

restoration components into a single, comprehensive strategy.

**DATES:** In order to be considered in the Draft EIS (DEIS), comments and suggestions should be received no later than 30 days after publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, ATTN: Cindy S. Barger, Project Manager, Civil and Public Works Branch (CEPOH-PP-C), Room 311, Building 230, Fort Shafter, HI 96858-5440.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Questions or comments concerning the proposed action should be addressed to Ms. Cindy S. Barger, Project Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, Civil and Public Works Branch, Building 230, Fort Shafter, HI 96858-5440, Telephone: (808) 438-6940, E-mail:

*Cindy.S.Barger@poh01.usace.army.mil*, or Mr. Carty Chang, Project Planning and Management Branch Chief, State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Engineering Division, 1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 221, Honolulu, HI 96813, telephone (808) 587-0227, E-mail: *carty.s.chang@hawaii.gov*.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

A preliminary assessment of this federally funded action indicates that the project may cause significant impacts on the environment. As a result, it has been determined that the preparation and review of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed for this project. The EIS and Feasibility Study for the Ala Wai Canal Project are being conducted concurrently. The EIS will evaluate potential impacts to the natural, physical, and human environment as a result of implementing any of the proposed alternatives that are developed by this project.

This project will be implemented under Section 209 of the Flood Control Act of 1962 (Pub. L. 87-874), for the purpose of flood mitigation and ecosystem restoration in the Ala Wai Canal Watershed, which consists of the sub-watersheds of Makiki, Manoa, Palolo, and Waikiki. The USACE will work with the affected community and the sponsoring local organization, the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, to develop an acceptable plan to address the flood and ecosystem problems.

The 11,069-acre Ala Wai Canal Watershed is located in the southern portion of the island of Oahu. The Watershed is highly urbanized, with approximately 1,746 structures within the designated 100-year floodplain. There is a high potential for massive

flood damage to the densely populated and economically critical area of Waikiki and the adjacent neighborhoods of McCully and Moiliili. Additionally, flooding frequently occurs in lower Makiki and recently in the central Manoa Valley, causing damages to businesses, homes, and academic facilities. There is also significant environmental degradation of the streams and waterways, including heavy sedimentation, poor water quality, lack of habitat for native species, and a prevalence of alien species.

Goals of the Ala Wai Canal Project are to (1) Protect the entire Ala Wai Canal Watershed from the 100-year flood event, (2) improve the migratory pathway for native amphidromous species, (3) reduce sediment buildup in the streams and Ala Wai Canal, (4) enhance the physical quality of existing aquatic habitat for native species, and (5) improve water quality. Anticipated significant issues identified to date and to be addressed in the EIS include: (1) Impacts on flooding, (2) impacts on stream hydraulics, (3) impacts on fish and wildlife resources and habitats, (4) impacts on recreation and recreational facilities, and (5) other impacts identified by the Public, agencies, or USACE studies.

A full range of possible programs and actions will be considered in order to meet the project goals. Currently under consideration are dredging, detention basins, flood walls, debris basins and other debris management actions, bridge modification, flood-proofing structures within the flood plain, diversion of flood waters, flood warning systems, widening of channels, acquisition of properties within the floodplain, maintenance easements, and a drainage district. Ecosystem restoration measures currently under consideration include low-flow channels, creating more natural stream channels, constructed wetlands, trash separators, sediment interceptors, daylighting the stream, increasing or decreasing shade as necessary, reducing the pig population, and stream bank stabilization. As hydrologic, hydraulic, and biological analyses are performed and stakeholder consultations are conducted, additional concepts may be developed.

Evaluation of all of the alternatives will take into account minimization of adverse impacts to social resources, economics, aesthetics, recreation, historic and cultural resources, and native species habitat. Flood hazard reduction alternatives will additionally take into account a cost-benefit analysis and ability to complement ecosystem restoration measures. Evaluation of the ecosystem restoration alternatives will

be based on the areas of habitat they create, improve, or provide access to, as well as their ability to complement flood hazard reduction measures.

A DEIS will be prepared and circulated for review by agencies and the public. The USACE and DLNR invite participation and consultation of agencies and individuals that have special expertise, legal jurisdiction, or interest in the preparation of the DEIS. The DLNR will be issuing a state-level Environmental Impact Statement Preparation Notice (EISPN) pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343. All written and verbal comments received in response to this Notice of Intent and the State EISPN will be considered when determining the scope of the EIS. To the extent practicable, NEPA and HRS 343 requirements will be coordinated in the preparation of the EIS document.

