

# In Re: USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management

Transcript of 2:00 Meeting

July 10, 2024

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Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARING OF  
USACE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT  
PROJECT MEETING  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI  
DATE: JULY 10, 2024, AT 2:00 P.M.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Vicksburg District  
Public Meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk  
Management Project  
Held at the Mississippi Public  
Broadcasting Auditorium at  
3825 Ridgewood Road,  
Jackson, Mississippi,  
Beginning at 2:00 p.m.

REPORTED BY:

ELLA J. HARDWICK, CVR-M, CCR #1749

Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

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APPEARANCES:

Members of the Army Corps of Engineers:

- Mr. Thomas R. Shaw
- Ms. Robyn Colosimo
- Colonel Christopher Klein
- Mr. Brandon Davis
- Mr. Keith Turner

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   MR. SHAW: Good afternoon, everybody.  
2                   Welcome to the public meeting for the  
3                   Pearl River Flood Risk Reduction Project.  
4                   The meeting is for the purpose to discuss  
5                   the draft environmental impact statement.

6                   My name is Tom Shaw. I'm the project  
7                   manager for the Vicksburg District. I'm  
8                   going to introduce some of our speakers  
9                   here at the table, but I would like to  
10                  take an opportunity to recognize a few  
11                  people that are here in the audience, and  
12                  we appreciate you all coming today.

13                  Beginning with Supervisor Robert  
14                  Graham from Hinds County. He is also --  
15                  these people are on the board of the Pearl  
16                  River -- the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River  
17                  Flood Control and Drainage District. So  
18                  Supervisor Graham. Mayor Clay Burns from  
19                  the City of Richland, Mayor Gary Rhoads,  
20                  who's the president, I believe, from the  
21                  City of Flowood, Mayor Jake Windham from  
22                  the City of Pearl, and Supervisor Steve  
23                  Gaines from Rankin County.

24                  Also joining us today is Anna Thames  
25                  with Senator Hyde-Smith's office and Brad

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 Ferguson with Senator Wicker's office. If  
2 there are any other public officials or  
3 people representing any of our elected  
4 officials, if you're here, and would like  
5 to make yourself known yet, please do so  
6 at this time.

7 MR. MCGOWAN: Bobby McGowan, Hinds  
8 County.

9 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir.  
10 Appreciate you being here.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible).

12 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir.  
13 Appreciate it. Anyone else? Okay, so  
14 let's see if we can get this thing to  
15 work.

16 And so, the introductions that I'd  
17 like to make for folks at the table here,  
18 being on the far end is Keith Turner, who  
19 is representing the Rankin-Hinds Board;  
20 Colonel Jeremiah Gipson, the Vicksburg  
21 District Commander; Robyn Colosimo, she is  
22 with the ASA's office and responsibility  
23 for planning and project review, I  
24 believe, policy review; Mr. Eric Bush,  
25 chief of planning at headquarters with the

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 United States Army Corps of Engineers;  
2 and, Brandon Davis, with the Regional  
3 Planning and Environmental --

4 MR. DAVIS: South Group.

5 MR. SHAW: South Group Division.

6 Excuse me. I lost the beat.

7 So, anyway, the agenda kind of looks  
8 like this. The way that we anticipate the  
9 flow of this meeting is it will be --  
10 there will be kind of an information  
11 meeting at the beginning, and when we get  
12 through the presentation, we'll have an  
13 opportunity for people to come down to ask  
14 questions in the mic.

15 And I would just remind everybody that  
16 this is part of the public record. And  
17 so, we will -- the videos of these public  
18 meetings will be posted on our project  
19 website, along with the transcripts, and  
20 the presentation will ultimately be posted  
21 on the project website.

22 And we'll have that information in  
23 just a minute so that you can actually see  
24 where you can find it, get your phone out,  
25 take a snapshot, that kind of thing.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           There's also a QR code on here as well.

2           So let's begin with the -- let's begin  
3 with the message from our outgoing  
4 Commander. Those of you that were at our  
5 scoping meetings back in May of '23,  
6 Colonel Christopher Klein was our  
7 commander then, but he's moved on to  
8 another assignment, and Colonel Jeremiah  
9 Gipson is our new Commander. And let's  
10 watch the video. Hopefully the audio is  
11 going to work on this. See if we're still  
12 plugged in. May have to have a technical  
13 person figure it out. Of course, it did  
14 work before we did this.

15           (TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEO.)

16           COL. KLEIN: In 2024, the Vicksburg  
17 District published a Draft Environmental  
18 Impact Study, a pivotal step in our  
19 journey towards mitigating the flood risks  
20 plaguing the Pearl River Basin.

21           Publishing the Pearl River Basin DEIS  
22 forms a significant milestone in our  
23 collaborative efforts with the community  
24 and local leaders to deliver a flood risk  
25 management strategy tailored to the unique

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 needs of the City of Jackson and its  
2 surrounding areas.

3 We're committed to providing a  
4 solution that manages flood risk and, at  
5 the same time, enables a wide range of  
6 additional benefits. It was an honor to  
7 lead the team through the publication of  
8 this important document.

9 My time in the Vicksburg District,  
10 however, has come to an end, as the Army's  
11 transitioned me to another role in a  
12 district serving our war fighters, allies,  
13 and partners in the Middle East. The good  
14 news, though, is that the Army chose a  
15 very capable leader to continue the good  
16 work in the District. I'd like to  
17 introduce Colonel Jeremiah Gipson.

18 Colonel Gipson most recently served as  
19 Deputy of the Mississippi Valley Division  
20 in Vicksburg and has been following the  
21 development of this plan for months.  
22 Colonel Gipson Jeremiah, welcome.

23 COL. JEREMIAH: Thank you, Chris  
24 Klein, and for your dedication and  
25 leadership. To our partners, I assure you



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           that the mission entrusted to us will  
2           continue with the same vigor and result.  
3           Together, we will navigate the  
4           complexities of the Pearl River Basin with  
5           diligence and foresight.

6                     For decades, flooding along the Pearl  
7           River has disrupted lives and livelihoods.  
8           Various proposals have been presented, yet  
9           none garnered definitive support. In July  
10          2022, the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood  
11          and Drainage Control District presented a  
12          locally preferred plan to the Assistant  
13          Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, the  
14          Honorable Michael Connor. This set the  
15          stage for the Corps involvement.

16                    Secretary Connor tasked us with  
17          bridging data gaps, identifying the  
18          National Economic Development Plan, and  
19          evaluating the merits of that plan.  
20          Through extensive public engagement, we've  
21          gained valuable insights ranging from the  
22          need for recreational areas, concerns  
23          about water quality, and existing concerns  
24          in the lower Pearl River.

25                    As we move forward, your engagement is

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 critical. We invite you to attend our  
2 scheduled public meetings or submit your  
3 thoughts via email or mail. Your voices  
4 will shape the future of flood risk  
5 management in our region.

6 In closing, I urge each of you to  
7 participate. Together, we can forge a  
8 resilient future for those who are  
9 affected by the Pearl River Basin and  
10 those who rely on its many benefits.  
11 Thank you.

12 (END OF VIDEO.)

13 MR. SHAW: Okay. I mentioned earlier  
14 a QR code. Those of you that use  
15 smartphones with QR codes, you can see  
16 there is a QR code up there. And so,  
17 there is a schedule for our meetings.  
18 This is the first one.

19 We've got meetings scheduled, another  
20 one in Jackson this afternoon, but at the  
21 Mississippi Trade Mart. There'll be a  
22 meeting tomorrow morning at 11:00 in  
23 Slidell, Louisiana, and then we will close  
24 out at 6:00 p.m. in Monticello, so,  
25 please, if you've got an opportunity to

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 attend.

2 The purpose of these meetings, yes, we  
3 do want to explain what we've done to  
4 date, but we also want to hear from you.  
5 It is vital that we get the information  
6 from those that are local here in the  
7 area.

8 So, Rules of Engagement, how are we  
9 going to conduct ourselves. I would ask  
10 that when we get through the presentations  
11 and it's time for people to come up and  
12 speak at the mic, I would just ask that  
13 you please wait until you are given  
14 permission. I will grant permission for  
15 you to speak then.

16 I would also ask -- unfortunately,  
17 because of the number of people that we  
18 expect to actually talk, we need to limit  
19 your questions to about three minutes  
20 apiece. I know that doesn't seem quite  
21 long enough, but that is what we actually  
22 have to do.

23 I would also ask that you please be  
24 respectful and not to be offensive to  
25 anybody here in the audience. We would

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 ask that you avoid interruptions of the  
2 panel moderator and the fellow attendees.  
3 This is only one of the ways that we can  
4 transfer information to you. We have a  
5 project website. It's not shown here.  
6 It'll come up in just a minute.

7 But here's one of the ways that we can  
8 collect comments. One would be the  
9 comment cards that are out in the lobby  
10 when you first came in. We would love for  
11 you to write a question there. Your  
12 questions will become part of the public  
13 record. We will respond to those, and  
14 they'll all be posted to the project  
15 website.

16 Of course, you can write in by US  
17 mail. The address is right there in terms  
18 of how you would address the mail. And  
19 then there's also an email, that the  
20 PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil. Any of  
21 those abilities to comment, any of those  
22 will become part of the record, and it'll  
23 be responded to.

24 Okay. At this time, I'm going to ask  
25 Robyn Colosimo to discuss our meeting

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 purpose.

2 MS. COLOSIMO: Can you hear me? Hi,  
3 I'm Robyn Colosimo, and I'm the Deputy  
4 Assistant Secretary of Project Planning  
5 and Review and the Assistant Secretary of  
6 the Army for the Civil Works Office.

7 What does that mean? My boss, Mike  
8 Conner, who's already been referenced,  
9 oversees the Corps of Engineers as a  
10 matter of policy oversight. So we are a  
11 small office that oversees the Corps of  
12 Engineers civil works program.

13 My job here is to make sure we're  
14 hearing from you all directly, and I want  
15 to thank you for your time. It's hugely  
16 important to all of us, and I know during  
17 the week in particular is an investment in  
18 time. Thank you for being here, thank you  
19 for being present, and thank you for the  
20 input you're going to provide. It's  
21 invaluable.

22 Our main goal really is to hear from  
23 the public, whether it's today or through  
24 the email or through all the sessions. We  
25 are really valuing input always. But this

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 process has been pretty dynamic so far,  
2 and we know we're at a place where we want  
3 to find those good solutions that  
4 represent the community's broader  
5 interests.

6 Overarchingly, the work reflected in  
7 this DEIS was really guided by my boss in  
8 the memo that Mr. Shaw already referenced.  
9 Why is that? It is unusual because we  
10 actually have an authority that directs my  
11 boss to make a decision about potential  
12 investment alternatives within  
13 implementing authorities that was afforded  
14 money during the bipartisan infrastructure  
15 law to allow an implementation, if we can  
16 find that implementable solution.

17 That work seeks to resolve the decades  
18 of repetitive flooding here in Jackson  
19 within the Pearl drainage and take  
20 advantage of those bipartisan  
21 infrastructure law funds. That's a huge  
22 deal, right? There's a lot going on in  
23 Jackson, but these, these monies mean  
24 something, and we know how important that  
25 is.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           In fact, when the rains happened in  
2           '22, all the year's flooding, we were  
3           actually here as those rains were  
4           arriving. It was a pretty poignant moment  
5           actually to arrive back in DC and realize  
6           what was happening on the ground and see  
7           it firsthand and know the new cycle was  
8           coming.

9           This work that you have seen in the  
10          draft DEIS and you'll hear more about  
11          today encompasses updated modeling. It  
12          builds upon prior studies completed by the  
13          Corps and Rankin-Hinds, some of which had  
14          not been released. And so, this is a  
15          really important point in time for this  
16          DEIS. You're going to hear more about  
17          those alternatives, understand what they  
18          encompass, and give us your valuable  
19          input.

20          One thing I want to leave you with is  
21          it is imperative to understand that we  
22          understand how much other work is going on  
23          in Jackson, particularly the water and  
24          sewer work that's going on. Anything we  
25          do as an agency through the use of these

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 funds to benefit your community will  
2 dovetail with that work. We want to make  
3 sure all of those things happen.

4 And, in fact, we do have some  
5 environmental infrastructure money that we  
6 used to support some of the work in the  
7 water and sewer area as well. So that's  
8 been a big effort for us. More than  
9 anything, thank you again for being here.  
10 I look forward to conversations today and  
11 continuing conversations. Next slide.

12 And I think this is the slides, Tom,  
13 you're referencing that have a bit more  
14 about some of the websites and the dates.  
15 This is the first of four sessions in the  
16 next two days. We did have a virtual  
17 session a bit ago. Many of you may have  
18 participated there, and so, that input's  
19 already a huge value to us. I'm going to  
20 turn it back to you.

21 MR. SHAW: And so, Ms. Colosimo  
22 mentioned the virtual meeting. We took  
23 questions in the chat, and those questions  
24 are being responded to, and we hope to get  
25 those posted to the website within a week



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 or so.

2 I would want to mention, too, that in  
3 addition to a video that we have going on,  
4 we also have a court reporter doing  
5 transcription for us to make sure that we  
6 get everything captured properly.

7 So at this time, as we go in and  
8 discuss the review process, I'm going to  
9 ask Mr. Eric Bush, if you would, to talk  
10 to us about that.

11 MR. BUSH: Thanks, Tom, and thanks,  
12 Robyn. Again, my name is Eric Bush. I'm  
13 the Chief of Planning and Policy at Corps  
14 headquarters, and my job is to provide  
15 technical and policy advice to the Chief  
16 of Engineers, that's Lieutenant General  
17 Scott Spellmon, and to Ms. Colosimo and  
18 the Secretary, Mr. Conner.

19 And so, with that, I just want to  
20 state the obvious here. We're in the  
21 middle of a public process now, which  
22 leads to a future decision by Mr. Connor,  
23 and naturally that involves public review  
24 and the opportunity to comment on our  
25 proposed actions.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           This, for me, is the most important  
2           step in our decision process here. And  
3           so, I want to assure you that your input  
4           is valued and will be taken seriously with  
5           all due consideration as we advance in  
6           this decision process here.

7           As I think Tom stated, the review  
8           process is currently underway now, and it  
9           continues through August 6th. And, as has  
10          been stated previously, there are multiple  
11          ways for you all to submit comments and  
12          questions regarding the evaluations that  
13          have been performed and the alternatives  
14          that are being considered.

15          All of your comments will be  
16          considered and documented in the final  
17          DEIS. And more important than just  
18          documenting, whatever additional tasks or  
19          evaluations we undertake as a result of  
20          public comment will be included in that --  
21          in that final Environmental Impact  
22          Statement. Next slide, please.

23          And so, you all know this, but it's  
24          worth emphasizing that this project is  
25          about flood protection. And when I think

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 about flood protection, and you all do,  
2 too, it's about reducing economic damages  
3 and human suffering and environmental  
4 impacts associated with flooding events.  
5 And Robyn just spoke about the most recent  
6 one, but we all know there's a long  
7 history of flooding in this basin.

8 Through our process, we evaluate a  
9 range of alternatives in order to identify  
10 the best plan. And you'll hear later in  
11 this presentation today about the  
12 evaluations that have already been  
13 undertaken in furtherance of an eventual  
14 decision.

