



Pearl River Basin, Mississippi, Federal Flood Risk Management Project

Appendix A - Preliminary Scoping Report



July 2025

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APPENDIX A: PRELIMINARY SCOPING REPORT

**Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management
Project**

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Scoping Report

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**Pearl River Basin, Mississippi
Federal Flood Risk Management Project
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Scoping Report**

I Introduction

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg District (CEMVK) published a Notice of Intent (NOI) on May 18, 2023 (FR vol 88 No. 96) notifying the public of the USACE intent to prepare a DEIS for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi and to conduct public outreach for a study to evaluate potential Flood Risk Management measures in the study area and to analyze flood risk management plans that can be implemented under section 3104 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. This DEIS provides an assessment of proposed alternative projects to address flood damage reduction efforts within Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi. The notice of intent begins a formal public scoping comment period, which is ongoing throughout the development of the DEIS. The purpose is to determine the scope of issues for analysis in this DEIS.

This Scoping Report outlines the project background and scoping process to date, and summarizes the key issues identified by members of the public during the scoping period, which began on May 23, 2023. This report presents comments received up to June 30, 2023. Comments received after June 30, 2023, are not included in this report; however, they are considered in the development of alternatives to address the impacts and analysis of the DEIS. An analysis of the comments identified 18 themes that are detailed in Section IV. The following top five themes represent roughly 69 percent of the comments received:

1. Flood Risk/ Concern
2. Environmental Impacts
3. Ecosystem Impacts
4. Water Supply
5. Alternatives

II Background

The Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project is located between River Mile (RM) 270.0 just south of Byram, Mississippi, and RM 301.77 at the dam of Ross Barnett Reservoir.

The NFI Final Section 211 Report was submitted to the ASA-CW as a recommendation for federal participation in flood risk management within the Pearl River Basin in Mississippi. The NFI Draft Report underwent an Independent External Peer Review in June 2018, and the USACE Agency Technical Review (ATR) in June 2020.

The purpose of this DEIS is to evaluate alternatives for federal participation in Pearl River, Mississippi, flood risk management along the Pearl River in Hinds and Rankin Counties under Section 3104 of WRDA 2007. The “scope”, or extent of evaluation, for purposes of this EIS includes the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts analyzed. Those impacts are direct, indirect, or cumulative. The scope of this DEIS includes the geographic range, as well as elements of the human-built and natural environment studied to determine all reasonable alternatives for flood control in the Study Area.

This DEIS was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), as reflected in the USACE Engineer Regulation (ER) 200-2-2 (33 CFR Part 230). The NFI Section 211 Report is incorporated by reference and is available at <http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Programs-and-Project-Management/Project-Management/Pearl-River/>.

III Scoping

NEPA affords all persons, organizations, and government agencies the right to review and comment on proposed major Federal actions that are evaluated by a NEPA document. This is known as the “Scoping Process.” The scoping process is the initial step in the preparation of the DEIS. The scoping process is an early and open process to help determine the scope of issues to address and identify the significant issues related to the proposed action. Therefore, the scoping process will help identify (1) the range of actions (project, procedural changes), (2) Alternatives—both those to be rigorously explored and evaluated and those that may be eliminated, and (3) the environmental resources considered in the evaluation of potential environmental impacts.

Six public scoping meetings were organized and hosted in accordance with NEPA to gather input from interested parties, agencies, and the public to evaluate alternatives to compensate for unavoidable impacts within the Pearl River Basin Federal Flood Risk Management Project.

Public outreach meetings were held in person twice a day on May 23 and May 24, 2023, and virtually twice a day on June 1, 2023. The In-Person public meetings were held on May 23, 2023, in Slidell, LA at the Slidell High School Auditorium and May 24, 2023, in Jackson, MS at the Mississippi Agriculture Museum, Sparkman Auditorium. The virtual meetings were broadcast from the CEMVK office at 1300. and 1800. The public was notified about the meetings through publication of the NOI, as well as through multiple social media channels and local newspaper. Recorded presentations of the scoping meetings were uploaded to the study website for those who could not attend. Questions were answered live by the PDT during both meetings.

Scoping Meetings

A. Public Notification

The public was notified of the scoping meetings using the following communication mechanisms. The meeting materials are included in Attachment A1-3:

- A Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register on May 18, 2023.
- A Public Notice was e-mailed to 12 television stations between Mississippi and Louisiana.
- A meeting notice was placed on the CEMVK Web site and Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood & Drainage Control District website.

B. Meeting Process

The virtual meetings were conducted according to the following agenda:

1. Opening remarks
2. PowerPoint presentation
3. Public Comments

A PowerPoint presentation was presented to the participants and narrated by Robyn Colosimo, Colonel Christopher D. Klein, Thomas Shaw, Troy Constance, Lesley Prochaska, and Brandon Davis. A video was presented by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Michael L. Connor. The PowerPoint presentation is included in Attachment A3. A panel of subject matter experts were on hand during the virtual meeting to answer questions and clarify information presented.

Opening remarks were made by USACE representatives. During opening remarks, the scoping process was explained to the participants who were advised that comments would become part of the record of the meeting.

USACE representatives wrapped up the meeting by thanking participants for their attendance and contributions and encouraging them to submit comments for inclusion in the Scoping Report by June 30, 2023.

C. Meeting Venues

The in-person meetings were held at two locations: Slidell, LA, and Jackson, MS. For the Slidell, LA in-person meeting, the scoping meeting was held at the Slidell High School Auditorium located at 1 Tiger Drive, Slidell, LA 70458. For the Jackson, MS in-person meeting, the scoping meeting was held at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Sparkman Auditorium, located at 1150 Lakeland Drive Jackson, MS 39216.

For the two virtual meetings, CEMVK Office of Public Affairs along with Project Management managed the meetings at the CEMVK HQ building at 1400 Walnut Street Vicksburg, MS 39180. The video presentation was shared live on WebEx. The scoping

videos were posted to the USACE Vicksburg District Website:
<https://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Programs-and-Project-Management/Project-Management/Pearl-River/>. Also the scoping videos were posted on YouTube.

D. Meeting Attendance

On May 23, 2023, two in-person meetings were held at 1300 and 1800. The in-person scoping meetings located within Slidell, LA included roughly 74 participants. There were questions and/or comments submitted.

On May 24, 2023, two in-person meetings were held at 1300 and 1800. The in-person scoping meetings located within Jackson, MS included roughly 183 participants. There were questions and/or comments submitted by the participants during this scoping meeting.

On June 1, 2023, at 1300, the WebEx scoping meeting included 69 participants. There were questions and/or comments submitted by the participants during this scoping meeting.

On June 1, 2023, 1800, the WebEx scoping meeting included 54 participants. There were questions and/or comments submitted by the participants during this scoping meeting.

IV. Comments

The following methods were available for the meeting participants and other members of the public to submit their comments on the Pearl River Basin Federal Flood Risk Management Project:

- Oral and written comments could be presented during the in-person and live virtual meetings. Transcription of meetings are located in Attachment A4
- E-mail comments: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil.
- Mail comments: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay St., Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

The number of comments received and the mode in which those comments were received is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Comments by Mode

Comment Mode	Number of Respondents	Number of Comments
Facebook	1	2*
Letter by Mail	3	3
In-person comment	159	159
e-mail submitted Letter	154	154
e-mail submitted Form Letters	3,161	5
Total:	3,478	323

**Facebook comments were MVK posting the YouTube video of scoping meeting*

A. Methodology for Reviewing and Summarizing Comments

For this report, a comment is defined as a distinct assertion, point, or opinion relating to the study. Therefore, an individual could have multiple comments per submittal. For example, one person's e-mail message may contain several comments. This preliminary report considered all comments received by 11:59 p.m. central standard time on Friday, June 30, 2023. The comments were organized according to comment mode (Attachment A5 and A6). This scoping report includes comments received via individual e-mail, form e-mail, letter, comment cards, and comments posted as public comment on the Notice of Intent published in the National Register.

Comments were evaluated for recurring themes in order to gain an understanding of the key issues to be addressed in the draft EIS. The theme categories are broad and encompassing in order to summarize the major issues that were identified. Sixteen recurring themes were identified. Comments were categorized into one or more themes. For example, the comment "The one Lake plan is too negatively impactful and does not help Jackson enough to outweigh the destruction that will come with it. We need real and sustainable solutions to the serious issue of the flooding in Jackson. Please stop this shameless attempt to further disenfranchise Black residents. do not carry on with this gentrification project." is classified as Theme 1: Environmental Impacts, Theme 3: Flood Risk/ Concern, and Theme 7: Environmental Justice (EJ).

It should also be noted that the number of comments in Table 2 below, is greater than the total number of comments in Table 1 because some comments are associated with more than one theme and therefore are counted more than once in Table 2. The recurring themes and their percentage of occurrence are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Themes by Percentage of Occurrence

Ranking	Theme	Number of Comments	Percent Occurrence
1.	Flood Risk/ Concern	184	20.8%
2.	Environmental Impacts	164	18.5%
3.	Ecosystem Impact	108	12.2%
4.	Water Supply	90	10.2%
5.	Alternatives	71	8%
6.	Hazard, Toxic, Radioactive Waste (HTRW)	45	5.1%
7.	EJ	42	4.7%
8.	Impacts to Wildlife	27	3%
9.	Housing or Property Impact	23	2.6%
10.	Infrastructure (Electricity or Road Accessibility)	18	2%
11.	Health Concerns	17	1.9%
12.	Hunting or Outdoor Recreation	17	1.9%

13.	Support	17	1.9%
14.	Responses	16	1.8%
15.	Home Accessibility	13	1.4%
16.	Agriculture (Flooding of Farmland or Loss of Livestock)	12	1.3%
17.	Access to Emergency Services	12	1.3%
18.	Cultural	4	0.45%
	Total:	880*	100%**

*Note: * The number of occurrences is greater than the total number of comments received because a given comment can be associated. The percentages are based on dividing the number of occurrences of a given theme by the total number of comments and multiplying by 100.*

***Percentage references whole numbers except for cultural.*

The top five recurring themes account for 69 percent of the comments and are more fully developed below.

Flood Risk/Concern: Majority of the comments were made regarding the flooding within the study area and if the project would in fact address the flooding issues.

Environmental Impacts: 18.5% of the comments were made regarding the negative impacts the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project would have on the surrounding area including both the study area and downstream impacts. The impacts discussed include the erosion of banks, the impacts to pristine areas along the pearl, the impacts to water quality, the impacts to the Gulf of Mexico due to changes of the Pearl River, etc...

Ecosystem Impact: Negative comments were made regarding the ecosystem impacts occurring within the study area and downstream of the study area to flora and fauna (Both terrestrial and aquatic). The general consensus is the worry that the construction of the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project could cause irreversible damage to the ecosystem that inhabits the Pearl River to the Gulf of Mexico.

Water Supply: Concern was expressed regarding if the construction the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project would impact the current water concerns within the Pearl River. Many comments expressed interest in learning if the drought conditions that occur in certain parts of the year would worsen due to this project.

Alternatives: General comments expressed that Alternative C should not be selected and other alternatives like alternative A, A1, and the One River Plan should be evaluated.

B. Form e-mails

Numerous e-mails were received in the format of “form e-mails.” Multiple form letters were created by “everyactioncustom.com”

CEMVK received roughly 3161 individual form e-mails/letters with individual names and addresses. The e-mails were received from May 23, 2023, through June 30, 2023. The

bulk of the emails arriving between June 4 – 8, 2023. The form e-mail/letters are included in Attachment A4. The form e-mails received contained the same language, and therefore counted as a single occurrence and assigned themes accordingly for the purpose of this analysis.

In general, the comments from the form letters opposed the current plan and stressed the impacts the current plan would have on the environment. The concern focused on water quality, flooding, HTRW, impacts to the wildlife, and the downstream impacts from this construction.

C. Additional Opportunities for Public Input

The official deadline for receipt of comments for preliminary scoping was June 30, 2023. The draft EIS will be available for public review and comment for a 45-day period that is currently scheduled for January 26, 2024.

D. Missing Information

Not applicable

Attachment A1
Federal Register Notice of Intent

complete description of the activities, go to <https://www.federalregister.gov> and search on the permit number provided in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1—ISSUED PERMITS

Permit No.	RTID	Applicant	Previous Federal Register notice	Issuance date
24378-01	0648-XC630	The University of Alaska Southeast, 1332 Seward Ave, Sitka, AK 99835 (Responsible Party: Jan Straley).	87 FR 80527, December 30, 2022.	April 28, 2023.
25686	0648-XB542	NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach, Miami, FL (Responsible Party: Lisa Desfosse, Ph.D.).	86 FR 59997, October 29, 2021	April 5, 2023.
26919	0648-XC724	Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 2070 U.S. Highway 278 Southeast, Social Circle, GA 30025 (Responsible Party: Matt Elliott).	88 FR 7080, February 2, 2023 ...	April 14, 2023.
27027	0648-XC718	Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, P.O. Box 140, Gustavus, AK 99826 (Responsible Party: Thomas Schaff).	88 FR 4975, January 26, 2023 ...	April 28, 2023.
27077	0648-XC750	WSP Wild Water Productions Limited, St Stephen's Avenue, Bristol, BS1 1YL, United Kingdom (Responsible Party: Joanna Barwick).	88 FR 8408, February 9, 2023 ...	April 11, 2023.
27099	0648-XC782	Pacific Whale Foundation (Responsible Party: Jens Curie), 300 Ma'alaea Rd. Ste. 211, Wailuku, Hawaii 96793.	88 FR 10294, February 17, 2023	April 28, 2023.
27225	0648-XC783	Sea Research Foundation, Inc. dba Mystic Aquarium, 55 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355 (Responsible Party: Katie Cubina).	88 FR 10299, February 17, 2023	April 20, 2023.
27267	0648-XC816	The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore, 1876 Mansion House Drive, Baltimore, MD 21217 (Responsible Party: Ellen Bronson, DVM).	88 FR 15681, March 14, 2023	April 28, 2023.
27272	0648-XC768	Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, 175 Edward Foster Road, Scituate, MA 02066 (Responsible Party: David Wiley, Ph.D.).	88 FR 9870, February 15, 2023	April 20, 2023.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activities proposed are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

As required by the ESA, as applicable, issuance of these permit was based on a finding that such permits: (1) were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in Section 2 of the ESA.

Authority: The requested permits have been issued under the MMPA of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the ESA of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226), as applicable.

Dated: May 12, 2023.

Julia M. Harrison,
 Chief, Permits and Conservation Division,
 Office of Protected Resources, National
 Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2023–10561 Filed 5–17–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a draft environmental impact statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) intends to prepare a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project in Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi to analyze flood risk management plans that can be implemented under section 3104 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. This notice updates the original Notice of Intent declaring the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District, the non-Federal interest (NFI) and USACE's intent to conduct a Feasibility Study

and EIS process, which was published in the **Federal Register** on July 25, 2013. USACE is now preparing a DEIS to identify the national economic development (NED) plan by comparing the level of flood protection provided by the alternatives presented in the NFI's section 211 Study (Alternatives A and C) and two new USACE alternatives (Alternative A1 and Combination/Hybrid Plan, as allowed for by section 3104); assess the environmental acceptability and technical feasibility of the alternatives; and provide the Secretary the necessary information to choose a plan to implement. Additionally, consistent with section 1176 of WRDA 2018, the DEIS will assess potential downstream impacts to the Pearl River Basin.

DATES: All comments and suggestions must be submitted by June 20, 2023.

ADDRESSES: To ensure the Corps has sufficient time to consider public input in the preparation of the Draft EIS, scoping comments should be submitted by email at PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil, by surface mail to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK–PMP, 4155 Clay Street, Vicksburg, Mississippi 39183–3435, or at the Scoping Meeting(s).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions and comments regarding the proposed project should reference “the

Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project” and be directed to Eric Williams at eric.m.williams@usace.army.mil or (504) 862-2862.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background: Section 3104 of WRDA 2007 modified the “Pearl River Basin Project” originally authorized by section 401(e)(3) of WRDA 1986 to authorize the Secretary to “construct the project generally in accordance with the plan described in the ‘Pearl River Watershed, Mississippi, Feasibility Study Main Report, Preliminary Draft’, dated February 2007” subject to subsection (c). Section 3104(c) provides that “[i]f the Secretary determines under subsection (b) that the locally preferred plan provides a level of flood damage reduction that is equal to or greater than the level of flood damage reduction provided by the national economic development plan and that the locally preferred plan is environmentally acceptable and technically feasible, the Secretary may construct the project identified as the national economic development plan, or the locally preferred plan, or some combination thereof.”

The NFI prepared a draft feasibility study/environmental impact statement (Study) under section 211 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996 and submitted it to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (OASACW) in July 2022 for review. Since then, OASACW and USACE have been working with the NFI on resolving identified issues with the NFI section 211 Study.

For the past 100 years, headwater flooding of the Pearl River has caused disruption to citizens and businesses throughout the Jackson, Mississippi, metropolitan area, putting over 5,000 commercial and residential structures at risk of flood damage. Five of the highest river stages on record have occurred in the past 20 years. The greatest flood risk is borne by minority and low-income communities. Jackson has struggled with population loss and lost economic opportunity.

In 1996, local interests proposed the LeFleur Lakes Flood Control Plan, consisting of upper and lower lakes along the Pearl River south of the Ross Barnett Reservoir as an alternative to the comprehensive levee plan consisting of new levees, levee enlargements, water control structures, and culverts. USACE later prepared a preliminary feasibility study and draft environmental impact statement (FS/DEIS) evaluating the local interest plan and the comprehensive levee plan, dated February 2007, which was not noticed in the **Federal Register**,

but is referenced in the current DEIS. The levee plan was determined to be non-implementable.

In March of 2012, the NFI prepared a Preliminary Hydraulic and Hydrologic Report for a channel improvement concept along with some initial inquiries of a locally preferred plan with a smaller footprint. The flood risk management effort was continued in 2013 when the NFI team began rescoping the project with input from USACE, input from additional agencies and the public, and a review of previous alternatives. To efficiently and effectively consider as many measures as possible, the previous reports were utilized where possible, reevaluating the flood risk management measures studied and considering over 60 plans previously studied. During the review of plans examined in prior reports, plans were updated in some cases with current cost estimates; in other cases, plans were updated with continued modeling for updated and thorough analysis. Using this information, the USACE is conducting a reanalysis of engineering, economic, and environmental factors relative to prospective flood alleviation measures in the Pearl River Watershed study area (Metropolitan Jackson area) for Alternatives A, A1, C, and a Combination/Hybrid Plan by employing Department of the Army criteria and guidelines. The DEIS will examine the reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of all reasonable alternatives that may be proposed.

Proposed Action: The purpose of the proposed action is to reduce flood risk in the Jackson metropolitan area; reduce the flood risk of critical infrastructure, including the Savannah Street Wastewater Treatment Facility; and to improve access to transportation routes, evacuation routes, and critical care facilities during flood events. For the past 100 years, headwater flooding of the Pearl River (greater than 10 feet deep in some areas) has caused disruption to businesses and industry throughout the Jackson, MS, metropolitan area. This area of increased flood risk includes 5,000 commercial and residential structures and effects a population of over 500,000. There have been numerous flood events that have affected the Study Area, most notably the Easter Flood of 1979 and the May Flood of 1983. Most recently, the Pearl River crested at 36.67 feet in Jackson on February 17, 2020, the third highest crest ever recorded.

Alternatives: Alternatives being considered include the following. Alternative A consists of relocating structures (buy out) and buying the land

upon which the structures were located. The total number of structures to be relocated in this alternative is more than 3,000, including residential structures, commercial structures, government and public buildings, schools, and hospitals. Alternative A1 will be for both residential and nonresidential structures receiving residual damages in the base year with the project in place. Nonstructural measures of acquisition, elevation, and floodproofing may be applied to several with-project floodplains and will be optimized by reach to the annual exceedance probability (AEP) event floodplain providing the highest net benefits. Alternative C consists of the construction of channel improvements, demolition of the existing weir near the J. H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant (WTP) site and construction of a new weir with a low-flow gate structure further downstream to enlarge the existing river channel, Federal levee improvements (excavated material plan), and upgrading an existing non-Federal levee into a federalized ring levee around the Savannah Street WWTP. The NFI's preferred alternative is a Channel Improvements Plan, Alternative C. Consideration of an alternative that is a combination, or hybrid, of these plans is authorized. The Combination/Hybrid Plan may consist of features that demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in Alternatives A, A1, and C. Through this Notice, the public is invited to identify potential alternatives, information, and analyses relevant to the proposed action.

Summary of Expected Effects: It is anticipated that Alternatives A and A1 would have minimal impacts on natural resources but could have significant effects to the human environment. These alternatives propose the buyout of up to approximately 3,100 structures, including homes and businesses. Implementation of Alternative A or A1 would impact population and housing, employment and business activity, tax revenues, community cohesiveness and growth.

Alternative C's environmental effects will be further determined during the upcoming analyses. Based on the information available now approximately 2,069 acres of terrestrial habitat would be converted to aquatic habitat. Approximately 1,861 acres of wetlands and “other waters of the U.S.” and approximately 487 acres of existing surface water bodies, including the Pearl River channel and its tributaries, would be impacted. Additionally, impacts on threatened and endangered species by converting the portion of the

Pearl River within the project area from a riverine system to a lake system will be further reviewed. Water quality and quantity impacts downstream of the project area will also be reviewed pursuant to Section 1176.

Environmental Reviews and Consultation Requirements: The alternatives are being coordinated with federal, state, regional, and local agencies. In accordance with relevant environmental laws and regulations, USACE will engage at least the following agencies, some of which may also serve as cooperating or participating agencies in the EIS preparation: U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; USFWS under the Endangered Species Act; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Mississippi Department of Environment Quality under the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act; Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and Federally-recognized Indian Tribes under the National Historic Preservation Act.

