

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
VICKSBURG DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39183

SCOPING MEETING  
ON  
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
PEARL RIVER WATERSHED

BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI  
THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2004  
6 P.M.

PRESENT:

CORPS OF ENGINEERS:

Mr. Doug Kamien, Planning, Programs, and Project Management  
Division  
Mr. Dan Johnson, Planning, Programs, and Project Management  
Division  
Ms. Renee Turner, Planning, Programs, and Project Management  
Division  
Mr. Norwyn Johnson, Planning, Programs, and Project Management  
Division  
Mr. Gary Walker, Planning, Programs, and Project Management  
Division  
Mr. Phillip Hollis, Planning, Programs, and Project Management  
Division  
Ms. Billye Barfield, Planning, Programs, and Project Management  
Division  
Mr. Ron Goldman, Engineering Division  
Mr. Charlie McKinnie, Engineering Division  
Mr. Jerry Villeret, Information Management Office

LIST OF ATTENDEES:

Mr. Don Allen, LMA, Jay, MS \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Patrick Banks, Louisiana Department of Fish and Wildlife,  
P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898  
Mr. Jan Barlow, Jr., 3507 Prentiss Avenue, Moss Point, MS 39563  
Mr. Robert Begnard, 372 Davis, Biloxi, MS 39230  
Ms. Deborah Bird, The Nature Conservancy, 349 Main Street, Bay  
St. Louis, MS 39520  
Mr. Jerry Bird, Mississippi Coast Audubon, 349 Main Street, Bay  
St. Louis, MS 39520  
Mr. Steve Breland, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Ms. Verlee Breland, USM GCRL, 703 East Beach, Ocean Springs,  
MS 39564  
Ms. Margaret Bretz, Secretary of State's Office, P.O. Box 97,  
Gulfport, MS 39502  
Mr. Mike Buchanon, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Teddy Busick, GOIC Industries, 886 Camp Wicks, Biloxi,  
MS 39532  
Mr. Jimmy Cannette, Commission Oyster Fisherman, 15701 Knohn  
Road, Ocean Springs, MS 39565  
Ms. Julie Cannette, Commission Oyster Fisherman, 15701 Knohn  
Road, Ocean Springs, MS 39565  
Mr. George Carbo, 1900 E. Beach Boulevard, Gulfport, MS 39501  
Mr. Bruce Champion, Louisiana Department of Health and  
Hospitals, 6867 Bluebonnet Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70810  
Mr. Jeff Clark, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Mike Cummings, The Sun Herald  
Mr. Jim Currie, Hickory Creek Mitigation Bank, 1020 West Beach  
Boulevard, Pass Christian, MS 39571  
Mr. Dale Diaz, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Doug Dueling, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
14933 McEllang, Biloxi, MS 39532  
Ms. Rita Duvernay, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
129 Lafayette Circle, Ocean Springs, MS 39564  
Mr. John D. Freddie, Jr., Biloxi, MS 39562  
Mr. Doug Fringe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 825,  
Ocean Springs, MS 39566

Ms. Marcia Garcia, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Ms. Becky Gillette, 34 Davis Bayou, Ocean Springs, MS 39564  
Ms. Jean Gordon, The Clarion-Ledger, 201 S. Congress Street,  
Jackson, MS 71201  
Mr. Scott Gordon, AGO/Mississippi Department of Marine  
Resources, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Gary Greg, GCRL, P.O. Box 7000, Ocean Springs, MS 39564  
Ms. Sharon Hodge, AGO/Mississippi Department of Marine  
Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Paul Hopper, Hopper Std., 3701 Grand Bature, Moss Point,  
MS 39562  
Ms. Dianne Hunt, WRANPS, 23707 Redfish Lane, Pass Christian,  
MS 39571  
Mr. Joe Jenkins, Crystal Seas, 166 West North Street, Pass  
Christian, MS 39571  
Ms. Phyllis Jenkins, Crystal Seas Std., P.O. Box 717, Pass  
Christian,  
MS 39571  
Mr. Joseph D. Jewell, Mississippi Department of Marine  
Resources, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Roy Kulick, Sierra Club, 13713 Windlo Circle, Ocean Springs,  
MS 39566  
Mr. Keath Ladner, Terry's Seafood, Inc., 5122 Shipyard Drive  
Lakeshore, MS 39558  
Mr. Randy Lane, Commission Fisherman, 326 Gollott Street,  
Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Chris LaGarde, 1314 Gout, Ocean Springs, MS 39564  
Ms. Kirsten Larsen, GCRL, P.O. Box 7000, Ocean Springs,  
MS 39564  
Mr. Mark LaSalle, Coastal Resource, 2710 Beach Boulevard,  
Suite 1-E, Biloxi, MS 39531  
Mr. Bill McDonald, Flood Control District, 143-A LeFleurs  
Street, Jackson, MS 39211  
Ms. Carol Melin, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Kenny Melin, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Billy Melton, Commission Fisherman, 8372 Mystic Circle, Pass  
Christian, MS 39571  
Mr. Gerald Miller, Environmental Protection Agency,  
61 Forsyth, Atlanta, GA 30307

Mr. James Miller, Commission Fisherman, 10456 3rd Diberville,  
Biloxi, MS 39540  
Ms. Joan Murphy, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Ben Posadas, MSU/OREC, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. John Joseph Ross, 7588 E. Quailridgeham, Grand Bay  
Mr. William Searboroyl, 27055 Bradly Road, Pass Christian,  
MS 39571  
Mr. Craig Slay, Adams and Edens, P.O. Box 400, Brandon,  
MS 39043  
Ms. Tina Shumate, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Ms. Mary Stevens, Jackson Audubon Society, 5120 Reddoah,  
Jackson, MS 39211  
Ms. Paula Vasseyy, Sierra Club, 3125 Grand \_\_\_\_\_, Gautier,  
MS 39553  
Ms. Barbara Viskeep, Mississippi DEQ, 1411 Bayview Avenue,  
Suite 208, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Mike Walker, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources,  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, MS 39530  
Mr. Andrew Whitehurst, 3141 W. Tidewater Lane, Madison,  
MS 39110  
Mr. Bragg Williams, 507 Esplanade Avenue, Bay St. Louis,  
MS 39520