15 And it's also important for me to  
16 emphasize that we do this in partnership  
17 with our nonfederal partner. In this  
18 case, it's the Rankin-Hinds Flood Control  
19 District, who's already done, as you all  
20 know, much better than most of us at this  
21 table. Rankin-Hinds has already done a  
22 considerable amount of great work to  
23 advance to the point where we are today  
24 and, you know, on the brink of moving the  
25 project forward here.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           I'll just also state that the project  
2           is already authorized by Congress. That's  
3           important because that's a very important  
4           decision point in our civil works process,  
5           but that authorization is subject to  
6           subsequent determinations to be made by  
7           our Secretary. And we're using this  
8           Environmental Impact Statement process to  
9           inform him regarding the decisions that  
10          are yet to be made.

11          And I'll also add that it's important  
12          for you all to know that the  
13          administration and Congress have set aside  
14          funds through the bipartisan  
15          infrastructure law to initiate design and  
16          construction on a project after the  
17          required evaluations have been completed.

18          So I'll wrap up here. Per direction  
19          from our bosses, Mr. Connor, the Chief of  
20          Engineers, we're preparing -- we've  
21          prepared already a draft Environmental  
22          Impact Statement to inform you all, to  
23          inform agencies, and also to inform  
24          Mr. Connor and his staff.

25          And we are, of course, now in the

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 middle of that public process, that public  
2 comment period which we invite you to  
3 participate in, and that includes -- that  
4 concludes, rather, in August, August 6th.  
5 And so, I thank you for the opportunity to  
6 be here today, and I'll also just add that  
7 we're happy to take questions later.

8 And I'll turn now the presentation  
9 over to Mr. Keith Turner, representing  
10 Rankin-Hinds. Thank you.

11 MR. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Bush.  
12 So, as many of you are aware, Jackson has  
13 had flooding problems since its creation.  
14 The Pearl River has flooded continuously  
15 over the years, and to the point of where  
16 in the 1960s, the Corps of Engineers came  
17 in to work with the local authorities to  
18 build the existing levee system, as some  
19 of you may be aware. It protects a  
20 portion of the fairgrounds area and then a  
21 section of Rankin County.

22 During that construction of the  
23 levees, they also straightened a section  
24 of the river, created a new channel, and  
25 also dredged out portions of the river.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           Unfortunately, in '79, as some of you may  
2           be aware, that we had the worst flood of  
3           record that overtopped the levee on the  
4           Hinds County side and flooded all the  
5           Coliseum and the buildings in that area.

6           Fortunately, it did not overtop on the  
7           Rankin County side, but it was a  
8           significant flood for much of Jackson.  
9           The neighborhoods had 8-10 feet of water  
10          in them, and north and south of downtown,  
11          as well as downtown, was under water.

12          So since that time, various groups,  
13          government entities, have been trying to  
14          find solutions. They've struggled with  
15          additional floods through the years. Of  
16          course, we've had floods. Another one in  
17          '83 that was second flood of record, and  
18          then as recently as 2020, we had a flood  
19          of -- third flood of record.

20          And it would have been much worse but  
21          for the fact that the Ross Barnett  
22          Reservoir at the time was extremely low.  
23          It was lower than its normal pool because  
24          they were trying to kill off invasive  
25          plant species at the time. So

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           fortunately, they had some storage  
2           capacity in there.  Otherwise, the 2020  
3           flood would have been much worse.  And  
4           then, of course, in 2022, we had some more  
5           flooding going on.

6           Each year, the Pearl river floods.  
7           Naturally it floods eight to ten times a  
8           year to where the levees have to perform,  
9           and Rankin-Hinds operates two pumping  
10          stations, one on each side of the river.  
11          They have to perform and they pump for  
12          sometimes weeks at a time because the  
13          levees are having to hold back water and  
14          water falls on the dry side.

15          So it's an ongoing effort.  It's been  
16          there for years, and it's a challenge that  
17          folks have been trying to find solutions  
18          for.  If you can go to the next slide,  
19          please.

20          As I mentioned, the levees were  
21          constructed in the '60s.  Since that time,  
22          of course, and since '79, these other  
23          flood ideas have been tested and failed.  
24          Shoccoe Dam was a dry dam north of the  
25          reservoir.  That was knocked down because

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 of local concerns about flooding in that  
2 area. A full levee system from the  
3 reservoir on down south was also killed in  
4 the legislature because of downstream  
5 concerns. So there has been no solution  
6 since '79, and we keep coming close to  
7 having another significant flood event.

8 Originally, Rankin-Hinds got involved  
9 back in the early 2000s and picked up the  
10 mantle from other entities that no longer  
11 were able to move forward on options. And  
12 then in 2012, we entered into an agreement  
13 with the Corps of Engineers under what  
14 they call Section 211, which allowed  
15 Rankin-Hinds to prepare an Environmental  
16 Impact Statement and NEPA compliance and a  
17 feasibility study of different  
18 alternatives.

19 That was turned in to the Corps in  
20 2022 as a final DEIS. It was never  
21 published because at that stage, the Corps  
22 identified issues that they wanted to go  
23 through and create another additional  
24 DEIS. But those documents are out there.

25 During that process, of course, we had



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 multiple public meetings. I know some of  
2 you were at those, both at our scoping  
3 period in the early 2000s and then through  
4 the 2018 process as well.

5 I think that really summarizes where  
6 we're at. I mean, obviously, we have  
7 worked hard with the Corps trying to come  
8 up with the alternatives they're going to  
9 talk to you today about, and we really  
10 appreciate and thank the Corps for their  
11 hard work as they've really worked very  
12 hard in the past year trying to pull all  
13 this together.

14 And also, as they'll discuss the  
15 alternatives, we understand that, you  
16 know, we worked with them on  
17 alternatives D and E, which will be  
18 discussed, but alternative D is the Flood  
19 Control District's preferred alternative  
20 as well right now. So I think the next  
21 slide is -- Oh, that's mine also. Yes.  
22 I'm sorry.

23 Out of the last -- meetings that were  
24 held last year, there was concerns about  
25 the tributaries and flooding associated

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 with all of that. So the team came out  
2 and started looking at what's being done  
3 and what's available. And so, as you can  
4 see, this is not all the detail, but as  
5 you can see, there's a lot of projects in  
6 the metropolitan area by the counties and  
7 by the cities that are specifically  
8 designed to deal with tributary flooding.

9 Because there's a lot of flash  
10 flooding and a lot of tributary concerns  
11 unrelated to the Pearl River flooding, and  
12 I know a lot of you experienced that. So  
13 there's several millions of dollars that  
14 are being allocated towards tributary  
15 work.

16 The last item, we had a question on  
17 (indiscernible) funding, District's  
18 funding. Jackson's in the process of  
19 moving some dollars, several millions of  
20 dollars -- I don't have the exact number  
21 yet because they're still in the process,  
22 but they're working with their engineers  
23 to focus on additional tributary work in  
24 the Jackson area.

25 We'll hopefully have that in the next

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 week or so, and we'll make sure that that  
2 gets put out to the public as well so  
3 they'll be aware of it. Next slide, I  
4 think, is -- yeah.

5 MR. DAVIS: You get the easy stuff.  
6 Is this my slide? Is this my slide?

7 MR. SHAW: No. It was Keith's also.

8 MR. TURNER: Oh, is it mine? I'm  
9 really screwing up today, aren't I? Okay.  
10 I'll be glad to run it back. Let's go.  
11 Sorry about that, folks. My apologies.  
12 You know, we did one this morning. You  
13 think I would have gotten it right after  
14 having it done this morning as well.

15 So as we mentioned, this is being done  
16 under WRDA, Water Resources Development  
17 Act, Federal Law 3104, which allowed the  
18 Flood Control District to perform the work  
19 thus far and then passes the mantle over  
20 to the Corps and the Assistant Secretary  
21 of the Army to make a decision.

22 The problem, obviously, with flooding  
23 in Jackson, and if we had a map -- there's  
24 one out there that you can see that I  
25 think does a good job of it. Jackson's

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 flooding comes from the fact that we have  
2 a very wide floodplain above the City of  
3 Jackson up towards the reservoir, and then  
4 it pinches very tightly where we've  
5 developed it as urban development, and  
6 then it widens back out again.

7 So the challenge there is to try to  
8 figure out how to move that water through  
9 the area with the urban structures and so  
10 forth. So the study area encompasses  
11 basically the whole metropolitan area.  
12 That's what our authority is from the  
13 Flood Control District. That's the  
14 authority under 3104. So that's Rankin,  
15 Hinds Counties, and then, of course, the  
16 Jackson area, Flowood and Pearl and  
17 Richland.

18 So the flooding, as some of you may  
19 have experienced or may have seen pictures  
20 of, folks don't realize how severe it can  
21 get. For example, in 1979, we had  
22 Interstate 55 under water. You literally  
23 had a stream flowing down I-55, and you  
24 couldn't use it for days on end.

25 The wastewater treatment plant, which

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 has been in the news obviously a lot in  
2 the past few years, went under water. So  
3 you had raw sewage coming out of the  
4 wastewater treatment plant flowing into  
5 the Pearl. That lasted for months. I  
6 think there was a nine- or ten-month  
7 project before they were able to turn that  
8 off.

9 So there's a lot of -- there's  
10 hospitals. Flowood has four hospitals  
11 that would be surrounded by water in  
12 another flood event, a 100-year flood  
13 event, and they'd have to vacate those  
14 hospitals. And, of course, there's loads  
15 of businesses, and then many of you have  
16 maybe personal residences in these areas.

17 So Lakeland Drive went under water as  
18 well. I forgot to mention that. So you  
19 have difficulty on evacuation areas, you  
20 have difficulty on all the infrastructure,  
21 if we don't get this addressed.

22 The other important part of flooding,  
23 in particular on the Jackson side, is the  
24 areas that flood first are environmental  
25 justice communities, minority, low income

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 areas. They're the first ones to  
2 experience it. We saw it in 2020. We saw  
3 it in 2022. The water comes up to their  
4 neighborhoods first, and they're not  
5 getting any relief.

6 And the problem with some of this  
7 flooding is you don't know whether you  
8 have to move out or not. They project it,  
9 but if your street's going under water,  
10 you got to decide whether you want to stay  
11 or go, whether you want to move your  
12 stuff. So a lot of times when these  
13 floods start coming up, it may not flood  
14 your home, but you've already had to pack  
15 up and move out.

16 So there's a lot of cost and stress  
17 and grief associated with this, even if it  
18 doesn't flood their homes. So just south  
19 of downtown and, of course, the north  
20 neighborhoods, they're the first ones to  
21 flood, and that's what we're trying to  
22 solve problems for as well. I think I'm  
23 done now.

24 MR. SHAW: You did. Okay. And so, I  
25 would like to take this opportunity to

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 discuss a little bit of what USACE has  
2 done. So it's been mentioned Section 3104  
3 of WRDA 2007 is what we were working from.  
4 That language states the Secretary is  
5 authorized to construct the NED plan,  
6 which that's the National Economic  
7 Development Plan, the locally preferred  
8 plan, or LPP, or some combination thereof.

9 You're going to hear that combination  
10 thereof. It's going to become a common  
11 theme, because in the collaborative work  
12 that we've done with Rankin and Hinds,  
13 we've identified certain things that we  
14 can do and look at what would ultimately  
15 reduce the impacts of, say, excavation or  
16 HTRW -- that's hazardous, toxic,  
17 radiological waste -- or mitigation, those  
18 kind of things.

19 And so, that collaborative work means  
20 that we kind of honed in on some better  
21 choices, some alternatives that we think  
22 are going to do better. And so, we were  
23 also asked to look and compare the levels  
24 of flood protection for the alternatives  
25 and then assess the environmental

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           acceptability and technical feasibility.  
2           The end goal is to get flood risk  
3           reduction for the Jackson metro study  
4           area.

5                    Okay. And so, what you're actually  
6           seeing here -- can anybody see that? We  
7           didn't make those circles quite heavy  
8           enough. What you've got is you've  
9           basically got --

10                   UNIDENTIFIED: Is there a way to turn  
11           the lights down on the screen?

12                   MR. SHAW: Hey, Justin, is there any  
13           way to dim the lights just a little bit?  
14           There we go. Does that make it a little  
15           bit easier, everybody?

16                   VARIOUS: Yes.

17                   MR. SHAW: Okay. Perfect. So we  
18           kind of used -- the geometric shapes  
19           actually work good for us here. So if you  
20           see the area that's the yellow circle,  
21           that's what we consider to be the study  
22           area. That focuses on the communities of  
23           the cities of Jackson, Flowood, Pearl, and  
24           Richland, and, of course, Hinds and Rankin  
25           Counties, and also has some of the



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 tributaries that are in there as well.

2 There is an oval. That oval is the --  
3 is what's considered to be the project  
4 area. That's the area where we can  
5 actually exercise some influence, if you  
6 will, through this potential project, and  
7 basically that goes from river mile 270,  
8 which is just south of Byram, all the way  
9 up to the Ross Barnett Reservoir.

10 And, of course, the project area is  
11 actually limited to be where the proposed  
12 actions would cause some benefits and were  
13 to be implemented. And then the last  
14 thing that kind of looks like a long  
15 rectangle, that's an influence area.  
16 That's an area where anything that we do  
17 from a hydrology standpoint would have any  
18 potential impact at all. So that's the  
19 three areas that we wanted to focus on.

20 Okay. And so, multiple alternatives  
21 were considered. Rankin-Hinds looked at  
22 three alternatives when they completed  
23 their draft DEIS. Alternate A, which was  
24 basically a nonstructural plan.

25 And I failed to mention this when you

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           came in outside, there's some study boards  
2           out there, and those boards kind of  
3           describe what's going on with the draft  
4           DEIS that talks about nonstructural  
5           solutions, for example, whether we dry  
6           proof or we elevate to provide benefits.

7           So they looked at that, the  
8           nonstructural plan. They looked at the  
9           levee plan, which is Alternate B that the  
10          Corps of Engineers proposed back in 2007,  
11          and then Alternate C was their locally  
12          preferred plan. The draft DEIS was  
13          submitted to the Assistant Secretary of  
14          the Army under Section 211 back in 2022.

15          The Secretary's office took a look,  
16          evaluated certain components of it. There  
17          were some things they didn't understand,  
18          and they basically charged the Corps of  
19          Engineers, please see if you -- work with  
20          the Rankin-Hinds folks, see if you can  
21          work together and fill in -- there were  
22          some data gaps. See if we can fill in  
23          those data gaps to get to a solution for  
24          the Jackson, the metro study area.

25          So what we did is we had a

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 collaboration effort with them for months  
2 and months now, and it's been very good.  
3 What we did is we modified that  
4 nonstructural plan just a little bit, and  
5 we'll talk about these plans shortly.

6 But we also created -- remember, I  
7 talked to you about that combination  
8 thereof. So we did look at some of the  
9 more, if you will, attractive features  
10 where we felt like we could give benefits  
11 with more limited impacts and reductions  
12 in cost as well. So Alternate D was one  
13 of those combinations thereof.