NEPA Schedule: The draft EIS is presently scheduled to be available for public review and comment in September 2023. A 45-day public review period will be provided for interested parties and agencies to review and comment on this draft document. All interested parties are encouraged to respond to this notice and provide a current address if they wish to be notified of the Draft EIS circulation. A Record of Decision would be approved and signed no earlier than 30 days after the final EIS is published.

Public Involvement and Scoping: USACE invites all affected federal, state, and local agencies, affected Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, other interested parties, and the general public to participate in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process during development of the DEIS. Besides providing information, this notice requests input on alternatives and issues of concern.

To ensure that public comments are considered in the DEIS preparation process, members of the public, interested persons and entities must submit their comments to USACE by mail, email, or at the Scoping

Meeting(s). All comments and suggestions must be submitted by June 20, 2023. All personally identifiable information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by a commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

Scoping meeting(s) will be held at various locations (Slidell, Louisiana, and Jackson, Mississippi) during the scoping period which extends to June 20, 2023, to present information and receive comments from the public. Notification of the meeting(s) will be publicly announced in advance by USACE through press releases, special public notices, USACE social media platforms, and the project website <http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Programs-and-Project-Management/Project-Management/Pearl-River/>.

James A. Bodron,
Programs Director, Mississippi Valley Division.

[FR Doc. 2023–10599 Filed 5–17–23; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3720–58–P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Certificate of Alternate Compliance for USS George Washington (CVN 73)

AGENCY: Department of the Navy (DoN), Department of Defense (DoD).

ACTION: Notice of issuance of certificate of alternate compliance.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Navy hereby announces that a Certificate of Alternate Compliance has been issued for USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73). Due to the special construction and purpose of this vessel, the Admiralty Counsel of the Navy has determined it is a vessel of the Navy which, due to its special construction and purpose, cannot comply fully with the navigation lights provisions of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (72 COLREGS) without interfering with its special function as a naval ship. The intended effect of this notice is to warn mariners in waters where 72 COLREGS apply.

DATES: This Certificate of Alternate Compliance is effective May 18, 2023 and is applicable beginning May 4, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lieutenant Commander J. Martin Bunt, JAGC, U.S. Navy, Admiralty Attorney, Office of the Judge Advocate General,

Admiralty and Claims Division (Code 15), 1322 Patterson Ave. SE, Suite 3000, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374–5066, 202–685–5040, or admiralty@navy.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background and Purpose. Executive Order (E.O.) 11964 of January 19, 1977 and 33 U.S.C. 1605 provide that the requirements of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (72 COLREGS), as to the number, position, range, or arc of visibility of lights or shapes, as well as to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signaling appliances, shall not apply to a vessel or class of vessels of the Navy where the Secretary of the Navy shall find and certify that, by reason of special construction or purpose, it is not possible for such vessel(s) to comply fully with the provisions without interfering with the special function of the vessel(s). Notice of issuance of a Certificate of Alternate Compliance must be made in the **Federal Register**.

In accordance with 33 U.S.C. 1605, the Admiralty Counsel of the Navy, under authority delegated by the Secretary of the Navy, hereby finds and certifies that USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) is a vessel of special construction or purpose, and that, with respect to the position of the following navigational lights, it is not possible to comply fully with the requirements of the provisions enumerated in the 72 COLREGS without interfering with the special function of the vessel:

Rule 21(a), pertaining to the placement of the masthead lights over the fore and aft centerline of the ship; Annex I, paragraph 2(g), pertaining to the placement of the sidelights above the hull; Rule 21(b) pertaining to the visibility of the sidelights; Annex I, paragraph 3(a), pertaining to the placement of the forward masthead light in the forward quarter of the ship; and Annex I, Paragraph (2)(i)(iii) pertaining to the placement of the task lights.

The Admiralty Counsel of the Navy further finds and certifies that these navigational lights are in closest possible compliance with the applicable provision of the 72 COLREGS.

Authority: 33 U.S.C. 1605(c), E.O. 11964.

Dated: May 15, 2023.

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

[FR Doc. 2023–10630 Filed 5–17–23; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3810–FF–P

Attachment A2

Public Notice



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Vicksburg District**

www.mvk.usace.army.mil

Contact: Anna Owens

anna.m.owens@usace.army.mil

601-631-5208

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2023

USACE Vicksburg District to host public meetings for Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project

VICKSBURG, Miss. -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Vicksburg District and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) will hold four hybrid public meetings for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management (FRM) Project in Slidell, Louisiana, and Jackson, Mississippi, May 23-24. Two virtual only sessions will be held on June 1.

Attendees will hear from district experts and partners about proposed plans and have an opportunity to provide feedback and input. Each meeting will begin with an overview of the efforts to address flooding in the project area and then provide an opportunity for participants to provide feedback and share information.

Meeting information is as follows:

May 23:

Slidell High School Auditorium
1 Tiger Drive, Slidell, LA 70458

Meeting 1: 1-3 p.m.

Meeting 2: 6-8 p.m.

May 24:

Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, Sparkman Auditorium
1150 Lakeland Drive, Jackson MS 39216
Sparkman Auditorium

Meeting 1: 1-3 p.m.

Meeting 2: 6-8 p.m.

Each in-person meeting will have a virtual attendance option via WebEx dial-in, which is as follows:

Toll-free telephone number: 1-844-800-2712

Meeting number and passcode: 1992 79 9046

The public can provide verbal, written or video comments during the meeting, or through email at pearlriverfrm@usace.army.mil though June 31. District and ASA(CW) personnel will be on hand to receive

feedback.

Self-addressed comment cards will be available. Additional comments via traditional mail can be mailed to:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay St., Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

The district will hold an additional virtual public meetings on June 1 from 1-3 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.

June 1:

Virtual Meetings

<https://usace1.webex.com/meet/thomas.r.shaw>

Toll-free telephone number: 1-844-800-2712

Meeting number and dial-in passcode: 1992 79 9046

ASA(CW) Mr. Michael Connor will use public input to assemble a draft report, which will be released for additional public comments on September 1, 2023. A final report is expected in December 2023, with Mr. Connor's final determination and record of decision expected in January 2024.

The Pearl River FRM project aims to provide effective, near-term flood risk reduction for Pearl River communities.

For more information about the Pearl River FRM Project, visit

<https://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Programs-and-Project-Management/Project-Management/Pearl-River/>.

The USACE Vicksburg District is engineering solutions to the nation's toughest challenges. The Vicksburg District encompasses a 68,000-square-mile area across portions of Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, that holds nine major river basins and incorporates approximately 460 miles of mainline Mississippi River levees. The Vicksburg District is engaged in hundreds of projects and employs approximately 1,100 personnel.

XXX

Attachment A3

PowerPoint Presentation

PUBLIC MEETING MAY 23 & 24, 2023

Pearl River Basin Flood
Risk Management



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps
of Engineers®



AGENDA AND PURPOSE



2

Meeting Purpose

Purpose: Provide opportunity for public to learn more about and provide feedback for the efforts to alleviate/reduce flooding in the project area.

Non-Federal Interest

Non-Federal Interest (NFI): Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District.

Authorization

Authorization: Sec. 3104 of WRDA 2007 (may construct NED plan, the locally preferred plan (LPP), or a combination thereof subject to certain determinations). Sec. 1176 of WRDA 2018 (required assessment of downstream impacts).

History

History: Flooding along the Pearl River has significantly impacted areas in/around Jackson, MS for over 100 years. This area has been studied many times. NFI submitted locally preferred plan in July 2022.

NFI Report

NFI Report: NFI prepared a feasibility study under Sec. 211 of WRDA 1996 and submitted it to the ASA(CW) in July 2022.

USACE Review Process

USACE Review Process: In Oct. 2022, ASA(CW) charged the Corps with completing the data gaps in the NFI's feasibility study to inform the ASA(CW)'s determinations. The analysis (prepared as a draft environmental impact statement) is scheduled for Sep. 1, 2023. The NEPA process is expected to be completed in Jan. 2024.



PUBLIC MEETING PURPOSE



In Person Meeting Schedule

Tuesday

May 23, 2023
1 p.m. & 6 p.m.

1-844-800-2712
Meeting Number:
1992 79 9046

Slidell High School
Auditorium,
#1 Tiger Drive
Slidell, LA 70458

Wednesday

May 24, 2023
1 p.m. & 6 p.m.

1-844-800-2712
Meeting Number:
1992 79 9046

MS Ag Museum,
Sparkman Auditorium,
1150 Lakeland Dr.
Jackson, MS 39216

Virtual Public Meeting Schedule

Thursday

June 1, 2023
1 p.m. & 6 p.m.

- Information to log in or dial in to meeting are available on the web at:
- <https://usace1.webex.com/meet/thomas.r.shaw>

or for phone only
1-844-800-2712
Access Code: 1992799046#

Public Input

- Self-addressed comment cards will be available at the public meetings.
- Traditional Mail
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay St., Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435
- E-Mail PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil



MESSAGE FROM ARMY CIVIL WORKS



Public Message from Assistant
Secretary of the Army for Civil Works,
Michael Connor





PEARL RIVER FLOODING



- The Jackson, Mississippi metropolitan area has experienced devastating floods for the past 100-years, including as recently as 2020 and 2022.
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding has been allocated to complete planning and implementation of a plan.
- People of Jackson, MS are a priority to provide effective flood risk solutions.



CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION



Section 3104 Pearl River Basin, Mississippi, of Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2007

- The Secretary may construct the national economic development (NED) plan, the locally preferred plan (LPP) or some combination thereof,
- Subject to a determination by the Secretary that the LPP provides at least the same level of flood damage reduction as the NED plan and that the LPP is environmentally acceptable and technically feasible.

WRDA 2018 Section 1176

- Assess downstream effects.



HISTORY



- **Jackson East & West Levees constructed 1968**
- **Flood of Record – April 1979**
- **Numerous Flood Risk Studies Conducted**
 - 2007 USACE Preliminary Draft Report
 - Evaluated a Levee Plan and the LaFleur Lakes Plan
 - 2018-2022 Rankin-Hinds (R-H) Feasibility Report Work
 - Prepared under Section 211 of WRDA 1996 authority
 - Released for Public Review in Summer 2018
 - Modified plan to address public comments
 - Modified plan to address OASACW/USACE comments
- **CURRENT STATUS: USACE Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) - Under Development**



USACE ACTIVITIES



Per Section 3104, the Secretary may construct the NED plan, the LPP or some combination thereof.

USACE is preparing a DEIS to inform the Secretary decision.

- Identify NED plan
- Compare level of flood protection of alternatives
- Assess the environmental acceptability and technical feasibility of the alternatives

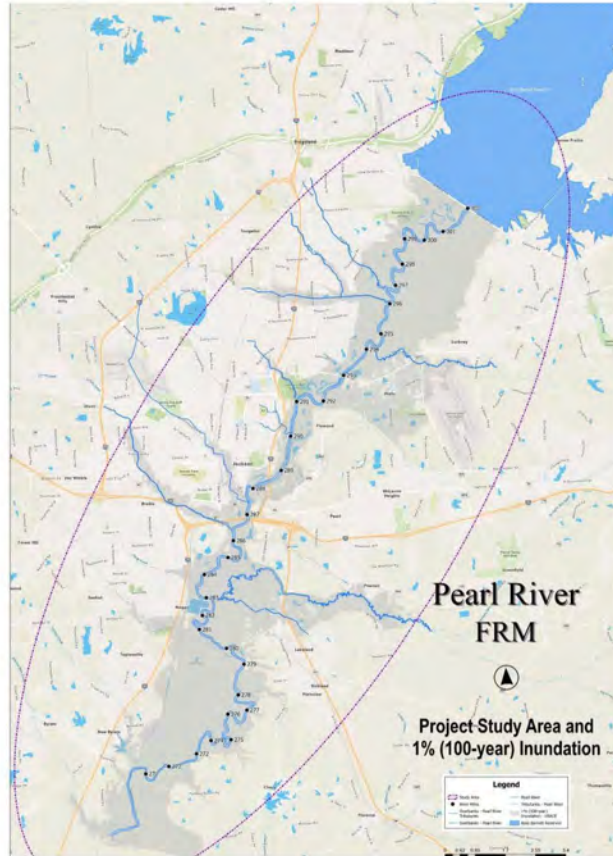
OVERVIEW OF NFI REPORT

Alternatives considered include:

- Nonstructural Plan
- Levees Plan
- Channel Improvement Plan - NFI preferred project consists of:
 - Construction of channel improvements
 - Demolition of the existing weir near the J. H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant (WTP) site
 - Construction of a new weir with a low-flow gate structure further downstream to enlarge the existing river channel
 - Federal levee improvements (excavated material plan)
 - Upgrading an existing non-Federal levee into a federalized ring levee around the Savannah Street WWTP.

ALTERNATIVES UNDER EVALUATION

- **Nonstructural Alternatives**
 - A: Relocating structures (buy out and relocating)
 - A1: Additional non-structural measures such as elevation, and floodproofing
- **Alternative C – Channel Improvements Plan (NFI Recommended Plan)**
 - Excavate and widen channel, use material to enhance levees, create habitat islands and weir relocation
- **A combination or hybrid alternative is authorized.**
- **Other Potential Alternatives**





AREAS OF INTEREST



- Flood Risk Reduction
- Water Supply
- Water and Wastewater Treatment
- Ecosystem/Environmental Impacts
- Existing Waste Sites
- Cultural Resources
- Transportation
- Downstream Impacts
- Recreation Access and Opportunities
- Community Impacts (Cohesion, Quality of Life etc.)
- Economic Opportunities

Potential Others?

TIMELINE

May 2023

- Public/Agency Outreach

Summer
2023

- Technical Evaluations/Analysis & Environmental Compliance Activities

September
1, 2023

- Draft Report/Draft EIS
- The public is given an opportunity to respond to the Draft EIS.

December
2023

- Final Report/Final EIS

January
2024

- Secretary Determination & Record of Decision



TO SUBMIT FEEDBACK / PROVIDE INPUT



Feedback/input will be accepted through June 30, 2023

Email: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

Address for feedback via Mail:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39183-3435

Project Website:

<http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Programs-and-Project-Management/Project-Management/Pearl-River/>

Attachment A4
Transcription of scoping meetings

May 23, 2023 Transcription: Slidell, LA 1300



Transcript of the Testimony of
**USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management
Project Meeting (1_00),**

Date: May 23, 2023

Case: USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project
Meeting (1:00)

Pilant Court Reporting
Phone: (800) 841-6863
Fax: (877) 474-5268

USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project Meeting (1:00)
USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project Meeting (1_00),

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
VICKSBURG DISTRICT**

**PUBLIC MEETING FOR THE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK
MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers - Vicksburg
District public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
Management Project, held at Slidell High School
Auditorium, 1 Tiger Drive, Slidell, Louisiana 70458,
beginning at 1:06 p.m.

Reported by:

Jenna Limjuco, BA-CCR
Certified Court Reporter

APPEARANCES:

Representing the Army Corps of Engineers:

Thomas R. Shaw

Robyn Colosimo

Leslie Prochaska

Colonel Christopher Klein

1 TOM SHAW:

2 Good afternoon, everybody. My name
3 is Tom Shaw. I'm the project manager for
4 the Vicksburg District. Thank you so
5 much for coming to the public meeting for
6 the Pearl River Flood Risk Management
7 Project.

8 Just a little bit of background here:
9 we've got some sign up lists that are out
10 in the foyer. We would ask if you -- if
11 you would put your name and address, and
12 maybe contact info -- I would ask that
13 you wouldn't put your personal email out
14 there because this would become part of
15 the public record, so to speak.

16 Also there are some study boards that
17 are out there with some push pins, and if
18 you're okay with doing it, we would
19 appreciate if you would stick a push pin
20 in that represents the location where you
21 live, because we'd really like to know
22 everybody that's part of this.

23 So we've got an allotted two hours
24 for this meeting, and we want to -- we
25 are here to collect information. We want

1 to know your feedback, your input with
2 respect to this project. So there's a
3 lot of value in that to us, so I would
4 just ask, if you would, if for some
5 reason we're starting to run over, there
6 are multiple ways -- we'll talk about
7 that -- ways that you can actually leave
8 your feedback or your input.

9 So with that, I kind of want to go
10 over the rules -- what we call rules of
11 engagement, just for a second. So when
12 we get through the presentation, one of
13 the things that will happen is that we
14 will do -- we will take comments. There
15 are multiple ways that can be done.
16 There's comment cards out in the lobby
17 and there's a comment box for you to drop
18 those cards in. We will also have the
19 ability for people, if you want to sit
20 down and give your -- like your video, if
21 you will, of your comments, then that's
22 absolutely a way to do it. And then we
23 also have an email address, and I'll show
24 that in just a little bit.

25 So I would ask that to allow

1 everybody to speak who wants to speak,
2 please limit your comments to about three
3 minutes, and that will give everybody the
4 opportunity to provide some input. I
5 would ask that you please be respectful
6 and try to avoid interrupting a panel, a
7 moderator, or somebody who's trying to
8 respond to a comment that you may have.

9 That's for those that are here in the
10 auditorium today. We also have this
11 going on via Webex, so we have a virtual
12 meeting as well. Likewise, you can
13 provide input there and it will be
14 collected and be part of the chat. We
15 can actually chat into the Webex itself,
16 and I will ask that you please refrain
17 from spamming that chat -- multiple
18 people just giving an influx of saying
19 the same thing. We ask that you not try
20 to dominate the conversation.

21 So the email address -- I'm going to
22 go ahead and give that you in just a
23 moment, but without further ado, I would
24 like to announce or tell you who the
25 speakers will be today. So with us on

1 your far right would be Robyn Colosimo.
2 Robyn is the Assistant Secretary of the
3 Army for Project Planning. And beside
4 her is Vicksburg District Commander
5 Colonel Christopher Klein, and beside the
6 Commander is Leslie Prochaska. Leslie is
7 a Plan Formulator with the Regional
8 Planning and Environment Division South.

9 And so with that, we've kind of
10 covered our housekeeping, so if you will,
11 can we go to the next slide, please?
12 Okay. So the question everybody is
13 asking: what's on the agenda? Why are we
14 here? Well, do value the input from the
15 public. The Assistant Secretary of the
16 Army has asked the Corps of Engineers to
17 review a document that was provided by
18 non-federal interests, and that was
19 something that the Corps has taken on.

20 It was an assignment, basically, that
21 we were giving to try to fill in the
22 blanks that there were in this plan --
23 things that there were problems that
24 generated and some could be filled out
25 completely, some could not. So the

1 meeting purpose is to allow the public --
2 you, the public -- to speak up and
3 provide us some feedback.

4 The non-federal interest I mentioned,
5 that is the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River
6 Flood Control and Drainage District --
7 Flood and Drainage Control District,
8 excuse me. And so one of the things I
9 will point to is that why are we here?
10 Why are we doing, you know, what we are?

11 And so there's two authorizations, if
12 you will, that you can see there. First
13 is Section 3104 of the Water Resources
14 Development Act 2007. What that
15 particular section stated was was that
16 the Secretary of the Army is authorized
17 to construct the National Economic
18 Development Plan, the locally preferred
19 plan -- which is -- that's the plan put
20 forth by non-federal interests -- or a
21 combination thereof.

22 In Section 1176 of WRDA 2018,
23 modifies that and says that we do have to
24 consider downstream effects associated
25 with that project as well. So there is a

1 reason for why we're doing this, and
2 that's the issue of the Pearl flooding in
3 the Jackson metro area. As our panelists
4 will talk about, there have been multiple
5 floods there with lots of damage, and
6 they are in desperate need of a flood
7 risk solution.

8 And so as I mentioned earlier, the
9 non-federal interest provided their draft
10 feasibility study, environmental impact
11 statement. They provided that to the
12 ASA's office -- the Assistant Secretary
13 of the Army for Civil Works, Mr. Connor.
14 They provided that to them in July of
15 2022. The ASA's office generated some
16 comments. Most of those comments were
17 resolved.

18 There were still some that were
19 unresolved, and they basically tasked the
20 Corps of Engineers -- in particular, the
21 Vicksburg District -- with trying to
22 complete and fill in those data gaps that
23 were identified as part of that in the
24 meeting.

25 And so what's next, if you will? So

1 we're collecting this -- your comments.
2 We're collecting the information. We are
3 in the process of filling in those data
4 gaps that I mentioned, and we will
5 provide to the Assistant Secretary of the
6 Army by the end -- end of August, so
7 he'll have it the first of September, and
8 there will be some follow up action. The
9 NEPA will be complete in January of 2024.

10 So with that, next slide, please.
11 I've got the slide right here. Okay.
12 And so here is our schedule for public
13 meetings. So this is the first session
14 of two sessions today here in Slidell.
15 There will be -- tomorrow will be -- the
16 24th, there will be a similar 1:00, 6:00
17 session there at the Spartan Auditorium
18 on Lakeland Drive in Jackson, and so
19 there will be one follow on meeting that
20 will be very similar to this one. There
21 will be a virtual public meeting that
22 will happen on the first of June -- a
23 similar 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. session.

24 So I mentioned earlier -- so I
25 mentioned earlier, if you can see at the

1 bottom of the page there, there are
2 multiple ways that you can provide
3 comments. There are comment cards out in
4 front. You can drop them in the box.
5 You can use regular mail if it's
6 available, and the address is up on the
7 screen, and then lastly, we have an email
8 that's set up for this project, and you
9 can see it's pearriverfrm@usace.army.mil.
10 And so we have a court reporter who's
11 taking notes, if you will, of the
12 transcription of this meeting.

13 Next slide, please. Okay. And now,
14 I'd like to reintroduce Ms. Colosimo.
15 Robyn is going to speak next with respect
16 to the project importance.

17 PRESENTATION

18 MS. COLOSIMO:

19 Just a sound check. Can folks hear me?
20 Bonus. As mentioned, I'm Robyn Colosimo, and
21 I work with the Assistant Secretary of the
22 Army for Civil Works Office. I just want to
23 thank everybody for being both here live and
24 online. We really look forward to working
25 with you all to garner your ideas and your

1 concerns about how to solve these flood risk
2 management problems in Jackson and the Pearl
3 drainage. We know that they've long plagued
4 communities, and it's been decades in the
5 making to get here today in many ways.

