

the ETI area by eliminating R-3202B and R-3202C, elevating the ceiling of R-3202A to 29,000 MSL and establishing new restricted airspace around the 12,000-acre tactical range.

In addition to the proposed action, two alternatives will be considered: the no action alternative, and a 12,000-acre tactical range similar to the proposed range, but located further west, near Grasmere.

The Air Force will conduct public scoping meetings to assist it in determining the issues and concerns that should be addressed in the EIS. Notice of time and place of the scoping meetings will be made to public officials and announced in the news media in areas where the scoping meetings will be held.

To assure there will be sufficient time to consider public inputs on issues to be included in developing the EIS when attendance at the scoping meetings is not possible, comments should be forwarded to the addressee below by April 1, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lt Col R. Oholendt, Air Combat Command Airspace and Range Management Division, HQ ACC/DOR, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia 23665; Telephone (804) 764-6026.

Patsy J. Conner,

Air Force Federal Register Liaison Officer.

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Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Jacksonville District, Jacksonville FL; Intent To Prepare a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) for the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project Comprehensive Review Study.

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), along with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), intends to prepare a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) for the feasibility phase of the C&SF Project Comprehensive Review Study. The DPEIS will be done commensurate with the development of a comprehensive plan that addresses the water resource needs of south Florida through a re-examination of the design of the original C&SF Project, authorized in 1948 to provide flood control, water

supply and other purposes to central and southern Florida.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions about the proposed action and DPEIS can be answered by: Mark Ziminske, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019; Telephone 904-232-1786.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

a. Authorization

The C&SF Project Comprehensive Review Study is authorized by Section 309(1) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992 and two resolutions of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation, United States House of Representatives, dated September 1992. These authorizations direct the Corps to re-examine the design of the C&SF Project to determine if modifications should be made to the project in the interest of improving environmental quality, water supply, and Everglades and Florida Bay ecosystems, while meeting the overall water resource needs in the study area.

b. Study Area

The Study area includes the entire C&SF Project with the exception of the Upper St. Johns River Basin, which is a separate hydrologic basin, not part of the Everglades ecosystem. Contained within the study area are: All or part of Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Dade, Glades, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Martin, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, and St. Lucie Counties, Florida.

c. Project Features and Scope

The Comprehensive Review Study will develop an overall C&SF Project initial comprehensive plan and develop the tools necessary to evaluate the effects of this plan, with particular attention to features specific to Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs), Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, the Lake Okeechobee Service Area, the Lower East Coast Service Area, and Native American tribal lands. The major components to be studied include: Alternatives for conveying water through the EAA, and modifying ground water levels to control soil subsidence; water storage in the Everglades headwaters to include Lake Okeechobee, the EAA, the WCAs, and Water Preserve Areas (WPAs); alternatives to reduce wildlife habitat fragmentation within natural areas; and alternative water regulation schedules

for Lake Okeechobee and the WCAs. Further, concepts to capture and store excess surface water in WPAs located along the eastern boundary levees of the WCAs by backpumping surface water that is normally released to tide via the C&SF Project canal system will be investigated.

There is an extensive effort by Federal, State and local governments in central and southern Florida to restore the natural Kissimmee—Lake Okeechobee—Everglades system. Much of this effort depends a great deal on the findings, recommendations and ultimate direction resulting from the Comprehensive Review Study. Therefore, it is envisioned that a conceptual plan will be identified early in the study process to provide a framework as the Corps, SFWMD, and other agencies and the public articulate the ultimate comprehensive plan.

d. Scoping

The scoping process as outlined by the Council on Environmental Quality will be utilized to involve Federal, State, and local agencies, affected Indian Tribes, and other interested private organizations and parties. A scoping letter will be sent to interested Federal, State and local agencies, interested organizations and the public, requesting their comments and concerns regarding issues they feel should be addressed in the DPEIS. Interested persons and organizations wishing to participate in the scoping process should contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the address above. Significant issues anticipated include concern for: maintenance of flood protection and water supply, water quality, wetlands, fish and wildlife, recreation and aesthetics, historical and cultural resources, groundwater recharge, and threatened and endangered plant and animal species. Public meetings will be held over the course of the study, the exact location, dates, and times will be announced in public notices and local newspapers.

e. It is estimated that the DPEIS will be available to the public in November 1999.

George M. Strain,

Assistant Chief, Planning Division.

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