14 And as the economics have worked out,  
15 it would probably likely be the National  
16 Economic Development Plan, and it is --  
17 that combination plan with the weir,  
18 Alternate D was also looked at because the  
19 weir has a -- there's a significant cost  
20 associated with a weir. And so, we also  
21 looked at that Alternate D, which is the  
22 same combination thereof but without a  
23 weir.

24 Okay. And so, we talked about  
25 nonstructural plans. So when the

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 evaluations are done of the study area for  
2 a nonstructural standpoint, we look at the  
3 25-year event, the 25-year flood. And  
4 then once that determination is made with  
5 the structures that fall within that flood  
6 area, then one of two things can happen  
7 is, if they're residential, then they  
8 would be eligible for being raised. And  
9 so, they would be raised to -- that  
10 100-year elevation is where you would  
11 ultimately raise them to.

12 If they're nonresidential, then we  
13 would do, basically, it's called dry  
14 floodproofing, and one of the potential  
15 options there would be a voluntary  
16 acquisition, with the caveat that if any  
17 properties were acquired that they would  
18 ultimately be converted to a green space.

19 And so, within the area of  
20 Alternate A1, there were 143 structures  
21 that were actually identified. Eighty-one  
22 of those were residential, with the  
23 remaining being nonresidential.

24 Okay. Alternate C that we mentioned  
25 was the locally preferred plan originally

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 submitted by Rankin-Hinds, and one of the  
2 things that it did was it significantly  
3 improved the conveyance through this area,  
4 through the study area.

5 And it was accomplished through  
6 several things, one of which was clearing  
7 and lowering of the channel, the  
8 overbanks, to basically improve this from  
9 a hydraulic standpoint to make the water  
10 flow more efficiently and better. It also  
11 included demolition of a weir for the fuel  
12 water treatment plant and then  
13 construction of a new weir, and that new  
14 weir would have a low flow gate in it that  
15 would be constructed at an elevation of  
16 258.

17 And it would also include the upgrade  
18 of a nonfederal levee around the Savannah  
19 Street wastewater treatment plant. And  
20 then there would also be some requirements  
21 for improved drainage, if you will, in  
22 support of existing federal levees.

23 Okay. And so, now we're here -- we'll  
24 talk about the combination thereof,  
25 Alternate D, which is with the weir, and

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           Alternate E without the weir. And so,  
2           remember the authority that the Secretary  
3           has.

4                     And so, the features that we looked at  
5           that would be a significant improvement,  
6           if you will, for this selection, if you  
7           will, this alternate, is that it did use  
8           some of the components of the  
9           nonstructural, the A1 that I spoke of  
10          earlier. It would also reduce excavation  
11          of that main channel of those overbanks  
12          that I was speaking of.

13                    By reducing that excavation, number 1,  
14          you do reduce the cost, but you also  
15          reduce the mitigation that might be  
16          associated with the removal of that  
17          material. It would continue to utilize  
18          the existing weirs, so there would be the  
19          demolition costs that would be associated  
20          with it, and it would be construction of a  
21          new weir.

22                    That new weir would be set at an  
23          elevation of 256, which is 2 feet lower  
24          than the Alternate C that was mentioned  
25          earlier. And the reason we would

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           construct that weir is to support future  
2           water supply and also make a provision for  
3           fish passage.

4                     And then, we also have nonfederal  
5           levee improvements at Savannah Street  
6           wastewater treatment plant. There's --  
7           one of the other things from EJ, from an  
8           environmental justice standpoint, there  
9           are levees at -- there will be additional  
10          levees at the Canton Club neighborhood.

11                    It would also include some  
12          countermeasures to protect bridges that  
13          cross the Pearl River in the study area,  
14          and there would be mitigation features  
15          associated with this. And so, as we  
16          mentioned earlier, this was arrived at in  
17          collaboration with Rankin-Hinds.

18                    Okay. And so, Alternate D, which is  
19          that potential NED plan that we mentioned,  
20          I mentioned that there are reduced  
21          excavations compared with Alternate C,  
22          which is a good thing. And then we  
23          actually moved the weir upstream. There  
24          was a deliberative effort to more  
25          optimally locate that weir.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   So that weir now would be basically  
2                   just upstream of the Gallatin Street --  
3                   the old Gallatin Street landfill is where  
4                   that weir is. It's just downstream of  
5                   I-20. Like I said, I mentioned earlier,  
6                   it's at elevation 256. Okay. I think  
7                   we've covered that.

8                   Alternative E is basically the same  
9                   thing. It just does not have the weir in  
10                  it, the new weir.

11                  Okay. And so, a little brief  
12                  discussion of H&H. So one of the  
13                  important things here is if you look at  
14                  that graph, and that graph is basically  
15                  the water surface elevation, with -- if  
16                  you look at the right-hand side of your  
17                  screen, the right-hand side of your screen  
18                  is upstream of the weir.

19                  The weir -- and I don't think there's  
20                  any way for me to show you where the weir  
21                  is. If you can see, there is a -- that  
22                  first arrowhead going from the right to  
23                  the left where it talks about I-20 and the  
24                  Alternate D proposed weir, that's where  
25                  that weir is, and just downstream is that



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 Gallatin Street landfill that I was  
2 mentioning. And so, the two colors are  
3 important here, because the color that's  
4 in blue, if you will, it begins from the  
5 right-hand side moving to the left-hand  
6 side. That blue color represents the  
7 without project. That's the current  
8 condition that we have now. So in an  
9 event of a 100-year flood, that's where  
10 that water surface elevation would be at  
11 that particular location upstream.

12 The orange or the kind of red-looking  
13 line represents the width project line.  
14 And you can see, as you move downstream,  
15 you start to see the benefits increase,  
16 but at the very upstream limits there,  
17 that's the bulk of the benefits that are  
18 associated with that 100-year event.

19 But you see, as you get down, and you  
20 get to the weir that the lines basically  
21 remain parallel, but there is a slight,  
22 slight bit of inducement, we believe less  
23 than 6 inches, for the 100-year event.

24 The other thing that we were asked to  
25 do is consider the downstream effects. In

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           our hydraulic modeling, we determined that  
2           basically once you get downstream about 5  
3           miles north of Monticello, it would not be  
4           measurable. It's within the tolerances in  
5           the model.

6           And so, one of the last things I would  
7           mention here is that one of the things we  
8           know we still have to do is sedimentation  
9           modeling, and we'll be doing that in a  
10          later phase of the project. Okay. Now,  
11          habitat mitigation. Brandon Davis is  
12          going to address this slide for us.

13          MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Tom. Thank  
14          you. There we go. Back it up just a hair  
15          for you. Thank you, Tom. Well, good  
16          afternoon. I'm Brandon Davis, and I'm  
17          really glad to see you all here. I met a  
18          lot of you during the scoping process, and  
19          it was very enlightening to learn about  
20          you, learn about your situation. It's how  
21          it was supposed to be. And it was good  
22          for me to meet you and to see the problems  
23          that you're having.

24          And that's one of the great things  
25          about NEPA. We're going to talk about

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           that. NEPA is the National Environmental  
2           Policy Act. These next few slides, we're  
3           going to go over some of that, where we  
4           have the opportunity to come together to  
5           collaborate and learn from each other and  
6           what's going, and that's what we're going  
7           to do today.

8                     One thing I want to promise you, a  
9           commitment to you for me is that, as I sit  
10          up here today, I'll be honest, I may not  
11          have all the answers to the questions, but  
12          my commitment to you is is I have subject  
13          matter experts out in the foyer with  
14          boards that if I don't know the answer to  
15          something, they do. And I don't want you  
16          leaving here today without having your  
17          question answered if there's something  
18          that's weighing heavily on you from a  
19          technical standpoint.

20                    So we'll go ahead and get into this.  
21          I have a few slides, and we're going to  
22          talk about the NEPA process, and we're  
23          going to talk about some things that fall  
24          underneath that umbrella. The first thing  
25          that you see here in slide 22 is Habitat

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 Mitigation. That's one of the things  
2 about the CIS. We come together, and we  
3 share our understandings of what's going  
4 on, and we try to talk about the impacts  
5 and also the benefits of what is going on  
6 out here on the various resources and  
7 discuss any plans of mitigation.

8 Now, obviously, we want to avoid and  
9 minimize the best that we can, but there  
10 are situations where mitigation is  
11 required, and if that is the case, we take  
12 the necessary steps to do so.

13 So what are you looking at here? On  
14 the table, what this table is going to  
15 show you up in the left-hand corner, I  
16 believe that's my left, it's going to show  
17 you an overview of the anticipated habitat  
18 impacts for the alternatives, Alternative  
19 C and then what they're calling the CTO,  
20 combination thereof of Alternative D and  
21 Alternative E.

22 So the first two columns I guess you  
23 see is acres of impacts, and, like I said,  
24 that's the first column. You see  
25 Alternative C, you see the values that are

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 broken out by the various habitat type,  
2 and you see how it compares to the CTO  
3 alternative, the reduction that you're  
4 seeing for each of the various habitat  
5 units for the project.

6 Now, the farthest two columns -- and  
7 I'm sorry. I'm trying to explain this  
8 from the table here. But the farther two  
9 columns, you see AAHUs. Okay. What is  
10 that? That's average annual habitat  
11 units, and what that represents are the  
12 functions and the values of a particular  
13 habitat.

14 When we mitigate -- in the Corps, when  
15 we mitigate, we're going to base on these  
16 loss functions. The mitigation that we  
17 may have for open water may be different  
18 for bottomland hardwood. It just depends  
19 on what is potentially impacted. But it's  
20 not a 1:1, a ratio of acres to acres on  
21 that. There may be more value having to  
22 be put in bottomland hardwood versus open  
23 waters. That's just an example that I'm  
24 using.

25 Our terrestrial impacts, they were

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           determined by running the certified  
2           habitat evaluation process model. That's  
3           HEP, H-E-P. Some of you may be familiar  
4           with that. This was completed by  
5           Rankin-Hinds, and their contractor did an  
6           outstanding job with that, and we  
7           presented -- we were able to work with  
8           that and presented that into the draft  
9           DEIS that we have for you that's out for  
10          the public right now.

11                 One thing I want to point out, very  
12           important we point this out, that we  
13           are -- our team is -- we are currently  
14           developing a mitigation plan. As we said,  
15           we don't really know the direction. We  
16           are going to present this to Secretary  
17           Conner. He's going to make a decision  
18           based off the information that we provide  
19           to him.

20                 So prior to any construction  
21           activities starting, we would have a  
22           mitigation plan complete. Next slide,  
23           Tom.

24                 All right. This is a slide I know  
25           that is important to a lot of you, the

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           threatened and endangered species. And in  
2           this table, what you're going to see is  
3           eight species of concern in the study  
4           area. We want to note that, A1, that the  
5           alternatives that you're seeing up there  
6           on the table are C and then the  
7           combination thereof. A1, which was the  
8           nonstructural plan, was not included in  
9           this because there's not any expected  
10          impacts to be listed for these species  
11          with a nonstructural activity.

12                 A good thing to point out is that we  
13          have a fantastic team working on this, but  
14          they did a really good job in  
15          collaboration with the U.S. Fish and  
16          Wildlife Service when they were making  
17          their determinations of these species.

18                 So what do I mean when we're talking  
19          about determination of the species? If  
20          you see up there in the table, you may see  
21          an LAA or an NLAA. That means the LAA,  
22          excuse me, likely to adversely affect but  
23          not to jeopardize the continued existence  
24          of. So there could be temporary impacts  
25          to that species, but we're not expecting

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           that species to be in complete jeopardy  
2           and not be able to revisit and reestablish  
3           themselves into that habitat.

4           And then NLAA, not likely to adversely  
5           affect. As I said, the common -- the  
6           determinations for each of these species  
7           that are listed, eight of them here, was  
8           made in collaboration with the U.S. Fish  
9           and Wildlife Service. This is not just  
10          the Corps saying, well, we don't think  
11          anything's going to happen here. We had  
12          great collaboration.

13          You'll notice with Alternatives C and  
14          D -- that's going to be your middle column  
15          there -- with weir, we have the same  
16          impacts. It's assumed that just like what  
17          we saw in Alternative C, construction of  
18          the CTO with the weir, there could be  
19          potential elimination of some riverine  
20          habitats, as you possibly would expect  
21          with that.

22          A velocity analysis like was conducted  
23          for Alternative C is being conducted  
24          because we need to better understand the  
25          potential impacts that the CTO could have



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 on the riverine system. Yes. We do have  
2 fish ladders in place and other measures,  
3 but we still need to make sure that we're  
4 doing that velocity analysis to understand  
5 what is really going on with those  
6 habitats.

7 The Alternative E, the CTO without the  
8 weir, it does have slightly different  
9 impacts, as you possibly would expect.  
10 Remember, that is with -- like I said,  
11 without the weir. Has slightly different  
12 impacts to the river channel as expected,  
13 but expect to function as a riverine  
14 system except during the high water  
15 events, which is, you know, kind of a  
16 tip -- what you expect with the existing  
17 conditions that are going on.

18 There's going to be some bank  
19 excavation, even with the CTO without the  
20 weir. So there could be some impacts to  
21 turtles. I know if you notice on here --  
22 I can barely see it, but that's okay.  
23 It's better for the public to see that.

24 There may be some temporary impacts to  
25 turtles because they use those banks for

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 various things, but it's temporary, and we  
2 expect that to come back to a natural  
3 state for them.

4 A biological assessment has been  
5 prepared. It's been submitted to the U.S.  
6 Fish and Wildlife Service with the effect  
7 of these determinations that we have, and  
8 the consultation is still ongoing and  
9 expected to be completed by the release of  
10 this final DEIS. Next slide.

11 Cultural Resources. Most of you know  
12 what cultural resources is. It can be  
13 buildings. It can be Native American  
14 artifacts. Historical artifacts. There's  
15 a whole array of what cultural resources  
16 could be.

17 All the alternatives do have the  
18 potential to affect cultural resources,  
19 but that's common knowledge. Building a  
20 highway, you don't know what's buried  
21 there from a historical reference. So  
22 cultural resources are all around us  
23 everywhere.

24 But how we work through that is we are  
25 currently negotiating a programmatic

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 agreement with the State Historic  
2 Preservation Office, that's called the  
3 SHPO, and tribal nations and also other  
4 partners as well.

5 So what is a PA? Really it's a plan  
6 to lay out the steps of what we would have  
7 to do to address any impacts  
8 programmatically. So if we do a  
9 nonstructural plan, if we do a plan with a  
10 weir, without the weir, we'd have steps  
11 laid out of what we would have to do to  
12 take care of that.

13 Our team is having regular  
14 consultation meetings. They actually had  
15 one this morning until they reached an  
16 agreement. That PA -- I called it  
17 periodic assessment. Excuse me. The  
18 programmatic agreement is expected to be  
19 signed before a record of decision is  
20 signed. Next slide.

21 So Tribal Nations, that falls  
22 underneath Section 106, part of that NEPA  
23 umbrella that I had mentioned a little bit  
24 earlier. A policy of the federal  
25 government is to consult with our

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           federally recognized tribal governments,  
2           nation to -- you know, government, nation  
3           to nation.