A public scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at the Washington Middle School Cafeteria at 1633 South King Street, Honolulu, HI 96826, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. to determine the scope of analysis of the proposed action. The scoping meeting will also be announced in local media. Interested parties are encouraged to express their views during the scoping process and throughout the development of the alternatives and EIS. To be most helpful, comments should clearly describe specific environmental topics or issues which the commenter believes the document should address. Further information on the proposed action or the scoping meeting may be obtained from Cindy S. Barger, Project Manager, at (see **ADDRESSES**). The DEIS should be available for public review in early 2010, subject to the receipt of federal funding.

**Brenda S. Bowen,**

*Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. E8-23221 Filed 10-1-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3710-NN-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

#### Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

**AGENCY:** Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** The Corps of Engineers (Corps) intends to prepare an

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRGO) Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study within the Middle and Lower Pontchartrain Basin and areas of southern Mississippi. The Corps will evaluate a full range of comprehensive restoration measures to restore important estuarine components and ecosystem processes within the areas affected by the MRGO navigation channel and assess the impacts associated with implementing the plan. The MRGO was authorized by Congress in 1956 as a Federal navigation channel to provide a direct route between the Port of New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. Construction began in 1958 and was completed in 1968 to authorized dimensions (36-foot depth by 500-foot width; 38-foot depth by 600-foot bottom width in Bar Channel). Construction of the MRGO channel created a direct deep water link between the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal and the Gulf of Mexico allowing higher salinity waters to enter Lake Borgne and Lake Pontchartrain estuaries. Construction resulted in direct wetland losses, damages to the Bayou LaLoutre Ridge and alteration of the adjacent landscape and hydrology by placement of dredge material adjacent to the channel in upland confined disposal facilities. Since Hurricane Katrina made landfall in 2005, the MRGO navigation channel has not been maintained. A June closure plan and accompanying Legislative EIS and Record of Decision titled "Integrated Final Report to Congress and Legislative Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet Deep-Draft De-Authorization Study" was signed on June 5, 2008, officially deauthorizing the MRGO navigation channel (from the Gulf of Mexico to Mile 60 at the southern bank of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway) and authorizing construction of a closure structure at the south ridge of Bayou LaLoutre in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana and development of plan to restore the areas affected by the MRGO Navigation channel.

**DATES:** See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for scoping meeting dates.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions concerning the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) should be addressed to Ms. Sandra Stiles at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVNP-M-RS, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160-0267, phone (504) 862-1583, fax number (504) 862-2088 or by e-mail at [sandra.e.stiles@usace.army.mil](mailto:sandra.e.stiles@usace.army.mil).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

1. *Authority:* Water Resources Development Act of 2007 Sections 7012 and 7013 authorized the Corps to develop a comprehensive closure and restoration plan, at full Federal expense, to de-authorize deep-draft navigation on the MRGO, Louisiana, extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and develop a restoration plan.

2. *Proposed Action.* The Corps will develop a comprehensive ecosystem restoration plan to restore the areas affected by the MRGO navigation channel to include: (1) Physically modifying the MRGO channel and restoring areas affected by the channel; (2) restoring natural ecosystem features to reduce damage from storm surge; (3) measures preventing saltwater intrusion into the waterway; (4) measures protecting, restoring or increasing wetlands to prevent saltwater intrusion or storm surge; (5) measures reducing risk of storm damage to communities by preventing or reducing wetland losses or restoring wetlands in areas affected by navigation, oil and gas and other manmade channels; (6) diversions to restore the Lake Borgne Ecosystem.

3. *Alternatives.* Restoration measures being considered include physical modification and restoration of the MRGO navigation channel, freshwater, sediment and nutrient introduction; shoreline protection and bank stabilization; restoration and protection of natural ridges; barrier island protection and restoration; wetland protection, creation and restoration; water control measures (gates, weirs, sills, plugs, etc.); measures to increase native vegetation; restoration of natural features to reduce storm surge. Once restoration measures are identified, alternative plans will be developed through various combinations of restoration measures that best meet the study goals and objectives and are determined to be cost-effective, environmentally acceptable and technically feasible. Some measures may also be recommended for implementation under other authorities.

4. *Public Involvement.* Stakeholder and public involvement for this proposed action is integral to the project. Interested parties, concerned citizens, and other State and Federal agencies, private and not-for-profit or non-governmental organizations are strongly encouraged to participate in the development of the proposed action. Stakeholder and public meetings would be held throughout project development. Meeting announcements would be made as information becomes available.