MR. GARY WALKER: If ya'll could be seated, we will be glad to get started. It is 6 o'clock, the time we announced the meeting would start. I do appreciate ya'll coming down tonight. I am Gary Walker, Project Manager, for the Pearl River Watershed study. I want to welcome everybody here tonight to the Pearl River Watershed meeting. Representing Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District is Mr. Bill McDonald to my left and Mr. Craig Slay--Craig raise your hand. He is representing Rankin-Hinds Flood Control District. This is our agenda tonight. I am going to give you a brief overview of the Vicksburg District. Mr. Charlie McKinnie from our Hydraulics Branch will discuss flow distribution in the Pearl River Watershed. I will discuss the comprehensive levee plan that was previously proposed to protect the Jackson Metropolitan area. Mr. Bill McDonald, seated here, representing Rankin-Hinds Levee District, will discuss LeFleur Lakes Flood Control Plan, and

lastly, I will request your input. The meeting will be recorded tonight, and we will provide you a transcript of the meeting if you desire one. I will give you a brief overview of our District. A lot of you people on the Coast may work with Mobile a lot of the time, which is one of our sister Districts to the east. The Vicksburg District is located down in this area. Then south of us, we have got New Orleans District. I mentioned to the east is Mobile. The Vicksburg District is part of the Mississippi Valley Division and stretches all the way from the Gulf Coast--all the way to the Canadian border with the St. Paul District on the north. The Vicksburg District covers 68,000 square miles in portions of three states. Responsibility includes Mississippi River--278 miles of Mississippi River with eight ports. We have a total of 12 locks and 9 dams. The Ouachita-Black has four locks and dams. The Red River has five locks and dams. You may know there are three locks on the Pearl River. We have 10 flood control dams--4 in Mississippi, 3 in Arkansas, and 3 in Louisiana--and the Arkansas Lakes all have hydropower. I want to introduce Mr. Charlie McKinnie now. He will give you just a little bit of brief interview about the flow distribution in the Pearl River Watershed--Charles.

MR. CHARLIE MCKINNIE: What I would like to do is just present to you just a little brief overview of the Pearl River Basin and how it basically flows down to the coastal area. As you know, the total drainage area in the Pearl River Basin is about 8,870 square miles of drainage area. Just to give you some numbers to look at, Ross Barnett Reservoir has almost 3,000 square miles of drainage area. The Bogue Chitto River Basin, which is right here in this little area right here, has about 1,200 square miles of drainage area. The total river miles on the Pearl River Basin--is a long narrow river basin about 415 miles of river--at Jackson roughly at mile 300. Pearl River flows through approximately 23 counties and 2 parishes. This is just some historical information. I do not know if you can read all of the numbers up there, but just to give you a little background on some of the historical flooding. Two of the major floods that have occurred on the Pearl River are the 1979 flood, which basically devastated Jackson, Mississippi, over a 200-year event, and the 1983 event, which basically most

of your flooding occurred down here around the Slidell area, which was about a 200-year event. These are just some historically stages along there just to give you an illustration that most of the area up here in Jackson from the 1979 flood event, most of your damages were occurred there; 1983 flood event, a good portion of the area down here was flooded mainly because the rainfall fell along in the Bogue Chitto River Basin. Just to let you know that rainfall does affect how the Pearl River floods because it is a long narrow drainage basin. These are just some slide pictures of the flooding that occurred in 1979 in Jackson. You see the coliseum in the lower left, the interstate overtopped. We also have the slide showing the 1983 flooding around Slidell. You can see Interstate 10 was overtopped, numerous subdivisions north and south of Slidell were flooded, which is about a 200-year flood event. This slide shows the Jackson area. The Ross Barnett Reservoir that goes through the Jackson area. The Ross Barnett Reservoir was completed in 1962 by the Pearl River Water Supply District. It was built for the purpose of water supply and recreation. The Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, constructed the east Jackson levee and the Jackson levees in 1968 to provide flood protection through Jackson. Jackson levee is about 2 miles in length, the east Jackson levee is about 11.4. Getting down closer to where we are right now, this is the lower Pearl River Basin. This shows the navigation canal over here, pretty much of the West Pearl navigation and three locks. That project is pretty much not being used right now. The Pearl River when it gets to Bogalusa, pretty much expands out into a wide flood plain. The Pearl River basically comes down through here. There are several distributaries that have broken out. Walkiah Bluff is pretty much one that in recent years we have worked on this to try to get the flow distribution between the Pearl River and the West Pearl River 50/50 low-flow distribution such that the Pearl River would not dry up basically. The Pearl River continues to flow past this area. It used to flow through an area that is now called the "Shoals." Pearl River actually used to flow this way. The Pearl River now flows down Holmes Bayou and into West Pearl River and out to the Coast. There is some flow, a distributary called Farris Slough. Farris Slough is a distributary and it does provide flow to the East Pearl River which meets up with the Hobolochitto River, which comes out of