4           Currently there's no tribal lands or  
5           rights that have been identified, but  
6           consultation is continuing to go on with  
7           our tribes because we have identified some  
8           protected tribal resources, but that's  
9           something that -- no reason for harm or  
10          alarm. We're just continuing to consult  
11          and be a good partner with our federally  
12          recognized tribal nations. Next slide.

13          So environmental justice, something  
14          that I think that this administration, the  
15          Biden administration's done a fantastic  
16          job of implementing. So what is  
17          environmental justice?

18          Keith talked about it a little bit a  
19          moment ago, but, really, if giving you a  
20          brief definition, you know, it means the  
21          just treatment and the meaningful  
22          involvement of all people, regardless of  
23          income, background, origin, disability,  
24          things of that nature.

25          We want to make sure everyone's

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           involved and that we are not going out and  
2           targeting cheap lands to build a project.  
3           We're making sure everyone's involved.  
4           Everyone's included. It's very important,  
5           and this administration has done a  
6           fantastic job of making sure that all  
7           voices are heard.

8                     For the no-action and the 100-year  
9           floodplain, there's roughly just under 800  
10          structures. The actual number is up there  
11          in the EJ -- in the EJ area of concern.  
12          In the nonstructural plan, Alternative A1,  
13          there'd be 143 structures in this EJ area  
14          of concern.

15                    For structures that do flood in EJ  
16          areas, under our alternative CTO,  
17          nonstructural measures obviously would  
18          have to be revisited. Now, in the CTO, we  
19          already -- and Tom had mentioned this --  
20          we already talked about nonstructural  
21          measures within that CTO alternative.

22                    But when continuing to refine our  
23          models, if there are any type of a  
24          structure that is getting any, you know,  
25          type of inundation, we would have to

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           revisit that, make sure that we're going  
2           through the proper methods, whether it be  
3           floodproofing, elevating, things to that  
4           nature.

5                     Something important to know about the  
6           environmental justice is that the public  
7           meetings, the sessions here, I think  
8           public comment closes on this sometime in  
9           August, but the talking with the  
10          environmental and justice community is  
11          going to continue to outgo -- outreach and  
12          meetings.

13                    We have two to three meetings over the  
14          next couple of months with our  
15          environmental justice communities. We  
16          want to offer the opportunity for them to  
17          ask more questions and understand about  
18          the project and how it's going to benefit  
19          them. All right. Next slide.

20                    Something we haven't talked much about  
21          is recreation, and I want to -- from a  
22          policy standpoint, I want to make  
23          something -- make something clear if  
24          there's any confusion. This is a flood  
25          risk management project, and by our

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 policy, 50 percent or more of our benefits  
2 have to come from flood risk benefits and  
3 anything on the backside of that, we can  
4 start counting recreational benefits.

5 Alternative C and the CTO, they do  
6 show water-based and shoreline-based  
7 recreation for this alternative. We  
8 wouldn't see any type of -- as you would  
9 imagine, we wouldn't see any type of  
10 recreational benefits for any type of a  
11 nonstructural alternative because things  
12 would pretty much stay the same, almost  
13 like the way conditions are right now in  
14 the area.

15 What we do see, and one thing to point  
16 out, Alternative C and the CTO, they have  
17 benefits, but they also show to have  
18 impacts at Lefleur State Park, showing to  
19 have some impacts. I want to point out  
20 that the impact area would be more to the  
21 east, near the river, down to the  
22 southeast, and that's areas that are --  
23 normally that are already impacted by and  
24 are made inaccessible during water events.

25 Something -- a key point to take away

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 from this is that if there were any type  
2 of impacts to key infrastructure, you  
3 know, key structure being trails, boat  
4 ramps, things to that nature, we would  
5 continue -- we would coordinate with the  
6 park service on that to mitigate as we  
7 needed to. We can't just make -- damage  
8 an area out there and there not be any  
9 type of mitigation for that.

10 The goal obviously is going to be to  
11 avoid and minimize, but if we have to  
12 mitigate, we'll take the proper steps to  
13 mitigate if one of the alternatives is  
14 selected for -- with recreation impacts --  
15 or benefits. Excuse me.

16 All right. So the next slide here is  
17 Economics, and I wanted -- I wanted to --  
18 I'm not here to teach you anything, but I  
19 do want to explain some things to you,  
20 because this -- to me, this looks like a  
21 bunch of numbers. It's almost like, so  
22 what? Okay. So let's try to get clear on  
23 what these mean and break them down for  
24 you.

25 Now, one thing I do want to start off



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 with is that you're going to see a range  
2 of numbers up here, and just, for example,  
3 if you look at Alternative D here, the CTO  
4 with weir, you're seeing a cost that  
5 ranges from 487 million to 655 million.  
6 So why do we have a range of costs like  
7 that?

8 Well, we are building in risks  
9 associated with these costs. Our  
10 engineers got together, and they have come  
11 up working with a team coming up with  
12 these estimates, and they put ranges on  
13 them. And to me, that's a very smart way  
14 of doing business with that.

15 But to check ourselves, this is  
16 currently under agency technical review.  
17 We have a reviewer out of our Walla Walla  
18 District that is the cost engineering  
19 center of expertise that is actually  
20 reviewing these numbers for us right now.  
21 That ATR is ongoing and will be completed  
22 in about mid-March.

23 So you see what the various costs are  
24 here. And the next thing that you're  
25 going to see that I want to bring to your

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 attention is we talked about NED. Okay.  
2 What is a NED plan?

3 And what a NED plan is, is the  
4 National Economic Plan -- National  
5 Economic Development Plan. But what that  
6 is is that we are looking for a project  
7 that is going to provide the most net  
8 benefits. Okay? And we're also looking  
9 for what -- a benefit to cost ratio that  
10 is above unity.

11 So benefits. And that's pretty much,  
12 you know, common knowledge of, you know,  
13 you go to your job and you get paid. The  
14 benefit is going to your job, you're  
15 making money. That's what we're trying to  
16 do here is maximize the benefit that we  
17 get from these projects.

18 And then the benefit to cost ratio,  
19 you see that over there, 1.4. So what  
20 that means is is we're going to take our  
21 benefits that are derived from our  
22 economist on this project, we're going to  
23 divide that by the costs that are provided  
24 to us from our engineers, and that's going  
25 to give you a number.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           So what that 1.4 means is that for  
2           every \$1 that is invested by the federal  
3           government, \$1.40 is returned to the  
4           public. So that's how we derive what NED  
5           is. So just wanted to give you an  
6           overview of what you see here. And,  
7           again, I invite you to -- if you have  
8           questions about the economics, I'm going  
9           to be in the back with our lead economist  
10          on this. We'll be glad to go in more  
11          detail with you on that. Next slide, Tom.

12          So this is a lot of numbers, and I  
13          don't know if you can see the BCR down at  
14          the bottom there. But I want to remind  
15          you that we were -- the charge that we  
16          were given by the ASA in our guidance is  
17          that we are to give them an array of  
18          alternatives to choose from, and we were  
19          to identify what a NED plan is.

20          And we have done that, and, you know,  
21          we feel really good about these numbers,  
22          and they're vertically aligned. Again, we  
23          are going before the agency technical  
24          review right now to make sure that there  
25          wasn't anything missed, and there could be

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 additional analysis that's required that  
2 would give, you know, maybe some type of a  
3 variation.

4 But, at the moment, these are the  
5 slot, the numbers that we have. And what  
6 I want to point out is that the big thing  
7 is the risk that we see with the costs.  
8 We have a high and a low for  
9 Alternative D, Alternative E, and then the  
10 nonstructural plan.

11 So if you're trying to identify what a  
12 NED plan would be, it would be the BCR  
13 being above one and then also which  
14 project provides the most net benefits.  
15 Well, it's kind of subjective. We have  
16 about three options up there: One could  
17 be a nonstructural plan, one could be the  
18 Alternative D, the CTO without a weir, and  
19 then it could be with a weir. A lot of it  
20 depends on the cost and what we get as far  
21 as a final cost certification goes.

22 So just wanted to break that out for  
23 you, that nothing has been selected.  
24 There are options out there for the  
25 Secretary, and this is the information

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           that we will provide to them to make an  
2           informed decision. Next slide.

3           Okay. So my final slide here is  
4           Hazardous, Toxic, and Radiological Waste.  
5           And so, numerous, as you can see, are the  
6           nonfederal interests. Rankin-Hinds did a  
7           great job. There's numerous analyses that  
8           have been conducted on this.

9           Once an alternative has been selected,  
10          we would have to do an additional  
11          assessment prior to construction. Really  
12          the bottom line on this is that we can't  
13          go out and construct in an area if there's  
14          some type of HCRW risk. So we have to  
15          have a clean site. We'll collaborate with  
16          Rankin-Hinds to make sure that that is  
17          taken care of before any type of  
18          construction activity would take place.

19          MR. SHAW: All right. Thank you,  
20          Brandon. And so, one of the questions  
21          that you might ask is, so where are we in  
22          the process? And so, what we tried to  
23          provide here is the timeline that gives  
24          you some information on that.

25          So, as we mentioned earlier, the draft

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 DEIS went out for public review on the 7th  
2 of June.

3 The public review period does end  
4 August the 6th, and then the period of  
5 August through September is when we will  
6 be addressing the public comments with the  
7 intent to make a notice of availability  
8 for the final DEIS in 20 -- I'm sorry, in  
9 October. And then with the final DEIS  
10 being released sometime in December and  
11 with the Secretary making his  
12 determination and a record of decision at  
13 that time.

14 Okay. And so, that concludes the  
15 first part, the presentation part, and  
16 what we will do is we will now open it up  
17 for the microphones.

18 And I would just ask -- you know, we  
19 are trying to focus on process and  
20 procedure at this particular moment, and  
21 if there are technical questions that we  
22 do not have answers for, we have our  
23 subject matter experts that are in the  
24 back. They will be kind of standing  
25 around those boards that relate to their

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 specialty, and they will be more than  
2 happy to discuss with you at that time.

3 And so, we mentioned the ways we  
4 can -- you know, you can have feedback.  
5 So we've got basically two hours allotted  
6 for this, and so, we can spend about an  
7 hour. So about an hour for just general  
8 comments and discussion, and then, like I  
9 said, you're free to go back to the  
10 subject matter experts back in the lobby  
11 area. Dr. Crawford, I think.

12 (COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS BY PUBLIC.)

13 MS. ABBY BRAMAN: Afternoon. If you  
14 don't mind, I'm going to go first because  
15 I have to leave.

16 MR. SHAW: Certainly.

17 MS. ABBY BRAMAN: If that's okay.  
18 Thank you. My name is Abby Braman. I'm  
19 Executive Director of Pearl River Keeper,  
20 a nonprofit dedicated to protecting  
21 everyone's right to clean water.

22 So the Corps' flood risk management  
23 planning document seems to be written to  
24 justify the existence of a lake  
25 development, instead of objectively

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1            assessing the alternatives that provide  
2            the most flood risk reduction.

3            After the Corps found the local  
4            sponsors' One Lake project to be not  
5            feasible, it spent years and over a  
6            million dollars of taxpayer funds on the  
7            design of Alternative D, which was another  
8            lake plan.

9            Alternative D has the same problems as  
10           the One Lake plan. It's prohibitively  
11           expensive. It's above the maximum budget  
12           threshold dictated by Congress. It will  
13           require millions of dollars in  
14           environmental mitigation costs to  
15           compensate for habitat loss. The Corps  
16           stated in its own internal presentation  
17           that it would be extremely challenging, if  
18           not impossible, to mitigate for riverine  
19           impacts of this proportion.

20           It will dredge away a large portion of  
21           our beautiful Lefleur's Bluff State Park,  
22           our only current public access to the  
23           river. Alternative D's channel  
24           improvement and lake shifts the flood  
25           risks away from central Jackson and



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 Flowood and towards federally designated  
2 disadvantaged communities along our  
3 tributaries, South Jackson and Richland.

4 Improved river conveyance through  
5 central Jackson forces more water on  
6 communities downstream of the project area  
7 inducing flooding that will cover 38,000  
8 acres and be felt as far downstream as  
9 Byram.

10 The flooding caused by Alternative D  
11 is so egregious that the Corps is offering  
12 the owners of some structures in South  
13 Jackson and Richland compensation in the  
14 form of elevations, floodproofing, and  
15 voluntary buyouts. Alternative D, the  
16 Corps' new channel improvement and lake  
17 plan, alleviates flooding for a little  
18 over 300 structures and causes flooding  
19 for others, has a price tag of 500 to 650  
20 million.

21 The other alternative proposed  
22 alternative, A1 plus the Canton Club  
23 Levee, is a nonstructural plan involving  
24 elevations and floodproofing of  
25 structures. It also protects a little

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 over 300 structures, but only comes to a  
2 price tag of 60 million. It doesn't make  
3 sense that alternative A1 cost is well  
4 below the current total authorized project  
5 costs.

6 A large budget remains for expanding  
7 alternative A1 to include more structures  
8 and for adding other project features,  
9 such as recreational opportunities along  
10 the river, levees to protect critical  
11 infrastructure, like Savannah Street  
12 wastewater treatment facility, bridge  
13 conveyance improvements and tributary  
14 restoration.

15 Communities along our tributaries,  
16 like Purple, Eubanks, Town, and Lynch  
17 Creek suffer from persistent and  
18 devastating flash flood events and deserve  
19 consideration in a Pearl River Basin flood  
20 risk management project. So Pearl River  
21 Keeper recommends the Corps discard the  
22 lake plans, like Alternative D, and  
23 instead develop a combination plan that  
24 prioritizes and maximizes flood risk  
25 management benefits over recreational and

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 commercial opportunities.

2 Thank you for your time. I'm going to  
3 run. But the other thing is I've  
4 submitted a FOIA request for a cost  
5 analysis or an economic appendix. It's  
6 impossible for anyone to understand the  
7 project and whether it's the NED if we  
8 don't have that information. So thank you  
9 very much for your time.

10 MR. SHAW: Thank you.

11 DR. SCOTT CRAWFORD: Hi. Good  
12 afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon. Hi.  
13 My name is Dr. Scott Crawford. I am just  
14 here as a private citizen that lives along  
15 one of Jackson's many tributaries. I  
16 happen to live on Eubanks Creek in Fondren  
17 on Choctaw Road, and, you know, we  
18 experience frequent flash flooding that is  
19 a direct threat to our homes, our cars,  
20 and in the worst case scenario, our lives.

21 And as you know, I'm a wheelchair  
22 user, and I can't self-evacuate, and, you  
23 know, when these floods happen, I'm  
24 trapped in my home. My neighbors get  
25 water in their homes.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   And so, back to this issue. Rather  
2                   than an unbiased scientific assessment,  
3                   the draft EIS reads like a justification  
4                   for a predetermined conclusion. The  
5                   document argues for a new lake plan  
6                   touting its economic and development  
7                   impact while completely ignoring induced  
8                   flooding on Jackson's tributaries and  
9                   river flooding south of the dam.

10                  For instance, you know, the Corps is  
11                  completely ignoring the tributary flash  
12                  flooding, stating incorrectly that someone  
13                  else will handle it. I read your report.  
14                  I've done nothing else for the last month,  
15                  and table 1-1 in your executive summary  
16                  does not stand much scrutiny at all.