6 When I say I oversee project planning and
7 review, anything that comes through the Corps
8 that requires either Congressional
9 authorization or appropriation, and then
10 ultimately implementation has to come through
11 our office. So I have a fundamental
12 responsibility in that process to certify the
13 validity of those reports and those
14 recommendations that come through the Chief
15 of Engineers.

16 So it's a serious job, but done in
17 collaboration with the Corps to make sure
18 we're checking our responsibilities both
19 technically and feasibility-wise, right, so
20 that often depends upon where you sit. From
21 my view, in my experience, it's all about the
22 great -- certainly with great input and great
23 understanding of the opportunity before us.

24 I do work for Mike Connor, who is our
25 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil

1 Works, and I want to introduce him via video.
2 He has a short introduction here. He does --
3 did want to be here, was unable to do that
4 today and tomorrow, but has been on the
5 landscape and will continue to be, because
6 this is an important project to advance for
7 him with you all. So with that, can we shoot
8 the video? Thank you.

9 MIKE CONNOR:

10 (Via video) Hi, everyone. I'm Mike
11 Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army
12 for Civil Works. I collect policy
13 oversight and direction for the U.S. Army
14 Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program.
15 The purpose of this community meeting
16 session on solutions is to address
17 flooding along the Pearl River in
18 Mississippi. We look forward to hearing
19 from you about the need -- your needs and
20 concerns regarding flooding issues and
21 the proposed projects to address these
22 challenges.

23 As all of you know, the city of
24 Jackson, Mississippi has experienced
25 devastating floods as recently as 2020

1 and 2022. I saw firsthand some of this
2 flooding in August of last year in a
3 visit to discuss a proposed project.

4 It is a priority to provide the
5 people of Jackson with effective near-
6 term solutions to their flooding risks,
7 and we have a tremendous opportunity to
8 deliver these solutions in the Bipartisan
9 Infrastructure Law with funding provided
10 through that legislation. This
11 administration will set aside sufficient
12 funding to complete planning and
13 implementation of the plan consistent
14 with existing authorities, and in
15 compliance with federal environmental
16 laws.

17 Your input today will provide the
18 technical feedback needed to inform my
19 decision on the solution we will
20 implement to reduce flood risk in
21 Jackson. I appreciate your time today as
22 we work together to provide the best
23 solutions for the Corps to help Jackson
24 and this region of Mississippi. Thank
25 you very much for your time.

1 MS. COLOSIMO:

2 As a civil servant, I feel honored to
3 work for Mr. Connor for many reasons. He's a
4 vast -- important leader with vast experience
5 in solving complex water resources problems
6 at the federal and regional levels. And so
7 for those of you who don't know him, it's
8 important to have him involved in this
9 process.

10 And most notably, he's been in and out of
11 government over the years, including being
12 the Deputy Secretary of Interior in the Obama
13 administration, so we do leverage his
14 experience and understanding on how to see
15 these things to encompass the Corps'
16 responsibilities. As he said, he will
17 ultimately be the decision maker, and I'm
18 going to come back to that in a minute on why
19 that matters here, and he is, obviously, very
20 interested in engaging with you all. Next
21 slide, please.

22 Okay, so why are we here? We're here
23 because we want to advance a flood risk
24 management solution after decades of
25 repetitive flooding in Jackson. As you all

1 know -- and in many cases, probably have
2 experience -- for over a hundred years, we
3 have had water flooding in the Pearl River
4 that's caused disruptions to businesses and
5 industry throughout Jackson, Mississippi,
6 affecting more than 5,000 commercial and
7 residential structures, and impacts a
8 population of over 500,000.

9 The most notable events were in 1979,
10 1983, but as Mr. Connor referenced, we're
11 also aware of the ones in '20 and '22. In
12 fact, I was here with Mr. Connor on a visit
13 as the rains were starting in '22, and it was
14 fascinating to actually have been here and
15 leave the next day, and find out what
16 emerged. It felt really important at the
17 time, and continues to be in my mind.

18 In 1979, the event caused more than \$223
19 million dollars in damages, and those values
20 in today's world, that's a very large number
21 when updated. And of course, the highest
22 crest was in 2020, and particularly affected,
23 too, minority and low income areas of
24 Jackson. We also recognize the Pearl River
25 has tremendous environmental value, including

1 wetlands that filter waters that eventually
2 flow into the Gulf of Mexico, and support
3 thousands of geese, ducks, and migratory
4 birds.

5 For decades, the Corps and non-federal
6 interests have sought to solve the flood risk
7 management problem in Jackson, but a lack of
8 project justification, community support, and
9 funding has stalled meaningful progress. So
10 why do I say that? Funding is a really
11 important piece that Mr. Connor mentioned, is
12 that why we are here and the opportunity for
13 us has everything to do with the Bipartisan
14 Infrastructure Law and money being set aside
15 to address these long stalled issues in
16 Jackson.

17 So we want and look forward to working
18 with you all to solve these problems that
19 have long plagued communities with a view
20 towards what we can do to make things work,
21 and take advantage of this tremendous window
22 of opportunity. Next slide, please.

23 In terms of Congressional interest, just
24 to make sure we don't get too much into
25 alphabet soup, the Corps of Engineers only

1 undertakes things that Congress gives us
2 authorization and appropriate for. In Pearl,
3 and in Jackson in particular, it's
4 particularly interesting because we were
5 authorized, as the Corps of Engineers, as
6 early as 1986 to construct a project to
7 resolve the flood issues that emerged in
8 1979.

9 In 2007, Congress modified that
10 authorization to plan, design, and ultimately
11 implement a project to allow the Assistant
12 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to make
13 an approval of that plan, and that was what
14 Mr. Connor referred to in his comments. Why
15 does that matter? Because we don't have to
16 go back to Congress if he meets the
17 requirements Congress gave him in that
18 authorization in 2007.

19 In 2018, as referenced, there was also
20 additional direction given to the Secretary
21 that we should make sure that that analysis
22 includes any potential downstream impacts,
23 because that had been a voice of concern for
24 many of you over time, so we obviously are
25 very interested in understanding those

1 concerns and making sure we have them fully
2 considered by the Corps.

3 Bottom line, up front: we need a plan
4 that we can execute that represents the
5 technical needs, the community needs, the
6 flood resilience that meet the standards set
7 by Congress, and consistent with
8 environmental laws.

9 So what's now and what's different? I've
10 already said it's a tremendous opportunity
11 that's created by the Bipartisan
12 Infrastructure Law. We really want to
13 advance a solution that can happen, and
14 really, the big thing is because we have
15 authority and we have appropriations and we
16 can go through a determination process by my
17 boss to determine what should be implemented
18 consistent with those things, we can actually
19 quickly move to design the implementation in
20 ways that it has not been able to move
21 forward in the past, so I can't emphasize
22 enough how many communities would like to be
23 in that position.

24 So we're excited to reinvigorate the
25 technical and community work to deliver for

1 Jackson. We look forward to working with all
2 of you, and this is our early engagement to
3 begin that process. So I know many of you
4 are curious why we were here and what's
5 happening, and this is the initiation of what
6 we intend to be able to deliver in a
7 collaborative process. And with that, I'm
8 going to turn this over to Colonel Klein to
9 walk through some more detailed slides.

10 Thank you.

11 COLONEL KLEIN:

12 Thank you, ma'am, and good afternoon,
13 ladies and gentlemen. I'm Colonel Chris
14 Klein, the Commander of the Vicksburg
15 District and the Pearl River Watershed
16 Servicing Commander, as well as the oversight
17 for this project.

18 So we know that Pearl River has a long
19 history of navigation and flood control
20 projects associated with it, and really, the
21 story of flood control in Jackson includes
22 the initial levee construction that was
23 constructed in 1968. And then in 1979, there
24 was a flood event, and since then, multiple
25 locally proposed as well as USACE proposed

1 solutions were brought forward for
2 consideration as to how to relieve flooding
3 for the people of Jackson.

4 The latest locally presented projects
5 plan was proposed -- was prepared under
6 Section 211 of the Water Resources
7 Development Act of 1996, as were other
8 locally presented plans, all reviewed and
9 presented directly to the Secretary for
10 consideration for implementation, and that
11 brings us to our work here today. Next
12 slide, please.

13 So what have we been charged to do? Our
14 latest efforts started at the end of last
15 year at the direction of the Secretary. Our
16 mission is to build off of all previous work
17 and develop a report that assesses an array
18 of options for technical feasibility,
19 environmental acceptability, and legal
20 compliance.

21 And right now we have two -- the two most
22 critical items that we're working on now,
23 first, is to identify the National Economic
24 Development Plan. So what this is, the
25 National Economic Development Plan, is the

1 plan that has the greatest benefit to meet
2 national economic growth priorities, and that
3 is the plan against which all other plans
4 will be assessed, to assure that the same
5 amount of flood risk mitigation is being
6 provided by those plans -- if not equal, then
7 more. The next thing we have to do is
8 complete our environmental compliance
9 activities.

10 So like I mentioned, NED plans are going
11 to be the baseline against which all
12 alternatives must perform, and each one of
13 those options has to provide as much, if not
14 greater, flood protection in the study area.
15 In addition, our report is also going to take
16 a look at an analysis of comprehensive
17 benefits. These comprehensive benefits are
18 twofold: they're both quantitative and
19 qualitative, so we're going even beyond just
20 the economic numbers to take a look at what
21 benefits each one of the different arrays can
22 provide to the city of Jackson.

23 Just as a reminder, the Corps of
24 Engineers and myself, we're neither a
25 proponent or opponent of any one project.

1 What we want to do is we want to deliver
2 flood risk management solutions for the
3 people of Jackson. Now let's turn it over to
4 Leslie, who's going to take us through where
5 we are technically with the projects.

6 MS. PROCHASKA:

7 Thank you. Leslie Prochaska, Plan
8 Formulator, regionally, here in the
9 Mississippi River Valley District Division
10 South. So the non-federal interest, Rankin-
11 Hinds, prepared the report, and that report
12 did build upon historical studies, as
13 mentioned. Over 60 different flood reduction
14 features were evaluated and looked at.

15 At the conclusion of that report, three
16 plans were identified for further assessment:
17 a non-structural plan, a levee plan, and a
18 channel improvement plan. The non-structural
19 plan consisted of relocating structures and
20 buying the land upon which the structures
21 were located for the 500 year flood event.
22 The levee plan included upgrading existing
23 levees, construction of additional levee
24 segments and or flood walls in unprotected
25 areas, and addition of pumps and gated

1 structures.

2 The channel improvement plan, which was
3 the NFI Rankin-Hinds preferred plan that was
4 presented in the report, consists of
5 excavation to increase the channel capacity,
6 demolition of the existing weir that's near
7 the J.H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant, and
8 construction of a new weir. That new weir
9 would have a flow gate and a fish passage.
10 That new weir would be located further
11 downstream, and we'll show that in the study
12 map.

13 They also proposed locations for
14 placement of excavated material, upgrading of
15 existing non-federal levee to federalize it
16 to a ring levee around the Savannah Street
17 Wastewater Treatment Plant. Next slide.

18 Since that report submittal, the U.S.
19 Army Corps of Engineers and Rankin-Hinds are
20 working collaboratively on a new report that
21 will provide a comparison of flood risk
22 management alternatives. The U.S. Army Corps
23 of Engineers is going to be lead author
24 preparing a draft environmental impact
25 statement that will identify the National

1 Economic Development Plan as discussed,
2 compare the level of flood protection
3 provided by that plan to the level of flood
4 protection provided to all the alternatives
5 being assessed. Additionally, the report is
6 going to look at the downstream impacts and
7 see if there are any in the Pearl River
8 Basin.

9 The comparison of plans will not only
10 include the non-federal interest Section 211
11 final plans; it'll also include the
12 additional plans, which includes revised non-
13 structural plan that will likely include
14 elevation of structures, as well as flood
15 proofing.

16 And then we talked about the combination
17 thereof, so there's going to be other plans
18 that will be assessed. The combination of
19 can be a combination of the channel
20 improvement plan, maybe a non-structural
21 plan. There's other possibilities, based on
22 the feedback, and built upon the historical
23 information.

24 The report, again, is not going to make a
25 recommendation; rather, it's going to provide

1 a comparison of alternatives so the Assistant
2 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works may
3 describe -- may decide the range of flood
4 risk management options. Next slide.

5 So we talk about the study area. So the
6 Pearl River Watershed is huge. It's over
7 8,000 square miles. Where we are authorized
8 and focused on for this study area is going
9 to be between River Mile 270, which is just
10 south of Richland, Mississippi, to River Mile
11 302 to the north, which is where the Ross
12 Barnett Reservoir Dam is located. So that is
13 the area and its associated tributaries right
14 adjacent where we are trying to achieve the
15 flood risk reduction. Next slide.

16 So as mentioned about comprehensive
17 benefits, also includes areas of interest.
18 So there's several areas of interest that
19 have been preliminarily identified and listed
20 on the slide. We're looking at the -- this
21 is where we're looking for public feedback as
22 well, regarding the areas of interests: the
23 ones that we have -- don't have listed, and
24 any additional new information, and your
25 feedback on the ones that have been

1 identified.

2 Those that have been identified in
3 addition to flood risk are water supply,
4 water wastewater treatment, ecosystem and
5 environmental impacts, existing waste sites,
6 cultural resources, transportation,
7 downstream impacts, recreational access and
8 opportunities, community impacts, and
9 economic opportunities. This list is not
10 limited. All right, Colonel Klein.

11 COLONEL KLEIN:

12 Thanks, Leslie. So that takes us to
13 where we are today, and the technical team's
14 work continues. We've got -- and we're here
15 today to receive your feedback that we can
16 then also include in the final report. We'll
17 also answer any questions that we know the
18 answers to at this point, otherwise, we are
19 committed to getting back to you. There will
20 be multiple opportunities to review the work
21 that's being done.

22 By the end of August, we intend to
23 complete a draft report, with a final report
24 due in December. And that draft report,
25 again, going out for -- going out for review

1 so that we are open and transparent through
2 this process. And then in January, that's
3 when the secretary is scheduled to review all
4 work done at this point, and then render his
5 decision.

6 As you can see, this is a really
7 streamlined timeline. We'd like to thank the
8 Assistant Secretary's office for guiding us
9 through this process, keeping us focused on
10 getting the work done, because what we all
11 have to be cognizant of is that we are
12 building on years of work -- many, many years
13 of work up to this point. Now is the time to
14 put a bow on it and deliver some flood risk
15 management to the city of Jackson. If you
16 don't have any further comments at this
17 point, we'll turn it back over to our
18 moderator. Thanks, Tom.

19 TOM SHAW:

20 Thank you, sir. Okay. So kind of
21 going back to what we first talked about,
22 we are here to collect feedback. We are
23 here to collect input from you folks, and
24 so I mentioned there are several ways to
25 do this. The email is up there. We're

1 going to leave this slide up as people
2 are coming up and discussing, but there's
3 the email address, there's the physical
4 address.

5 Like I said, there are comment cards
6 outside, and there's actually a project
7 website that's down at the bottom here
8 for you to see the information that's out
9 there. As we move along and as we get
10 information that we can put out there, we
11 will update that project website.

12 So with that, if you would, would you
13 bring the house lights up, please, and we
14 are going to begin collecting some
15 feedback from you, the audience. So I
16 will just ask -- there are microphones
17 here on either aisle. If you would, come
18 up. Please wait for me to recognize you.
19 We'll get you going so you can ask
20 questions.

21 Try to limit those to three minutes
22 for your question and input, and then if
23 for some reason we run out of time --
24 we've basically got a two hour window, so
25 I'm looking at about 1:35 now, so we're

1 good until about 3:00. If anybody still
2 has not had the opportunity to provide
3 input, there are multiple ways to do it,
4 like on the screen. We would love for
5 you to catch somebody outside and talk.
6 So with that, we adjourn. The mics
7 should be hot, so if you've got
8 questions, I would just ask that you
9 please come up and -- yep?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

11 Tom, I want to let people know that
12 on the board out front, there's a QR code
13 you can scan on your cell phone that will
14 take you to the project webpage, so you
15 don't have to type in the whole thing.
16 Just scan that QR code.

17 TOM SHAW:

18 There you go. Technology at its
19 best.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

21 I just want to let everybody know I'm
22 going to upload this presentation to the
23 website, hopefully Thursday night, so
24 you'll have that to look at more closely.

25 TOM SHAW:

1 Okay. Questions? Sir, if you would
2 -- if you would -- if you don't mind,
3 tell us your name and where you're from.

4 PUBLIC COMMENT

5 DRAKE MELLOTT:

6 Sure. Drake Mellott, I live here in
7 Slidell near the bayou, which is down there
8 by Jones Creek. First of all, thank you for
9 coming in person and giving us an opportunity
10 to ask some questions. That makes a big
11 difference to all of us, to know you've been
12 there. I know in your slides, you list
13 basically all the things you're considering,
14 and I understand this, but I'm just curious
15 about Jones Creek and the mitigation of
16 flooding there.

17 From what I understand, all the Pearls --
18 all the branches of the Pearl -- has seen a
19 dramatic increase in flooding over the last
20 three years. Whether you call it flooding or
21 not flooding as a described event, you know,
22 it's still greatly increased in my short time
23 here, compared to some other people who were
24 probably here 25 years in the same location
25 from 20 years ago, or year 1 through 20.

1 I've seen saltwater over my dock and
2 seawall from other than a tropical storm or
3 hurricane, or you know, a once every 15 year
4 flood that we've got like five years ago
5 hardly ever. I mean, you know, usually, 11
6 months and two weeks a year, not an issue at
7 all, then we have a storm season.

8 In the last three years, I probably see
9 water over the dock for at least three months
10 -- March, April, and May. So we're -- and I
11 asked a couple other guys today were they
12 doing a statement; they did. Probably in the
13 last three or four years, March, April, May,
14 where we live, we're seeing a foot to a foot
15 and a half more water than we're used to
16 seeing.

17 When I look up there and I see, you know,
18 channel widening and all those things that
19 help with flood mitigation, that means more
20 water downstream, in my interpretation. Can
21 you address that, at least, to see if there's
22 any path down here that you perceive --
23 either improvement, or making it worse? You
24 know, I don't know what's a good answer. We
25 just kind of want that input.

1 MS. COLOSIMO:

2 All right. So we're going to tag
3 team here. So thanks for that thoughtful
4 question and thank you for being here.
5 That's what we're supposed to do, and we
6 all appreciate that more than ever post-
7 COVID world, honestly, is that you can't
8 really see it unless you're here. As
9 someone from DC, I get it. It's really
10 important.

11 DRAKE MELLOTT:

12 You work in DC too much, I know.

13 MS. COLOSIMO:

14 There you go. All right, love that.
15 So first of all, love your comments. Do
16 definitely want to get them in writing as
17 well, right. So you and your friends, if
18 you have a kind of "where I have seen
19 this change," I think that's always
20 helpful. The engineer in me appreciates
21 that.

22 I want the Colonel and Leslie to talk
23 to it as well, as they see fit, but I
24 just want to remind you, too, that in any
25 analysis the Corps of Engineers does,

1 we've always done with sensitivity to the
2 emerging trends; right? And so
3 everywhere we go, it's going to be
4 upstream, downstream, tributaries -- all
5 those things.

6 So I think yeah, we're going to
7 answer that question and we're not
8 looking to pass water through and flood
9 somewhere else, because that only leads
10 to more problems for you and for more
11 work to be done by the agency. We're
12 going to make it as whole as we can, so
13 that's part of the analysis. I'll let
14 the Colonel talk to that.

15 COLONEL KLEIN:

16 Tack on to the -- before I hand it
17 over to Leslie, the expert -- so we're
18 running the -- we have the hydraulic
19 model. The model set up right now, it
20 does include the downstream effects, and
21 that will be part of the analysis. So we
22 do have -- it is a comprehensive model,
23 both locally as well as through the
24 downstream.

25 Where we are technically with the

1 modeling right now doesn't include all
2 the structural alternatives yet. That's
3 what's forthcoming, should be in the next
4 couple of weeks. We should get the
5 results of that and we'll have a better
6 of what's going on downstream.

7 By law, I think 1176 requires us to
8 do it, and it will be considered and that
9 is something that we'll have, certainly,
10 in the final report, sir.

11 DRAKE MELLOTT:

12 If I can interrupt with another
13 question: does your modeling include any
14 kind of surge capability for holding back
15 water when there's a tropical storm or
16 hurricane? Thanks.

17 MS. PROCHASKA:

18 So for this model, for where our
19 study area is, to the extent of it, it
20 will go to the extent to the southern
21 boundary condition. That southern
22 boundary condition is where it's
23 determined that there's no transferred
24 flood risk, or there's no hydraulic
25 impact further. This one does not extend

1 that far.

2 As far as to the answer, I believe
3 that we can verify that. We will verify
4 that, but there are other models that we
5 have that are studying the lower half of
6 the Pearl River, where the flooding --
7 but I -- I wouldn't -- but our models
8 will show and determine if surge could be
9 potentially impactful up there in
10 Jackson.

11 COLONEL KLEIN:

12 Do you want to take that, or me
13 first?

14 MS. COLOSIMO:

15 You can go first.

16 COLONEL KLEIN:

17 Okay. So thanks a lot, sir. I
18 appreciate the consideration about storm
19 surge and accounting for that, and I
20 think we can certainly add that in as
21 part of the comprehensive benefits that
22 we're looking at to make sure that we
23 weigh -- include and weigh that in as one
24 of those qualitative and quantitative
25 things that we can include in the report,

1 too. So I will certainly make a note of
2 that.

3 DRAKE MELLOTT:

4 You can say the concern is that, you
5 know, if we get sent water down at the
6 same time we get a high tide, then we're
7 toast, in laymen's terms; right?