Picayune basically. East Pearl is pretty much fed by the Hobolochitto River during normal flow conditions. During high-flow conditions, most of the entire flood plain is pretty much covered, and flow is interchanged through all kinds of distributaries and interconnecting channels. This is just a illustration to show you how the different flows occur from Bogalusa down to the Coast. This is the Walkiah Bluff project I was telling you about--the low-flow distribution. The Pearl River comes down here around Walkiah Bluff State Park and eventually goes down into Holmes Bayou. Wilson Slough was capturing probably over 90 percent of the flow. In this part of the river right here was basically drying up due to that. We came in with a 50/50 flow distribution--a rock weir that basically provides a 50/50 low-flow distribution during low-flow conditions. We are currently monitoring that. These are several closures that had to be made to make sure that flow would go around this bendway. That project is pretty much complete. I do have a slide that kind of illustrates that project. This is the weir right here. This is the open channel that we basically had to confine the flows to get the flow distribution that we needed. That basically gives you a little overview of the flows that come from the Pearl River through Jackson down to the Coast.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you Charles. Getting back to the Jackson study--the study of Pearl Watershed was authorized by two U.S. House of Representatives resolutions and by one U.S. Senate resolution dated May 1979. These resolutions followed the devastated flood that occurred in April 1979. As Charles mentioned, the existing levees, the existing projects in Jackson, the existing levees shown here--you have got the Fairgrounds levee on this side and then on this side is the East Jackson levee. The Fairgrounds levee protects about 420 acres; in adjacent with that, has a 45-cubic-foot-per-second (cfs) pumping station. The East Jackson protects 5,870 acres and has a 300-cfs pumping station associated with it. This same project includes 5.3 miles of river work that basically, up through the middle of Jackson, made some cutoffs up through the middle of Jackson. It has straightened the river. Again, this was completed in 1968. In January 1996, the Vicksburg District completed a draft feasibility report for the Jackson area that

recommended a comprehensive levee system. The Pearl River Basin Development District was a non-Federal sponsor for this study effort. Study actions were suspended in July 1998, and the final feasibility report was never completed. Lack of local support for the recommended plan, questions over operation of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, and downstream concerns over flooding and bank caving were primary issues. Also, in 1996, local interests proposed LeFleur Lakes Flood Control Plan consisting of upper and lower lakes along the Pearl River, south of Ross Barnett Reservoir, as an alternative to the comprehensive levee plan. The Feasibility Cost-Sharing Agreement necessary to resume flood control investigation was signed with the non-Federal sponsor, Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District, in October 2003. Investigation will include updating of the comprehensive levee that was previously discussed and a complete investigation of the LeFleur Lakes Flood Control Plan. The study is estimated to cost approximately \$2.8 million and is cost shared equally between the Federal Government and the non-Federal sponsors. Rankin-Hinds is providing the majority of their share primarily providing in-kind engineering and other services. The study is estimated to require approximately 2.5 years to complete. The comprehensive levee plan proposed in the draft 1996 report is shown here. The plan includes levee to protect north Jackson, northeast Jackson, south Jackson, and Richland. The comprehensive levee plan would provide protection of flood event of 1979 magnitude. The 1979 flood in Jackson is the maximum flood for the record and was estimated at approximately 200-year event. The components of the comprehensive levee plan include this levee section on the west side, also on north Jackson. We had a piece in the middle where we had a floodwall and in the south, we had the south Jackson levee and over around Richland, we had a levee over here. Seems like there is one more component, but that is the majority of the components. Also, it included raising of these existing levees--these were basically built at the 100-year event. The plan included raising of those levees to protect against the flood of 1979 magnitude. Now, I would like to introduce Mr. Bill McDonald. He represents the Rankin-Hinds Levee District. He will talk a little about the LeFleur Lakes Flood Control Plan. Bill.

MR. BILL MCDONALD: Thank you, Gary. I want to do two things--first of all just explain to you that the role of the Flood Control District in this feasibility study; then secondly, summarize some of the major components of the LeFleur Lakes Plan as it is proposed. First of all, Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District, we would just call it the "Flood Control District," is the local non-Federal sponsor as Gary has mentioned of this feasibility study with the Corps of Engineers. The Flood Control District is comprised, as you see here, of the cities of Jackson, Flowood, Pearl, and Richland, the State Fairgrounds Commission, and Rankin and Hinds Counties. The purpose of the Flood Control District is defined by the legislature as controlling the surface and overflow waters within its boundaries in order to do two things--protect its citizens and protect their properties. Now since fulfilling that purpose the Flood Control District has become involved in this feasibility study as the local non-Federal sponsor. As you see here, the LeFleur Lakes Plan, as it is called, was proposed in 1996 as an alternative to what Gary has referred to as the comprehensive levee plan, which at that time had just recently been completed by the Corps of Engineers. Subsequent to that plan proposal in 1996, several local Governments and Governmental agencies in the Metro area endorsed that plan and in 2001, the Flood Control District assumed the official sponsorship of the plan and the feasibility study as the local sponsor. In October of this past year (2003), just a few months ago, the Flood Control District and the Corps of Engineers reached an agreement to participate jointly in this feasibility study. The Flood Control District agreed, as did the Corps, to share 50 percent of the costs and effort of that study. Now, let me just summarize briefly some of the major components of the LeFleur Lakes plan as it was originally and presently proposed. First of all, you may be familiar with some of these. The plan, as it is conceived, includes two lakes, which will be controlled by low-head weirs, extending roughly from the Ross Barnett Reservoir to just south of I-20 in the Jackson Metro area. Now at normal pool elevation, these lakes combined will cover a surface area of approximately 5,000 acres. An independent study commissioned in the year 2000 by the Corps of Engineers and jointly by the Pearl River Basin Development District concluded that, indeed, the LeFleur Lakes Plan could

provide flood control benefits and protection as would the comprehensive levee plan. Now, as part of the plan, the 1979 Easter flood level would reportedly be reduced by significant amount. And finally, just one item of mention about the LeFleur Lakes Plan, as it is conceived by its originators, the operation of the plan would take into consideration downstream areas beyond just the immediate project area in order to mitigate things like bank sloughing and other downstream concerns. Now, part of the feasibility study that is presently being undertaken--all of these components that I have summarized briefly here, as well as other components of the LeFleur Lakes Plan--will be evaluated comprehensively from an engineering and environmental benefit to cost basis. All of that will be a part of this feasibility study that Gary has introduced. With that Gary, I will turn it back over to you to proceed.