17                  We've been told many times that  
18                  there's a study, and nothing has been done  
19                  for decades, decades now, to solve our  
20                  creek flooding problems. So we are not  
21                  naive. We do not believe listing some  
22                  words on a table is going to work. We're  
23                  not buying it.

24                  Okay. As someone that lives on one of  
25                  those tributaries, you know, like I said,

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 we're just not buying it. Words on a  
2 table are a far cry from substantive  
3 action to mitigate flash flooding.

4 Now, I agree with Ms. Braman. There  
5 are better alternatives than a lake plan.  
6 We already have a lake, folks. It's  
7 called the reservoir. We have a lake.  
8 Alternative A1 has no adverse  
9 environmental consequences and could be  
10 expanded to include more homes and  
11 structures, and I think it should be  
12 expanded to include more homes and  
13 structures.

14 Restore the floodplains and work on  
15 the tributaries, raise the roads, and  
16 include a possible levee to protect all  
17 the northeast neighborhoods, including  
18 McCloud and Parkway. I need someone to  
19 prove to me that it can't be done.

20 You know, I agree. I agree  
21 wholeheartedly that Canton Club Levee is a  
22 great idea. In fact, I can't believe it  
23 wasn't done decades ago.

24 So the question I have, and it's a  
25 sincere question, is why can't we extend

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           that levee, or something like that levee,  
2           to protect all three of those communities  
3           in the northeast Jackson area? And all of  
4           this, this A1, it's all doable now. It's  
5           all doable right now.

6           MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Anyone  
7           else?

8           MR. ANDREW WHITEHURST: I'm Andrew  
9           Whitehurst, Water Program Director for  
10          Gulf Restoration Network, or Healthy Gulf.  
11          I live in Madison.

12          I learned two things in my ecology  
13          class from Dr. Robert Kashner at UNO that  
14          are relevant to this project and its  
15          alternatives that further dam the Pearl.  
16          The first thing is that dams disrupt the  
17          physics and ecology of rivers by trapping  
18          nutrients and sediment and exporting  
19          heated water. They are also barriers to  
20          the movement of fish and aquatic life.

21          The second thing that he told us was  
22          the Corps of Engineers does what Congress  
23          tells it to do because Congress has the  
24          money. On the first point, you don't have  
25          to read too hard between the lines of this

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 DEIS to see that the Corps is leaning  
2 towards Alternative D, which will further  
3 dam the river.

4 On the second point about the Corps,  
5 one person makes the decision on which  
6 alternative to advance to the next stage  
7 of being funded and built, and that's Army  
8 Secretary for Civil Works Michael Connor,  
9 who has for the last three years been  
10 lobbied hard by the nonfederal sponsor and  
11 its supporters.

12 He'll make his decision sometime in  
13 December, and he's in a hurry. There's an  
14 election and a new presidential term  
15 coming.

16 My main question for Secretary Connor  
17 is this: Is it really okay to approve a  
18 project first and then wait until the  
19 pre-construction engineering and design  
20 stage to figure out how great the costs  
21 are? Costs for wetland mitigation, toxic  
22 waste site remediation, modifying bridges,  
23 utility lines, and many others will be  
24 determined later during the PED stage.

25 What Army Corps rules govern this

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 process that leaves the determination of  
2 major costs until after he gives his  
3 approval? And why was there no economics  
4 index or appendix included to help the  
5 public compare project costs and see the  
6 Corps work in generating them?

7 The Corps of Engineers follows  
8 planning rules that make it find the  
9 alternative that has the best benefit to  
10 cost ratio, and so, it found alternative  
11 A1, the nonstructural alternative that  
12 elevates, floodproofs, offers buyouts, and  
13 can build a levee to protect the Canton  
14 Club neighborhood and others. A1 costs  
15 the least and does the least environmental  
16 damage.

17 Without actually asking community  
18 members and homeowners what they think of  
19 A1 or A1 with levees, the Corps states  
20 that this alternative might not work due  
21 to low participation. Again, who did the  
22 Corps ask?

23 Alternative A1, even an enhanced  
24 version of it, can be built with existing  
25 money without additional authorization



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 from Congress. Alternative D costs so  
2 much that the Corps and sponsors would  
3 have to go back to Congress to authorize  
4 more money for the Pearl project. And the  
5 DEIS document admits that the weir built  
6 to create the recreational lake in  
7 Alternative D offers no new flood control,  
8 because a weir is not a water storage  
9 structure.

10 Alternative D will induce new, higher  
11 flooding on residents downstream in  
12 Richland, South Jackson, and Byram, all  
13 the way to Georgetown. This DEIS  
14 document, for all its shortcomings,  
15 contains components that can be rearranged  
16 in a logical, constructive way if  
17 communities are involved in the planning.

18 An expanded Canton Club Levee that  
19 protects the three neighborhoods that  
20 flooded worst in 2020 and 2022 could be a  
21 start, and other beneficial features could  
22 be added in increments as the Corps plan  
23 formulation guidance documents suggest.  
24 The way I see it, the Army Secretary can  
25 do this project well, or he can do it by

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 the end of December.

2 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Ma'am?

3 MS. FRAN BRIDGES: Good afternoon. I  
4 come as an individual resident, you might  
5 say. I am May Francis Bridges, also known  
6 as Fran Bridges, and I live in the west  
7 Jackson area.

8 And I've attempted -- you know, you  
9 almost have to have a technical degree to  
10 understand some of this, but when I look  
11 at it in layman's terms, you have the  
12 Lynch -- the Lynch Street -- the Lynch  
13 Creek that flows behind our residents who  
14 live off of Jane Avenue, off of  
15 St. Charles, and go on down behind  
16 Westland Plaza, and then on down by  
17 Hemingway. The neighborhood right behind  
18 it, Sylvan Glen, floods. The what used to  
19 be called Camelot Apartments floods.

20 And then you go on past Hemingway, and  
21 you're right there at the entrance of  
22 Jackson State University where it floods.  
23 Okay. You go past that, and you have Jim  
24 Hill and Isabel School, elementary school  
25 and a high school.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   So as I've looked at this, we talk a  
2                   lot about northeast, but we talk very  
3                   little about West Jackson. And then you  
4                   have South Jackson, and you all probably  
5                   understand this better than I do, that  
6                   when you have any type of development  
7                   going on and you put in more cement or  
8                   something like that or you're making, I  
9                   guess, slabs for houses, that water has to  
10                  run off somewhere.

11                  So there's some neighborhoods down  
12                  around Bienville in South Jackson, and  
13                  that's sort of what has happened to them.  
14                  The new development is -- the water's  
15                  running off of them. And I think the same  
16                  thing happens out toward Westside, because  
17                  there's a new development there. So when  
18                  we look at this, and the Corps of  
19                  Engineers is doing this, so we're like,  
20                  okay, Northeast Jackson, Old Canton this  
21                  or Canton that, but where's West Jackson?  
22                  Where is South Jackson?

23                  So why can't the Corps consider  
24                  that -- Jackson and perhaps Hinds County  
25                  both are in a unique situation with

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 funding. So when you say tributaries and  
2 you don't do anything about our  
3 tributaries, you know, it's like you're  
4 cutting our legs off and telling us, you  
5 know, keep swimming, you'll be okay.

6 So I would just ask you to consider  
7 the tributaries and consider working a lot  
8 closer with the people who are affected.  
9 Last thing I'm going to say, in 1979, I  
10 had the great pleasure of being an  
11 employee of South Central Bell at that  
12 time. I also had the great pleasure, the  
13 Easter weekend of 1979, moving from an  
14 apartment to a house. My first attempt at  
15 home ownership was right behind Westland  
16 Plaza on Casa Grande Circle.

17 And we moved that weekend. Had no  
18 idea it was flooding in Jackson. Okay?  
19 From right over on Pearl Street, Summers  
20 Apartments, over right behind Westland  
21 Plaza, we didn't know there was a flood,  
22 but it flooded downtown, Town Creek, all  
23 of that. Where the convention center is  
24 now, W.T. May was there, water was up to  
25 the door.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           The word from South Mississippi was  
2           you can't see anything in Jackson but the  
3           eagle on top of the Capitol. That's how  
4           bad the flooding was. But it did not  
5           flood this community.

6           So one would ask, how could such a big  
7           flood have occurred downtown and in that  
8           part and then all of a sudden, after 1979,  
9           1983, all the other flooding, it came to  
10          the environmental justice neighborhoods,  
11          you might say?

12          I don't have the answers, but I would  
13          certainly ask you to consider and make  
14          close contact with the people that are  
15          affected. And I was very pleased to hear  
16          you talk about the reason for this study  
17          may have been economic impact and human  
18          suffering. People suffer when they have  
19          to start over with their houses when it's  
20          been flooded, and they don't have the  
21          insurance.

22          I said last thing. This is the last  
23          thing. Last thing, the flooding, putting  
24          us in those flooding zones has increased  
25          our insurance, flood insurance

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           astronomically. So that needs to be  
2           considered, too. If you fix it, we might  
3           have an opportunity to pay less flood  
4           insurance. Thank you.

5           MR. SHAW: Anyone else? Yes, sir.

6           MR. MIKE MOCKBEE: We appreciate all  
7           y'all done and all and all the information  
8           we've gotten, but I'd like to ask each one  
9           of y'all to get your crystal ball out and  
10          tell us when we might see some shovels  
11          doing some of these solutions.

12          THE COURT REPORTER: Sir, what is  
13          your name? I'm sorry.

14          MR. MIKE MOCKBEE: Mike Mockbee.

15          MR. SHAW: Mike Mockbee. Yeah. And  
16          I apologize. If you would, can you step  
17          to the microphone, please, and state your  
18          name for the record? Yes, sir.

19          MR. REESE PARTRIDGE: My name is  
20          Reese Partridge. I've lived in Jackson  
21          for over 40 years. I've been going to  
22          Lefleur's Bluff State Park since it was a  
23          Jackson city park. Since about 25 years  
24          ago, I and other members of the Jackson  
25          Audubon Society have maintained nesting

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 boxes at Lefleur's Bluff State Park for  
2 prothonotary warblers, which are yellow  
3 songbirds that migrate each year from  
4 South America for their summer breeding  
5 season here and return to South America in  
6 the fall.

7 Like most of our migratory birds,  
8 their numbers are in decline, and they are  
9 of high conservation concern. Cornell  
10 University reports they have declined by  
11 31 percent from 1966 to 2019, an average  
12 of -- and average a decline of about 0.7  
13 percent each year.

14 Quoting Cornell, "As habitat  
15 specialists, these warblers are vulnerable  
16 to the loss and alteration of forested  
17 wetlands on their breeding grounds.  
18 Removal of standing dead trees and  
19 channeling of streams can affect  
20 availability of nest sites, as well as  
21 nest success."

22 That sounds like it's on point for  
23 what we're talking about today. Past park  
24 visitors are going to be shocked by how  
25 Alternative D, the Corps preferred plan,

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 is going to destroy some of the park's  
2 mature cypress Tupelo gum wetlands, which  
3 is also the very best prothonotary warbler  
4 nesting habitat. The lake plan  
5 alternatives also eliminate this prime  
6 nesting habitat for declining species.

7 According to a map in the EIS draft,  
8 the most quintessential cypress Tupelo gum  
9 pond in the park, actually on any public  
10 lands in the Jackson area I'm aware of, is  
11 going to be excavated, destroyed, and  
12 eliminated for the sake of commercial  
13 development.

14 According to the Wildlife and  
15 Fisheries website, there are 305 acres in  
16 Lefleur's Bluff State Park. The EIS says  
17 that 78 acres of the park will be  
18 excavated for Alternate D. That's over 25  
19 percent.

20 So on one hand, we're told that the  
21 government is going to increase recreation  
22 with Alternative D, and on the other, take  
23 25 percent of actual park land and put it  
24 under water for the sake of commercial  
25 development.



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           My second topic concerns the economics  
2           that we talked about today on the  
3           alternatives in the draft EIS. There's  
4           some astonishing facts in the draft EIS  
5           lake plans, including alternative D. Not  
6           only will it protect 316 houses for its  
7           half a billion dollar cost, it will flood  
8           52 other houses downstream. The term  
9           used, as I understand it, is "induced  
10          flooding." So the net improvement is only  
11          going to be 264 houses for the half a  
12          billion bucks.

13           But the bad news doesn't stop there,  
14          because the presence of the lakes will  
15          also increase flash flooding in the  
16          tributaries and drainage ditches that flow  
17          into the Pearl.

18           But there's some good news in all  
19          this, if the Corps of Engineers will just  
20          dump the lake plans and go with some form  
21          of Alternative A, buyouts and raising up  
22          of flood-prone properties, along with  
23          protective levees for Canton Club and  
24          other neighborhoods in a similar  
25          situation.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   Alternative A with Canton Club Levee  
2                   protects 308 homes and structures. 308 in  
3                   Alternative A with Canton Club Levee  
4                   versus the 264 net number in Alternative D  
5                   and E lake plans. Start with  
6                   Alternative A and improve on it.

7                   Alternative A1 has the highest benefit  
8                   to cost ratio. Alternative A1 with Canton  
9                   Club is \$60 million, million with an M,  
10                  versus Alternative D, which is half a  
11                  billion with a B.

12                  When I read about the good and  
13                  important work the Corps of Engineers and  
14                  the federal government does around the  
15                  country to prevent, alleviate, and reduce  
16                  flooding in private homes and businesses,  
17                  time and again I hear the most  
18                  cost-effective solution is buyouts. Too  
19                  often, all the incredibly expensive earth  
20                  moving excavation and destruction doesn't  
21                  even solve the flooding problems.

22                  We've had a governor who recently had  
23                  a lot of country sayings that he repeated,  
24                  one of which was, "Keep your eye on the  
25                  ball." "Keep your eye on the ball" means

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 get the job done but do it in the most  
2 cost effective way for taxpayers and, in  
3 this case, in the least destructive way  
4 for our natural heritage.

5 The lake plans are a preposterous and  
6 outrageous misuse of and misappropriation  
7 of taxpayer money. What's more, it's  
8 ignorant to move forward with any lake  
9 plan when it ignores the facts. The facts  
10 are that buyouts and raising flood prone  
11 structures are a far wiser of taxpayer  
12 funds than any lake plan. Thank you.

13 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Next.

14 MR. MORRELL RICHARDSON: Hi. I'm  
15 Morrell Richardson. I'm a retiree from  
16 Eaton Aerospace, and I live very close to  
17 Lefleur's Bluff State Park. This question  
18 is for Colonel Gipson. It is a follow-up  
19 from a question that I asked the last time  
20 of Colonel Klein, which he could not  
21 answer but promised that he would study  
22 and get back to me. So I assume he has  
23 briefed you on this.

24 Before I get to the question, though,  
25 let me give you a little back.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   MR. SHAW: Sir, can I ask you to get  
2 closer to the mic? Thank you.

3                   MR. MORRELL RICHARDSON: Before I get  
4 to the question, let me give you a little  
5 background. I was born and raised in  
6 Jackson. I've seen many floods. I was  
7 alive when the reservoir was built.

