

and develop dredged material disposal options that will include an evaluation of beneficial uses of dredged material. The project is being maintained at its authorized depth of 45 feet and includes about 34.5 nautical miles of deep-draft channel. The Corpus Christi area is located about 200 miles southwest of Houston, Texas. The local sponsor for the project is the Port of Corpus Christi Authority.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposed action and DEIS can be answered by: Mr. Carl Anderson, (409) 766-3914, Project Manager, Project Management Branch, or Dr. Terry Roberts, (409) 766-3035, Environmental Lead, Environmental Branch, Planning, Environmental, and Regulatory Division, P.O. Box 1229, Galveston, Texas 77553-1229.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. The study process began in 1990 when Congress directed the Secretary of the Army to study the feasibility of modifying the 45-foot channel to accommodate larger vessels, increase shipping efficiency, and enhance navigation safety. A reconnaissance study evaluated a deepening and widening plan to establish a Federal interest in the project. The study concluded there was a Federal interest in continuing studies in 1994. The feasibility study began in June 1999 and will determine the most cost-effective alternative for improving the channel while protecting the Nation's environment.

2. Alternatives: a. The six construction alternatives that will be evaluated in the feasibility phase are:

(1) Widening the existing 400-foot channel across Corpus Christi Bay between Ingleside and the Harbor Bridge.

(2) Add barge lanes across Corpus Christi Bay.

(3) Extend the La Quinta Channel approximately 8,000 feet.

(4) Deepen the channel to 52 feet from the Gulf of Mexico to the Viola Turning Basin and widen it across Corpus Christi Bay between Ingleside and the Harbor Bridge.

(5) Deepen the channel to 50 feet from the Gulf of Mexico to the Viola Turning Basin and widen it across Corpus Christi Bay between Ingleside and the Harbor Bridge.

(6) Deepen the La Quinta Channel to 50 feet.

b. A "No Action" alternative will be evaluated and presented for comparison purposes in evaluating the various construction alternatives.

3. Scoping: The scoping process will involve Federal, State, and local

agencies, and other interested persons and organizations. A series of scoping workshops will be conducted to discuss various issues associated with the channel improvements and placement of dredged material. Separate Scoping Notices will be issued for the various workshops. Issues to be considered in this process include beneficial uses of dredged material, changes in salinity and circulation, water and sediment quality, erosion along the channel, and threatened and endangered species impacts. Any person or organization wishing to provide information on issues or concerns should contact the Corps of Engineers at the above address.

4. Coordination: Further coordination with environmental agencies will be conducted under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat), and the Coastal Zone Management Act (Texas Coastal Management Program). A Regulatory Agency Coordination Team has been formed to provide guidance and counsel on matters relating to the evaluation of environmental impacts of this project. The Team is composed of representatives from three Federal and six State regulatory agencies, the local sponsor, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

5. DEIS Preparation: It is estimated that the DEIS will be available to the public for review and comment in March 2002.

Gregory D. Showalter,
Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Lake Tohopekaliga Extreme Drawdown and Habitat Enhancement, Osceola County, FL

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the South Florida Water Management District intend to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the feasibility of implementing a plan for the Lake

Tohopekaliga Extreme Drawdown and Habitat Enhancement Project, Osceola County, Florida.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions about the proposed action and DEIS may be addressed to Ms. Heather Carolan or Ms. Elizabeth R. Manners, U.S. Army Engineer District, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019; Telephone 904-232-2016/3923.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Proposed Project

a. Lake Tohopekaliga, located in Central Florida, has previously undergone three extreme drawdowns in 1971, 1979, and 1987. The drawdowns are designed to improve aquatic habitat that has been negatively impacted by flood control practices, which have resulted in detrimental stable lake levels and nutrient enrichment. Following refill of Lake Tohopekaliga after the three previous drawdowns the numbers of fish food organisms, sport fish and forage fish increased significantly; new aquatic vegetation communities became established; and organic sediments decreased in the lakes.

b. The purpose of this project is to improve the environmental ecosystem of Lake Tohopekaliga and thus provide quality habitat for fisheries, birds and other wildlife. Beneficial effects associated with the drawdown plan include bottom substrate improvements as organic build-up is reduced. Reduction of muck will lead to an increase in diversity and density of desirable vegetation. The drawdown will also allow the control of nuisance aquatic plants, such as hydrilla, water hyacinth, cattails, alligator weed, smartweed and pickerelweed, which proliferate under the unnatural static lake level conditions. In addition, the water quality of Lake Tohopekaliga will be enhanced by the nutrient uptake and filtration abilities by the recruitment of native plant species. Restoring littoral habitat, which favors bass, will increase native fish species.

c. Approximately 2,844 acres (40%) of shoreline along Lake Tohopekaliga will be exposed during the drawdown. Organic bottom sediments should compact and consolidate during the scheduled low water period. Coverage of beneficial aquatic vegetation such as knotgrass, maidencane and bulrush should increase following refill due to germination of seeds exposed during the drawdown. The subsequent increase in vegetation communities should significantly increase fish food organisms and sport fish populations.

d. Muck removal will be performed to enhance aquatic habitat and improve

boating conditions. Approximately 5 million cubic yards of organic material will be removed. The material will be disposed of on upland sites or used to create in-lake wildlife islands. Wildlife islands serve as excellent rookery sites for wading birds and also serve as resting and basking areas for reptiles.

