

issues and to receive public input and comment.

b. The DEIS will analyze the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts to the local area resulting from the proposed project. Specifically, the following major issues will be analyzed in depth in the DEIS: hydrologic and hydraulic regimes, essential fish habitat and other marine habitat, air quality, cultural resources, recreation, wastewater treatment capacities and discharges, transportation systems, alternatives, secondary and cumulative impacts, socioeconomic, environmental justice (effect on minorities and low-income groups), and protection of children (Executive Order 13045).

c. The Corps will serve as the lead Federal agency in the preparation of the DEIS. It is anticipated that the following agencies will be invited and will accept cooperating agency status for the preparation of the DEIS: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of the Interior—Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Commerce—National Marine Fisheries Service, Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Alabama State Port Authority, Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer, Alabama Department of Transportation and the City of Mobile.

4. The first scoping meeting will be held in conjunction with the DEIS for the restoration of areas adjacent to the Arlington and Garrows Bend Channels scoping meeting in February 2002 in the local area. Actual time and place for the meeting and subsequent meetings or workshops will be announced by the Mobil District by issuance of a Public Notice and/or notices in the local media.

5. It is anticipated that the DEIS will be made available for public review in October 2002.

Luz D. Ortiz,

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 Southwest Florida Feasibility Study (SWFFS)

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

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), intends to prepare an integrated Feasibility Report and DEIS for the Southwest Florida Feasibility Study. The study is a cooperative effort between the Corps and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), which is also a cooperating agency for this DEIS. One of the recommendations of the final report of the Central & South Florida (C&SF) Comprehensive Review Study (Restudy) was the SWFFS. The SWFFS will develop a comprehensive regional plan for addressing water resource problems and opportunities in southwest Florida.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Kremer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Planning Division, Environmental Branch, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019, or by telephone at 904-232-3551.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: a.

Authorization: The C&SF Project was first authorized in 1948 to provide flood control, water control, water supply, and other services to an area that stretched from Orlando to Florida Bay. Section 309(l) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992 (Pub. L. 102-580) provided authorization for the Restudy. The Restudy concluded with an Integrated Feasibility Report and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement in April 1999. Section 528 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-303) authorizes several ecosystem restoration activities recommended by the Restudy, including the SWFFS.

b. Study Area: The SWFFS area covers approximately 4,300 square miles including all of Lee County, most of Collier and Hendry Counties, and portions of Charlotte, Glades, and Monroe Counties.

c. Project Scope: The SWFFS will develop alternative plans and recommendations for structural, non-structural, and operational modifications and improvements in the region. The study will evaluate alternatives based on their ability to improve water deliveries to the estuaries, manage agricultural and urban water supplies, protect and conserve water resources, protect or restore fish and wildlife and their associated habitat, restore and manage wetland and associated upland ecosystems, sustain economic and natural resources, improve water quality, and other performance criteria being developed by the Project Delivery Team.

d. Preliminary Alternatives: Like the Restudy, the Environmental Impact

Statement (EIS) will evaluate the following structural and non-structural water resource related features: surface water storage, re-establishment of overland sheet flow, aquifer storage and recovery, stormwater treatment, wastewater treatment, water conservation programs, land acquisition, rehydration of wetlands, ecosystem needs, and operational changes to water management facilities.

e. Issues: The EIS will address the following issues: restoration of estuarine, aquatic, wetland, and upland ecosystems; water flows; future agricultural, environmental, and urban water demand and supply; socioeconomic resources; aquifer recharge; conversion of public conservation lands to water storage areas; water quality; impacts to the estuaries; flood protection; the impacts of land acquisition on the tax base; aesthetics and recreation; fish and wildlife resources, including protected species; cultural resources; and other impacts identified through scoping, public involvement, and interagency coordination.

f. Scoping: In July 2000, the Corps and SFWMD conducted the first round of public meetings with stakeholders, agencies, and other members of the public to gather technical input and documentation identifying the water resources problems, needs, and opportunities of southwest Florida. The second round of public meetings occurred in October 2000, to clarify and refine the issues brought up in the first round of meetings, and discuss the draft Project Management Plan (PMP).

A third round of meetings, scheduled to occur in February 2002, will provide an opportunity for public and agency input in response to this Notice. The meetings will discuss the feasibility phase of the study, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and further gather public input. Other 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. We invite the participation of affected Federal, state and local agencies, affected Indian tribes, and other interested private organizations and parties.

g. DEIS Preparation: The integrated Feasibility Report, including a DEIS, is currently scheduled for publication in June 2005.

Dated: January 7, 2002.

James C. Duck,

Chief, Planning Division.

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