8                   When I lived at the reservoir, I  
9 crossed that dam every single day for 18  
10 years going to work. I saw the levels.  
11 When the water's up over the boat ramp and  
12 over in the bathrooms at the spillway,  
13 Jackson is under water. And I saw that  
14 day after day, year after year.

15                   Now I live right next to Eubanks  
16 Creek, right next to Mayes Lake, and every  
17 time it floods, the park is under water.  
18 I have looked out on -- in the February  
19 '22 flood, I looked out my window from my  
20 living room couch and saw beavers and  
21 ducks swimming by.

22                   Now, raising the river level 6 feet is  
23 not going to prevent stuff like that. The  
24 park already floods every year. It's only  
25 going to flood 6 feet deeper.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   Now, there is -- the drainage from  
2                   this campus here goes across Lakeland  
3                   Drive, and there's a storm drain which  
4                   constantly gets overwhelmed during flash  
5                   floods. Now, if the river level is 6 feet  
6                   higher, where is that water going to go?

7                   All right. So I'm familiar with the  
8                   reservoir. It operates at capacity. It  
9                   goes up and down only by inches. It  
10                  cannot in any sense of the word be  
11                  considered a flood control project.  
12                  Neither can this. And I resent when I see  
13                  flood control project or flood mitigation  
14                  in the titles of these projects. If it  
15                  does anything at all, it's going to make  
16                  things worse.

17                  And to follow up with the question, I  
18                  asked Colonel Klein toward the end of the  
19                  last meeting as we were looking at some  
20                  large photos before and after the  
21                  reservoir, within a year of the reservoir  
22                  being built, there was a massive  
23                  channelization downstream, and it was not  
24                  planned.

25                  Now, supposedly, they did their

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 homework on the reservoir, and yet this  
2 massive miscalculation took thousands and  
3 thousands of acres, rerouted the river,  
4 changed everything. Those were just  
5 complete miscalculations.

6 Designing a dam and a spillway should  
7 not force you to do major projects  
8 downstream. And with what's known of this  
9 situation -- I'm also old enough to  
10 remember when they used to do hydrological  
11 experiments at the Waterways Experiment  
12 Station.

13 I wonder if you can produce a  
14 hydrological model. Say an office cooler  
15 with a spigot, and it has to maintain  
16 within an inch, that's the reservoir.  
17 Then you got a dog bowl with a few holes  
18 in it that are tributaries, and it's the  
19 Pearl River Basin. When you put the whole  
20 thing under a sprinkler, the reservoir  
21 can't go over the top. It's got to stay  
22 there. The only thing you can do is open  
23 that spigot and fill up that dog's bowl  
24 and the tributaries.

25 Now, if somebody can show me a

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 physical experiment where rain at the  
2 reservoir is not going to affect us or  
3 that the reservoir can control Jackson  
4 flooding in any other way than opening the  
5 gates, that's all they can do. The only  
6 flood control the reservoir has over  
7 Jackson is how deep Jackson floods.

8 Now, Colonel Gipson, what did Colonel  
9 Klein say about why the massive redesign  
10 was necessary after only one year?

11 COL. GIPSON: We didn't talk about  
12 that.

13 MR. MORRELL RICHARDSON: He told me  
14 he would. That's all. Thank you.

15 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Next.

16 MS. TAMITHA DILL: Good afternoon.

17 My name is Tamitha Dill, and I am a  
18 resident in the McCloud neighborhood and a  
19 member of the 3C1CA group, stands for  
20 three communities, one common agenda, and  
21 the three communities are Canton Club,  
22 Parkway, and McCloud.

23 We were organized for the main reason  
24 to focus on flood damage reduction. I  
25 would like to thank you, USACE, the rest

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 of the panel, our dignitaries, local  
2 businesses, friendly neighbors, and  
3 friends. Thank you for giving my  
4 neighbors and I the opportunity to express  
5 our concerns.

6 In our communities, we were mandated  
7 to be evacuated in 2020 and 2022 due to  
8 the Pearl River flooding, but,  
9 unfortunately, we have been dealing with  
10 other factors on a regular basis for  
11 several years. We have worked with  
12 department heads, dignitaries, with little  
13 to no progress.

14 Some of the issues are collapsed pipes  
15 in the storm drains; clogged drains for  
16 many, many years; flash floods each time  
17 it rains, which block access to roads,  
18 homes, businesses, et cetera; unstable  
19 bridge on Sedgwick Drive on Purple Creek,  
20 which already had a proposal in 2021 to  
21 have it replaced. Unfortunately, nothing  
22 has been done yet.

23 Currently, the City of Jackson does  
24 not have any engineers on their roster.  
25 No bridge inspector on their roster. I



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 would like to request USACE to reject the  
2 alternatives and choose an inclusive  
3 decision for the residents for upstream  
4 and downstream, businesses in the area,  
5 and wildlife.

6 Some of the issues with these  
7 alternatives are, with alternative A1,  
8 where will the water flow for the Canton  
9 Club Levee? There is a need to replace  
10 the current levees now. So if the levees  
11 are placed in your alternatives, how will  
12 they be managed or maintained? Who will  
13 be responsible for those operational fees  
14 of these levees?

15 Home elevations may require additional  
16 costs to bring those structures up to  
17 current building codes for plumbing,  
18 electrical, and energy systems. And why?  
19 Why were there many tributaries that  
20 removed -- that would impact our  
21 neighborhoods removed from your plan?

22 For example, Purple Creek. It floods  
23 definitely for those particular  
24 communities that I just mentioned and also  
25 upstream to Ridgeland and so forth. But

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           it's funny that the same Purple Creek is  
2           on the City of Ridgeland's Flood  
3           Mitigation and restoration project, which  
4           they are currently asking \$4 million.

5           They also have the written support  
6           from -- to Congress -- they have written  
7           support to Congress from Representative  
8           Michael Guest and Senator Cindy  
9           Hyde-Smith, but that will not fix our  
10          problem in Jackson for the same Purple  
11          Creek tributaries and including others.

12          Will buyouts be taxed? Will flood  
13          zones reduce the values of those homes  
14          that are being voluntarily asked to be  
15          bought out?

16          Alternative C, this plan takes us  
17          furtherest away from the productive flood  
18          mitigation and restoration plan. It  
19          disturbs the ecosystem and definitely not  
20          cost effective in regards to the towns.

21          Alternatives D and E, it doesn't  
22          provide a solution that resolves our  
23          flooding, and both of these requests  
24          require congressional action. USACE, your  
25          motto is ESSAYONS, which stands for --

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           it's a French phrase that translates to  
2           "let us try." For you, try means using  
3           all of your skills, resources, talents,  
4           and enthusiasm to overcome a challenge,  
5           and I believe you're up for the challenge.

6           So please, I beg you, do not place us  
7           on the back burner. Please focus on flood  
8           damage reduction. Let us try. Thank you.

9           MR. SHAW: Thank you. Yes, sir.

10          MR. ALAN LANG: Good afternoon. I'm  
11          Alan Lang. I'm a lifelong Jackson  
12          resident/investor in a lot of the affected  
13          areas. Just, again, thank you for what  
14          you're doing here. I've been involved in  
15          some wetlands mitigation projects that are  
16          involved. I know all the cultural and  
17          ecological and hydrological and all of the  
18          different considerations that you go  
19          through, and it's not easy.

20          As a lifelong resident, I know that,  
21          you know, there needs to be a bias toward  
22          action with regards to flood control. If  
23          you look at a lot of the considerations --  
24          a lot of concerns have been brought here  
25          today. If you tried to do the Ross

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           Barnett Reservoir today, 70 or 80 percent  
2           of the comments would be directly pointed  
3           against that action, and billions of  
4           dollars in residential and commercial  
5           development, hundreds of millions of tax  
6           dollars have been generated over the last  
7           50 years as a result of that project.

8           We've seen how the story ends. It's  
9           an unqualified success. Flood control  
10          does work, and I would just encourage you  
11          to have a bias toward action with regards  
12          to your -- to your proposals. Thank you.

13          MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Sir,  
14          next.

15          MR. LARRY MCDONALD: Hey, everybody,  
16          how you doing? I'm Larry McDonald. I'm  
17          from one of the flood districts, North  
18          Canton Club Circle. I was here just about  
19          every time after 2000 when it flooded,  
20          every time, even flashflooded.

21          The question I got, I see -- I'm from  
22          Hillsboro, Mississippi originally. I'm  
23          not going to throw all these numbers up  
24          here, but the One Lake proposal that  
25          you're trying to do, I'm just going to

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 call it what it is. What happens when  
2 that one lake floods? I never saw that  
3 contingency plan in any report.

4 Two, I've been to many countries, many  
5 states that have recreational levees. Why  
6 we, the people in Mississippi, the  
7 government, or the federal government  
8 can't come up with something to do  
9 recreational levees to benefit all the  
10 people in Mississippi that goes along that  
11 river channel? That's one of the main  
12 concerns that I have.

13 I don't think we're doing -- I'm not  
14 saying you guys are not doing enough. I  
15 appreciate you for your support, whatever  
16 you're doing, but I'm thinking somehow we  
17 need to come as a collective to do  
18 something that will benefit everyone as a  
19 whole.

20 And I think a combination of levee, a  
21 recreational levee, and cleaning some of  
22 these drains everybody keeps talking about  
23 within the inner cities, no matter whether  
24 it's Flowood, Jackson, Pearl, I think it  
25 can be done with a combination of the

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 United States government and the  
2 Mississippi government communicating and  
3 working effectively. I think we can do  
4 that.

5 And if you can show me that critical  
6 point for this One Lake project, what you  
7 want to call it, because once you build  
8 this, I know you -- a lot of people want  
9 it done. I want to see the critical point  
10 because I think it's going to have another  
11 disaster. That's all I got.

12 MR. SHAW: Thanks, sir. Yes, sir.

13 MR. GREG DIVINITY: Okay. First of  
14 all, I'm Greg Divinity. I'm here just as  
15 a pastor in the South Jackson area, as  
16 well as a citizen of South Jackson, and  
17 this is where I'm coming from, is this, is  
18 that we've been talking about this and  
19 doing something about this since I was a  
20 junior in high school. Now my grandbabies  
21 are juniors in high school.

22 What I'm saying is we have to begin to  
23 do something, and we have something on the  
24 table. What we need to do is we need to  
25 move forward with something that we

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           already have. If Alternative D is what we  
2           have on the table, we need to move with  
3           it.

4                        Because what happens is, if we  
5           continue to kick the can down the road, my  
6           grandchildren's grandchildren will be  
7           juniors in high school and will still be  
8           kicking this can down the road. A flood  
9           would devastate our communities, would  
10          devastate the areas.

11                      So what I'm saying is, if we have  
12          something on the table, all these numbers  
13          and stuff, all this, I'm not familiar with  
14          all that, but I know that we need to do  
15          something. And then when we do it, what  
16          we can do is begin to improve on it.

17                      But we have to move forward on  
18          something soon and quick, because what is  
19          happening is we're continuing to kick this  
20          can down the road, and you're continuing  
21          to cause people to lose hope. And so, we  
22          have something in place, which is  
23          Alternative D that we have, it seems to be  
24          a pretty good plan at this present time,  
25          let's move forward with it, put it in

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 place, improve as we go, but it will give  
2 us some hope that something is taking  
3 place.

4 Appreciate all that you all do.  
5 Appreciate all the research that has taken  
6 place. I understand sometimes people say,  
7 well, you're paying too much for this,  
8 paying this for this, but I want you all  
9 to understand with me, flooding will cost  
10 lives, and one life is worth all the money  
11 that we're talking about.

12 When I think about it, we need to do  
13 something, and if we have something on the  
14 table, let's move forward with it and  
15 improve it as we go. Thank you.

16 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir.

17 MR. DEION THOMPSON: Good afternoon,  
18 sir.

19 MR. SHAW: Good afternoon.

20 MR. DEION THOMPSON: Good afternoon,  
21 USACE. I'm going to make my comment very  
22 short.

23 MR. SHAW: Could you give us your  
24 name, please?

25 MR. DEION THOMPSON: Yes, yes. My



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 name is Deion Thompson, and I live in the  
2 Canton Club subdivision. Been there for  
3 the past 20-some years.

4 And my neighborhood, which is in  
5 northeast Jackson, consists of Canton  
6 Club, there's McCloud, and we also have  
7 Parkway. And in our backyard, when the  
8 flooding starts on the Pearl River, it  
9 hits us first. In '20, we had to  
10 evacuate. '22, we were getting ready to  
11 evacuate.

12 The flooding came instantly, just as  
13 it did in '20, and people were having to  
14 just disrupt their livelihoods and not  
15 knowing how long we were going to be away  
16 from our homes, and our homes being  
17 destroyed with the floods because some of  
18 the residents still, to this day, have not  
19 gotten their homes back intact.

20 We met with Roger Wicker, Senator,  
21 that is. In '20, he stood there at the  
22 flooding and told us we were going to fix  
23 this problem, this flooding. "It's a  
24 doable project." He spoke those exact  
25 words to me as he shook my hand.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           The mayor was there for the City of  
2 Jackson that did nothing, and several  
3 other people. Like I say, I'm not going  
4 to call anybody's name to discriminate  
5 against them.

6           But the thing of it is, we have to  
7 come up with this plan that you all told  
8 us that you all would come up with, and  
9 that plan included, one, it was a  
10 comprehensive plan. You all know what  
11 that is. That starts at our back door at  
12 the Pearl River Basin there at the  
13 spillway all the way down to the Gulf  
14 Coast.

15           Okay. And I want you all to give us a  
16 plan that's going to include everyone,  
17 meaning that it's going to strengthen,  
18 first and foremost, our neighborhoods. We  
19 don't want our neighborhoods destroyed.  
20 We don't want our neighborhoods wiped out.  
21 The people that are there, homeowners,  
22 myself, and others, we want our properties  
23 and our neighborhood protected.

24           We talk about, what, flood risk, the  
25 management of it? It starts there with

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 the reservoir and goes all the way down to  
2 the Gulf. You all know that. You are not  
3 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for  
4 nothing.

5 Secondly, the safety impacts of our  
6 neighborhoods should be included in this  
7 plan with our creeks, our bridges, our  
8 drainage systems, our sewage, and even the  
9 future references of our drinking waters.

10 And, thirdly, the environmental safety  
11 of this. We don't want the environment  
12 destroyed. We don't want none of the  
13 facets of it. The Audubon Society is  
14 involved in it. The Pearl River Keepers,  
15 they're involved in it. And these are  
16 entities that are counting on you all, as  
17 well, including this comprehensive plan  
18 that's going to help all of us.

19 We don't want our neighborhoods  
20 flooding the way that they've been  
21 flooded. You all please come up with some  
22 kind of plan. You don't work for the  
23 Pearl River Flood Control District. You  
24 work for us.

25 You all have been given the privilege

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 to give us some satisfaction as to taking  
2 care of the flood, the flood mitigations  
3 and all these things that we're being  
4 involved in. We are counting on you all.  
5 Please don't let us down.

6 Colonel Klein was honest with us, I  
7 would say, with the conversation that I've  
8 had with him now. Our new person, we  
9 expect you to do the same. If you do  
10 that, we'll be grateful to you.

