

3. *Scoping.* Scoping is the process for determining the scope of alternatives and significant resources and issues to be addressed in the EIS. For this analysis, a letter will be sent to all parties believed to have an interest in the analysis, requesting their input on alternatives and issues to be evaluated. The letter will also notify interested parties of public scoping meetings that will be held in the local area. Notices will also be sent to local news media. All interested parties are invited to comment at this time, and anyone interested in this study should request to be included in the study mailing list.

A public scoping meeting will be held in July 2002. The meeting will be held in the vicinity of Morgan City, LA. Additional meetings could be held, depending upon interest and if it is determined that further public coordination is warranted.

4. *Significant Resources.* The tentative list of resources and issues to be evaluated in the EIS includes tidal wetlands (marshes and swamps), aquatic resources, commercial and recreational fisheries, wildlife resources, essential fish habitat, water quality, air quality, threatened and endangered species, recreation resources, and cultural resources. Socioeconomic items to be evaluated in the EIS include: Navigation, flood protection, business and industrial activity, employment, land use, property values, public/community facilities and services, tax revenues, population, community and regional growth, transportation, housing, community cohesion, and noise.

5. *Environmental Consultation and Review.* The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be assisting in the documentation of existing conditions and assessment of effects of project alternatives through Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act consultation procedures. The USFWS will provide a Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act report. Consultation will be accomplished with the USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) concerning threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat. The NMFS will be consulted on the effects of this proposed action on Essential Fish Habitat. The draft EIS (DEIS) or a notice of its availability will be distributed to all interested agencies, organizations, and individuals.

6. *Estimated Date of Availability.* Funding levels will dictate the date when the DEIS is available. The earliest that the DEIS is expected to be available in the fall of 2004.

Dated: June 6, 2002.

Thomas F. Julich,

Colonel, U.S. Army, District Engineer.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the L-31N Seepage Management Pilot Project

AGENCY: Department of the Army, 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 Pilot Project Design Report (PPDR) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the L-31N Seepage Management Pilot Project. The project is a cooperative effort between the Corps and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), which is also a cooperating agency for this DEIS. L-31N is a levee-canal system running north-south and is located south of the Tamiami Canal in Miami-Dade County. One of the environmentally detrimental effects resulting from the construction of the Central and South Florida Project is extensive water seepage from Everglades National Park (ENP). This project will investigate seepage management technologies to control seepage from ENP. The pilot project will provide necessary information to determine the appropriate amount of wet season groundwater flow to return to ENP while minimizing potential impacts to Miami-Dade County's West Wellfield and freshwater flows to Biscayne Bay; results of the pilot project will be used in the full-scale project.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Planning Division, Environmental Branch, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, FL, 32232-0019; Attn: Ms. Janet Cushing or by telephone at 904-232-2259 or email: janet.a.cushing@usace.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: a.

Authorization: Section 601 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-541) authorized the implementation of the L-31N Pilot Project.

b. *Study Area:* The study area is along a portion of L-31N north of structure G-211, and the southern portion of L-30

just north of C-4 (Tamiami Canal), in Miami-Dade County.

c. *Project Scope:* The scope is to investigate seepage management technologies to control seepage from ENP and use the resulting data in the full-scale implementation of the proposed project features along the entire length of L-31N. The evaluation of alternatives and selection of a recommended plan will be documented in the PPDR and EIS.

d. *Preliminary Alternatives:* Technologies to be tested may include reducing levee seepage flow across L-31N via a levee cutoff wall and reducing groundwater flows during the wet season by capturing the groundwater with a series of wells adjacent to L-31N, then back-pumping the water to ENP.

e. *Issues:* The EIS will address the following issues; the relation between this project and related projects including Modified Water Deliveries to ENP; impacts to Miami-Dade West Wellfield and Biscayne Bay, impacts to aquatic and wetland habitats; water flows; hazardous and toxic waste; water quality; 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:* A scoping letter and public workshops will be used to invite comments on alternatives and issues from Federal, State, and local agencies, affected Indian tribes, and other interested private organizations and individuals. The next public workshop is scheduled for July 2002; more information about the workshop will be in the scoping letter.

g. *DEIS Preparation:* The integrated draft PPDR, including a DEIS, is currently scheduled for publication in November 2004.

Dated: June 18, 2002.

James C. Duck,

Chief, Planning Division.

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