storage at the Bear Creek Reservoir.

As annual visits to Bear Creek Lake Park (BCLP) continue to increase year after year, and Lakewood's local resources continue to be stretched further, it is our belief that serious consideration should be given to the feedback offered by the local entity responsible for the obligations associated with operating Bear Creek Lake Park.

The Bear Creek Reservoir is part of the Corps of Engineers' (Corps) "Tri-Lakes" flood control project that also includes Chatfield and Cherry Creek Reservoirs. Unlike Chatfield and Cherry Creek, which operate as state parks, in 1982 the State of Colorado requested that the City of Lakewood assume the financial and management burdens of the park and recreation facilities at BCLP. Lakewood has operated BCLP pursuant to a lease with the Corps through 2042 and a 2012 Corps' Master Plan.

As demonstrated in the chart below, unlike the Chatfield Reservoir, Bear Creek Reservoir has much less capacity, so the feasibility study originally proposed 20,000 acre-feet (AF) of additional volume would have a much more significant impact on Bear Creek Lake Park. Chatfield's normal water area is 2,100 while Bear Creek's is 603. Adding 20,000 AF to Chatfield is a 39% increase while the addition of 20,000 AF to Bear Creek is a 450% change. The resulting total storage capacity at Chatfield would be 350,000 while Bear Creek's would be 77,000.



\*\*Alternative formats of this document are available upon request\*\*

	Chatfield Reservoir	Bear Creek Lake Park (Excluding Golf Courses)
Annual Park Visitors	1,500,000	650,000
Approximate Park Size (Acres)	5,300	2,623
Normal Water Area Before Storage Change (Acres)	1,500	110
Normal Water Area with Increased Storage (Acres)	2,100 (39% increase)	603 (450% increase)
Total Storage Capacity (AF)	350,000	77,000
Reallocation Volume (AF)	20,600 (5.9% of Total)	20,000 (26% of Total)
Vertical Water Fluctuation Attributable to Storage Change (Feet)	12	53

Since 1982, Lakewood has successfully operated BCLP and its popularity as an outdoor respite in the middle of the busy city continues to exceed expectations. Over the years, Lakewood has invested millions of dollars in BCLP and has developed the Park into a regional amenity. Annual Park operating expenses were \$1.7 million in 2021. A wide variety of recreational activities are available at the Park including boating, swimming, paddle boarding, fishing, cycling, hiking, running, bird watching, picnicking, camping, horseback riding, skiing and archery. The Park also boasts large riparian and short grass prairie habitat areas, with diverse and abundant wildlife populations, including many successful raptor nesting sites. Results of the 2017 Community Resources Master Plan public input survey identified BCLP as the most frequently used city facility with about 44% of respondents indicating they used the park in the past year. The most recent master plan survey results, just completed in May of 2022, indicated 75% of the Lakewood's population have visited the Park in the last year. Although Lakewood is unable to account for every visitor to the Park due to the number of access points, the number of visitors who entered the Park through the main gate numbered 650,000 in 2021 and visits are on pace to surpass that in 2022.

As evidenced by the outpouring of public feedback that has already been received regarding this project, there is clearly strong opposition to adding the originally suggested 20,000-acre feet of storage capacity to the Reservoir. We are encouraged to know that the Corps is now considering an array of alternatives, including capping lower amounts of additional storage, analyzing the need and water alternatives from water providers as well as deeper excavation of the existing reservoir.

Public comments received to date speak clearly to the passion and care of so many who use BCLP as a respite from the stress and tension of everyday life in today's world. Our role as elected officials is to act as the voice for our constituents and in this case, their voices are loud and clear; adding storage capacity to Bear Creek Reservoir would have a detrimental impact on park users, the natural landscape, existing park amenities and the wildlife habitat.



I recognize and appreciate the need for additional water storage in Colorado and we fully support the State's Water Plan. However, based on recent information provided by Water Education Colorado, the State has already achieved, or is permitted to add, 475,000-acre feet of storage capacity, which exceeds the original reported study goal of 400,000 additional acre-feet.

For the incredible and irreplaceable value of Bear Creek Lake Park as it exists today, and all that it provides for the regional community, we urge you to strongly consider alternatives that will keep the conditions as near to existing as possible. Minimal change to the park landscape also allows the city to move forward with a highly anticipated master planning effort for the park in 2023. As the world-renowned American biologist and naturalist Edward Osborne Wilson once wrote, "Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction." Bear Creek Lake Park is Lakewood's little slice of nature.

Sincerely,



Adam Paul  
Mayor



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