11 Pearl River flood -- the Pearl River  
12 Flood Control people that's controlling  
13 the river and what have you, they're  
14 looking for one thing, that is to put  
15 money in their pockets, and I'm just going  
16 to tell you like that, with this One Lake  
17 project, and we don't have time for that.

18 We do not have time for our  
19 neighborhoods to be flooding again. And  
20 right now, within the past from January up  
21 until now, we've been threatened with  
22 floods three times. So we're just sitting  
23 ducks waiting for the next flood to  
24 happen.

25 Please consider that in y'all's plan.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 Please do not neglect us. Please, Colonel  
2 Gipson. Please help us. We ask of you.  
3 We beg of you. Got you.

4 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir.

5 MS. MINDY BOWERS: Hi. My name is  
6 Mindy Bowers, and I live in Canton Avenue  
7 Estates. I flooded in 2020. I was  
8 evacuated. Threatened in 2022. My house  
9 was 8 feet under in 1979, and I'm very  
10 invested in this control project.

11 However, all the tributaries -- I live  
12 on Purple Creek, and the tributaries are  
13 not being taken care of. This is an  
14 example of Purple Creek. It's blocked.

15 I have been working 11 years to try to  
16 get this cleared so that what is  
17 happening -- I live down this area, and  
18 the water is 4 feet deep, standing, not  
19 moving because of this. I've been on  
20 WLBT. I've written to the city. So  
21 someone needs to take care of this  
22 problem.

23 The other issue I have is I'm a little  
24 concerned with the levee, the Canton Club  
25 Levee. It will, I think, take care of

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 certain houses, but one portion of this  
2 levee is on the north side of Purple  
3 Creek.

4 The creek floods. I've been flooded  
5 all the time. If you put a levee on the  
6 back side of this creek and the water  
7 comes, hits the resistance of that levee,  
8 the water is going to be -- come right  
9 toward my backyard, right into my house.  
10 So it's protecting these houses, but what  
11 about these houses over here where the  
12 water is going to now just flood a  
13 different -- different houses? Still  
14 going to flood, in my opinion.

15 And if what you say is that after they  
16 do the work, this will prevent --  
17 100-year flood won't happen, so not to  
18 worry, because Purple Creek won't flood.  
19 Well, then why are you putting the levee  
20 there if it's not going to flood?

21 And I'm on the downside, the back  
22 side, the bottom of the levee. So in my  
23 opinion, when water hits a wall, it's  
24 going to bounce off. And that's all I  
25 have to say.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 MR. SHAW: Thank you, ma'am. Next.  
2 Yes, ma'am.

3 MS. SHARON PAGE: Good afternoon.  
4 Thank you for listening to our comments.  
5 I would like to be heard by you --

6 MR. SHAW: Ma'am, could you start  
7 your name, please?

8 MS. SHARON PAGE: I'm going to get to  
9 it. The U.S. Corps of Engineers and  
10 elected officials of the Rankin-Hinds  
11 District Board, my name is Sharon Page. I  
12 have -- I have lived in part of the Canton  
13 Club that flooded in 2020 and 2022.

14 In 2020, officials claim we had a  
15 certain amount of time to evacuate. Of  
16 course, I worked. I got off of work  
17 early. By the time I got home, it was  
18 really too late for me to evacuate  
19 anything. What I got out was clothes for  
20 myself and my son. Everything else I left  
21 there. I do have flood insurance. Thanks  
22 for that.

23 In 2022, the water came up to my  
24 doorstep. It did not get into my home. I  
25 am back there on Foxboro where the water

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           actually comes in at to start off with.  
2           First time it flooded, I was out of my  
3           house for nine months. Second time, it  
4           was probably a week because the water did  
5           recede.

6           This is a trauma to me, and it stays  
7           on me. Every time it rains, every time it  
8           rains, my street floods, especially when  
9           there's a heavy rain. I have problems  
10          getting out of my community.

11          Not only that, I have to think about,  
12          do I need to evacuate now? Do I need to  
13          pack? The last time my coworkers came to  
14          my home, and they elevated all of my  
15          furniture. They lifted it up high because  
16          that was less than two years. They said,  
17          We're not going to let you lose all your  
18          furniture this time, so we're going to do  
19          this for you. And I thank them for that.

20          It's three communities there. I see  
21          with one of your alternatives you do have  
22          the levee for the Canton Club area, which  
23          is my area, but I think about my neighbors  
24          as well, because all three of us, we are  
25          communicating with each other on this here



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 situation. I would hate seeing their --  
2 for what you are going to do for us, the  
3 Canton Club, destroy their property.

4 I know what it's like going through  
5 that. At first, I didn't. I used to see  
6 all this on television, people houses  
7 flooding. Then it would hit me, it was a  
8 problem. It really was a problem. I saw  
9 how the other communities, how they felt.

10 And if I felt like that and you all  
11 protect my area and forget the people  
12 downstream, I'm going to know if they're  
13 going to -- going through it, and that's  
14 going to hurt me as well because I'm going  
15 to, I know.

16 Questions I have, first, what measures  
17 will the levee system include to ensure  
18 drainage? The streets in Canton Club,  
19 like I said, they flood every time we get  
20 a heavy rain. Sometimes it's just a  
21 moderate rain. It floods. It floods  
22 there.

23 The new levee cannot make this worse,  
24 and any situation should seek to lessen  
25 this problem. Your plan must consider

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 Canton Club drainage when the river is  
2 flooding within its banks and doing  
3 extreme events when the river is above  
4 flood stage.

5 Second, how would Canyon Club Levee  
6 impact my neighbors south of Purple Creek?  
7 We are all in this together, and the  
8 solution that helps one but not the other  
9 is unacceptable.

10 Third, if the Corps can ensure Canton  
11 Club protection behind a levee, then  
12 what's the feasible and constructive  
13 system for Parkway and McCloud? We want  
14 measures that can protect us and be  
15 (indiscernible) without further studies  
16 and congressional action trying to justify  
17 a new recreation and real estate dam.

18 I want to thank you all again for  
19 listening to me.

20 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Next.

21 MR. ZACH SERVIS: Hey. How are y'all  
22 doing today? My name is Zach Servis.  
23 That's S-E-R-V-I-S. I'm a resident of  
24 Jackson on the north side. Thankfully,  
25 I'm not affected by the floods or

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 anything. I'm a business owner, music  
2 artist, and I'm also raising a family and  
3 running for mayor of Jackson.

4 Why do I say that? Because there's a  
5 caveat about this entire project. And I  
6 come from a military family, so, first of  
7 all, thank you for what you guys do.

8 There's a caveat nobody's talking  
9 about. I don't know if it's because they  
10 just don't want to or if it's because  
11 they're not aware of it, but there's an  
12 agenda that has existed long before this  
13 project came.

14 And if you go on to YouTube, there's a  
15 video called Great City Vision video on  
16 the Great City of Mississippi page, and it  
17 shows you what this river is going to look  
18 like long before they ever told you about  
19 this project.

20 Because there is a plan and agenda to  
21 make East Jackson the place to be for  
22 residential and commercial development  
23 while completely neglecting West Jackson  
24 and South Jackson. And there's other  
25 things I can pull up historically.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           They're getting ready to say they're  
2           not going to rehydrate Lake Hico. They're  
3           going to level it out. It's a complete  
4           waste. The only reason Lake Hico was  
5           stopped being used was because of  
6           segregation. The reason it was fenced  
7           off.

8           The Ross Barnett Reservoir was created  
9           with no thought towards how people in  
10          South Jackson and West Jackson were going  
11          to be affected. I don't know if y'all  
12          know the history. Ross Barnett was  
13          Governor of Mississippi who wrote his  
14          campaign song, and he sung of how he was  
15          anti-integration.

16          So all of the planning that went into  
17          these developments for the river were only  
18          supposed to benefit one group of people,  
19          which are the ones who all moved east of  
20          I-55.

21          There is over 300 acres of land on the  
22          east side of I-55 by Elton Road and  
23          McDowell Road that are city surplus that  
24          they're actively willing to sell in the  
25          City of Jackson that easily could be used

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 for this river project, and if you want to  
2 put a lake anywhere, put it there, because  
3 all the development is going into a place  
4 that's already being developed well. It's  
5 already doing well economically. It's  
6 already doing well financially.

7 But let me tell you the communities  
8 that aren't doing well right now, West  
9 Jackson, South Jackson, and they're the  
10 ones that get flooded out mostly.

11 Now, I used to be an Uber driver as  
12 well. I have driven every street that --  
13 I know about streets y'all don't even know  
14 exist in the metro area, and I've seen the  
15 streets that flood. I've seen how bad it  
16 gets. Shoot, Roach -- the Monument bridge  
17 floods every year downtown. That's  
18 downtown.

19 I know we're pressed for time, but I  
20 want to implore you guys, because you  
21 mentioned economic justice and  
22 environmental justice. It needs to be a  
23 real priority, because I believe we need  
24 this progress. I believe we have to have  
25 something to solve this flooding.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   And I do believe recreational,  
2                   commercial development is a needed and  
3                   good thing, but it cannot be at the  
4                   detriment of the people who are already in  
5                   need of development.

6                   I would like to see a version of this  
7                   project that puts the lake on the south  
8                   side, that takes those tributaries that  
9                   run into Hanging Moss Creek, put it up  
10                  into Lake Hico, and let's rehydrate Lake  
11                  Hico.

12                 Let's put a reservoir in Jackson that  
13                 benefits Jackson so that instead of them  
14                 opening up the levees and flooding us out  
15                 in 2020 -- no one in Madison got flooded  
16                 out. Ridgeland didn't get flooded out.  
17                 They let it flow downstream.

18                 All I'm asking is that you guys  
19                 prioritize the people who are already not  
20                 getting a fair shake in this so that  
21                 everyone in Jackson benefits from this.  
22                 Thank you.

23                 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Next.

24                 MR. TAYLOR NICHOLAS: Thank you for  
25                 your time. I realize we're coming up on

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 4:00. My name is Taylor Nicholas. I'm  
2 actually a resident of Jackson, and I work  
3 with Great City. So I would love to  
4 sidebar with you after this, if that's  
5 okay.

6 And I want to just give a little  
7 clarity and some insight into that Vision  
8 video into what I hope, right, this  
9 project could be and what I hope,  
10 honestly, where we can go as a city.

11 I'm a father of three, as I mentioned.  
12 I believe that Jackson has natural  
13 resources and community as its two major,  
14 I'd say biggest, assets. I believe that  
15 you guys have been trying to, let's just  
16 say, work on a longstanding issue, and I  
17 believe flood control is something that we  
18 absolutely have to -- absolutely have to  
19 tackle. We hope that we can do it in a  
20 way that brings the community to our  
21 riverfront. Right.

22 We have, let's just say, as we all  
23 know, water quality problems in the city.  
24 We have sewage quality -- sewage issues in  
25 the city. And as we've read about for

1           years, there have been millions of gallons  
2           of sewage, right, going into this -- into  
3           this river, and we hear about downstream  
4           impacts of that.

5           I personally believe that as we -- we  
6           talk about South Jackson. We talk about  
7           West Jackson. As we open up our  
8           riverfront and allow our youth of our city  
9           to be able to access that and to actually  
10          engage with the river and outdoor  
11          activities, then we all as a community  
12          have a greater appreciation for our  
13          natural resources.

14          So whether that looks like a lakefront  
15          or that just looks like trails and parks  
16          along the river, we as a community need to  
17          come together and embrace that and be able  
18          to chart a course for a better future.

19          Now, flood control is why we're all  
20          here. Flood control is paramount, and we  
21          all, I think, implore you together to get  
22          that right and to move on action. And I  
23          do believe that there are options on the  
24          table here that can give us greater  
25          community impacts and recreational



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 opportunities.

2 I think that's great. I understand  
3 that's secondary, but I think it's  
4 fantastic. So I'll leave my comments  
5 there and love to talk to you afterwards.  
6 Thanks.

7 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Next.

8 MR. PATRICK JEROME: My name is  
9 Patrick Jerome. I was here 15 years ago,  
10 I think, when this was the Two Lakes  
11 project, and we heard from the U.S. Corps  
12 of the Army Corps of Engineers that it was  
13 going to be too expensive, there were  
14 going to be environmental problems, and  
15 that it was not very good flood control.

16 So now we're here listening to all  
17 this One Lake project. Turns out it's too  
18 expensive, there's environmental issues,  
19 and it's not very good flood control.  
20 I've heard a lot about the Rankin-Hinds  
21 Flood Control District, but I've also  
22 heard a lot of people here complaining  
23 about flooding.

24 I feel that the -- I would like to  
25 know what the Rankin-Hinds Flood Control

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 District has been doing about the flooding  
2 that is existing, other than pushing these  
3 lake projects because that is all that  
4 I've ever seen them do. You go to their  
5 website. It is just a big PR piece for  
6 this project.

7 They don't seem to be doing anything  
8 about the tributary flooding, which I can  
9 tell you is going to get worse. I have  
10 been observing the real estate buildup in  
11 Madison County right now, which is where a  
12 lot of the water we get here is coming  
13 from.

14 The tributaries upstream are not  
15 unrelated to the flooding that we're  
16 experiencing. The development that is  
17 happening in Madison County right now,  
18 especially out near Gluckstadt and north  
19 of Madison, a lot of that comes down here.  
20 We're pushing more water into the  
21 floodplain every year through development  
22 here and development in Flowood.

23 And I would like to see more  
24 acknowledgement of the increased  
25 development in the report, because what I

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 read did not -- it seems to operate under  
2 the assumption the water flows that we're  
3 getting now are what we're going to get in  
4 the future, which I do not believe to be  
5 true for a number of reasons, mainly  
6 because of development.

7 And Mr. Turner said, you know, the key  
8 here is to move this water through the  
9 city in a hurry, but we're not talking  
10 about doing that. We're talking about  
11 slowing it down. We're talking about  
12 building a lake that's going to be full of  
13 trash and sewage, because we do not have  
14 proper storm drain system in here.

15 And the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
16 knows that along the Pacific Northwest and  
17 the Mississippi River, upstream of the  
18 Mississippi River, the northern part of  
19 the river, there are moving dams, and  
20 people along those rivers are enjoying the  
21 benefits of the increased flow. They're  
22 enjoying these rivers being removed --  
23 these dams being removed, and we're  
24 talking here about building one.

25 It seems to me that the -- and, also,

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 I did not know until today that the  
2 Alternative D, the third, fourth lake  
3 project I've seen presented here,  
4 increases flooding in some areas of the  
5 city, which is not what I wanted to hear.

6 It seems to me that, yes, as the Pearl  
7 River Keeper said, that this is a  
8 justification for a plan. I understand  
9 that it is the locally preferred plan, but  
10 I do not feel that the Flood Control  
11 people are speaking for many locals. It  
12 seems like a justification.

13 It seems as though we could expand  
14 alternative A1 for a fraction of the cost.  
15 We're talking about 500,000 million  
16 dollars at least, and you know it's going  
17 to be more expensive than that. 500,000  
18 million dollars, whereas we could get this  
19 done for less than \$100 million for a  
20 thousandth of the price.