MR. GARY WALKER: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and subsequent regulations for implementing the Act require that as soon as practical after the decision is made to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a scoping process will take place. The formal NEPA scoping meeting for the study was conducted in Jackson on 23 February 2004. The comment period for this process will remain open through 24 March 2004. We are here tonight to accept your comments and those you give us tonight will be treated with the same regard as those provided in Jackson. Again, we are going to record the meeting. This is your opportunity to provide input into the study process. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the Vicksburg District and Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District, with your help, to identify significant issues and concerns that need to be addressed in our EIS. As I just mentioned, the comment period will remain open through 24 March 2004. I would like to emphasize the purpose of this meeting tonight is to gather input to help us, the Corps, and Rankin-Hinds to better define exactly what the significant environmental issues are and the ones that need to be analyzed in depth. If we keep that in mind as the meeting goes on, I think it will be beneficial. Some things of consideration are what environmental studies are needed, the significant resources--what is known about significant resources in the area, issues to be analyzed--what are the major concerns that

should be analyzed. These are some of the areas that we have already identified: waterfowl, which includes various species of ducks and wading birds; wetlands; project impacts to wetlands, one of our nations most important resources we addressed during the study; aquatic habitat--the areas include river, lakes, streams, and of course, wetlands, all of which provide habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms; terrestrial habitat--these areas provide cover along with foraging and nesting areas for terrestrial wildlife species such as deer, raccoons, birds, etc.; project impact to water quality will be addressed--we will work closely with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality on this issue; impacts to any significant cultural or historical sites will be determined and addressed during the study; an endangered or threatened species will be addressed in conjunction with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, any impacts the project may have on Federally listed, as well as state listed, endangered or threatened plants and animal species; cumulative impacts--we must look not only at the individual environmental impacts this project may have, but also the cumulative impacts, along with existing future projects that we have with a certain geographical boundary; mitigation--we want to be sure that any unavoidable project impacts to the environment are compensated through mitigation; the fossil sites--we have identified some information concerning existing fossil sites within the project area which will be fully investigated during the study. As part of our study process and to help us with these studies, the Corps has invited the participation of various resource agencies and Federally-recognized Indian tribes. They have been invited to participate as cooperators in the preparation of the draft supplemental EIS. We also extend this invitation to the Department of Marine Resources. We are scheduled to produce a draft report, draft EIS in October 2005, which will be distributed for public comments prior to being finalized. And now we want to hear from you. I would like to reiterate the purpose of this meeting tonight is to identify significant issues and concerns that need to be addressed in our draft EIS. Because these procedures are being recorded for transcript, I would ask that as you are called that you come to one of the microphones, either this one or the one other there. Come to

one of the microphones in the aisle, identify yourself, and then proceed with your comments. I would also ask that your comments not exceed somewhere between 3 and 5 minutes. We also would take those if you want to hand those in at the back of the room or mail them to us, we will be glad to get those, anyway you want to give them to us. I would mention this--do not get upset if you ask a question and we do not respond--we do not intend for this to be a question-and-answer session because the study has basically just started. We are asking for your input in the study process. We need to look at those significant things that will need to be addressed in the draft EIS. So do not get upset with us--if you want to talk with someone after the meeting about a specific item, that is when we would encourage you to do that. We want to recognize a couple of people tonight to probably get started--give them an opportunity to say a word or two. We have got Chris LaGarde from Congressman Taylor's office. Chris, you are here, somewhere. Would you like to say a word or two?

MR. CHRIS LAGARDE: I may as well. Chris LaGarde, Congressman Gene Taylor's office, 4th District in Mississippi. First of all, thank ya'll for coming. I know it was somewhat a short notice. I think if we had had more notice, we may have been able to get a few more people out. I would ask that if it is possible to extend the comment period--24 March 2004 is, what a little bit less than 2 weeks, I think away. For most of these folks, including myself, tonight was the first time I have got to see anything about the project. So, if it is possible, and I do not know if it will be beneficial to the folks or not, but we may end up getting some extra comments if we are able to extend the comment period. Also, any future meetings that ya'll have, I would ask if you would have a meeting on the EIS or the draft EIS in Jackson, that certainly you would consider having one down here. I think you can tell by the turnout that there is an interest in this project. I think you will find out as the night goes on that there will be continued interest. Again, on behalf of Congressman Taylor, thank ya'll for coming. I know it was a little bit short notice, but we appreciate ya'll being here. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Also, I have Margaret Bretz with the Secretary of State office. Margaret, you want to raise your hand and wave. Thank you. I also want to thank Bill Walker, Director of Marine Resources for having us directed to this facility tonight. So, Bill, we thank you, we appreciate that. With that, we will proceed with the public comment. The best way to do is start row by row. Anybody on the front row here? We will start with the front row.

MR. GERALD MILLER: Gerald Miller with EPA in Atlanta. I, like Chris, just literally moments ago got a sense of what this project is all about. One of the things that jumps out at me, I was present in Jackson just coincidentally for the Easter flood, and it is my recollection that subsequent to that there were a number of meetings that were held by a lot of folks, mainly to discuss a past encroachment on the flood plain. In other words, people were saying that we were punished to the degree we were because of a lot of things and a lack of understanding how all of this flood, how the encroachment all meshed together. Well, the past is the past. What I guess I think for this project is there should be a sense of, even with this project, future kinds of encroachments should be examined such that we are not having a meeting here 25 years from today discussing, you know, the second set of Twin Lakes, because it is my sense of having being doing this for about 30 years, that there is very little that we can do that poor decisions can undo. Second thing, I do not have a sense of the resources that are impacted here. So, it is a little bit difficult to give any more than just the general thing. But just looking at it, I am going to offer to you that stream mitigation is really pretty tough, both architecturally and cost-wise and that is certainly going to be something as you are trying to balance the levee system versus the lake system. Then, I would also offer that the sequencing of these things and certainly as soon as we get a sense of what kind of resources are involved, then I think we can give you a little bit better handle on suggestions relative to comparing and contrasting. Now, I know this is kind of less than totally intrusive to a lot of people, but there are some objectives of the project I am going to offer that can be addressed nonstructurally. Certainly

moving some elements of folks that are at greatest risks out of the flood plain, removal of some things I was just involved in project with the Huntington District in which they were removing some impediments to flooding from previous encroachments. So, those are just some general things to consider.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Let us go to the second row. Start on this end. This gentleman. Yes sir.