8 MS. COLOSIMO:

9 Sure, sure. I did want to just add
10 one little piece, which is -- and this is
11 not atypical, right -- is that in terms
12 of infrastructure that already exists, in
13 any part of the country, we have to look
14 at how those systems currently operate
15 for their legislative purpose, whether
16 it's ours, or the state's, or local.

17 So in terms of holding back water,
18 the modeling would only encompass what
19 it's mandated to do. Now, we all know
20 under certain extreme conditions,
21 entities, including ourself, have
22 permission to operate differently to hold
23 back water that's unprecedented, but we
24 start with how they currently operate and
25 don't make judgments about whether they

1 can do it differently, and then we move
2 to sensitivity. So I think I heard that
3 embedded in there. I just wanted to kind
4 of get that point out.

5 DRAKE MELLOTT:

6 Okay. Appreciate it. Thank you.

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 Sure.

9 JOHN CANENBERG:

10 Yes. My name is John Canenberg. I'm
11 from New Orleans.

12 COLONEL KLEIN:

13 Yes, sir.

14 JOHN CANENBERG:

15 I've been tracking this plan for a while.
16 I have a particular concern about the One
17 Lake development idea. They are already
18 advertising in the Jackson area lots. I
19 wonder if in the National Economic Plan that
20 you say sort of has its hands in this, is the
21 potential increase in value along the lake
22 that will be created in any way attributed
23 back to those that will be displaced, and do
24 those displaced people have any priority on
25 the lots at some sensible value?

1 MS. COLOSIMO:

2 So we're going to tag team again.
3 Having not seen the advertisements you're
4 talking about, it's a fundamental matter
5 of policy -- and particularly my boss --
6 we're not looking to make investments
7 that drive people away from their homes
8 in any way, shape, or form. And so we're
9 not looking to change the demographics or
10 who owns the land. I understand you're
11 saying there's advertising there. I'm
12 not privy to where that is, but we would
13 certainly look to understand that
14 challenge that's emerging there.

15 But my boss is not looking to make
16 sure we're driving people off their land;
17 he's looking to make sure we protect
18 them, no matter what strata they come
19 from. One thing I do need to mention
20 here is that this a pretty strong
21 priority for the administration, but my
22 boss in particular. He is a Native
23 American and he feels very strongly about
24 this issue, and so I think we're going to
25 make sure a full range of alternatives

1 are considered, including those
2 communities that, perhaps, felt they were
3 driven out or not included in the
4 analysis.

5 JOHN CANENBERG:

6 Will there be a development allowed
7 along the created lakeshore?

8 MS. COLOSIMO:

9 So I think we need to answer this
10 question, because when you talk about
11 specifics, I have to be careful because I
12 don't know where you're talking about.
13 But I would say as an outsider coming in,
14 as a matter of policy, we don't look to
15 subsidize the development of those areas.

16 If there's a federal project, those
17 lands have to be encompassed, largely
18 speaking, in title, and so I don't --
19 we'd have to understand the issues more.
20 I would like to know more about it, but
21 we do not -- we generally do title
22 appeasements.

23 JOHN CANENBERG:

24 Thank you.

25 COLONEL KLEIN:

1 Do you have anything?

2 MS. PROCHASKA:

3 I will add to that. So the National
4 Economic Development Plan, when we
5 identify that, the inputs that goes into
6 it is it's calculated based on the flood
7 risk reduction. So it's whatever the
8 flood risk reduction benefits go to
9 indemnify the National Economic
10 Development Plan.

11 The comprehensive benefit is another
12 category that will be assessed and will
13 be presented in the report, or the ASA
14 decision -- the Secretary -- but for
15 identification of the National Economic
16 Development Plan, it is what is the
17 reduction of damages to Pearl River. The
18 reduction of damages from flooding is how
19 it's calculated.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

21 You done? Yeah. I'm wondering if the
22 widening and dredging is going to come down
23 here also on the plan, or is that just for
24 that area up there?

25 MS. PROCHASKA:

1 Okay. So it's limited to the -- when
2 you're talking about the study area,
3 we're talking about River Mile 270, which
4 is by Ridgeland, Mississippi, to -- it
5 could go to channel improvements all the
6 way up to the Barnett Reservoir Dam, so
7 that's the area of focus. So Ridgeland,
8 Mississippi would be the furthest south,
9 right now, for the channel improvement
10 plan.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

12 Any plans for down here?

13 MS. PROCHASKA:

14 That would be outside this particular
15 study area, but there are other studies
16 that the Corps is involved in right now
17 that are looking into down here.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

19 One more thing: and when they open
20 the water up in Jackson and it comes down
21 here, what's going to happen when they
22 open that one up and more water comes?

23 MS. PROCHASKA:

24 So that -- with the hydraulic
25 modeling that we're doing, there's --

1 that's going to be assessed. Every
2 different -- the different plans that are
3 being identified, they will assess the
4 risk and the down project conditions, and
5 will address downstream effects. That's
6 definitely going to be evaluated.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

8 Okay. Thank you.

9 COLONEL KLEIN:

10 Sir, there's another -- you can also
11 reach out to -- whichever side of the
12 river, either Representative Scalise or
13 Representative Ezell -- and ask them to
14 ask us to look into, you know, a
15 potential study for doing dredging and
16 widening and that kind of stuff down
17 here.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:

19 Okay. My mom's been here since '89.
20 In the past three years, her place that
21 she was living at is completely
22 underwater now constantly, so that's why
23 I was just asking that question.

24 COLONEL KLEIN:

25 That's a great question, sir. I

1 appreciate it.

2 MS. COLOSIMO:

3 Please share that on the info.

4 TOM SHAW:

5 Sir?

6 WADE MIZELL:

7 Wade Mizell, Washington Parish, Bogalusa.
8 As far as the One Lake project, as you know,
9 the Ross Barnett already holds back water,
10 and if they build another reservoir below the
11 Ross Barnett, in order to fill that up, they
12 would have to hold back water also. So the
13 Pearl River is already shallow during the
14 summer months.

15 What's going to happen -- I mean, you
16 know, we have trouble with flooding, but when
17 you're in a drought, you're also going to
18 have a problem with the river drying up if
19 you have two reservoirs holding back water.
20 So what's going to happen to us? I have a
21 camp on a canal, and so you know, it's going
22 to get to the point where you can't even run
23 a boat with a motor on the river.

24 MS. PROCHASKA:

25 That's -- yeah. That's a very --

1 thank you. That's -- thank you for that.
2 So part of the design in the plan that
3 was proposed in the Rankin-Hinds report
4 is to include a low flow gate to try to
5 sustain normal conditions, as water is
6 available. So when it would -- it would
7 flow naturally, by gravity, through that
8 low flow gate, so it wouldn't be
9 hindered.

10 It will hold back once it reaches a
11 certain level of height within the water
12 column, but if the water's there, it's
13 going to allow -- the new weir, for it to
14 flow, because you know, sometimes it's
15 dropping. Well, not totally dry, but
16 yeah, very valid concern.

17 WADE MIZELL:

18 Well, we all know they don't have
19 priority, you know, as far as trying to
20 get the reservoirs full, and I do know
21 that Georgia and Florida encountered a
22 scenario that's as far as Pearl River and
23 the Rigolets. Apalachicola oysters --
24 Georgia -- the state of Georgia put a dam
25 on one of their fresh water rivers, and

1 to have oysters, you need brackish water.
2 We all know that.

3 Well, when they put the dam up, it
4 annihilated the oysters in Apalachicola.
5 You go to Florida, you have Louisiana,
6 Alabama, Mississippi oysters. They
7 destroyed that industry. My point being,
8 you know, you don't get the salinity -- I
9 mean, you don't get the brackish water in
10 the Rigolets, you're going to be
11 destroying oysters, crabs, and so on and
12 so forth.

13 COLONEL KLEIN:

14 Sir, again, you're absolutely right.
15 It's great -- that speaks to part of this
16 as the environmental concerns. So the
17 environmental concern is you're changing
18 the salinity of the water, it impacting
19 what habitats are there, and part of our
20 environmental impacts in the
21 environmental impact review is ensuring
22 that we preserve the habitat as it is,
23 and to mitigate thereof. So yeah, please
24 -- we will look into this, certainly.

25 MS. COLOSIMO:

1 Yeah. Just another thing to focus on
2 is that the changing climate, right --
3 not a political term; a technical term,
4 right? So the highs and lows matter, and
5 that is certainly something from my boss
6 that is very important. He comes from
7 western water, right, and so drought --
8 our agency is involved in that and
9 thinking about our projects with
10 presuming water is going to be lower and
11 higher.

12 How do we think about those ranges in
13 any investment? So what you highlight
14 here just about the low water, what we're
15 already seeing is something we want to
16 make sure we're addressing -- are we
17 making it worse; are we helping? Those
18 kind of things. Thank you for that.

19 COLONEL KLEIN:

20 So sir, if you could, on the comment
21 cards, tell us exactly where that is so
22 that we can take a look at where it is on
23 the map, and then, you know, be able to
24 do our environmental analysis on that in
25 that particular area specifically with

1 the oysters, your canal, camp, and
2 flooding. Thanks, sir.

3 WADE MIZELL:

4 Sure, okay. It's where the sills and
5 the locks are. You know, Lock 1, 2, and
6 3.

7 COLONEL KLEIN:

8 Thank you.

9 TOM SHAW:

10 Sir, I was just given an update with
11 respect to the storm surge, particularly
12 related to hurricanes. That's the St.
13 Tammany Parish Study that's actually
14 being done.

15 COLONEL KLEIN:

16 New Orleans District.

17 MS. PROCHASKA:

18 I think that one's going to be
19 released publicly, actually, in the next
20 few months. There are revised links on
21 that one.

22 JACK SESSIONS:

23 How are we doing today, folks? My name's
24 Jack Sessions. I live right here in Pearl
25 River myself -- been there for 20-something

1 years -- and I remember the day that this all
2 came about. I was at the first meeting, I
3 think, in 2013, and correct me if I'm wrong,
4 but the number one question was when they
5 build this retention pond, is this going to
6 be strictly for flood control, or is there
7 going to be houses and lots being sold on
8 this retention pond?

9 Because I was very confused and everybody
10 else was last time we talked about it. They
11 said, "We can't answer that question. We
12 don't know if they're going to develop it."
13 That's what our thing is thinking, that
14 they're going to -- it's going to be to
15 benefit somebody's pocket, not flood control.
16 So is that -- are they going to build houses
17 on this lake or retention pond? Yes, or no.

18 MS. COLOSIMO:

19 Okay. Let me start with the highest
20 level, and then we'll go to the actual
21 technical level, but this is an important
22 concept; right? In this study, we've
23 heard this a lot, and I'm going to echo
24 what Leslie said, which is we are an
25 engineering agency. We focus on flood

1 risk management, navigation, water supply
2 -- those kind of things.

3 We are not looking to create
4 development. We are creating
5 opportunities for flood risk that could
6 encompass One Lake, as well as other
7 things we've talked about, and a few
8 other great ideas we want to hear from
9 you. But we are not in proponency of
10 creating lots that get sold to create a
11 specific economy. If those project
12 features encompass land, we have to
13 encompass them in that project.

14 So what that -- broader, though, is
15 the community -- what a project like this
16 could do for the broader community. I
17 don't think that's necessarily about
18 selling lots. It is about solidifying
19 Jackson's economy to continue to exist,
20 right, in a low lying area. That's more
21 about the government and the city itself,
22 but I don't have the details beyond that.
23 I know we're going to study this to make
24 sure.

25 COLONEL KLEIN:

1 And so when we take a look at it,
2 it's specifically to make sure that we
3 are implementing the flood risk map and
4 flood risk reduction. And so, you know,
5 what we see right now is that as the
6 water comes in, it backs up up the
7 tributaries that are all going into that
8 area. So our focus right now with
9 whatever projects it is is to reduce the
10 impacts upon those tributaries.

11 Along with that, as Ms. Colosimo
12 mentioned, we -- you know, we purchase
13 land and gain title to lands that are
14 required for us to manage our project,
15 and then those become federal lands;
16 right? Whatever project is built,
17 whatever it may be -- you can look at --
18 you know, go up along the river, there'll
19 be a whole bunch of levees along the Red
20 River in Louisiana with walking community
21 paths, and because of the protection
22 that's provided, there's some -- there is
23 business development adjacent to those
24 levees that were built there.

25 So it is plausible that whatever is

1 built, because of the level of flood risk
2 mitigation that's provided, could result
3 in business development because it's more
4 economically feasible to stand up a
5 business or even a residential community
6 because you're receiving protection.

7 JACK SESSIONS:

8 So no residential -- at this
9 particular time, there's no kind of
10 foresight for building residential houses
11 and all around this lake?

12 COLONEL KLEIN:

13 That would be outside of what we
14 study, so -- I think it would be the
15 county that would be studying that type
16 of stuff. So we're focused on what is
17 the flood risk, flood risk management
18 associated with the project. Does it
19 deliver that level of flood risk
20 management?

21 We will own, you know, title and
22 deed, those properties that are
23 associated with the project. When you're
24 on the dry side, now, you have -- you now
25 have land that is -- like talking about

1 the NED Plan.

2 So what the NED Plan focuses on is
3 now that you have this level of flood
4 risk management -- you're keeping water
5 off of people's homes, businesses, out of
6 industrial parks and what have you in the
7 city of Jackson -- naturally, to the
8 point of property values, that changes
9 the value of the property both
10 potentially monetarily, certainly
11 intrinsically.

12 You know, it changes how much flood
13 insurance you have to buy. It also gives
14 the county and the city an opportunity
15 now to develop those areas that are no
16 longer prone to flooding, and how they
17 develop those lands in the county for
18 private is how they would develop them.
19 But we're not studying -- so that's not
20 part of our study as to what happens with
21 those now protected lands.

22 JACK SESSIONS:

23 So when y'all actually purchase that
24 land -- I guess, the federal government
25 -- so the question is, is it's never

1 going to be a residential land? Maybe
2 business, but not residential; right?

3 MS. COLOSIMO:

4 So I think this is important: we
5 can't answer in detail; right? So we
6 need to hear your comment, understand
7 exactly what you're concerned about. I
8 hear it here, but we're going to make
9 sure it's on the Record, so anything else
10 we have to write down, it's hugely
11 important.

12 What I want to say is every state and
13 every county we deal with in the nation,
14 the problem is the same about who is
15 responsible for land use, planning, and
16 management. We will make sure that's
17 addressed, in terms of where that lies,
18 if there's an ongoing update. We're not
19 encouraging that, but that may be a
20 separate and related process that's going
21 on in general in having to encompass any
22 future plans, including roads and all
23 those things.

24 So we want to make sure that's
25 encompassed in our analysis and what we

1 no about that. But no, we are not
2 looking to force any of those ideas.
3 Maybe counties or parishes or whoever has
4 the land use authority is considering
5 that.

6 JACK SESSIONS:

7 All right. Thank you.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

9 There are FEMA restrictions along
10 flood ways also.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 Oh, right. Anything in a flood way,
13 by the way, is regulated by the Federal
14 Emergency Management Agency, and we do
15 that in tandem with letting them know
16 where those lines are, both pre and post
17 projects. Thank you for that.

18 TOM SHAW:

19 Sir?

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

21 So my concern is how is this flood
22 management? Can you explain that? Is it --
23 I mean, are y'all talking about the Ross
24 Barnett, or is it going to be, you know, at
25 static levels? Surge? You know, if you

1 could help explain that, that would be ideal.

2 COLONEL KLEIN:

3 So do you want to start?

4 MS. PROCHASKA:

5 Sure. When you excavate within the
6 channel area, it's creating more storage,
7 so that does create more storage and more
8 volume that can be held. So the weir
9 would have underwater, like, low flow
10 gate, so that will allow the water to
11 pass through.

12 When it gets up to a certain height,
13 it's going to hold anything back without
14 that water column, and then when it gets
15 to a certain height above the weir, if
16 we're in a flood stage, it will then pass
17 over that. But it does create more
18 storage to hold back from flood risk
19 reduction.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

21 So it won't be a static level? It'll
22 go up and down?

23 MS. PROCHASKA:

24 Yes.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

1 So it won't be like the Ross Barnett,
2 where they just maintain at 297?

3 MS. PROCHASKA:

4 I'm not --

5 COLONEL KLEIN:

6 Right. And with -- Ross Barnett's a
7 tough -- a tough one to compare it to
8 because there is a water control manual
9 associated with the Ross Barnett, so that
10 when we -- when there is going to be a
11 heavy rain surge up in Northeast
12 Mississippi, they can release ahead of
13 that so the reservoir can take more.

14 Understand that they maintain it at
15 297 so that O.B. Curtis can draw the
16 water off of that; right? So there's a
17 certain water -- there's a certain level
18 that is always maintained in order to
19 maintain the water supply, right, for the
20 city. But then they can draw it up and
21 down, you know, to receive from the
22 Northeast.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

24 So you're going to, you know, take
25 out the swings that we see right now?

1 Like I'm looking at the Columbia gauge,
2 it goes from 16 -- it'll swing seven
3 feet, so it'll kind of moderate that, or
4 it'll be static like the Ross Barnett --
5 water in, water out?

6 MS. COLOSIMO:

7 So I think that's part of our
8 analysis; right?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

10 That's part of your analysis?

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 Right. So let me make sure we get a
13 comment card from you so we capture it
14 correctly. And then I think this is the
15 thing: your concern is documented. This
16 is why we want to know what your concern
17 is. We may not have the answers today,
18 but we can make sure that we are clear on
19 what we know about that analysis of that
20 plan, which is recommended by Rankin-
21 Hinds.

22 When we go through this analysis, we
23 may find there are some moderations that
24 are worthy of consideration to mitigate
25 some of those concerns. So we'll figure

1 out your concern, understand it based on
2 what you told us, and make sure we're
3 being as visible as we can about that --
4 what we know and what we don't know.

5 COLONEL KLEIN:

6 And so I'll take as, essentially, a
7 question of will the weir stabilize surge
8 flows downstream, in particular the
9 Columbia gauge -- the one that you were
10 talking about?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

12 Right. Well, I have a camp at
13 Columbia, but here in Slidell, it's like
14 everybody's saying -- we're concerned
15 about the downstream effects.

16 COLONEL KLEIN:

17 Okay. Thanks.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:

19 Because right now, when the Ross
20 Barnett -- I mean, when it gets up high,
21 it gets to 298, it's coming. It is
22 coming, and we're -- you know, we're
23 toast. That's all there is to it, you
24 know.

25 And from a political aspect, we're

1 thinking, well, they're just maintaining
2 the boat houses and the docks and all
3 the, you know, millionaire properties
4 that are on the Ross Barnett. We don't
5 need another one of those lakes. We need
6 a retention pond, not a lake.

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 Appreciate you explaining that
9 derivation there, and we'll make sure we
10 some answers.

11 TOM SHAW:

12 Thank you. Ma'am?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

14 Yeah, I just have a few, why not. Number
15 one, we're talking about you're going to
16 construct another weir. So in 1996, the Army
17 Corps of Engineers built a weir -- we call it
18 the Diversion at Walkiah Bluff. This is at
19 the flux of the Pearl where it splits into
20 the East Pearl at Holmes Bayou. So you built
21 it in 1996 after you done all your studies
22 and your little models, and then guess what?
23 Instead of it splitting water 50-50, like you
24 studied and modeled for it to do, it split
25 the water 70-30. I'm sure y'all are familiar

1 with that: yea or nay?

2 So now, today, the weir is falling apart,
3 the river is blown out on both sides of it,
4 and guess what you say now? "We have no
5 money to fix it." Okay, so then we have a
6 canal. We have a canal between Lock 1, 2,
7 and 3. My grandfather helped build it
8 starting in 1935.

9 Now, our lock structures and the levees
10 on that canal are falling apart, so I guess
11 I'm struggling with why we should listen to
12 y'all and your studies and all these reports,
13 and you come in here and you build something
14 else that you can't guarantee is going to
15 work like it should, no different than the
16 Diversion at Walkiah, and then you have -- if
17 you do build something and it messes up
18 something, you don't have the money to fix
19 it.

20 So I just think that instead of building
21 more things, that the United States Army
22 Corps of Engineers should take care of what
23 they've already built in the Pearl River
24 Basin instead of constructing more problems
25 in the basin. That's number one.

1 Number two: number two is you're talking
2 about widening a channel within your study
3 area. How many miles is your study area?

4 MS. PROCHASKA:

5 So the focus area would be 270 to 302
6 for the river miles.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

8 Okay. So 200-something of a 414 mile
9 long river?

10 MS. PROCHASKA:

11 No. 207 to 302, so approximately
12 about a little under 30 by 30 miles.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

14 So two-thirds?

15 MS. PROCHASKA:

16 No, 30 by 30 miles.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

18 Okay. Regardless -- okay.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

20 So I'm not an engineer like you people,
21 but I do have a lot of common sense, and I do
22 believe that, unfortunately, once you go
23 through college so many years and become
24 engineers, you forget things like common
25 sense.

1 My father was a ditch digger for St.
2 Tammany Parish and my son is a ditch digger
3 for St. Tammany Parish. Imagine the Pearl as
4 a 414 mile long ditch; okay? The ditch is
5 clogged up. The ditch is full of debris.
6 The ditch is silted in. We have serious
7 streaming and erosion that's just silting the
8 river in.

9 We have the four guys back here that's
10 pushing for the project. I had the
11 opportunity about eight years ago to bring
12 them on the Pearl out of Lock 1. They rolled
13 up their pants and they pushed my boat out of
14 the canal and back in the canal because we
15 didn't have enough water to navigate the
16 Pearl. We took a paddle and we stuck it down
17 in the middle. It was two foot deep here at
18 Pearl River at Pearl River.

19 So if you have a ditch and the northern
20 miles of the ditch isn't draining properly,
21 you don't go up there and you dig that ditch
22 bigger. You go below where that problem is
23 and you clean out that ditch, and you're
24 going to realize that the ditch up here,
25 then, is going to flow better.