21 And this development in Madison and  
22 Gluckstadt is going to make this project  
23 problem worse in the future. And, look,  
24 if we try -- if we go ahead and approve a  
25 lake project now, we're going to be back

1 here in ten years. And we're not kicking  
2 the can down the road by refusing a plan  
3 that doesn't work. We are proposing  
4 better action because we -- again, I said,  
5 if we try this lake plan, I'll see you all  
6 here in 15 years.

7 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Next.

8 MR. KENNY DAWSON: Good afternoon.  
9 My name is Kenny Dawson. I'm a landowner  
10 in the very southwestern corner of Rankin  
11 County. I own a half mile of river  
12 frontage on the Pearl.

13 While we empathize with the people  
14 upstream that flood and would like to see  
15 something done for that, the immediate  
16 concern that has not been addressed for  
17 the landowners south of I-20 is the  
18 constant eroding of the banks. I'm paying  
19 tax now on five acres that's water over  
20 the last 20 years.

21 Congress allocates millions of dollars  
22 every year to flood control projects on  
23 the Yazoo, while the Pearl just gets  
24 minimal monies, just enough to maintain  
25 the gauges and a little bit of flood

1 control study. You guys have been doing  
2 this stuff for a long time. You know what  
3 you're doing.

4 You changed the outflow on all of the  
5 reservoirs that flood the Yazoo River  
6 Basin to drop that river level at 1 foot  
7 per 24-hour period, yet you're mandating  
8 that the reservoir do it at what was very  
9 destructive on the Yazoo at 2 foot every  
10 24-hour period.

11 My question to you would be, instruct  
12 the reservoir to do what you're doing on  
13 the Yazoo and stop this erosion of the  
14 lower Pearl. You killing us. When I  
15 first bought that property in '83, I could  
16 throw a boat in, jon boat and a motor, and  
17 come all the way to Jackson without any  
18 problem. Wouldn't hit a thing. I can't  
19 get off my property now without getting  
20 out and dragging the boat over stuff.  
21 Trees.

22 The river's wider than it's ever been.  
23 It's just horrible. And we don't see any  
24 information coming down the pike from you  
25 guys about what this lake project or any

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 other thing that we're doing is going do  
2 to the landowners downstream. You know,  
3 my heart goes out to these folks flooding.  
4 I'd love to see you get something fixed  
5 for them, but don't forget about those  
6 folks downstream.

7 You know, I'm paying tax on land that  
8 I do not own anymore, and it's  
9 heartbreaking. It really is. Thank you  
10 very much.

11 MR. SHAW: Thank you, sir. Ma'am.

12 MS. MAUREEN MCGUIRE: Good afternoon.  
13 My name is Maureen McGuire, and my family  
14 and I moved here some 25 years ago to  
15 Jackson, and we were surprised at the lack  
16 of sizable parks in Jackson, having come  
17 from the northeast, with the exception of  
18 Lefleur's Bluff.

19 Lefleur's Bluff is a true gem in this  
20 city. It is a state park. It has  
21 endangered species. I have seen wood  
22 storks there. Wood storks are an  
23 endangered species. I've seen multiple,  
24 multiple species there. My family has had  
25 picnics there. We go canoeing there.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 We've gotten barbecuing there.

2 I am a bit shocked at the callous  
3 nature of how you say, oh, the park will  
4 be a little more flooded than it usually  
5 is. Yes. It floods a bit. It's on a  
6 wetland. But it sounds like it will be  
7 totally devastated with this plan.

8 And I would like you to consider what  
9 a gem it is to Jackson and how ruining  
10 that park will devastate some of us.  
11 There's not a person in this room,  
12 including myself, who feels for the people  
13 that are being flooded and have this  
14 constant thing hanging over their head,  
15 and I sincerely hope we can put together a  
16 bunch of measures to alleviate that, but  
17 let's not destroy the best park in  
18 Jackson. Thank you.

19 MR. SHAW: Thank you, ma'am. Next.

20 MS. JILL MASTROTOTARO: Hi, I'm Jill  
21 Mastrototaro. I'm the Mississippi policy  
22 director for Audubon Delta. I'm here on  
23 behalf of our 38,000 members in  
24 Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. And  
25 as a conservation nonprofit guided by the



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 principle what's good for birds is good  
2 for people, we understand just how  
3 important the Pearl River is to our  
4 communities, for our economy, and an  
5 astonishing 32 million birds that use the  
6 Pearl River every year from the Ross  
7 Barnett Reservoir to the Gulf of Mexico.

8 It comes as no surprise, then, that we  
9 have been working for many years with our  
10 chapters and partners to protect the Pearl  
11 from the environmentally destructive One  
12 Lake project, a plan widely publicized as  
13 a private real estate development scheme  
14 masquerading as a flood control project.

15 Despite the Corps' latest plan being  
16 incomplete and missing important  
17 information required by law, this draft  
18 EIS makes it crystal clear that one lake  
19 and all similar dam or dredge plans of the  
20 Pearl should be reduced. Specifically,  
21 our Alternatives C, D, and E will not  
22 provide meaningful flood relief. They  
23 will only put more people and property in  
24 harm's way and threaten the way of life  
25 for downstream communities.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           Along with many other concerns, these  
2 alternatives will cause massive  
3 environmental impacts, expose local and  
4 downstream communities to toxic  
5 contamination, and induce flooding on  
6 vulnerable and downstream communities.

7           All three alternatives include a long  
8 list of hidden costs to be borne by  
9 taxpayers, such as cleaning up toxic sites  
10 or replacing bridges. The draft EIS  
11 states one lake is not justified.

12           For the slightly smaller One Lake  
13 proposal, Alternative D, that's now the  
14 preferred, apparently, it says the dam,  
15 quote, "Does not provide any flood control  
16 benefits." So instead, Audubon is urging  
17 the Corps to pursue effective flood relief  
18 for the Jackson community that protects  
19 the Pearl and its wildlife and respects  
20 downstream communities, and we believe  
21 this can be done through Alternative A1's  
22 home elevations and floodproofing  
23 buildings and crucially -- crucially by  
24 expanding this plan to include elements  
25 such as benefiting more homes and

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 businesses, elevating roads, addressing  
2 local creek flooding, incorporating  
3 nature-based solutions, and considering  
4 levee protections for vulnerable Jackson  
5 neighborhoods.

6 It's very disappointing to see the  
7 draft plan arbitrarily exclude and  
8 outright dismiss these transformational  
9 opportunities, opportunities that Audubon  
10 and many others have been asking for. For  
11 example, it's outrageous that the Corps is  
12 proposing to put undue financial burdens  
13 on homeowners to participate in home  
14 elevations. These costs aren't justified,  
15 and we suspect they're intentional so as  
16 to derail that alternative.

17 Another opportunity to expand  
18 alternative A1 is to include the Pearls  
19 urban creeks to be inclusive, not  
20 dismissive, of the chronic flash flooding  
21 concerns that you've heard from many folks  
22 this afternoon.

23 And another opportunity is to look at  
24 the potential Canton Club Levee that could  
25 protect another thousand structures by

1           being expanded to include the adjacent  
2           Parkway and McCloud neighborhoods and to  
3           consider those other neighborhoods around  
4           it.

5           The good news is that there's federal  
6           money available now to begin putting  
7           alternative A1 plus -- A1 plus into  
8           action. Let's begin delivering meaningful  
9           flood relief for those who need it here in  
10          Jackson while protecting the Pearl River  
11          and downstream communities.

12          And, importantly, we also support the  
13          comprehensive study's recommendation that  
14          a comprehensive watershed study is long  
15          overdue. So we look forward to providing  
16          our comments in writing. Thank you.

17          MR. SHAW: Thank you. Yes, sir.

18          MR. JUAN FERNANDEZ: Hey. I'm Juan  
19          Fernandez. I was driven here by the  
20          motivation that this project has lacked a  
21          certain level of transparency, and I think  
22          honesty, as to what the goals of the  
23          project really are.

24          I'll save my -- I haven't really  
25          written my comment yet, but I did have

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 another one. I've seen a lot of people  
2 from Jackson -- I've seen a lot of people  
3 from Jackson speak today, I think pour  
4 their hearts out in statements.

5 And I think it's a real problem that  
6 the only elected officials who are part of  
7 this vetting process, members of the levee  
8 board left very early on in the meeting,  
9 was Mayor Gary Rhoads, Jake Windham from  
10 Pearl, the mayor, excuse me, Supervisor  
11 Graham, and maybe Supervisor Steve Gaines.  
12 They walked out. Who's telling them how  
13 people feel about this project? Who's  
14 trying to tell them that perhaps there's  
15 more alternatives that could be  
16 implemented faster to protect their  
17 constituents?

18 I got up to speak now in hopes that  
19 this message will somehow make it to them  
20 and that they can actually stick around  
21 for the entire meeting this evening.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. SHAW: Thank you. Next.

24 MR. LOUIE MILLER: Good afternoon.

25 My name is Louie Miller. I'm the state

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 director for the Sierra Club in  
2 Mississippi, and on behalf of our  
3 2,000-plus members in Mississippi is what  
4 I am delivering these remarks for.

5 As a native Jacksonian, I'm no  
6 stranger to the issue of flooding. In the  
7 1979 flood, I was helping friends and  
8 family move furniture and valuables onto  
9 the roof of their homes along Meadow Oaks  
10 Park Drive in Jackson. So I know  
11 flooding. I know what it looks like, and  
12 I know what it feels like to this day, and  
13 hearing what people are saying today is a  
14 stark reminder of that.

15 After the '79 flood, the General  
16 Accounting Office conducted a postmortem  
17 of the flood, the '79 flood. What they  
18 found was a cascading series of errors  
19 that significantly contributed to the  
20 flooding impacts, such as not sandbagging  
21 the Fortification Street Levee, leading to  
22 the flooding of the fairgrounds area.

23 The City of Jackson and the Levee  
24 Board failed to cut off the 66-inch sewer  
25 line that also let in millions of gallons

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 of river water. But foremost, first and  
2 foremost, unabated development in the  
3 floodplain and, yes, the floodway by  
4 greedy, opportunistic developers.

5 So here we are again with history  
6 repeating itself with the so-called One  
7 Lake plan, which is nothing short of a  
8 real estate development scheme  
9 masquerading as flood control, which will  
10 once again allow development in the  
11 floodway. I can't think of anything more  
12 asinine than that at this point in time.

13 While the DEIS is woefully incomplete,  
14 as Mr. Andrew Whitehurst has identified,  
15 it is incomplete. In the 25 to 30 years  
16 that I've been doing this work, I have  
17 never seen a DEIS that was going to wait  
18 for the PED section to be conducted.  
19 What -- as Mr. Andrews said, what is the  
20 rush here? What's driving this process  
21 besides politics?

22 So given that, you've given us a draft  
23 Environmental Impact Statement that does  
24 not contain a mitigation plan. You have  
25 given us a DEIS that has no impacts for

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 tributary flooding in Jackson. How can  
2 that be if you're really, truly interested  
3 in resolving flood issues?

4 Tributaries are one of the biggest  
5 problems, and there's been plenty of  
6 information about one lake and the  
7 inability of those tributaries to drain,  
8 exacerbating the existing situation. We  
9 hear -- and I appreciate what you've done.  
10 We hear all this talk. But we don't have  
11 the information to make decisions, and  
12 that tells me you don't either.

13 Determination of whether the weir is a  
14 high hazard dam, that information is not  
15 in this document. No sedimentation study.  
16 It's to be conducted during the PED  
17 period. On and on and on. The hazardous  
18 waste has not been analyzed or done an  
19 assessment --

20 MR. SHAW: Sir, can I get you to wrap  
21 it up, please?

22 MR. LOUIE MILLER: -- that in and of  
23 itself is very disturbing in the sense  
24 that these are -- we know there are sites  
25 that if One Lake gets built, you're going



## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 to dredge those up -- several of those  
2 toxic sites. Why has that not been done  
3 now given the costs that are involved in  
4 cleaning up those types of sites?

5 Formal environmental -- let me get  
6 this straight. Formal Endangered Species  
7 Act. Okay. Very important, required by  
8 law, consultation, and it must be  
9 initiated. Formal -- the other -- the --  
10 you know, the list is insane, but let's --  
11 let's try to keep our cool here.

12 Let's talk about the Fish and Wildlife  
13 Coordination Act that has not been  
14 followed through. That is another issue  
15 that will be critical to what this is  
16 going to look like and what kind of  
17 mitigation you would end up with.

18 So there is -- you know, again, we're  
19 putting the cart before the horse in not  
20 having that information available to the  
21 public in a draft, which is where it's  
22 supposed to be so people can evaluate that  
23 in some meaningful way and just say, oh,  
24 well, we'll get to it at some point in the  
25 PED.

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1                   So it's disturbing to me that that is  
2                   the process that we're facing right now.  
3                   So given that --

4                   MR. SHAW:   Sir, would you please wrap  
5                   it up?

6                   MR. LOUIE MILLER:   Pardon?

7                   MR. SHAW:   Would you please wrap it  
8                   up?

9                   MR. LOUIE MILLER:   I will when I'm  
10                  finished.  Thank you.  I've waited for  
11                  everybody else to speak.  Okay?

12                  MR. SHAW:   But there are other people  
13                  that want to speak, sir.

14                  MR. LOUIE MILLER:   I appreciate that,  
15                  and I'll make it short.

16                  So those are -- those are issues that  
17                  we need to look at.  As many people have  
18                  said here today, the A1 plus with  
19                  additional levees will do -- get the  
20                  biggest bang for the buck and protect  
21                  people's houses and homes now rather than  
22                  later.  Thank you.

23                  MR. SHAW:   Thank you.  Anyone else?  
24                  Okay.  As we mentioned earlier, there are  
25                  multiple ways that you can continue to add

## Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1           your feedback, add your comments, ask  
2           questions. You can certainly do so back  
3           in the lobby area with the subject matter  
4           experts. You can go to the project  
5           website, which is here at the bottom of  
6           the page. You can also email to that  
7           email address there, and then there are  
8           comment cards in the back.

9           I would like to thank you all for your  
10          participation, for being here, to  
11          expressing your views, to being heard. It  
12          does matter. We want to hear. We want to  
13          know. I would ask that you please have a  
14          safe journey, and with that, we're going  
15          to adjourn in here. If you would like to  
16          talk to some of the subject matter  
17          experts, please do so now. Thank you.

18                           (END OF MEETING.)

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Transcript of 2:00 Meeting 7/10/2024

1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER  
2 I, Ella J. Hardwick, CVR-M, #1749, Court  
3 Reporter and Notary Public, in and for the State of  
4 Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing  
5 contains a true and correct transcript, to the best  
6 of my ability, as taken by me in the aforementioned  
7 matter at the time and place heretofore stated.  
8 I certify that I am not in the employ of or  
9 related to any counsel or party in this matter and  
10 have no interest, monetary or otherwise, in the  
11 final outcome of this matter.  
12 Witness my signature and seal this the 21st day  
13 of July, 2024.  
14  
15   
16 Ella J. Hardwick, CVR-M #1749  
17 My Commission Expires:  
18 February 8, 2025  
19  
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21  
22  
23  
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