5. *Public Scoping Meeting.* Scoping is the process utilized for determining the range of alternatives and significant issues to be addressed in the EIS. For this study, a letter will be mailed to all parties believed to have an interest in the analysis. The letter will notify interested parties of public scoping meetings that will be held in the local area and request their input on alternatives and issues to be evaluated. Notices will also be mailed to local news media. All interested parties are invited to comment at this time, and anyone interested in this study should request inclusion in the study mailing list. A public scoping meeting will be held November 3, 2008 from 6–9 p.m. in Chalmette, Louisiana and November 6, 2008 from 6–9 p.m. in Waveland, Mississippi. The exact location and address for the meetings will be announced through local media channels. Additional meetings could be held, depending upon public interest and if it is determined that further public coordination is warranted.

6. *Significant Issues.* The tentative list of important resources and issues that will be evaluated in the EIS include but are not limited to tidal wetlands (marshes and swamps), barrier islands, aquatic resources, commercial and recreational fisheries, wildlife resources, essential fish habitat, water quality, air quality, threatened and endangered species and critical habitat, recreation resources, and cultural resources. Socioeconomic items to be evaluated in the EIS include navigation; flood protection; business and industrial activity; oil and gas pipelines; employment; land use; property values; public/community facilities and services; tax revenues; population, community and regional growth; transportation; housing; community cohesion; environmental justice, aesthetics and noise.

7. *Environmental Consultation and Review.* The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will assist in documenting existing conditions and assessing effects of project alternatives through the 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 regarding the effects of this proposed action on Essential Fish Habitat. The draft EIS or a notice of its availability will be distributed to all interested

agencies, organizations, and individuals.

8. *Estimated Date of Availability.* The earliest that the DEIS is expected to be available is March of 2010.

Dated: September 23, 2008.

**Alvin B. Lee,**

*Colonel, U.S. Army, District Engineer.*

[FR Doc. E8-23219 Filed 10-1-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3710-84-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Department of the Navy

#### Notice of Closed Meeting of the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel

**AGENCY:** Department of the Navy, DoD.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Executive Panel will report on the findings and recommendations of the Subcommittee on Africa to the Chief of Naval Operations. The matters to be discussed during the meeting have been divided into the following four categories: threats to U.S. security and interests in Africa; political, economic, and security assessments of key African nations and institutions; U.S. Navy security cooperation and engagement strategies; and a conclusion/summary of the classified discussions.

Each topic under each of these headings is classified either secret or confidential, which makes this information exempt from open meeting disclosure pursuant to 5 U.S.C. Section 552b(c)(1).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on October 27, 2008, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Center for Naval Analysis Boardroom, 4825 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** CDR David Di Tallo, CNO Executive Panel, 4825 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311, telephone: 703-681-4908.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), these matters constitute classified information that is specifically authorized by Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense and are, in fact, properly classified pursuant to such Executive Order. Accordingly, the Secretary of the Navy has determined in writing that the public interest requires that all sessions of this meeting be closed to the public because they will be concerned with matters listed in section 552b(c)(1) of title 5, United States Code.

Individuals or interested groups interested may submit written statements for consideration by the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel at any time or in response to the agenda of a scheduled meeting. All requests must be submitted to the Designated Federal Officer at the address detailed below.

If the written statement is in response to the agenda mentioned in this meeting notice then the statement, if it is to be considered by the Panel for this meeting, must be received at least five days prior to the meeting in question.

The Designated Federal Officer will review all timely submissions with the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel Chairperson, and ensure they are provided to members of the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel before the meeting that is the subject of this notice.

To contact the Designated Federal Officer, write to Executive Director, CNO Executive Panel (N00K), 4825 Mark Center Drive, 2nd Floor, Alexandria, VA 22311-1846.

Dated: September 26, 2008.

**T.M. Cruz,**

*Lieutenant Commander, Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. Navy, Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. E8-23227 Filed 10-1-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests

**AGENCY:** Department of Education.

**SUMMARY:** The Acting Director, Information Collection Clearance Division, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before December 1, 2008.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere

with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Acting Director, Information Collection Clearance Division, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management, publishes that notice containing proposed information collection requests prior to submission of these requests to OMB. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g. new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary of the collection; (4) Description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) Respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) Reporting and/or Recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment.

The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology.

Dated: September 26, 2008.

**Sheila Carey,**

*Acting Director, Information Collection Clearance Division, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management.*

### Federal Student Aid

*Type of Review:* Extension.

*Title:* Application for Approval to Participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs.

*Frequency:* On Occasion; Prior to expiration of eligibility.

*Affected Public:* Businesses or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local, or Tribal Gov't, SEAs or LEAs.

*Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour Burden:*

Responses: 4,485.

Burden Hours: 21,181.

*Abstract:* The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended requires postsecondary institutions to complete and submit this application as a condition of eligibility for any of the Title IV student financial assistance programs and for the other postsecondary programs authorized by the HEA. The institution must submit the form (1) initially when it first seeks to become eligible for the Title IV programs; (2) when its program