

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
ACTIONS DURING 2016 TEXAS HISTORIC FLOODING**

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Introduction

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) provides immediate and effective response and assistance during national emergencies and disasters. Although these responsibilities rest primarily with state and local offices, USACE may supplement those efforts to save lives, prevent immediate human suffering, and mitigate property damage.

During the 2016 Texas flooding events USACE top priorities were:

- Support immediate lifesaving and life safety emergency response priorities
- Operate USACE lakes and reservoirs within operational guidelines to minimize impacts
- Coordinate operations with stakeholders
- Minimize navigation impacts

Flood Related Authorities

USACE supports planning, response and recovery due to flooding under Public Law 84-99, Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act.

Public Law 84-99 enables USACE to assist state and local authorities in flood fight activities including preparedness and response services and advanced planning measures designed to reduce the degree of damage caused by an impending disaster. This law also allows USACE to partner with local sponsors to cost share the repairs of flood protection structures following a disaster. This law is commonly referred to as the Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act

Discussion

USACE has been responding and assisting in the recovery of flood events since the 1882 Mississippi River flood, where USACE was authorized to use their boats to rescue survivors and move supplies. Before 1950, federal disaster response was authorized on a case-by-case basis. The 1950 Disaster Relief Act changed that and authorized federal agencies to provide disaster assistance to states and local jurisdictions.

During the 2016 Texas historic flooding USACE managed high water across the state for over five months. USACE operates 29 lakes or reservoirs across the state of Texas. During the 2016 flood 23 of these structures were in a flood pool status. Two of the lakes reached surcharge status. Thousands of man hours were required for 24-hour monitoring of dams and levees across the state. USACE worked very closely with stakeholders on release rates to improve downstream notification and potential impacts.

Over 300,000 sandbags were provided to local governments. Navigation along the Gulf Intracoastal Water Way (GIWW) was closed for two weeks due to high flows in the Colorado River. This caused a backup of over 200 vessels which took another two weeks to clear once the GIWW reopened. USACE provided debris and environmental subject matter experts to assist with debris removal and environmental restoration.

References

1. PL 84-99 – Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act
2. ER 500-1-1 – Emergency Employment of the Army and Other Resources – Civil Emergency Management Program
3. PL93-288 – Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act