2. Alternatives

a. Several drawdown alternatives will be identified and evaluated during the study.

b. Potential environmental resources and issues to be evaluated in the DEIS include project impacts on:

- (1) Fish and wildlife resources.
- (2) Wetlands resources.
- (3) Wildlife habitat & values.
- (4) Vegetation.
- (5) Water quality.
- (6) Surface & groundwater resources.
- (7) Endangered or threatened species.
- (8) Historical or archeological resources.
- (9) Aesthetics.
- (10) Nuisance and exotic plant species.
- (11) Downstream effects.
- (12) Air quality & noise.
- (13) Soils.
- (14) Navigation and recreation.
- (15) Freeze protection.
- (16) Local tropical fish farms.

c. Because of the magnitude and duration of this project the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the South Florida Water Management District have determined that a DEIS should be prepared for the Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

3. Scoping

The scoping process as outlined by the Council on Environmental Quality will be utilized to involve Federal, State, and local agencies; and other interested persons and organizations. A scoping letter will be sent to interested Federal, State, local agencies and interested parties requesting comments and concerns regarding issues to consider during the study. Responses to this letter will help identify the potential environmental impacts to be evaluated in the DEIS. Additional comments are welcome and may be provided to the above address. Public meetings may be held in the future. Exact dates, times, and locations will be published in local papers.

4. Schedule

It is estimated that the DEIS will be available to the public by the spring of 2001.

Gregory D. Showalter,
Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the American River Project, Long Term Evaluation, California

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act, and the California State Reclamation Board (The Board), lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, intend to prepare a joint document to evaluate the environmental effects of proposed flood control and ecosystem restoration components for the Sacramento, California, area.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions concerning the proposed action and draft SEIS should be addressed to Ms. Patricia Roberson, Environmental Resources Branch, Planning Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1325 J Street, Sacramento, California 95814-2922, telephone (916) 557-6705.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Project Location

Sacramento is located where the American River joins the Sacramento River. The American River watershed, or drainage basin, covers approximately 2,100 square miles northeast of Sacramento and includes portions of Placer, El Dorado, and Sacramento Counties. Runoff from this basin flows through Folsom Reservoir and passes through Sacramento in a channel controlled by a system of levees. In addition to providing flood control to Sacramento, Folsom Dam and Reservoir are part of the Federal Central Valley Project, California's largest water delivery system. The primary study areas include Folsom Dam and Reservoir, lower American River, Sacramento Bypass, and the Yolo Bypass. These features are located

within Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado Counties.

2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

The Corps and the Board are conducting a supplemental feasibility evaluation of alternative measures to provide additional flood protection to the City of Sacramento. This documentation and the accompanying SEIS/EIR are supplements to the 1996 American River Watershed Project Supplemental Information Report and SEIS/EIR, which in turn supplement the 1991 American River Watershed Investigation feasibility study and EIS. Alternatives to address resource problems and needs identified to date will include in whole or in part: (1) Enlarging Folsom Reservoir; (2) a downstream levee plan, which would involve raising and strengthening levees, raising bridges, and widening the Sacramento Bypass, and (3) a combination of downstream levee work and Folsom enlargement. Potential for ecosystem restoration will also be evaluated.

3. Scoping Process

a. Scoping is a process to identify the actions, alternatives, and effects to be evaluated in an environmental document. The public is invited to assist the Corps and non-Federal sponsor in scoping this SEIS. The Process provides an opportunity for the public to identify Significant resources in the study area that may be affected by the project. To facilitate this involvement, a series of public scoping meetings will be held in Folsom and Sacramento in August/September 2000. Individuals, organizations, and agencies are also encouraged to submit written scoping comments by September 30, 2000.

b. After the draft SEIS is prepared, it will be circulated to all interested parties for review and comment. Public meetings will be held to receive verbal and written comments. All comments will be considered and responded to in the final SEIS/EIR.

4. Availability

The draft SEIS/EIR is scheduled to be distributed for public review and comment in June 2001.

Gregory D. Showalter,
Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.
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