1 It's common sense. It doesn't take
2 millions of dollars worth of studies; it
3 doesn't need all these engineer reports. The
4 Pearl is nothing but a big ditch, and down
5 here, the big ditch is stopped up.

6 Unfortunately, y'all don't come down here
7 and clean it. The last time it was dredged
8 or even any of the debris picked up out of it
9 was in the '70s. If you look, we used to
10 have a West Middle, Peach Lake Cutoff. You
11 can look since Katrina and you can see where
12 runout streams off of the West Pearl is
13 completely silted in and doesn't flow
14 anymore, and that's why you have the
15 gentleman over here who says he's seeing
16 three foot more water, you know, in April,
17 May, and March -- whatever he was saying --
18 the water's sitting in Slidell. That's why,
19 because the Pearl is a mess down here.

20 So I just think that it's kind of dumb,
21 and I want y'all to put your degrees aside
22 and look at the common sense logic. If you
23 don't clean this part of the ditch and expect
24 the whole thing to flow better. If you can
25 get down here and clean the ditch, then of

1 course, Jackson would flow better.

2 Last, my third thing is why are you going
3 to build a flood control structure when you
4 have the Ross Barnett Reservoir? The Ross
5 Barnett Reservoir was not built as a flood
6 control structure, and it is not operated as
7 one. So instead of building a flood control
8 structure right by something that could
9 operate as a flood control structure, why
10 don't you do a study on that to see how that
11 could benefit the people of Jackson? Thank
12 you.

13 MS. COLOSIMO:

14 Thank you, ma'am, for comments. I'm
15 an engineer, but a common sense,
16 practical person at the end of the day,
17 so I completely appreciate what you said,
18 so I'm going to let folks here talk to
19 the idea of the work downstream and
20 whether we can do that. It's all for us,
21 but there's a couple of things to really
22 hit first and foremost.

23 We are not biased towards a solution.
24 I want to be very clear about that. My
25 boss said that, I'm going to say it until

1 the end of time: my job is to get him
2 information to make a decision from. So
3 the input you have there, I want to know
4 more about it, I want to see it in
5 writing so we can unpack that and make
6 sure we address it in the report.

7 Two: it always comes back to
8 Congressional authority, or the authority
9 who has the infrastructure; right? So
10 I'm going to let these folks talk about
11 that lower reach that you're talking
12 about and being able to consider that in
13 tandem. That does fall within this
14 authority. This idea of combinations
15 thereof is a question of whether the
16 geography of our authority via Congress
17 gives us that opportunity; if not, how
18 can we support that in some other way?
19 There's always something there.

20 And then lastly, just this idea of
21 the maintenance and new infrastructure.
22 This is a problem nationwide in every
23 aspect of government, and it is an issue
24 that's been playing for over a hundred
25 years of increasing issues, and I

1 completely appreciate what you said
2 there, so thank you for that.

3 COLONEL KLEIN:

4 Do you have any comments?

5 MS. PROCHASKA:

6 I can go when you're done.

7 COLONEL KLEIN:

8 Okay, good. Ma'am, thank you for
9 that. I think you're going to be my
10 greatest advocate on the Hill, so if you
11 could -- and I'm serious, because I'm
12 seeing this, too. For me to own and
13 maintain the Pearl River Watershed and
14 not get the funding to maintain it, you
15 know, it's not good for me, too.

16 I will express the capability if you
17 get your congresspeople to ask me what
18 it's going to take to fix it. I'll tell
19 them. That's it -- that's how it goes.
20 That's how it works; okay? So
21 Representative Ezell, Representative
22 Scalise -- if they make the Lower Pearl
23 locks and weirs and issue, then that is
24 absolutely something I will express
25 capability to take on.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 4:

2 So the lock on the canal -- I guess a
3 lot of people -- I guess you don't know
4 that either. Right now, St. Tammany
5 Parish and Washington Parish have just
6 funded to do a study because y'all,
7 through the WRDA Bill of 2018, y'all were
8 able to sell it or transfer it to other
9 people.

10 So it's now on St. Tammany Parish and
11 different ones, so they're fixing to get
12 rid of all the lock gates and there's
13 spending \$660,000 to figure out what to
14 do with it because, ultimately, the Corps
15 of Engineers built it and then you
16 wouldn't take care of it.

17 WADE MIZELL:

18 They had locks collapse.

19 COLONEL KLEIN:

20 They did?

21 WADE MIZELL:

22 Yes, sir, and they would open the
23 locks to alleviate -- adjust them. They
24 had three locks and they had three lock
25 collapses, and the Corps de-funded it.

1 Y'all don't accept responsibility because
2 there's ongoing lawsuits -- people
3 drowning and whatnot. That can be
4 defended real easy, people drowning on
5 the sill. But anyway, y'all removed the
6 lock masters and now the locks are just
7 barely cracked up, with just a small
8 water flow going through. They could
9 adjust it to go out through Bogue Chitto
10 Refuge. The Bogue Chitto runs into it.

11 You've got two rivers, Pearl River
12 and Bogue Chitto, and the locks -- Lock 3
13 runs into Bogue Chitto, which also is
14 silted in like she's talking about and
15 needs dredging. But anyway, they turned
16 it over to Washington Parish and St.
17 Tammany Parish for the maintenance of it,
18 and of course, Washington Parish is
19 broke. They don't have any money for it.
20 St. Tammany, like she said, is funding a
21 study for the removal. I don't know --
22 that's about it.

23 JOHN CANENBERG:

24 I would like to put a more positive spin
25 on my first set of questions. The reason I

1 asked them is it may be an unintended
2 consequence, and it's certainly not something
3 you control at this point, but when you build
4 these lakes, developers swoop in. The people
5 that are displaced are displaced.

6 Since you mentioned our congressmen and
7 senators and so forth, as part of this
8 National Economic Development Plan, could it
9 not be a funding source for the Corps to have
10 some way to claw back the incredible rise in
11 lakeshore property that will happen in
12 Jackson? It's going to happen. People are
13 already planning and talking about it. Can't
14 you get some of that rise in value back into
15 your budget from these developers? That
16 would take legislation, that would take
17 political will. Would you back that?

18 MS. COLOSIMO:

19 So officially, we can't state we
20 would back it, but this is what I would
21 say: my boss would say that this issue
22 is -- just for full disclosure, as an
23 agency, as an example, any Corps of
24 Engineers owned facility where it happens
25 to have recreational lands, we charge

1 fees for those and they're pretty
2 nominal, but those monies go back to the
3 general treasury.

4 Department of Interior, every other
5 agency, it actually gets, essentially,
6 ring fenced and goes back to offset their
7 cost. That has been an area of perpetual
8 interest in every secretary I have worked
9 for with Congress, and it has never been
10 able to get across the finish line.

11 There is some act -- bill being
12 passed now. I don't recollect what it's
13 called -- I can let you know about that
14 -- that's basically the idea you're
15 talking about. This is a really tough
16 one. We can't officially support or not
17 support things, but we can say we value
18 in what you're talking about.

19 JOHN CANENBERG:

20 What's the schedule for this thing?

21 MS. COLOSIMO:

22 This thing? In terms of the report,
23 the draft report will come out in
24 September, so this is why we wanted to
25 get this process going now. We have

1 technical work underway, and so we want
2 to make sure we have good ideas. And
3 thank you for that question, because I
4 did want to come back to some of these
5 options people are talking about.

6 Remember, we talk about the
7 combination thereof, so some of these
8 other ideas, we want to make sure we're
9 recording both for what they are and what
10 we heard, and also seeing if there's a
11 combination thereof plan that exists that
12 we can put forward through the
13 Secretary's consideration. Again, we're
14 not biased to any one plan.

15 I guess and then the other thing I
16 would offer is that in my own experience
17 over decades of doing this as well is
18 that, you know, this whole idea of this
19 "what a community does with their land
20 with these investments and how they think
21 about the community" and stuff like this
22 is usually important; right?

23 What's the community benefitting from
24 now in terms of minimizing those damages,
25 and what's the opportunity therein? Some

1 communities do things around recreation
2 lands and public access and those kind of
3 things that I've heard great things about
4 over time, that are always benefits;
5 right? So I think we want to hear what
6 your good ideas are so we can capture
7 them in this analysis.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 5:

9 This is kind of sidetracking what
10 y'all's study is. I just have a question
11 --

12 MS. COLOSIMO:

13 Sure.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 5:

15 -- off the side of this. How does
16 the state of Mississippi allow Jackson
17 and Hattiesburg to dump millions of
18 gallons of untreated crossover into the
19 Pearl River?

20 COLONEL KLEIN:

21 Do you want me to take that question
22 for the Record, sir?

23 MS. COLOSIMO:

24 Thank you.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 5:

1 Well, it's ongoing.

2 MS. COLOSIMO:

3 Thank you.

4 TOM SHAW:

5 Sir?

6 HOWARD PAGE:

7 Yes. My name is Howard Page and I'm from
8 Gulfport, Mississippi, but I have a lot of
9 family that lives on the Pearl River here in
10 St. Tammany, and I'd like to follow up on an
11 issue that the lady before me just grazed
12 about sedimentation and silting on the river,
13 and how that's been a chronic problem for the
14 last few years.

15 There's a lot of places on the river
16 which may be outside of the study area. I
17 don't know if y'all've looked outside of the
18 40 miles that you're presently looking at,
19 and if you can, come down here and look, you
20 know, much further down river, and look at
21 the affects here, if it's possible to expand
22 your study area, and to do it before
23 September, when your report is actually going
24 to come out.

25 But my question is are you aware that the

1 silting has been going on, that it's been a
2 chronic condition; and are you aware that
3 it's continuing? In other words, when you
4 finish your study and put a ribbon it, as you
5 said, the silting is going to continue. So
6 whatever set of conditions you end up with,
7 you have to understand that you're not
8 addressing the sanding, gravel lining, and
9 the stream shore destabilization that's
10 happening that's constantly causing really
11 bad silting down here.

12 Is your study looking at that? Are you
13 aware that there's been a real increase in
14 silting down here, and that's there's going
15 to continue to me, and does your study take
16 that into account? And then also, are you
17 planning on expanding this area down here in
18 St. Tammany and Hancock County to include
19 your study area before your publishing in
20 September?

21 MS. PROCHASKA:

22 As far as the study area, downstream
23 impacts are going to be assessed. In
24 regards to sedimentation, we do have the
25 potential to do a sediment transportation

1 leveling or assessment, so please provide
2 that feedback in comment because that is
3 a potential. I'm not a hundred percent
4 sure if we were including that, but if we
5 could get the feedback, then we'll
6 definitely take it in advisement for
7 suggestion.

8 As far as looking into the level of
9 detail in the Pearl River down here, for
10 any impacts that we cause from or with
11 project condition, yes, that's going to
12 be assessed. But as far as what's
13 already here and in place, I'm going to
14 refer you to the St. Tammany study
15 because some of this stuff that would be
16 things that are ongoing here, the St.
17 Tammany study that the Corps is currently
18 doing and is going to be released, that
19 one's focused and includes the Pearl
20 River.

21 Yeah, we can connect you. It's
22 actually -- there is -- the public
23 website for the New Orleans District for
24 the Corps of Engineers does have listed
25 on there the St. Tammany study with a

1 fact sheet information for the public.
2 Before we leave here today, can we get
3 them the information on the website? Can
4 we share that in the background,
5 potentially?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 6:

7 The silting on the river, it's a
8 major problem. Our locks register the
9 sediment at 17 or 18. For three straight
10 weeks, they were talking about dredging
11 the bayous, marshes, and the extended
12 arm.

13 And I read that they were doing swamp
14 tours, and right behind the project, they
15 had in less than two months -- less than
16 60 days -- the bayou was filled back in
17 with silt, and that's a fact. It was
18 scary. Within two months. I ran that
19 river every single day, seven days a
20 week, 365 days a year, honest to God.
21 Every single day, every stops, there were
22 swamp tours, and in two months, the river
23 filled back in and that's the God's
24 truth.

25 HOWARD PAGE:

1 And to be clear, it sounds like that
2 hasn't been part of the study,
3 understanding that the silting, as far as
4 this particular study; that as you look
5 at down river effects, I don't think
6 you've understood the condition that
7 there's been a huge increase in silting
8 and a continuing silting problem here.
9 That doesn't seem to be a condition that
10 you're aware of.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 We're working on understanding the
13 conditions right now as part of our
14 assessment, so -- but your feedback is
15 going to make us -- you know, if you give
16 us a written comment and so forth, it'll
17 be something that we will put as part of
18 the public comment record and look into.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 7:

20 I just don't understand why you need to
21 take a study and don't intend for the study
22 to go on down to the Gulf of Mexico. That
23 would be just physical, all the way from the
24 start to finish.

25 MS. COLOSIMO:

1 Yeah. So the Corps of Engineers is
2 perhaps the most misunderstood and
3 different agency from any other federal
4 agency, and the main issue is that we
5 don't have germane authority and
6 appropriation to do what we see fit in
7 terms of the management of any region in
8 the country, largely speaking.

9 And what that means is we have to
10 have existing authorization to do
11 something in a geography, and it's
12 usually a specific geography, and
13 associated appropriation to do that. So
14 we have this segregated problem, but it
15 starts with your point. We don't have,
16 necessarily, the ability to expand the
17 existing Congressional declaration to do
18 an analysis beyond the geography that's
19 identified.

20 I think that's one of the reasons we
21 got the 1176 Direction, to make sure we
22 were doing downstream impacts. But the
23 flood risk management problem being
24 studied was really localized in the
25 Pearl, in some sense, compared to what

1 we're talking about here. Now, that
2 doesn't mean that it isn't encompassed in
3 this other analysis that I'm unfamiliar
4 with, so we're going to do our homework
5 on that. We just don't have that
6 authority.

7 TOM SHAW:

8 Folks, I would just ask if you've got
9 a question, the people that are online
10 would like to hear as well, and they are
11 trying to record this. If you would,
12 please, use a mic. Sir, I believe I have
13 a little bit of knowledge on the
14 navigation thing.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

16 Okay. So I just have one question. You
17 keep saying that there's a study going on for
18 the Lower Pearl done by the New Orleans
19 District. Why are they doing a study on the
20 Pearl if the Pearl is in the Vicksburg
21 District?

22 MS. PROCHASKA:

23 The Pearl River terminates in --
24 sorry. Go ahead.

25 COLONEL KLEIN:

1 So it's because -- it's mostly
2 because the -- we've regionalized our
3 study planners and they all operate out
4 of the New Orleans District. So by
5 matter of proximity, from here to New
6 Orleans District is about an hour and a
7 half drive; from the city of Jackson,
8 it's about an hour drive; from Vicksburg
9 --

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

11 I understand that, but that doesn't
12 -- if you have the authority over the
13 Pearl, why would you give the funding and
14 give the study to another district?

15 COLONEL KLEIN:

16 So because --

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

18 I think -- and I guess -- and you
19 don't even have to answer because I know
20 your answers are vague, but the problem
21 with the Pearl is, from day one, that the
22 right hand doesn't know what the left
23 hand's doing, and I think that having the
24 New Orleans District do a study on the
25 Pearl isn't helping the real problem when

1 the Vicksburg District is who is supposed
2 to be over the Pearl. Thank you.

3 COLONEL KLEIN:

4 Okay.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 9:

6 So let me tell you one quick thing with
7 respect to navigation. I mean, that's the
8 reason we have locks and dams on the Pearl
9 River, right, is that there was --
10 originally, it was constructed for
11 navigation. Back in the mid '70s, we dredged
12 for traffic -- it was predominantly barge
13 traffic, but other things, but we did do
14 dredging. It was maintained.

15 In the '70s, we were enjoying the EPA
16 doing all the dredging. We were not able to
17 continue that mission and guess what happens
18 when you've got the navigation mission and
19 the navigation traffic starts to fall off and
20 you start to build up sediment? Nothing goes
21 forward.

22 They physically couldn't move any more
23 barges, and so they were light loading the
24 barges, and then basically, it fell off. So
25 that's the reason that there's no more

1 navigation on the Pearl. Did that help a
2 little bit?

3 MS. COLOSIMO:

4 That lead to the disposition?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 9:

6 That did. It ultimately lead to the
7 disposition of the project, in terms of a
8 navigation project. That's what it was
9 originally prescribed for, so there is
10 no more maintenance dredging.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 Thank you.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 10:

14 You said there was no more
15 maintenance dredging?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 9:

17 Yes, sir. By the Corps of Engineers.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 10:

19 On Pearl River down through West
20 Pearl River, there's no dredging, but on
21 the East Pearl up through the Mississippi
22 Test Site, there is still dredging there.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 10:

24 But anyway, I have a question for you.
25 In 1983, Pearl River had gone up as high as

1 it's ever been in recorded history and they
2 had to open up the dam up against the Ross
3 Barnett, which flooding everything down here
4 -- everything got flooded. I'm just
5 wondering, I understand that there's been
6 some kind of limits put on what water levels
7 they can keep on the Ross Barnett -- that, I
8 don't know about, but that's what I've heard.
9 Can this project -- this One Lake Project tie
10 this whole thing in together and we can wind
11 up with another flood like that in '83?

12 MS. COLOSIMO:

13 Yeah. So appreciate you raising that
14 and writing it down for us, but generally
15 speaking, I mean, dams have -- I'm not
16 talking about Ross Barnett specifically.
17 Dams do have -- the way they operate by
18 authority or convention, this is a
19 private dam, so we don't have any
20 jurisdiction over that.

21 But how they operate under extreme
22 duress would lead to initial inquiries in
23 1983 under unprecedented conditions, but
24 our analysis will look at how that's
25 operated and look at any proposal for One

1 Lake and how it's operated, or proposal
2 for levees or anything else that comes
3 about through your suggestions and
4 recommendations that would alleviate
5 flood risk management. It will encompass
6 how Ross Barnett would operate.

7 TOM SHAW:

8 Any additional questions?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 11:

10 We have one more.

11 TOM SHAW:

12 Huh?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 11:

14 Her.

15 STACY ORTEGO:

16 Hi. Stacy Ortego. I'm with the
17 Louisiana Wildlife Federation, and we just
18 wanted to express some concerns that we'll
19 also submit in writing for the deadline. So
20 some of our concerns are really with wildlife
21 species. Some people also mentioned concerns
22 about oysters, shrimp, crab with the low
23 flow. There's -- they also mentioned in the
24 summer with the flow that's already lower,
25 there are folks that, you know, can't --

1 already are having trouble with those water
2 levels, and so there's concerns about that
3 being impacted even more.

4 And from what you're saying about the
5 sediment transport study, are you saying that
6 that has to be requested by people in writing
7 before you can actually do that? I'm not
8 sure why that wouldn't be part of the study
9 that you're submitting for comments later.

10 MS. COLOSIMO:

11 No. We just want your comments
12 documented about what you're asking for.
13 We are looking downstream at affects in
14 totality --

15 STACY ORTEGO:

16 Okay.

17 MS. COLOSIMO:

18 -- so I think that this is more just
19 another way for us to make sure we
20 capture it, and that's why we're doing
21 this.

22 STACY ORTEGO:

23 Understood, yeah. We'll make sure we
24 have that in writing as well. And
25 there's also some concerns with the toxic

1 waste sites that are in this project
2 area. If I'm not mistaken, I think
3 someone said there's about \$8 million set
4 aside to deal with any kind of clean up?

5 That doesn't seem very adequate, so I
6 would just make sure if that's -- if
7 that's the right amount or not, that you
8 make sure that if there would be negative
9 impacts at any -- that there's an
10 adequate amount of money to handle that.
11 With eight sites, \$8 million would not be
12 enough.

13 I would also point out that the
14 American Rivers has listed the Pearl
15 River as number three on their ten most
16 endangered rivers in the United States.
17 This is the second time since 2018 that
18 this has been put on their list, and that
19 is because of this project and the
20 potential negative impacts from it.

21 There's also concerns with the
22 sediment availability. Any wetlands that
23 we already have, we need to maintain, so
24 construction of any wetlands and bottom
25 land forest -- any cypress trees that

1 mature to growth, cypress trees that are
2 lost cannot be mitigated for. When
3 they're gone, they're gone. It will take
4 years and years to fix those impacts, and
5 then there's always the concern that
6 mitigation is not happening in the area
7 where the impacts are happening.

8 We've had those comments before on
9 projects with that issue. Sometimes
10 there's not even enough mitigation bank
11 credits in an area, so I would just
12 stress those concerns, and in addition,
13 wildlife impacts, too. There's two
14 endemic species of turtle: the ringed
15 sawback turtle and Pearl River map
16 turtle. There's also Gulf sturgeon,
17 which is a threatened species that we're
18 concerned about, and then you have
19 different bird species like black rail,
20 prothonotary warbler, and several other
21 species.

22 This river is one of the most
23 biodiverse in the nation, so we want to
24 make sure that the integrity of that is
25 intact. Again, we'll submit some of

1 those in writing, but thanks for meeting
2 with us here today.

3 MS. COLOSIMO:

4 Thank you.

5 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

6 Hello, all. My name is Juan Fernandez.
7 I am from Jackson, Mississippi, and I just
8 couldn't wait to be at this meeting, so I
9 came early here. I have three questions
10 slash points that I want to address, and I'm
11 going to try to stay with some of the things
12 that have been said here.

13 So number one, I think a big concern that
14 I've heard at least maybe two or three people
15 mention is the -- will there be development
16 along this lake? And I understand that it
17 seems that you can't give a yes or a no
18 because that's outside of the jurisdiction of
19 what the Corps does; however, I believe it's
20 either Appendix B or Appendix C of the 2018
21 EDIS does mention that one of the benefits
22 brought by this plan is increased land
23 values. I think one of the terms is
24 "intensification."

25 These are all land values that are in

1 Downtown Jackson, and I believe that they've
2 given us a minimum of about -- a conservative
3 estimate based on that of about \$55 million
4 over a certain amount of years. I don't know
5 if that relates to this idea that they are
6 going to develop along the lake. I doubt
7 that it's going to increase the value. I
8 don't know if that's something you can
9 comment on, so that's one statement right
10 there and I'll let you take it.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 I can comment. We've acknowledged
13 that that is in the Rankin-Hinds report.