MR. JIM BARLOW: My name is Jim Barlow, and I also welcome you to be here. I would like to make a statement concerning the Pearl River in Jackson. I grew up in Jackson and was there as a youngster in the 1940s. Before the Ross Barnett was built and before there were many houses built on the flood plain, the river at that time had a flood stage of 18 feet. At 18 feet, it was generally bank full. The crest each spring was in the mid-30 to almost 40 feet. The floodwater was spread out from the fairgrounds over to where the airport is in Jackson now. Since then and also during that time, there were people living, in particular, Rankin County, in the flood plain, but not many people living in the Jackson area in the flood plain. After the Ross Barnett Reservoir was built, apparently, there were not very many heavy rains and floods. As my guess, I will not to emphasize that as a guess, that there was somebody asleep at the switch when the 1979 flood came along, and they waited to late to open the floodgates, open the gates on the river, and they allowed more water to flow than the channel could handle and that was the cause of that major flood. Also, whatever it was, I am not sure, the channelization of the river, instead of being a pretty river, it became an ugly ditch as it is today. The levees that were put in were apparently put in to alleviate the flood, and I do not know why we need to have additional flood control in that area because I am not aware of major flood problems since the 1979 flood. As far as the information down at the Slidell area, I am not sure how long that has been worked on, but apparently it still has not been resolved. There is a reference and a history book from about 1930 until today, the Pearl River has been manipulated not to the benefit of the river. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Anybody in this row? Let us start back over there. That gentleman right there. Come back this way--yes.

MR. DALE DIAZ: My name is Dale Diaz with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. I am Shellfish Program Coordinator. I would just like to state I am concerned about how this project will affect the long-term productivity of our coastal fisheries. Any decrease in freshwater flow from the Pearl River would likely mean higher salinities closer to shore and higher salinities over our historical oyster beds. Higher salinities can be particularly devastating to oyster beds due to higher incidents of disease and predation. I would like to make sure those things are checked out in the EIS. In recent years, we have had problems with predation by the southern oyster drill on the eastern and southern edges of our oyster reefs in western Mississippi Sound. These are the areas of oyster reefs which are located in the higher salinity areas. Any increase in salinity from this project would bring the range of the southern oyster drill closer to our more productive beds. Another effect of higher salinities could be an increase in the current of the protozoan and dermo on Mississippi public oyster grounds. Dermo infections can increase mortality rates in large oysters in high salinity waters, especially during the summer and fall. This would be a time that is typically drier here in south Mississippi and in northern parts of the state, it would be a lower river flow from the Pearl River during this period, and we could see increased mortalities. Dermo can also reduce productivity in live oysters. Infected oysters often have slower growth rates and slower meat yields than unaffected oysters because of their weakened condition. Please include these items in your EIS.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Anybody else on this row? Ma'am.

MS. DIANNE HUNT: My name is Dianne Hunt. I was formerly with Marine Resources. I am currently President and Chairman of the Board of Ramps, which is a wildlife rehabilitation organization who has been in the State of Mississippi for over 20 years now. We represent a large number of coastal residents. Our organization was in Jackson as well for a period of time. I

wanted to let this letter serve as my personal comments. I have not brought this before the board yet, but they could take action on this as far as rallying to provide more comments and spread the word about this project regarding this project proposed on the upper Pearl River area of Jackson. Read her letter (Exhibit 1). This term and developments associated with it, in my opinion, are becoming obsolete because we know the impact associated with it. There is always something worse that happens when we have flood control. It gives people a sense of false security when the river does overflow or somebody fails to open the gates at the right time, then houses are flooded as a result of that. People often build in flood plains thinking that they are safe now from flooding. Continues her letter (Exhibit 1). I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments and my concerns and hope you will deny the permitting of this project which is definitely not in the interest of the public of Mississippi and say something further about the oyster operation--dermo. I raised oysters offshore for 4 years, and I can tell you that dermo is a real serious impact to our oyster resource. If you cut off more of our freshwater, it is going to definitely hurt that. We all live downstream here. So, we appreciate your including these comments in your draft.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you, ma'am. Anybody else in this row? Okay, the gentleman over here.

MR. SCOTT GORDON: I am Scott Gordon. I am the Shellfish Bureau Director with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. Our fisheries office has put together a list of some questions concerning the significant environmental issues and then I had a few additional comments that I would like to add on this. Read his questions (Exhibit 2). These additional comments that I would like to put in are taken out of the revised preliminary draft EIS produced by the Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District--this is for the large-scale development in Coastal Mississippi. Mississippi's major oyster reefs are concentrated along the extreme western part of the Mississippi Sound south of Pass Christian. The freshwater coming into the Sound from the Pearl River keeps the salinity at levels favorable for oysters. Some reefs are scattered across the rest of the coastline that do not have the same flow of freshwater as does the western

side of the state. Water quality is influenced by the accumulative effect of all actions that occur within the entire watershed boundary. The primary threats to the oyster population in Mississippi are fluctuations and environmental parameters, particularly salinity. As long as the freshwater inflows to Mississippi Sound remain unchanged, oyster populations will continue to follow historical trends. I would like for these to be added to the record. We would also like to submit some written comments possibly at a later time to modify these. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you.

