



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, VICKSBURG DISTRICT
4155 CLAY STREET
VICKSBURG, MS 39183-3435

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF:

Regional Planning and
Environment Division South
Environmental Compliance Branch

October 20, 2025

CLEAN WATER ACT, SECTION 404
PUBLIC NOTICE

J BENNETT JOHNSTON WATERWAY 12-FT CHANNEL
LOUISIANA

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Vicksburg District (CEMVK), proposes to increase the J Bennett Johnston (JBJ) Waterway from 9-FT to 12-FT by performing improvements to existing dikes. The work involves the placement of fill material into waters of the U.S., therefore, the provisions of Title 33 CFR Parts 336.1(b)(1) and 337.1, effective April 26, 1988, are applicable and issuance of this public notice is required.

This notice is being distributed to all interested state and federal agencies and other known parties to make aware USACE, CEMVK's intentions to perform dike improvements in the area of work listed herein.

PROJECT: J Bennett Johnston 12-FT Channel

PROJECT AUTHORITY: This study effort is authorized by Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2018, section 1201:

The Secretary is authorized to conduct a feasibility study for the following projects for water resources development and conservation and other purposes, as identified in the reports titled "Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development" submitted to Congress on March 17, 2017, and February 5, 2018, respectively, pursuant to section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 2282d) or otherwise reviewed by Congress: (3) J. BENNETT JOHNSTON WATERWAY, LOUISIANA.—Project for navigation, JBJ Waterway, Louisiana.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED: The JBJ Waterway serves as a vital conduit for affordable transportation, driving economic prosperity in the region. The overall purpose and need is to improve navigation efficiencies for the channel through evaluating alternatives to provide an authorized 12-FT navigation channel depth in the JBJ Waterway and the five locks and dams between RMs 0 to 228, L&Ds 1 through 5. Maintaining a 12-FT channel on the JBJ Waterway will

result in transportation cost savings by increasing carrying capacity and eliminating the need for industries to “lightload.”

PROJECT LOCATION: The JBJ Waterway crosses ten northwest and central Louisiana parishes: Bossier, Caddo, Red River, Winn, Natchitoches, Grant, Rapides, Avoyelles, Catahoula, and Concordia. It supports the surrounding communities and military operations at Fort Polk (located in Vernon Parish) and Barksdale Air Force Base (located in Bossier City). The JBJ Waterway project is authorized from Old River Control Complex to the I-220 Bridge near Shreveport, Louisiana. All proposed features of the project are located primarily within the JBJ Waterway. Within the project area, there are five lock and dams that control vessel traffic within the channel.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION: The proposed plan is composed of 3 components:

1. Stonework improvements to the existing dikes in order to support 12-FT draft vessels.
2. Deviation from EM 1110-2-1604 to transit through the locks and dams during periods of low water.
3. Draft restrictions during periods of extreme drought or low water.

The main feature of this alternative is the stonework to bolster the existing dikes in 8 key dike field locations.

METHODS OF DISCHARGE: The main feature of this alternative is the stonework to bolster the existing dikes in 8 key dike field locations. Existing rock would be rearranged, and additional rock would be added to the dikes to achieve the 12-FT draft through scouring.

ADJACENT PROPERTIES: Properties immediately adjacent to the area for construction work are would not be impacted by the proposed actions.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT DOCUMENTATION: The USACE, CEMVK has completed a draft Feasibility Report with Integrated Environmental Assessment (EA), which analyzed the impacts of this proposed project. The draft EA resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and is being released for public comment along with this public notice.

STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A 404 (b)(1) review for this proposed project was completed on August 20, 2025, and subsequently, an application for a water quality permit would be sent to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality following concurrence of the finding of the 404 (b)(1) review.

THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES: According to updated results obtained from the USFWS Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) tool on 7 August 2025, there are a total of 6 threatened, endangered, or candidate species listed that could inhabit the immediate project area. The federally listed species that could occur in the project area are as follows:

- Tricolored bat (*Perimyotis septentrionalis*): Proposed Endangered
- Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Dryobates borealis*): Threatened
- Whooping crane (*Grus americana*): Experimental Population
- Alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*): Proposed Threatened
- Pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*): Endangered
- Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*): Proposed threatened

USACE made the determination that the proposed actions May Affect but Are Not Likely to Adversely Affect for the alligator snapping turtle and the pallid sturgeon. All other species received a determination of No Effect. Any changes in project design and impacts would be coordinated with USFWS.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: Based on the information presented in this document, USACE MVK has determined that there are no historic properties, as defined in 36 CFR 800.16 (I), in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the J. Bennett Johnston Waterway 12-ft Feasibility Study TSP, Avoyelles, Rapides, Grant, Winn, Desoto, and Natchitoches Parishes, Louisiana. Therefore, USACE MVK is making a finding of No Adverse Effects to Historic Properties/No Further Work Required for this undertaking. This project will be subject to the standard change in scope of work, unexpected discovery, and unmarked human burial sites act provisions.

Formal Section 106 consultation was initiated with Federally-recognized Tribes during the 2024 Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MS SHPO) Tribal Summit on 22 October 2024, and follow-up email correspondence to 12 Tribal parties (Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Muscogee [Creek] Nation, Quapaw Nation, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana) as well as the Louisiana SHPO on 05 November 2024, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(c). Written receipt confirming the intent to participate as a consulting party to this undertaking was received from the Louisiana SHPO on 18 November, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma on 07 December, and the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas on 09 December 2024. Virtual meetings were held 24 April, 23 July, and 27 August 2025, to further discuss this undertaking with Tribal consulting parties. All consulting parties were provided additional email correspondence of the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) selection, cultural analysis, and USACE Section 106 undertaking determination of **No Adverse Effects to Historic Properties/No Further Work Required** for the proposed project on 13 August 2025 for review and comment. Additional correspondence was provided to all

consulting parties on 13 September 2025 further clarifying the scope and nature of the project. Section 106 concurrence was received from the LA SHPO on 18 September and the Quapaw Nation on 7 October 2025.

COORDINATION: The following is a partial list of agencies to which a copy of this notice is being sent:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer

This notice is being distributed to these and other appropriate congressional, federal, state, and local interests, environmental organizations, and other interested parties.

PROJECT PLANS: Plans for the proposed work will be on file in the Regional Planning and Environment Division South Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District, 4155 East Clay Street, Vicksburg, Mississippi 39183, and may be seen by anyone having interest in them.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Interested parties may submit comments regarding the proposed work in writing to Mr. Taylor Piefke, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, by email at Taylor.Piefke@usace.army.mil or (601) 631-5087.

Sincerely,

Enclosures

Mark Smith
Chief, Environmental Compliance Branch

COMMENT PERIOD FOR THIS PUBLIC NOTICE EXPIRES: **NOVEMBER 20, 2025**