14 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

15 Okay.

16 MS. COLOSIMO:

17 But I think in terms of whether we're
18 conspiring that or counting it as credit
19 is a whole different matter. So we think
20 many times -- and I've only seen this in
21 a couple of places here, so appreciate
22 this comment because, again, making sure
23 we get all of this information as we go
24 through the analysis that the Corps is
25 doing at its behest is this idea of

1 declining tax base, increasing tax base.
2 You know, it's the lack of investment
3 problems as well. So we are not
4 proponents in that one way or the other,
5 but we acknowledge it.

6 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

7 I hear you. I think another big
8 concern is the construction of a new dam
9 on the Pearl River, which is never called
10 a dam in the report, but it is, to my
11 understanding, is going to have to be
12 classified as a dam. So there's been a
13 big question -- when I talk to people in
14 Jackson, everyone has an idea of how a
15 dam is supposed to work, as an upstream
16 structure to capture excess water and
17 create storage capacity, and I believe
18 storage capacity was used here.

19 But just factually going back to what
20 these two comments from the U.S. -- the
21 USACE, in its technical review, comments
22 706- 6368, and comment 828-5727 -- they
23 both specifically state that this dam is
24 not going to create any storage capacity,
25 nor is it going to increase the

1 conveyance capacity of the river. So I
2 think there needs to be better education
3 on what the dam does serve.

4 What does it mean that a dam is going
5 to reduce maintenance cost over long
6 term, as it's going to keep the drainage
7 district from having to mow? I think
8 that that's like a really interesting
9 thing in flood control. I can't find any
10 cases on the -- you know, I'm just
11 searching the internet, but I can't find
12 any cases of a place using dams as a way
13 to maintain vegetation.

14 If it does turn out to be a good way
15 of maintaining vegetation, maybe
16 engineering or ERDC can adopt it, too.
17 So that's another thing I would like to
18 know, if you guys could be -- could help
19 us understand, really, what is the
20 purpose of the dam if it is not for
21 storage capacity.

22 MS. COLOSIMO:

23 So we'll do that as part of the
24 analysis, but specifically, I want to
25 reference that you're looking at review

1 comments that were open at different
2 points in time, and certainly, part of
3 our job here is to make sure the Corps
4 goes back and looks at those prior
5 comments and make sure we're encompassing
6 those good ideas and concerns; right?

7 And so, overarchingly, a lot of that
8 is the foundation on which Colonel Klein
9 discussed earlier. There's all this
10 information out there; we've got to make
11 sure we're responsive to all those
12 things.

13 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

14 And yes, you know, I wish I had more
15 updated information, but I'm only working
16 with what we have.

17 MS. COLOSIMO:

18 Sure, of course.

19 JUAN FERNANDEZ:

20 That being said, I think that there's
21 a lot of distrust here -- and I agree
22 with it -- so I'll just finish up with
23 yet another line from, as you said,
24 perhaps an outdated comment. Comment
25 706-0926 from the U.S. Army Corps of

1 Engineers, the technical review in
2 reference to the 2018 DEIS: in general,
3 this report seems to be written to
4 justify the preferred alternative, i.e.
5 the One Lake, instead of objectively
6 assessing all the alternatives.

7 Perhaps it's -- we kind of feel it
8 too, and in Jackson, as well, understood
9 that this is really just a development
10 project, and I think that's a serious
11 reason of concern for us. Thank you.

12 COLONEL KLEIN:

13 Thank you, sir.

14 MS. COLOSIMO:

15 We've got time for some more
16 questions?

17 TOM SHAW:

18 Yes.

19 STACY ORTEGO:

20 I have one more.

21 MS. COLOSIMO:

22 Sure.

23 STACY ORTEGO:

24 Are y'all in conversation with the
25 municipalities and governments that have

1 passed resolutions opposing the project to
2 take in those concerns? I know years back,
3 the Louisiana legislature opposed the
4 project. There's been Washington Parish,
5 others -- Washington, St. Tammany, I believe,
6 City of Slidell, Pearl River, Bogalusa --
7 several entities that have come out, and then
8 there's also some entities in Mississippi --
9 the Oyster Council, I believe.

10 So I'm just wondering if y'all are in
11 conversation with any of those folks, or just
12 taking those comments as well, because I
13 think that the governments that are dealing
14 with these potential impacts in their
15 communities downstream, it's really important
16 that you have conversations with them.

17 COLONEL KLEIN:

18 Yes, ma'am, we're taking those into
19 account. I recently got a letter from
20 the mayor of Monticello, too.

21 TOM SHAW:

22 We still have time, folks, if there's
23 something else on your mind.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

25 I think I want to follow up on what

1 she's saying. So in the past --

2 TOM SHAW:

3 Use the mic, please.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:

5 So in the past, I don't think it was
6 y'all that held these meetings about, you
7 know, what we call the One Lake Project, but
8 in the past, the City of Pearl River, the
9 City of Slidell, different senators --
10 different ones -- wrote letters into public
11 comment periods opposing the thing.

12 So at this point, are y'all going to pick
13 those back up and add them to this, or do we
14 need to get those individuals, the cities and
15 entities, and politicians to redo that and to
16 submit them back into this?

17 COLONEL KLEIN:

18 So we're building on the previous
19 work, so that's all part of the
20 comprehensive record, and then in the
21 case of the mayor of Monticello -- new --
22 we got a new one, a new letter as well.

23 WADE MIZELL:

24 Yes. I've been living in Bogalusa for 65
25 years and been going down on the Pearl River,

1 started water-skiing at 6-years-old. There
2 used to be hundreds of people skiing on the
3 canal. Now, Washington Parish is basically
4 the only waterway where we have waterskiing,
5 whereas St. Tammany Parish, they have several
6 rivers: Tchefuncte River, Bogue Falaya River,
7 and so on and so forth.

8 So for us, that's our livelihood. Y'all
9 dry that up, we have nothing. We're just a
10 small town. We were the fifth largest city
11 in the state of Louisiana at one time, but
12 just like all small towns, we withered down
13 to nothing. But my concern is y'all drying
14 up the Pearl River and not being able to
15 navigate it. It would just be devastation,
16 as far as I'm concerned.

17 And you know, even though this isn't
18 y'all's study, majority of the people see it
19 as common sense that there's going to be
20 million dollar homes built on One Lake.
21 That's the way we see it.

22 MS. COLOSIMO:

23 Thank you.

24 JOHN CANENBERG:

25 Earlier, in the first response, it

1 alluded to the idea of the locally preferred
2 plan. Could you tell me what goes into the
3 locally preferred plan and whose voices were
4 heard in Jackson?

5 MS. COLOSIMO:

6 Okay, we're going to tag team here.
7 Okay. Big picture: National Economic
8 Development Plan, why does it exist? It
9 exists because it's the basis for cost
10 sharing. The locally preferred plan
11 could be any range of plans; it's just
12 not the National Economic Development
13 Plan. Why does that matter? It
14 expresses local interest of some subset
15 of locals. Sometimes there's more than
16 one locally preferred plan, but it really
17 gets at the basis for who pays the most,
18 in terms of cost sharing.

19 So there's certain laws about cost
20 sharing with any new plan, and any
21 increment above that, that increment cost
22 and whatever those features are, are 100
23 percent non-federal. So that's just
24 terminology, so I just want to clear up
25 our alphabet soup because it's very

1 confusing to most folks. So I will let
2 Colonel talk to you in the details, but
3 there could be many locally preferred
4 plans -- and so the non-federal
5 interests, Rankin-Hinds submitted one.
6 We know there are other interests by
7 other folks, so in theory, there could be
8 a multitude of variations out there.

9 COLONEL KLEIN:

10 And so with this one particular plan,
11 it did go through the review process. It
12 went through -- out to -- the local
13 entity held their own public sessions,
14 all right, and it went out. And to the
15 point, that was a big -- what I want to
16 highlight is the locally preferred plan
17 could be any locally preferred plan.

18 We've got three locally preferred
19 plans that we're assessing at this point,
20 so it's not just one singular one.
21 That's the nice thing about that Section
22 211 that was out in the Water Resource
23 Development Act of 1996. It allows any
24 local entity to submit their plan, as
25 long as its gone through the process, to

1 the Secretary for consideration.

2 Int his case, we've just received one
3 that we got that went through the process
4 so that it meets all the technically
5 feasible, environmentally less impact --
6 a host of things. It also assessed it
7 against the NED. I hope that satisfies
8 that area of concern.

9 TOM SHAW:

10 Anyone else? Okay. Outside, if you
11 didn't get a chance, stop by. You can
12 probably look a little closer at the
13 study area board. But I ask that if you
14 don't mind, put your push pin in with
15 respect to where you're from. There are
16 comment cards out there. You certainly
17 may go to the website or the email to
18 submit comments to us. Any last
19 thoughts? Otherwise, we're going to
20 adjourn.

21 COLONEL KLEIN:

22 I'll just state thank you, everybody,
23 for coming out and providing us with your
24 feedback. I've taken a lot of notes.
25 Thank you to our recorder for recording.

1 You're recording it as I'm saying it, so
2 -- okay, excellent. So you're thanking
3 yourself right now. So thank you, ma'am,
4 for capturing all of this for the public.
5 We're certainly going to go back and
6 study up. Ma'am?

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 Thank you, everybody. Your time's
9 valuable and we appreciate you spending
10 it with us today.

11 TOM SHAW:

12 Thank y'all. Be safe.

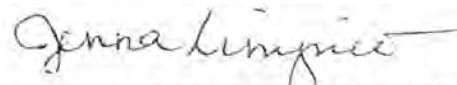
13 (THE PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:41 P.M.)
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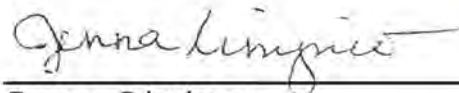
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May 23, 2023 Transcription: Slidell, LA 1800



Transcript of the Testimony of
**USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management
Project Meeting (6_00),**

Date: May 23, 2023

Case: USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project
Meeting (6:00)

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Phone: (800) 841-6863
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USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project Meeting (6:00)
USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project Meeting (6_00),

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
VICKSBURG DISTRICT**

**PUBLIC MEETING FOR THE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK
MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers - Vicksburg
District public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
Management Project, held at Slidell High School
Auditorium, 1 Tiger Drive, Slidell, Louisiana 70458,
beginning at 6:03 p.m.

Reported by:

Jenna Limjuco, BA-CCR
Certified Court Reporter

APPEARANCES:

Representing the Army Corps of Engineers:

Thomas R. Shaw

Robyn Colosimo

Leslie Prochaska

Colonel Christopher Klein

1 **TOM SHAW:**

2 **Good afternoon, everyone. My name is**
3 **Tom Shaw. I'm the project manager for**
4 **the Vicksburg District. We'd like to**
5 **welcome you all here to this second**
6 **public meeting for the Pearl River Flood**
7 **Risk Management Project. We appreciate**
8 **you coming.**

9 **We are here for a couple of reasons.**
10 **One is to help provide information to**
11 **you, but most importantly, we want to**
12 **gain input and feedback from you about**
13 **the project. So we do thank you for**
14 **being here. And so I will go ahead and**
15 **recognize our guests on the panel today.**

16 **We've got Robyn Colosimo on your far**
17 **right. She is the deputy -- Assistant**
18 **Secretary of the Army for Project**
19 **Planning and Policy Review. Next to her,**
20 **we've got Colonel Christopher Klein, the**
21 **Vicksburg District Commander for the**
22 **Corps of Engineers; and then next to the**
23 **colonel is Leslie Prochaska. She is the**
24 **Plan Formulator with the Regional**
25 **Planning Environment Division South. And**

1 so they will be helping, if you will, to
2 make this presentation, and then there'll
3 be a period of time afterwards we'll be
4 looking for comments and feedback from
5 you.

6 So if you will, I'm going to kind of
7 do a couple housekeeping things. We've
8 got, basically, a two hour window to
9 conduct this session and get some
10 feedback from you. When you came in,
11 there was some sign up sheets. We would
12 ask if you please -- if you're willing to
13 do so, please sign up at least your
14 address, maybe a phone number. I
15 wouldn't necessarily put your personal
16 email because it will become part of the
17 record and I would hate for you to
18 receive some unsolicited emails about
19 that.

20 So at this time, I want to talk about
21 a couple of things. One is you notice
22 there are multiple boards out in the
23 foyer when you came in, and on those
24 there are rules of engagement. There are
25 discussions about the public meetings,

1 which you will see on the slideshow, but
2 there's also a study area of what
3 constitutes Alternate A, which is a non-
4 structural alternate as proposed by non-
5 federal interests, and Alternate C, which
6 is the local preferred plan.

7 So we do have a virtual presence as
8 well. It's not only face to face here.
9 So I'm going to cover some really quick
10 things, if you will, with respect to
11 feedback. So I will just ask that, you
12 know, if you're here in the audience and
13 you want to ask a question at the end,
14 that you would wait to me recognized, if
15 you will, and then try to limit your
16 comments to three minutes or less.

17 There will be -- as I mentioned,
18 there is a virtual Webex going on as
19 well. In that Webex, you have the
20 ability to chat and ask questions. We
21 don't necessarily have a sign up on the
22 Webex, so if you would, just enter in the
23 chat your information, and that way we
24 have a record of you having participated.
25 So with that, let's -- let's go ahead and

1 get going.

2 We already talked about -- okay, so
3 agenda and purpose. We're here -- like
4 we said, we want to give you the
5 opportunity to hear about the project and
6 provide us feedback. It's vitally
7 important to us. The other thing is we
8 want to recognize the non-federal
9 interests, and that could be the Rankin-
10 Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage
11 Control District.

12 The authorization of this project was
13 done as submitted under Section 3904,
14 which allows the Secretary of the Army to
15 take action upon the submission, and then
16 there is -- we'll talk a little bit later
17 about Section 1176, which is the
18 assessment of the downstream impacts.

19 And so we'll do some discussions, if
20 you will, about the history of the
21 project and how we got to where we are
22 today. The non-federal interests
23 submitted a report under Section 211 in
24 July of '22, and they sent in comments,
25 and the Vicksburg District, the reason

1 we're here today is the Vicksburg
2 District was charged by the ASA to fill
3 in the gaps in those comments as we move
4 forward. We'll also talk about the
5 review process, but let's go to the next
6 slide, please.

7 Okay. As I mentioned earlier, this
8 is the second of two meetings here in
9 Slidell. Tomorrow, we will conduct
10 meetings in Jackson, Mississippi, and you
11 can see the schedule. It'll still be a
12 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. arrangement, and we
13 will be at the Mississippi Ag Museum
14 there on Lakeland Drive.

15 A couple of important things there is
16 the input that we're getting from you.
17 When you came in, there were comment
18 cards and comment box that you can enter
19 in your comments and basically place
20 those in the box. There is an email that
21 you'll see a little bit later, but the
22 email is at the very bottom. I don't
23 know if you can read that. And of
24 course, we can still get a hard copy in
25 U.S. Mail, and so any of those will do in

1 terms of us collecting information. The
2 big thing is we want you for that.

3 All right. At this time, we're going
4 to turn it over to Ms. Colosimo for her
5 to talk about the importance of the
6 project.

7 PRESENTATION

8 MS. COLOSIMO:

9 Mic check. Can you hear me? Bonus.
10 Thanks, everybody, for taking the time to
11 join us tonight. We did have a session
12 earlier today and it's good to see a few of
13 you back here as well, but also just to see
14 new faces.

15 This is a really important beginning of a
16 conversation around a potential project to
17 deal with flood risk management in Jackson.
18 We're going to unpack what we know today and
19 where we are through the three of us here,
20 and then take questions. I look forward to
21 all of that engagement.

22 Overarchingly, yeah, I'm Robyn Colosimo.
23 I oversee the Corps of Engineers. I've work
24 in that office that oversees it and my job --
25 sounds funky; right? Project Planning and

1 Review. What's that mean? It's really about
2 any proposal that comes through the Corps of
3 Engineers for an investment in a community
4 has to be cleared through our office before
5 it goes to Congress, ultimately through
6 project authorization or permission, and
7 ultimately, with the Administration as well.
8 So that is one of the reasons we're here.
9 This is an important priority, and I'll come
10 back to that.

11 But I want to turn now to a video of our
12 leader in the office, Mr. Michael Connor. He
13 is the Assistant Secretary of the Army for
14 Civil Works. He is the overseer of the Corps
15 of Engineers. He has some remarks, but he
16 could not be here today.

17 MR. CONNOR:

18 (Via video) Hi, everyone. I'm Mike
19 Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army
20 for Civil Works. I direct policy
21 oversight and direction of the U.S. Army
22 Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program.
23 The purpose of this community meeting
24 session on solutions to address flooding
25 along the Pearl River in Mississippi. We

1 look forward to hearing from you about
2 the need -- your needs and concerns
3 regarding flooding issues and the
4 proposed projects to address these
5 challenges.

6 As all of you know, the city of
7 Jackson, Mississippi has experienced
8 devastating floods as recently as 2020
9 and 2022. I saw firsthand some of this
10 flooding in August of last year in a
11 visit to discuss a proposed project.

12 It is a priority to provide the
13 people of Jackson an effective near-term
14 solution to their flood risk, and we have
15 a tremendous opportunity to deliver these
16 solutions in the Bipartisan
17 Infrastructure Law with funding provided
18 through that legislation. This
19 administration will set aside sufficient
20 funding to complete planning and
21 implementation of the plan consistent
22 with existing authorities and in
23 compliance with federal environmental
24 laws.

25 Your input today will provide the

1 technical feedback needed to inform my
2 decision on the solution we will
3 implement to reduce flood risk in
4 Jackson. I appreciate your time today as
5 we work together to provide the best
6 solutions for the Corps for Jackson and
7 this region of Mississippi. Thank you
8 very much for your time.

9 MS. COLOSIMO:

10 A couple key takeaways from that video
11 from my boss is that, really, it's his
12 decision that, ultimately, you're going to
13 help inform, and Congress gave him that
14 authority in a number of places, and I'll
15 come back to that in a few minutes.

16 Mr. Connor is just a great person to be
17 working for for many reason, but in places
18 like this with really challenging water
19 resources problems, his vast experience is
20 particularly important in decision making.
21 He's held many positions in the federal
22 government and worked on the Hill, and most
23 recently, with the Deputy Secretary of the
24 Department of Interior. So he's seen the
25 government work across the water space, and

1 we appreciate his views to be able to walk
2 through this process with all of you. Next
3 slide. Great.

4 So why are we here? Really, in totality,
5 we want to start this engagement with you all
6 about advancing the flood risk management
7 solution after decades of repetitive flooding
8 in Jackson. For over a hundred years,
9 headwater flooding in the Pearl River has
10 caused destruction to businesses and industry
11 and residents, where 5,000 commercial and
12 residential structures have been damaged,
13 impacting a population of more than 500,000.

14 Notable events were in '79 and '83, and
15 more recently, '20 and '22. 1979 Flood
16 closed transportation routes, homes and
17 businesses. It also caused \$223 million
18 dollars in damages back in 1979 value, so you
19 can imagine what those would be today. The
20 highest crest was in 2020, and notably, the
21 impact was to minority and low income areas
22 in Jackson in particular.

23 The '22 event -- which I was here with
24 Mr. Connor for -- we were actually visiting
25 the area to understand what was happening in

1 the Pearl and the opportunity to do something
2 under Mr. Connor's leadership. It was
3 actually starting to rain as we left, and so
4 that's why he referenced that he was here.
5 It's fascinating to have been here and tour
6 the area and get an appreciation for it, and
7 then know the rain started to come and what
8 happened. It heightened the need to do
9 something here.

10 Of course, the Pearl River Basin also has
11 tremendous environmental value, including
12 wetlands that filter waters that eventually
13 flow into the Gulf of Mexico and support
14 thousands of geese, ducks, and migratory
15 birds. We are looking forward to working
16 with interested parties like you to solve the
17 flood risk management problems that have long
18 plagued communities in the Pearl River
19 drainage. Next slide, please.

20 In terms of federal interests, I think
21 about it very simply, and it's here: 1986,
22 Congress authorized the Corps to plan,
23 design, and implement a flood risk management
24 project. Essentially, that meant we had the
25 authority, through the Corps of Engineers, to

1 go study the problem and develop potential
2 solutions to flood risk management.

3 In 2007, the authority was modified to
4 allow the ASACW, Mr. Connor, to determine the
5 appropriate plan to implement without further
6 consultation by Congress. This is a pretty
7 big deal. Typically, after a study is done,
8 you have to go back to Congress to have them
9 authorize it. This signals Congress's
10 continuing intent to resolve flood risk
11 management in Jackson and throughout the
12 Pearl drainage.

13 In 2018, we also got specific direction
14 to include analysis of potential downstream
15 impacts. Mr. Shaw referenced that earlier,
16 and that was perhaps, from many of you, that
17 we were hearing there concerns about any
18 unintended consequences of any investment in
19 Pearl. And so those are things that are the
20 basis for the foundations of the law and
21 direction to our office, and by extension,
22 the Corps of Engineers, to solve something in
23 Jackson in flooding. We continued to have
24 interest for years, but there was no plan or
25 funding to support moving out, and that's why

1 we still end up in this situation years later
2 that there is no viable solution that have
3 been put forward.

4 So why now? What's different? We have a
5 tremendous opportunity because of the
6 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, where funding
7 was actually allocated to the Corps to
8 identify, design, and ultimately implement a
9 flood risk management project subject to the
10 approval of Mr. Connor. What we are seeking
11 to do, with your help, is to formulate and
12 advance a solution that can happen, and
13 quickly. So the big thing here is it's
14 different because we now have funding
15 allocated by Congress to allow something to
16 move forward.