MS. MARY STEVENS: I am Mary Stevens. I am from Jackson. I am representing two organizations--the Jackson Audubon Society and the Mississippi Wildlife Federation. Both organizations have past resolutions outlining their concerns for the LeFleur Lakes project. Let me say first that we think that this project is a private development project disguised as a flood control project. The developers propose to destroy the river and build two lakes starting at the Barnett Spillway and going down to Byram near I-20, a portion of the river that is 31.77 miles long. A 600-acre island in the middle of this two lakes project will be built in hopes of bringing these private developers grand profits and exclude all but the wealthy from now what is a free-flowing public river. We support nonstructural, sustainable flood plain management such as voluntary buyouts and the development of green space that reduces Federally flood control bailout, liabilities, and increases wildlife habitat and public recreational opportunities consistent with current national trends and flood plain management. The LeFleur Lakes project, in order to provide flood control benefits to Jackson and surrounding areas, requires that the Ross Barnett Reservoir be changed primarily into a flood control reservoir. The Barnett Reservoir was constructed to provide recreation and water supply for Jackson, and it was never intended as a flood control reservoir. The proposed lake project would permanently destroy approximately 5,500 acres of streamside forests and wetlands resulting in decreased habitat complexity and decreased wildlife diversity. The proposed LeFleur Lakes project would permanently destroy 3,480 acres of bottom-land hardwood habitat.

As I had said before, 31.77 miles of riverine habitat. The proposed lake would destroy a major portion of LeFleur's Bluff State Park which is the largest public natural area in an urban setting in Mississippi with more than 300 acres of undeveloped area. The state park is home to the Mississippi Museum of National Science, one of our state's most treasured assets. Over 50 percent of the yearly visitation of 170,000 people that visit the museum are minority school children. The educational opportunities afforded these children will be severely limited by this LeFleur Lakes project. There are two closed municipal landfills which will be partially or fully inundated by the proposed lake and potentially causing drastic pollution and problems, especially downstream. The proposed lake will actually cause increased river flooding and bank caving downstream. The proposed lakes will cause increased flooding during heavy rains in Jackson and in the Metropolitan area as a result of higher water levels of tributary streams caused by impoundment of the Pearl River resulting in flooding in areas of Jackson that have never flooded before. The proposed lakes will act as a trap for urban runoff in Jackson which will result in stagnant pools during seasonal low-flow periods with high levels of garbage and pollutants including sewage instead of allowing natural processes to function that detoxify and contribute to water purification. The Pearl River and the area of the proposed lakes provide habitat for a rich assemblage of native mussels and fish species which cannot exist in a reservoir environment. Twelve species of special concern and an important geologic formation would be heavily impacted. The Pearl River in the area of the proposed lakes provides habitat for two Federally-listed species--the ring sawback turtle and the Gulf sturgeon. The proposed lakes would be completely unsuitable for either of these two species. The section of the Pearl River falls within designated critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon. We encourage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fully consider sustainable, nonstructural alternatives for flood control and LeFleur Lakes project area that could provide increased wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you.

MR. BRAGG WILLIAMS: Yes sir, my name is Bragg Williams. I live in Bay St. Louis. My family and I own a part of it on 1,400 acres of land on the front of Pearl River, approximately 2 miles in northwest Pearl River County. Our property has been directly and adversely affected by the Ross Barnett Reservoir. We bought the property in the early 1960s, and we have witnessed the degradation of the banks sloughing off into the river. We lost about 15 acres in the last 40 years. Annie Dodderly, the neighbor to the south who died last year or year before last; Mr. R. G. Stewart, who by the way was a member of the Pearl River Basin Development District Board for Pearl River County for many years, witnessed the degradation of the stream over the years. I am afraid that is going to occur to an even greater extent with this flood control project. What has happened to the stream is that in low water, the streambed is so low that for a 0.25-mile sections at a time, both above and below the middle bar at the mouth of Mill Creek and Pearl River County, you cannot run a 14-foot john boat with a 9.5- to 10-horsepower motor up it. That is unsuitable habitat for the Gulf sturgeon. All you have to do is compare the Pascagoula River to our east, a pristine for the most part unblocked, undammed river and look at what has happened to the Pearl River to our west over the last 40 years since the Ross Barnett Reservoir has been built. If you allow flood control projects such as this to be developed, it will prevent the Pearl River from flooding our bottom-land hardwood on my property, flooding two riverbed lakes--upper and Cameron Lake--and a vast hardwood that is probably one of the finest examples of typical bottom-land hardwood left in the lower Pearl River Basin from receiving its annual nourishment of freshwater to flush out those lakes, sloughs, and bayous that exist on our property. In addition, downstream from our property is located the Old River Wildlife Management Area and the Bogue Chitto Wildlife Refuge. Both of which encompass a major portion of Pearl River County and Washington and St. Tammany Parishes. Those areas, in addition to our property, will be adversely affected. One other thing I like to speak to--I live in Bay St. Louis. I fish in what is called the "Louisiana Marsh," south of Bay St. Louis and Biloxi bayou area. Because of another Corps project, the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, that area was deprived of its main source of freshwater--Bayou Luta. It was cut off in the early 1960s about

the same time that the Ross Barnett Reservoir was built, and the only source of freshwater other than rain that all of the marsh east of the Mississippi Gulf Outlet has at this time is that coming into Lake Borgne out of East and West Pearl Rivers. I am afraid that another structure especially the one that is proposed, is going to adversely affect that marsh area on into Lake Borgne in the Mississippi Sound where million of dollars worth of oysters are harvested every year. We did not build our camps down in the flood basin because we knew if we did they would get flooded. Our neighbors across the river built their houses up on pilings. We were told in Hancock County that if you build a new house in a flood plain, you have to build it up above the level of the 100-year flood mark or you cannot get insurance. Why did you allow people to build in the flood plain in Rankin and Hinds County, sir? Why was that allowed, I do not know. I sure did not do it. They do not do it in Pearl River County, and they do not do it in Hancock County. There are 23 counties in Mississippi that are touched by the Pearl River and 2 parishes in Louisiana. Harrison County is not one of them, sir. Hancock, Pearl River, Marion, where Monticello is up there--Lawrence County, St. Tammany Parish, Washington Parish, all of those counties and parishes are going to be adversely affected by the project you propose to ram down our throats, and I, sir, resent it.

MR. GARY WALKER: The row over here. Going back to the fourth row back there from across the lady in the red, the gentleman in the hat--black hat. Okay, sir.

MR. TEDDY BUSICK: My name is Teddy Busick. I am a processor of oysters. I am also Chairman of the Gulf Oyster Industry Council. This is a council--it is a five-seat council that meets with the FDA and regulators throughout the year to address our concerns on oysters. We have the same concerns as the Mississippi DMR just put forth to you. Any impact on Mississippi or Louisiana oysters affects all five Gulf states because we all rely on each others production. If our production goes down, Louisiana goes down. We are all impacted. We oppose this project until our concerns have been addressed. Also on a personal level, I would like to know how it affect the tourism industry if it winds up giving us poor water quality. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Let us move on across. Anybody in that same row? Gentleman in the red. Right across, sir. Okay.

MR. DAN ALLEN: My name is Dan Allen. I am from Jackson, Mississippi. From what we are talking about here, people tend to forget.

MR. GARY WALKER: Dan, speak a little closer to the microphone please.

MR. DAN ALLEN: I am sorry.

MR. GARY WALKER: Speak a little closer to the microphone. I could not hear you.

MR. DAN ALLEN: Like this?

MR. GARY WALKER: Yes.

MR. DAN ALLEN: Okay. My name is Dan Allen from Jackson. We are talking about a flood control project that is up in Jackson, Mississippi, but we are also realizing that if we are going to have impacts they are going to be further downstream along the river. Many times we do these projects and forget the fact that we are talking about a river system as opposed to just little parts along the river. We are talking about the LeFleur Lakes project that is going to dredge and create a reservoir. We are going to be flooding landfills. We are going to be increasing evaporation which could reduce water flows. I would request as part of the EIS we try to come up and quantify or address what some of these impacts are going to be downstream instead of simply looking at the upper Pearl River in isolation. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Anybody on that row there? Up against the wall? Let us come back across that row--the next row back--in there. Come on across the gentleman behind the black hat. Anybody there? I am looking across the aisle then. I am on the fifth row back. Okay. We will move over. Anybody on the outside wall over here? Okay, I am almost back to the back row on this side. Anybody? Yes ma'am?

MS. KRISTEN LARSEN: My name is Kristen Larsen. I work at the Gulf Coast Research Lab over in Ocean Springs, the Center for Fisheries. There has been a lot said tonight about the effect this project may have on the oyster production. One thing that has been forgotten is the shrimp production. Recently, we have just finished a 3-year project over in the western sound studying shrimp and the habitat use of the shrimp--the habitat marshes of the baby shrimp in that area. This project was done in conjunction with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. From what we have been able to see so far, the western sound seems to be the driving source of the shrimp for the entire rest of the Mississippi Sound. So we are very worried how this project will affect this marsh. There have already been signs of erosion in this area of the county. Reducing the river flow even further is going to lose our nutrients or \_\_\_\_\_ nutrients every year and replenishment of sediments every year. In addition to the oysters, it probably will adversely affect our shrimp population.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Anybody else in that same row? This gentleman. Okay. Thank you.

MR. JIMMY CANNETTE: Yes, my name is Jimmy Cannette. I am an oyster fisherman and an oyster grower. It would affect us, but our Pearl River does not stop at the mouth of the river. You need to include St. Bernard Parish because in Louisiana marsh, you have thousands and thousands of acres of oyster beds. In Mississippi, we have quite a few thousand. It would devastate us. You need to really look at this. Thanks.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Okay. Anybody else. Yes ma'am.

MS. PAULA VASSEY: My name is Paula Vassey. We fight really hard down here to protect our wetlands. We have Federal laws. We have state laws. We have local laws. We have problems getting everybody else to enforce our laws or to take care of our wetlands. We have just done a new Coastal draft EIS. I would suggest that ya'll use it thoroughly when considering the impacts on the Gulf Coast. We have Federal laws that protect our wetlands. It is obvious that the flood control people or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not care that there is a

national policy of no-net loss of wetlands. For your benefit and as a resource tool, I am going to introduce something and give it to ya'll. It is called the UGA River Basin Science and Policy Center Study. It is on reservoirs in Georgia meeting the water supply needs for minimizing the impacts. Some of the things are not relevant, but a lot of them are. These gentlemen tonight and ladies have mostly spoken about how it is going to impact us. It is not that we do not have feeling for the flooding in Jackson, but people that move into a flood zone, it is cheaper to buy them out. So, when you are looking at alternatives, the nonstructurals would be better. They are more environmentally friendly. They cost less. They are more sustainable. We-you look at people's houses that are flooding, there is a point where we cannot just keep doing poor flood control projects to save some poor farmer's crops or to save somebody's house. There is a point where it is cheaper. We need to look very seriously at the cost benefits on flood control projects. The last two studies I looked at, there is no cost benefit to the people. When you are putting \$2.8 million into a study, when you got a very small room that has a lot of people that even without the degrees and education maybe that some of the Corps people or some of the flood people have, they know that this is not a good project. We live south. Everything comes here. We are tired of eating everybody's pollution. We are tired of them not taking care of us. We work very hard to keep the Gulf Coast of Mississippi a viable, economic situation. We work very hard to keep it as a tourism industry. We work very hard to keep our older job intact such as the shrimping and oystering. It is our heritage, and we deserve to keep it. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Let us move on. I think I am on the last row of this side behind Chris LaGarde. Anybody in that back row? Yes sir.