17 So the process we're going to walk
18 through and we're beginning through today
19 ultimately leads to a decision which quickly
20 allows design, the construction to happen
21 because we have those funds already
22 allocated. Of course, in all of this
23 process, we're going to comply with process
24 and procedure, including environmental laws
25 and all requirements.

1 We are excited to be reinvigorating
2 technical and community work to deliver for
3 Jackson. Many of you have experiences we
4 heard from earlier today, and I look forward
5 to hearing more about the additional folks
6 that are here today. Big picture, this is
7 the beginning of an important process and
8 we're looking forward to advancing it,
9 beginning with your input.

10 With that, I turn to Colonel Klein to
11 walk through some additional information.

12 COLONEL KLEIN:

13 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm
14 Colonel Chris Klein, Commander of the
15 Vicksburg District. The Pearl River
16 Watershed is one of the nine watersheds that
17 we oversee from up in Vicksburg, Mississippi.
18 I'm honored to be here tonight, and thank you
19 for taking the time to come out and provide
20 us your feedback.

21 We had a really good first session --
22 really good first sessions where we heard
23 about the aging infrastructure on the river,
24 silting concerns, erosion concerns from the
25 banks. We greatly appreciate hearing about

1 that. We also heard about the downstream
2 impacts of whatever project will be put in
3 place, whether it be flooding, or even the
4 drying up of the river. You know, both of
5 those concerns were expressed.

6 Greatly appreciate that; hope to hear
7 more about that as well, as well as habitat
8 impacts. So we heard about, you know,
9 concerns about this is a very rich ecosystem;
10 a lot of critical habitat for endangered and
11 threatened species, and so we want to keep
12 taking that into account.

13 The other key takeaway I think I took
14 from the first session was the desire and
15 potential support for having a comprehensive
16 Pearl River Watershed Study. That's not the
17 purpose of this particular project, but it is
18 something to be considered, and we greatly
19 appreciate the feedback on that.

20 It's really because the Pearl River has
21 had a long history, starting with navigation
22 -- now it's also flood risk management -- and
23 the story of the flood control, particularly
24 up in Jackson, included those initial levee
25 structure which were constructed in 1968. A

1 flood of record occurred in 1979 -- real
2 devastating flood, plenty of pictures to
3 prove it -- and that resulted in the
4 authority to execute a flood control project
5 for the city of Jackson. And since then,
6 there have been multiple both locally
7 proposed as well as USACE proposed solutions
8 for flood risk management in the Jackson
9 area.

10 So the latest locally presented plan was
11 prepared under Section 211 of the Water
12 Resources Development Act, and that allowed
13 the locals to put together a plan -- a
14 reviewed plan -- and then present it directly
15 to the Secretary for consideration, and
16 that's really what brings us to our work that
17 we're doing today. Can we go to the next
18 slide, please?

19 So our USACE activities for today and our
20 latest efforts start at the end of last year,
21 2022, at the direction of the Secretary, and
22 our mission is to build off of all previous
23 work -- all previous work that has been
24 presented to us -- and develop a report that
25 assesses all options that are technically

1 feasible, environmentally acceptable, and
2 legally compliant. All right, so we're
3 taking a look at all the options in order to
4 provide that flood risk mitigation for the
5 city of Jackson.

6 The two most critical items that we're
7 looking for in this work that we're doing are
8 identified in the National Economic
9 Development Plan, as well as completing the
10 Environmental Compliance -- all quality
11 environmental compliance activities. And so
12 we talk about the National Economic
13 Development Plan -- what is that?

14 That is the plan that provides the
15 greatest benefit -- the greatest benefit to
16 meet our national economic growth priorities,
17 and so you know, all plans will then be
18 assessed against what is identified as the
19 National Economic Development Plan.

20 You know, if we have any questions, I'll
21 let you know in a little more depth on the
22 National Economic Development Plan. That's
23 going to be the baseline, and so that is
24 going to provide the expected flood risk
25 management that we need up in Jackson. And

1 all alternatives must meet at least that, if
2 not more, and so that's why the NED becomes
3 that baseline to look at.

4 We're also going to be providing an
5 analysis of comprehensive benefits. So
6 comprehensive benefits boast quantitative --
7 those that we can measure either via
8 economically, the amount of water passed
9 through the system, levels of gauges up and
10 down stream. I know from this morning, there
11 was some concerns about the flash flooding
12 that occurs on the Pearl during high water
13 events, so we're going to look deeper into
14 that in our modeling and our analysis.

15 We're also going to be taking a look at
16 qualitative, so things that are not
17 necessarily measured in numbers, but other
18 benefits that are not conventionally
19 measured, but definitely need to be
20 considered in the overall -- in the overall
21 analysis of a project and whether it should
22 or should not be built.

23 And so the thing I want to leave you
24 folks with, in my remarks at this point, is
25 to remember that the Corps of Engineers,

1 we're neither a proponent or an opponent of
2 any one project. What we want to do is we
3 want to get the engineering right, and we
4 appreciate your input into helping us
5 identify what is that best flood risk
6 management solution for the city of Jackson
7 and the Pearl River Basin.

8 At this point, I'll turn it over to
9 Leslie, who will go into the technical
10 details of where we're at in the project
11 right now.

12 MS. PROCHASKA:

13 Thank you. I'm Leslie Prochaska,
14 Regional Planning. So the non-federal
15 interests report that was submitted, it
16 builds upon the historical studies, assessing
17 over 60 different flood risk reduction
18 features. At the conclusion of the report,
19 three plans were identified for further
20 assessment: a non-structural plan, a levee
21 plan, and a channel improvement plan.

22 The non-structural plan consisted of
23 relocating structures and buying the land
24 upon which the structures were located. The
25 levee plan included upgrading existing

1 levees, construction of additional levee
2 segments and or flood walls in unprotected
3 areas, and addition of pumps or gating
4 structures.

5 The Channel Improvement Plan, which was
6 the non-federal interest Rankin-Hinds locally
7 preferred plan in their report, consisted of
8 excavation to increase the channel capacity,
9 demolition of existing weir that's near the
10 J.H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant,
11 construction of a new weir with low flow
12 gates, and fish passage structure further
13 downstream. It proposed a location of
14 placement of excavated material, upgrading an
15 existing non-federal levee into a federal
16 ring levee over the Savannah Street Water --
17 Wastewater -- Street Wastewater Treatment
18 Plant as well. So those are the three final
19 array of plans that were submitted. Next
20 slide.

21 So now, since that report submittal, the
22 Corp of Engineers and Rankin-Hinds are
23 working collaboratively on our work to
24 provide comparison of flood risk management
25 levels. The Corps of Engineers is going to

1 be lead author preparing the draft
2 Environmental Impact Statement to identify
3 the National Economic Development Plan, as
4 discussed.

5 It will compare the level of flood
6 protection provided by that plan to the level
7 of flood protection provided by all the
8 alternatives being assessed. Additionally,
9 the report is going to include the downstream
10 assessment of potential impacts on the Pearl
11 River Basin. The comparison of plans will
12 include the non-federal interests Section 211
13 final plans in the report they're submitting,
14 as well as additional plans.

15 A revised non-structural plan is
16 currently being worked on and assessed.
17 We're looking for feedback on that, but right
18 now, we're already looking at items maybe
19 such as structural elevation and flood
20 proofing of structures; as well as a plan
21 that can be a combination or hybrid of the
22 Channel Improvement Plan and non-structural,
23 and it can be other plans or alternatives
24 that are included in this report. This
25 report will not be a recommendation. Again,

1 rather, it provide a comparison of
2 alternatives so that the Assistant Secretary
3 of the Army for Civil Works may make the
4 decision on a range of flood risk management
5 options. Next slide.

6 So the Pearl River Basin is large -- over
7 8,000 square miles -- but our study area is
8 focused on providing benefits -- the flood
9 risk reduction benefits on the area between
10 River Mile 270, which is just south of
11 Richland, Mississippi, and then going north
12 up to River Mile 302 at the Ross Barnett
13 Reservoir Dam. The study area encompasses
14 portions of Hinds and Rankin Counties in
15 Mississippi. And when we see that in the
16 study area, downstream impacts or potential
17 for impacts are definitely going to be
18 considered and evaluated. Next slide.

19 Areas of interest, also known as
20 comprehensive benefits -- several have been
21 identified, as you can see on the slide.
22 We're looking for public feedback regarding
23 other areas that aren't identified on the
24 slide, as well as feedback on the areas that
25 have been identified. So if you see

1 something up there that's not presented,
2 please provide it -- that comment -- so we
3 can get that and include it in our
4 evaluations and for consideration.

5 But the ones that I identify in addition
6 to flood risk reduction priority right now
7 would be water supply, water and wastewater
8 treatment, ecosystem and environmental
9 impacts, existing waste sites, cultural
10 resources, transportation, downstream
11 impacts, recreational access and
12 opportunities, community impacts, and
13 economic opportunities. Now I hand it over
14 back to Colonel Klein.

15 COLONEL KLEIN:

16 All right, thanks, Leslie. Can you go to
17 the next slide? So our timeline, this is
18 where we are today. The technical team is
19 continuing to do their work, and it's really
20 critical that we execute now these sessions
21 with you, so that we can receive your
22 feedback, your considerations, and even from
23 Session 1, we've already received things.
24 I've got a checklist going of things that I'm
25 going to go back to the team and make sure,

1 "We are doing this; right? We are doing
2 this; right?" Your feedback is critically
3 important.

4 By the end of August, we will have a
5 draft report complete. In September, that
6 will go out for review as well, in order to
7 inform the final report, which will be
8 submitted at the end of December for the
9 Secretary to make a decision in January.

10 It's a very streamlined timeline, but I
11 just want to reiterate, as well as feasible,
12 and that's because we're working off of a lot
13 of years of great work that's been done up to
14 this point. So at this time, I'd like to
15 turn it over to our moderator, and we look
16 forward to hearing your feedback.

17 TOM SHAW:

18 All right, thank you. So as I
19 mentioned earlier, there are multiple
20 ways that you can provide your feedback
21 and your input, and we're going to leave
22 this slide up. We're going to have a
23 question session where you can come up
24 and make your comments, but we'll leave
25 this slide up that gives you several ways

1 that you can provide your input.

2 Of course, don't forget there are
3 comment cards out in the foyer. There's
4 also -- and if I didn't mention this,
5 there is a study map out there where you
6 can take -- put a pushpin in that will
7 represent where you're from, your
8 residence, or your area of concern, and
9 we would appreciate that feedback as
10 well.

11 So as we mentioned earlier, we've got
12 two microphones down here in the aisles.
13 The people that are online as part of the
14 Webex, we would ask that they please
15 provide information in the chat. If you
16 have a question and you would like that
17 question presented before the panel,
18 that's one way to do that. There will be
19 a record of that chat that will become a
20 part of the public record of this. We
21 will -- your questions and your
22 responses.

23 We have a court reporter up here.
24 She's taking those down, as well as we
25 have video rolling that's going on as

1 well. So at this time, Scott, could you
2 bring the house lights up for us. And if
3 you will, please wait until you're
4 recognized so that we don't talk on top
5 of each other. So if you have questions,
6 please make your way to the microphones
7 and we'll get started.

8 I would reiterate, though, because we
9 do have the virtual audience and because
10 there are some people that might not be
11 able to hear you, particularly if you're
12 pointing this way, please use the mic if
13 you have a question. So with that, the
14 lights are coming up, and make your way
15 to the microphones if you would like.

16 Yes, sir?

17 PUBLIC COMMENTS

18 BRAD PELLEGRIN:

19 Yeah, my name is Brad Pellegrin. I'm
20 born and raised in Slidell, my family's been
21 here forever. I actually graduated here, and
22 my other family members. I live down on
23 Porters Island, and I know of many, many
24 people who live in the flooded areas. My
25 brother lives in River Gardens, right at the

1 corner of Magnolia. That is the lowest point
2 in River Gardens, and there's like six months
3 out of the year, he can't even drive a
4 vehicle to his house. He's got to park down
5 the road and walk up.

6 I know a lot, a lot of people who fish.
7 They do everything on the river -- they
8 crawfish and they hunt -- everything.
9 There's a lot of livelihood that comes from
10 the river. I'm sorry if I'm a little -- I
11 had a stroke and it's kind of messed up my
12 thought process, so I --

13 COLONEL KLEIN:

14 No hurry.

15 MS. COLOSIMO:

16 Take your time.

17 BRAD PELLEGRIN:

18 I lived in Picayune for a while, and I
19 was there when they had that war over the
20 Wilson Slough. Was that the Army Corps of
21 Engineers project to do that? You can go
22 walk out and go to the river -- the real
23 Pearl River, not the big West Pearl -- and
24 the weeds are six feet tall, and you can walk
25 on dry land to Louisiana.

1 It was a slough that was built to divert
2 the water from the Pearl River over to the
3 other areas, to the West Pearl and stuff, and
4 I don't understand why they did that. So the
5 Pearl River actually comes down over by
6 Stennis. That's the Pearl. What we call now
7 the Pearl is the West Pearl, and then it
8 breaks down into the east and middle, you
9 know, and then it goes into the marshes and
10 the swamp. Y'all don't know anything about
11 the Wilson Slough?

12 COLONEL KLEIN:

13 No, sir, I personally do not.

14 MS. COLOSIMO:

15 We'll have to investigate.

16 BRAD PELLEGRIN:

17 Because it seems like that would be an
18 option to block that back off and divert the
19 water back where it's supposed to go.

20 Another thing that I get from some of the
21 things that I hear is why is Jackson more
22 important than the people who are down river?
23 This is all about Jackson; right? Jackson
24 flooding -- what about us?

25 MS. COLOSIMO:

1 Do you want me to tell you where
2 we're coming from? Are you finished?
3 I can respond, if you like.

4 BRAD PELLEGRIN:

5 No, well, why is the focus being on
6 Jackson flooding?

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 So if I may? So this is one
9 really important point, to say the
10 Corps has to respond to the direction
11 we're given from Congress. So the
12 direction was to study the flooding
13 problems in the Pearl. It doesn't
14 mean the rest of any other part of
15 the country is unimportant; it's just
16 we're responding to that direction
17 from Congress.

18 And so that direction, as we
19 outlined earlier, has continued over
20 time to encompass making sure we're
21 taking care of downstream interests,
22 perhaps in direct response to all of
23 you and others, to make sure if we
24 can solve the flooding in the Pearl,
25 it doesn't cause additional

1 challenges for your area. And that's
2 absolutely part of this analysis,
3 it's not inducing something else
4 somewhere else.

5 BRAD PELLEGRIN:

6 I'm just wondering what Jackson did or
7 what Mississippi did to where they're getting
8 more focus than we are. This river's been
9 needing dredging -- you can ride down the
10 river and you'll hit bottom with your boat --
11 your motor hits on the bottom -- and
12 sometimes it gets low enough to where you can
13 get hurt. It needs dredging. We all know
14 that. We've been wanting that for years and
15 years. Just dredging would help with the
16 flood down here -- dredging the river.

17 MS. COLOSIMO:

18 Thank you for that. We heard a
19 little bit about that earlier as
20 well.

21 BRAD PELLEGRIN:

22 Yeah. Thank you.

23 TOM SHAW:

24 Thank you so much. Sir?

25 DARREN STEVENS:

1 Thank you. I definitely agree with
2 everything this gentleman just said. My name
3 is Darren Stevens, and just to give you a
4 little bit of my background, I'm a paramedic
5 for 27 years. I'm now safety manager for an
6 aerospace company, and I live in Lower
7 Slidell, very close to the Mississippi line.

8 I am not a water expert whatsoever;
9 however, I am colleagues with a very awesome
10 water expert. He does water rescues that is
11 just amazing, and I've been in contact with
12 him about this meeting tonight, and he
13 couldn't be here, so I would like to share
14 his thoughts and his questions with this
15 committee today.

16 This is from my colleague, and as well as
17 the chief of the Pinegrove Fire Department,
18 and this is what they would like to have
19 asked. In 2006, the Army Corps of Engineers
20 completed construction of the Wilson Slough
21 off Parkside Drive, between St. Tammany
22 Parish and Pearl River County, Mississippi,
23 and then they never returned. It never
24 properly drained the way as promoted by the
25 Army Corps of Engineers, then was neglected

1 and ignored.

2 Because of that neglect and the failure
3 of the Army Corps of Engineers -- no
4 disrespect, please -- to fix or at least
5 maintain what they built to start with, the
6 erosion is destroying the ecosystem of St.
7 Tammany Parish, and as it stands right now,
8 the water gets so low in the summer, you can
9 drive a truck straight down the bed of the
10 river.

11 What is the plan, if any, to restore any
12 water flow back into the river channel past
13 the Wilson Slough, and is the Army Corps of
14 Engineers even concerned about the potential
15 environmental impacts that the failure of the
16 weir is and will be in the future without
17 immediate repair? It would appear that the
18 Army Corps of Engineers is completely
19 avoiding the area which is experiencing the
20 greatest impact of decreased water flow to
21 hold a meeting in Slidell. Can you speak to
22 that?

23 COLONEL KLEIN:

24 So thank you. Again, appreciate the
25 feedback. Please pass that on to them as

1 well.

2 DARREN STEVENS:

3 I will.

4 COLONEL KLEIN:

5 You know, absolutely fantastic
6 feedback. So what has happened with all
7 projects on the Lower Pearl -- we started
8 addressing this earlier -- with the aging
9 infrastructure we have, is we've --
10 they've gone to caretaker status; okay?
11 Caretaker status is probably, you know,
12 the lowest level of funding. I'm not
13 saying it's great, okay, and go -- you
14 know, go ahead, that's what I'm here for.

15 I'm here to take that criticism so
16 that I can take it back to our leadership
17 as well and say, "We need some -- we need
18 the appropriate funding so that we can do
19 caretaker status right," right, to
20 maintain these properly over time.
21 Because to your testimony, sir -- to
22 their testimony, they're not performing
23 as designed; right? And so now, I think
24 what we have to do as a nation, right, as
25 our -- as our elected officials and even

1 us as the Corps, is go back with that --
2 with this feedback and let them know
3 that, "Hey, things that we did are not
4 performing, you know, as they're supposed
5 to," and ask that question of what are we
6 going to do about it; right?

7 And one of the solutions could be --
8 I'm sorry, now I get it a little more,
9 sir -- could be, "Hey, let's close the
10 thing back off, right, and redirect the
11 water back to where it should be"; right?
12 That could be one solution. I think
13 we've now got that in the Record so we
14 can certainly take back.

15 Or if the decision is going to be,
16 "Hey, we're going to maintain these
17 things for the original intended purpose
18 that we put them in for," then I can go
19 back and express capability and say,
20 "Please fund me at the level it's going
21 to take to do that"; right? Because
22 there's some testimony earlier, in some
23 cases, because of the low funding that we
24 have, caretaker status has created
25 hazards; okay?

1 And as, you know, water safety rescue
2 folks -- you know, fire folks, they're
3 the ones that get called and do the
4 responses. So you know, we have a great
5 appreciation for that and understand it,
6 and so, sir, I appreciate that testimony,
7 and we'll, you know, go back, express our
8 capability and your concerns to my
9 leadership, as well as anyone else we
10 talk to.

11 DARREN STEVENS:

12 I appreciate that, and I'm sure a lot
13 of the first responders would.
14 Definitely take it back to your
15 leadership and let's just hope for the
16 best for it. Thank you, sir.

17 TOM SHAW:

18 Yes, sir.

19 GREGORY DAIGREPONT:

20 My name is Gregory Daigrepont. I own
21 land on the navigational canal, and I think
22 this really is all about Jackson because they
23 had a bad water problem a few months ago --
24 it was all over the news -- and sure, if we
25 can help out Jackson, that'd be great. It

1 seemed like the Pearl River's been very high
2 the last four, five months. There's been a
3 lot more water than normal, as it has been
4 coming down.

5 If they can just hold the water and use
6 it for good use, that would be great. But it
7 would be nice if they could keep an easy
8 medium, so to speak, because we ski in
9 between Lock 1 and Lock 2. It would be nice
10 to keep that water level at a certain medium
11 so that -- you know, we don't want the dam to
12 break up at Lock 2, or the lock to break and
13 flood everything. Even though we have the
14 assessment come all the way up the bank that
15 y'all could -- that the Corps could really
16 access any time they want to -- but
17 hopefully, it doesn't get to that.

18 My main thing is a while back they had a
19 dump over in Bogalusa -- that paper mill.
20 They dumped something and killed a bunch of
21 fish. If they could just restrict the
22 dumping in the river and keep the water
23 fresh, that could keep the water level at an
24 easy medium for it not to get too low, or
25 control for it not to get too high, so people

1 can make it to their houses and such, and for
2 it not to get too low for it to get
3 overfished real easy. That's my concerns, is
4 those three things right there.

5 MS. COLOSIMO:

6 So we heard some similar concerns
7 about this earlier today, so I really
8 appreciate you amplifying some of that.
9 Hadn't heart about the dumping and the
10 killed fish, so that was definitely
11 information I'm sure folks around here
12 may be more privy to that.

13 So we want to make sure that we're
14 making best use of that infrastructure
15 that exists, and that we're making it for
16 its original purpose, and we're not
17 implicating other problems as a result of
18 that. I think some of the things you
19 highlighted here, we need to make sure we
20 look at that.

21 GREGORY DAIGREPONT:

22 There is one other thing. Above Lock 2,
23 there was two drownings up there because the
24 way the water flows over from the dam -- I
25 haven't even been up there, but if they could

1 take a look at that and do something with
2 that to -- there's several drownings over the
3 years, but recently, there was two drownings
4 lately. That's just another problem up
5 there.

6 COLONEL KLEIN:

7 Yes, sir. Thanks for that, and we
8 are aware of those. I've expressed that
9 concern back to our leadership so we can
10 find some mitigation solution to prevent
11 future drownings there. I just want to,
12 too, thank you for the information on the
13 chemical spill. I was a child who grew
14 up downstream from Union Garmin, and I
15 remember the fish killed in the small
16 stream by my house, so I can only
17 imagine.