MR. BRUCE CHAMPION: My name is Bruce Champion. I am with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. I am the Program Administrator for the Louisiana Shellfish Program. We just recently found out about this meeting this week; therefore, we would like to request that we be put on your list for any notification of any future meetings regarding the project. In

addition to that, we would like to know the impact to the water quality and the oyster habitat in Louisiana Coastal waters. We would like to know how the project will impact the classification of Louisiana shellfish growing areas. In addition to that, we would like to know how it will affect the flow of the Pearl River, what times of the year we would expect maximum flows and minimum flows. We would like to know the affect on the salinities, particularly in the Lake Borgne area. In addition to that, we would like to know what mitigation would be taken to these effects. In addition to that, Mr. Scott Gordon had quite a good list there that I would not go back over, but I would ask that the list also be applied to the Louisiana waters. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you.

MR. PATRICK BANKS: My name is Patrick Banks. I am with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. I am a biologist supervisor in the oyster program. I noticed your list of things you guys are going to consider in your EIS, and I would just like to add a few things to that. The main thing that our department would be interested in is obviously the changes in the water volume coming out of that system. If we can address that, then a lot of our concerns, not necessarily will be met, but we evaluate some of our concerns just by knowing the changes in the water volume coming out of the system after that project is possibly put in place. Also, the timing of water release, if that project was to go, is a very important component as well. Like Bruce said, "changes in water quality is important" and also some sort of map of \_\_\_\_\_ regimes, salinity regimes, and how they would change within the Lake Borgne/Mississippi Sound system, I think would be an excellent point to add or an excellent appendix to add to your EIS. Some sort of map showing how the salinity regimes would change in that system. Lastly, I would like to offer our help in evaluating or at least providing some data. Our department, as well as Bruce's department, has an excellent historical database of salinity information, oyster production information, shrimp production information, and finfish production information that I think would be very helpful in your task. Thanks.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Anybody else on the back row there? How about the last row? Anybody on the outside wall? Did I miss anybody? Do not be bashful. Yes, this man right here. Yes, lady. Go ahead.

MS. BECKY GILLETTE: My name is Becky Gillette. I apologize. I thought the meeting started at 7:00 so I might repeat things that have been said from other people. I am Cochair of the Mississippi Chapter of Sierra Club. I recall that one of the bigger issues when I moved to the Coast 10 years ago was the Bonnie Carrie Spillway, and a lot of money was going to be used to divert freshwater from over in Louisiana in order to help our oysters here. I would say that project, I guess, finally fell through and is completely dead. At least there were strong indication that we needed more freshwater down here in order to keep our oyster industry healthy. So, it makes no sense to turn around now and create situations that would be more harmful for our oyster industry. One concern that I have is the scoping meeting that we are even here tonight discussing this. We should not be talking about building dams anymore. That is an out dated concept. We know now that there are too many environmental detriments to dams for the amount of benefit that there is. I will point out that in 1996 the preferred alternative for flood control was a levee system in the area, and the State of Mississippi failed to provide the cost sharing needed for that less damaging environmental alternative to be used. If there is a less damaging environmental alternative that can be used, then it should be used instead of us even talking about a dam. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you. Do we have anybody else? This gentleman.

MR. JOHN JOSEPH ROSS: My name is John Joseph Ross. I am known as Joe Ross. I will be 90 years old on the 19th of this month. The Army of Engineers has made so many mistakes in past. When I was 17, I was at one of these kind of meetings. I protested the Biloxi Channel. I asked them why they could not follow the natural waterway. They had to dig the channel straight. Eighteen or 20 years later, they followed the natural channel. I asked them to put the dirt on the south side of Deer Island.

They piled it up on top of oyster reefs. Thirty to 40 years later, they could have spent \$28 million to pick up these little islands they have all over in the way. They are still in the way. All the work they have done up on the Missouri River, they got up to 50 feet, and they had a flood there a couple of years ago. Now they are making a study to see if they had made a mistake on the Mississippi River and on the Missouri River. Now you are going to do something down here and then 20 or 30 years later, you are going to find out you got a mistake.

MR. GARY WALKER: Thank you, sir. Anybody else. Yes sir. Go ahead, ma'am.

MS. PAULA VASSEY: I just have a question. On previous occasions . . .

MR. JERRY VILLERET: Come to a microphone please.

MS. PAULA VASSEY: On previous occasions in dealing with the Corps, I requested hard copies of the EIS or the draft EISs. I am requesting two of those and two CDs. The last one I received, I got a day before the comment period ended. Like I told them, it was a waste of their money to send it if I do not get it in time to make comments. Thank you.

MR. GARY WALKER: Anything else? If nothing else, I will close the meeting--well, based on what we have heard tonight from Chris LaGarde, we will extend the comment period for 15 days from the 23d, which will make that 8 April 2004. So, we will extend that for 15 days until 8 April 2004. I hope that gives ya'll a little more time to get your comments in. With that, if there is nothing else. This is your opportunity, so do not hold back. If you do not have anything else, we will close the meeting out. Does anybody have anything else? Okay, we will officially adjourn the meeting. I appreciate your time and effort. We do appreciate it. Thank ya'll very much.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit 1 - Letter from Ms. Dianne R. Hunt
- Exhibit 2 - Letter from Mr. Scott Gordon, Department of  
Marine Resources
- Exhibit 3 - Letter from Mr. George Barisich, United Commercial  
Fisherman's Association
- Exhibit 4 - Letter from Ms. Debbie Bird, The Nature Conservancy
- Exhibit 5 - Letter from Mr. Daniel S. Allen
- Exhibit 6 - News Bulletin
- Exhibit 7 - Factsheet