18 GREGORY DAIGREPONT:

19 I think it was 2008.

20 COLONEL KLEIN:

21 Thanks, sir.

22 TOM SHAW:

23 Yes, sir, I believe you're next.

24 STANFORD OWEN:

25 My name is Stanford Owen. I live at 117

1 Shirmac Drive in Slidell. I'm a commissioner
2 in the St. Tammany Parish Levee Drainage and
3 Conservation District, and I represent that
4 district's eastern edge, which is all along
5 the Pearl River all the way up to
6 Mississippi. I have been living in the same
7 location since 1979. I remember the '79
8 flood, the '80 flood, the '83 flood, the '96
9 flood, and Katrina flood.

10 The last slide that you had up there, you
11 got 13 impact points that y'all are looking
12 at. One of them was downstream effects. Do
13 you have any information, data, presentation,
14 water flow data on the downstream effects,
15 specifically as it effects the Pearl River
16 Wildlife Management Area Marsh, the Biloxi
17 Wildlife Management Area Mash, Bayou Sauvage
18 Wildlife Management Area Marsh, and the Big
19 Branch Marsh?

20 All of those marshes are critical marshes
21 relative to storm surge protection. What you
22 did -- I worked with the Army Corps from
23 Vicksburg from 1984 to 1992 on the projects
24 that they were working for mitigating flood
25 in Slidell. I remember on a large account,

1 what they did was look at not only the
2 effects of flooding in the Slidell area, but
3 the affect of water flowing in the marsh. I
4 haven't seen any of that with this.

5 That will directly impact tens of
6 thousands of homes relative to storm surge.
7 So if it's a big negative, we need to know
8 that, and we need to know some data relative
9 to that. There are other issues relative to
10 environmental concerns that, quite honestly,
11 if that information could be forthcoming,
12 that is a pretty mundane route.

13 COLONEL KLEIN:

14 So we hear your concern. Thanks
15 for that. So for the downstream
16 analysis that's currently ongoing,
17 yes, it will be released and
18 available. I can't speak to each of
19 the specific wildlife management
20 areas. And also, to tie into that,
21 we're also assessing those
22 environmental impacts, so we'll be
23 working really closely with local
24 fish and games, environmental folks.

25 STANFORD OWEN:

1 So when -- in the decision making to
2 launch this project and actually do this
3 project, you're having these hearings and you
4 give us that information, and that's it? We
5 have more hearings? Is there any other
6 impact after that, or is that a done deal?

7 MS. COLOSIMO:

8 So a couple things that we're going
9 to tag team on this. So the Corps is
10 doing a report to support secretarial
11 determination. It will include National
12 Environmental Policy Act processes;
13 right? So the draft report's in
14 September, out for public comment. We
15 will produce a final report. We have a
16 NEPA document that's encompassed in all
17 the environmental impact statements, so
18 it's all -- we can come back and walk
19 through the eaches, but we're starting
20 with the early engagement.

21 We're going to determine how to do
22 more engagement along the way between now
23 and September, and try and, as we're
24 coming through that, make sure we're
25 building the information and getting

1 folks -- you guys are talking about it;
2 others are going to want to come in.
3 We're going to want to make sure that
4 we're learning so that we don't deliver
5 something that's incomplete.

6 SANFORD OWEN:

7 So I want to clarify what you just
8 said.

9 MS. COLOSIMO:

10 Yes.

11 SANFORD OWEN:

12 So between now and September, we're
13 going to have all the environmental
14 reports plus meetings to feed back on
15 that, and then you'll make a decision?

16 MS. COLOSIMO:

17 No. The September is a draft report.

18 SANFORD OWEN:

19 Draft report.

20 MS. COLOSIMO:

21 If you want to put up the slide with
22 the scheduled, can somebody do that?
23 It's hard to see with the light on;
24 right? So September 1 is the draft
25 report; right? And the public will have

1 an opportunity to comment. In December,
2 we're going to produce a final based on
3 the public comment to include all of you,
4 others -- the resource agencies, state
5 officials, all those things.

6 STANFORD OWEN:

7 And again, to clarify, the project
8 you're proposing is a single project?
9 You don't have multiple options to --

10 MS. COLOSIMO:

11 We do have multiple options. The
12 legislation requires -- I'm glad you
13 asked this. The legislature requires
14 this National Economic Development Plan,
15 which is a very funky term, and then we
16 have this non-federal interest plan that
17 was submitted by Rankin-Hinds, and then
18 there was this combination thereof that
19 Leslie referenced.

20 All those alternatives that are out
21 there that have been looked at in some
22 portion thereof, or other ideas people
23 have suggested, we're going to encompass
24 in how would that fit into the
25 combination thereof.

1 **SANFORD OWEN:**

2 I'd just like to make a point for the
3 Record that all of those marshes are
4 mostly dependent on Pearl River water for
5 survival; not Mississippi River at all,
6 and very little from Lake Pontchartrain.
7 So the Pearl River is the survival mode
8 for those marshes, which are not just
9 important for storm surge, but for
10 wildlife and fisheries itself.

11 **MS. COLOSIMO:**

12 Okay.

13 **SANFORD OWEN:**

14 Okay.

15 **MS. COLOSIMO:**

16 Thank you so much.

17 **TOM SHAW:**

18 Thank you. Ma'am?

19 **SHARON HEWITT:**

20 Thank you very much. I'm Sharon Hewitt.
21 I'm the state senator in this area, and so
22 first of all, I want to start by saying thank
23 you all for being here. You know, we very
24 much appreciate that. It's an important
25 issue in our area, and I appreciate the fact

1 that you're in Slidell, which is the area
2 where we're most affected, having this public
3 hearing, and thank you for the people who are
4 here in the audience.

5 I wasn't here for the afternoon meeting,
6 but I do appreciate the people that are here
7 to learn more about the project and to
8 express your concerns about it, because that
9 is the only way, right, that we're going to
10 make an impact on this project. This
11 project, as you talked about in your
12 presentation, has been under consideration
13 for some time. We formed a Lower Pearl River
14 Basin Taskforce through the legislature in
15 the state capitol, and the mission of that
16 has evolved a little bit over time.

17 It's currently configured to include all
18 the relevant state agencies that have
19 anything to do with managing water and
20 rivers, so our taskforce has representation
21 from the Department of Natural Resources,
22 Wildlife and Fisheries, the Coastal
23 Protection and Restoration Authority -- which
24 is our coastal zone management program -- the
25 Department of Environmental Quality,

1 representation from the legislature, as well
2 as Washington and St. Tammany Parishes.

3 And in 2018, when we had our last
4 opportunity for public comment, we prepared a
5 very, I think, well documented response on
6 behalf of the State of Louisiana to that
7 draft EIS, and I'm going to read maybe just a
8 couple highlights of that, and I'm going to
9 officially submit that again into the public
10 record to make sure that you all have that,
11 because we have all the technical work done
12 by all of our experts at the state level in
13 addressing the proposal as it was presented
14 at that time.

15 You know, one of our big concerns has
16 always been how the project area has been
17 defined. It's defined, as you said, Hinds
18 and Rankin Counties, without really looking
19 at the whole river as a system all the way
20 down to the Gulf of Mexico. And having that
21 -- you know, the impact of the downstream
22 areas added to the WRDA Bill in 2018 was work
23 that we did -- the people in this room, along
24 with, you know, legislative leadership, along
25 with our Congressional delegation -- to make

1 sure that it wasn't just about Rankin and
2 Hinds County, but it's also all of the
3 parishes here in Louisiana along the river
4 that are affected, and the people who live
5 here.

6 And so one of my questions is, you know
7 -- yes, you've said a couple of times that
8 you're going to be looking at the downstream
9 impacts, but I'd like to better understand
10 how it kind of factors into the decision.
11 You know, is this something where you're
12 going to look at the cost benefit analysis in
13 the project area, and the downstream is kind
14 of like a footnote on the downstream?

15 How -- because we're not going to have
16 any benefits on the downstream. There are no
17 benefits of this project to us that I can
18 see. You know, it's really just -- we're
19 just going to be -- we're going to get the
20 consequences of it, and how are those
21 factored into the overall decision when
22 you're looking at flood control projects for
23 the Jackson area.

24 MS. COLOSIMO:

25 So thank you for your continued

1 involvement in this effort in the basin,
2 and so eloquently putting those things
3 forward. So a couple things: first of
4 all, are we aware of your comments of all
5 the things out there? Yes.

6 Have I personally read them? No, but
7 I know that the District is, and we will
8 be looking at that entire record of prior
9 documents, prior comments, how those
10 things were brought through in today's
11 world, and what we additionally get,
12 right, because things could have changed
13 and merged since 2018 --

14 SHARON HEWITT:

15 Sure.

16 MS. COLOSIMO:

17 -- which only seems like yesterday.
18 So full confidence that we are going to
19 do that, but please submit to make sure
20 we didn't miss something. And that's
21 always the way it should be; right? You
22 know how that is.

23 I also appreciate you making sure
24 you've highlighted this taskforce for us,
25 and how they actually played in getting

1 the 2018 language, because sometimes we
2 don't know the backstory of how language
3 comes to be, and that speaks volumes to
4 this.

5 But to the more fundamental point,
6 you've got downstream impacts. I mean,
7 fundamentally, as an agency, investing in
8 solving a problem in one community should
9 not implicate problems in another
10 community that we fully understand;
11 right? And so yeah, we're not looking to
12 implicate any kind of flooding,
13 environmental damage downstream to
14 benefit one community, and then cause a
15 problem in another; right?

16 And so benefit costs? We're going to
17 be doing benefit cost analysis on these
18 various alternatives. On some level, it
19 depends upon what data we have, how we
20 describe those benefits -- whether it's
21 quantified monetized, or simply described
22 in basic terms. I mean, even just
23 talking about impacts to wetlands in the
24 number of acres is a significant
25 important way. Generally, we've talked

1 about how the water from the Pearl
2 provides the water to those refuges.
3 That gives us a good example. You don't
4 need to quantify this, as much as we can
5 understand.

6 So all those things are going to be
7 presented in a very complete way, and if
8 you think there are places we have
9 weaknesses, we want to know about them
10 and we want to make sure that they are
11 presented to my boss as a decision among
12 the alternatives that are out there.
13 Pros, cons -- yes, benefits to cost --
14 but also potential implications of other
15 unintended consequences.

16 SHARON HEWITT:

17 Okay, and I appreciate that answer. So
18 for those in the room, we will be working on
19 them. As we see the plan in September, we
20 will be working through the Lower Pearl River
21 Basin Taskforce, again, to develop a
22 consolidated response from all of our, you
23 know, executive branch agencies to try to
24 help address what we still see as benefits,
25 perhaps, or concerns that we may have.

1 I want to just highlight it -- and I can
2 read all this, but there were a handful of
3 kind of big bullets that came out of the work
4 that we did in 2018. At that time, again,
5 with the project as it was proposed, we felt
6 like there was little consideration given to
7 the potential impacts to the water quantity
8 and the water quality of the Lower Pearl
9 River Basin. (Perusing computer) Sorry, I'm
10 never good at this.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 No worries.

13 SHARON HEWITT:

14 We also believed that the construction
15 and the operation of the proposed project
16 could have a reasonably foreseeable effect on
17 coastal land use, water use, and natural
18 resources in the Louisiana Coastal Zone, and
19 we believe that a consistency determination
20 was necessary pursuant to the Coastal Zone
21 Management Act of 1972.

22 Third, we were concerned about during
23 the project construction, the water quality,
24 quantity, and sediment issues in the Lower
25 Pearl River. Fourth, we were -- we were

1 interested in consideration of downstream
2 mitigation projects and looking at, again,
3 weird and silt removals and things like that
4 that should be considered as part of the
5 overall gameplan.

6 There was certainly a lot of talk about
7 endangered species and the protection of rare
8 and threatened species, such as the Gulf
9 Sturgeon and the Inflated Heelsplitter, and
10 we have about 47 different species of animals
11 that are of concern in the Lower Pearl River
12 Watershed.

13 There's an issue of hazardous waste
14 sites, and we're concerned about how those
15 are going to affect the water quality for us
16 here downstream, and then just the --
17 finally, the impact of potential population
18 growth and future development along the
19 shoreline of the new reservoir to come with
20 the One Lake Project around here, and how
21 that is going to affect us again downstream.

22 So those were kind of the high level, you
23 know, themes of our concerns in the past, and
24 you know, we'll probably refresh some of that
25 when we see the new report. But don't forget

1 about us here -- and again, I know I'm
2 talking to a table full of engineers -- you
3 have to look at the river as a whole system,
4 and not just in isolation.

5 You know, we are going to be impacted
6 down river with whatever is done up river,
7 and we very much care. As the gentleman
8 said, you know, we're just as important in
9 Slidell, Louisiana as they are in Jackson,
10 Mississippi, and we're going to continue to
11 work with our Congressional delegation, and
12 hopefully continue to work with you all in
13 providing feedback and input and constructive
14 suggestions. Thank you very much.

15 MS. COLOSIMO:

16 We really appreciate that, ma'am, on
17 so many levels. Really, at the end of
18 the day, it's about community resilience;
19 right? Community resilience has broad
20 implications, and that's something my
21 boss would certainly say here, and so we
22 want to be engaged in that conversation,
23 we want to answer questions as they
24 emerge. We want to start with where we
25 were and inform the path forward, and so

1 really look forward to doing that with
2 you.

3 SHARON HEWITT:

4 Thank you.

5 TOM SHAW:

6 Sir?

7 ANDREW WHITEHURST:

8 Thank you. My name is Andrew Whitehurst.
9 I'm the Water Program Director for Gulf
10 Restoration Network, or Healthy Gulf, and I'd
11 like the Corps and the Army Secretary's
12 staff. This is the first time in ten years
13 that people have been invited to speak from
14 the microphone at one of these types of
15 meetings.

16 Meetings have been orchestrated, but not
17 allowing open public comments so we can be
18 heard by our peers and we can learn from
19 them. So thank you for that, and I'd also
20 like to thank Andrea Walker on the Army
21 Secretary's staff for being a great source of
22 information. Thank you, Ms. Walker.

23 MS. COLOSIMO:

24 Wave, wave.

25 MS. WALKER:

1 (Complying.)

2 MS. COLOSIMO:

3 There you go.

4 ANDREW WHITEHURST:

5 The Army Secretary's Office and the
6 Vicksburg Corps District are asking people
7 here on the lower end of the Pearl to help
8 the Corps fill in the gaps, as we heard from
9 Mr. Shaw, on the work they're doing since
10 they took over the writing of this draft
11 environmental impact statement for this
12 federal flood risk management project.

13 So we're being asked for the full scope
14 of issues -- you call them "areas of
15 interest" -- that need to be addressed in the
16 draft document being prepared for publication
17 by September 1. That's my understanding that
18 this is a scoping meeting, or re-scoping as
19 part of the NEDA process, and that's how I'm
20 going to treat it.

21 The Army Secretary's Office has had
22 access to two extensive reviews of the gaps,
23 if that's what you're looking for, and the
24 weaknesses of the 2018 Draft EIS. One was
25 done by the Army's own nationwide team of

1 reviewers, and one was done by Patel
2 Institute, a large engineering firm and
3 defense contractor.

4 The Army Secretary's office has access to
5 all the comments from 2018, and knows the
6 Lake Plan or whatever you call it -- the
7 Channel Modification Plan -- was not well
8 accepted, yet it seems that the Army
9 Secretary, in your memo of Notice of Intent
10 for this meeting, is describing advancing
11 four alternatives, and two of them involve
12 the lake: C -- Alternative C, and Alternative
13 A1.

14 In 2018, the lake dredging project was
15 one of three alternatives, plus a no action.
16 I didn't imagine that after finishing agency
17 technical review last July, that the Army
18 Secretary's office would repackage the
19 Rankin-Hinds Drainage District's work and
20 offer the lake dredging plan in two of its
21 four alternatives. That's a surprise. And I
22 don't know what the combination of all of the
23 above's going to be and I don't know what's
24 contemplated by other alternatives. I hope
25 there will be another agency technical

1 review.

2 On slide number eight, which is titled
3 "USACE" -- or "USACE Activities," there's one
4 leg of analysis that's not on there, and I'd
5 like that to be on for tomorrow night's
6 meeting in Jackson. You say that the project
7 has to be environmentally acceptable,
8 technically feasible, but the language in the
9 2018 WRDA in Section 1176 also added
10 economically justified, so that's three
11 levels of analysis, and it should be on your
12 slide. If you're, you know, going to do the
13 economic analysis, please put it up there.

14 And this is a long river. It doesn't
15 belong to Jackson. As you've heard from
16 speakers tonight, there are a lot of economic
17 issues all the way down the river, starting
18 with the discharge permits that cities have
19 to have and that paper mills have, and have
20 to meet for the Clean Water Act. Those are
21 economic issues. There's the fishing, the
22 ability to access the river in small boats
23 safely. The seafood industry that's
24 dependent on the marshes and estuaries is an
25 economic issue.

1 So that economic analysis needs to be on
2 slide number eight, and I'd like to know more
3 about how are you going to tackle it, because
4 that was part of the language that Senator
5 Cassidy and Representative Scalise put in the
6 WRDA in 2018 to protect the Lower Pearl in
7 Mississippi all the way to the mouth at Lake
8 Borgne.

9 Some of the scoping issues, if you're
10 looking for scoping issues, are here -- the
11 study area for the project should go all the
12 way to Lake Borgne, not be truncated at Hinds
13 and Rankin Counties. An unsteady three-
14 dimensional model should be used for the
15 Pearl River. That's been suggested to you by
16 the engineering department of this parish. A
17 water budget needs to be developed and
18 presented so we know the true picture of
19 water influx, water use and evaporation.

20 The Pearl River's falling below its 7Q10
21 minimum flow marks for a significant
22 percentage of days. When the record is
23 examined, post-Barnett Reservoir construction
24 in 1963, what will another source of
25 evaporation mean to that falling short of

1 minimum flows? What are the affects of a
2 warming climate on the Pearl River? This has
3 all been ignored in the 2018 DEIS.

4 Can the Ross Barnett Reservoir be used
5 more aggressively to store and release water
6 to manage rains in this watershed? Are the
7 present minimum flows released from the Ross
8 Barnett adequate for the lower river's needs
9 in the dry months of July to October?

10 I'll stop there, but there are more, and
11 I know that people need to be thinking along
12 the lines of what else should these scoping
13 factors hold, and I hope we get some more of
14 that tonight. I appreciate the ability to
15 make comments at all and to speak, in
16 particular. That's a nice change.

17 MS. COLOSIMO:

18 Thank you, Andrew. Just a couple
19 things I just want to make sure I respond
20 to. First of all, we really appreciate
21 your comprehensive thoughts there, and
22 please make sure you're submitting them.
23 I'm sure you're planning on doing that,
24 but I want to make sure we have them all
25 captured -- and that applies to

1 everybody, of course.

2 Couple things. One: in terms of peer
3 reviews and prior reviews, on some level,
4 current analysis is in response to that;
5 right? We have current direction, so I
6 want to clear up the direction. Why do I
7 hear 3104? Because that's the direction
8 where the Secretary can make a decision.
9 It also references two alternatives;
10 right -- the NED Plan and the non-federal
11 interest plan, otherwise known at the
12 FRDA Plan, or a combination thereof.

13 So we're not inhibiting or biased in
14 any way to the solution. We're being
15 very directly responsive to that
16 legislation, but can encompass other
17 ideas and alternatives. Many of you have
18 suggested some here, we heard some
19 earlier, and we've heard some others from
20 letters and whatnot, so open to those
21 ideas for certain. We are not biased to
22 it.

23 In terms of economic analysis, yes --
24 we are doing the economic analysis. We
25 just may have worded it strangely here.

1 Often, when we talk about technical
2 feasibility, it encompasses the cost
3 analysis, so we will certainly clean up
4 that language a bit. Not a problem. I
5 also appreciate some of your Qs.

6 One of them is the Ross Barnett, so I
7 just want to be clear about this: it is
8 not a federal facility. We are modeling
9 as it's supposed to be currently
10 operated. In the last session, it was
11 also suggested can they operate it
12 differently. I think that's a policy
13 matter for the people who own that, and
14 certainly, we can talk to them about
15 being able to offer any opportunity,
16 given your advice.

17 Whether or not we can implicate that
18 as a decision Mr. Connor makes is a whole
19 other thing, but for the good of the
20 public and transparency, certainly, we
21 can talk to what it does, how it's
22 operated, what its mandate is, and it is
23 not mandated in flood management.

24 Don't know anything about if they are
25 willing to entertain that, but we should

1 certainly talk about it for sure, and I
2 think another gentleman might talk about
3 that a bit earlier. So having taken all
4 that on, we can talk about other things
5 if you want to.

6 MS. PROCHASKA:

7 I would like to add -- on the A1
8 alternative for non-structural, the non-
9 structural will be non-structural only
10 plan. It will not have structural
11 components such as a weir and a ponding
12 behind the weir.

13 ANDREW WHITEHURST:

14 A1, when I read it in NOI, looked like it
15 would be the lake plan, build the lake, and
16 then decide if you have to do other non-
17 structural projects if you have flooding
18 after the lake's built. That's the way I
19 read it.

20 So you have C, which is the lake dredging
21 plan; A, which is non-structural -- flood
22 plain buyouts, relocations. A1, which is a
23 combination of C, the lake, and non-
24 structural after the lake's built; and then
25 the combination of all of the above. And I

1 don't know what that looks like or how it's
2 imagined, but if I'm wrong about A1, let me
3 know. But I heard it described twice today,
4 and it seems like it involves the lake
5 dredging, or the channel modification, as
6 well as some additional non-structural.

7 MS. PROCHASKA:

8 So the team's plan strategy right now
9 is to assess a non-structural only plan
10 without structural. That will be one of
11 the plans that's being assessed, so it
12 would not have the lake, the weir, the
13 compounding movement to the weir included
14 into one of the plans. It would just be
15 non-structural.

16 What that non-structural looks like,
17 though, is what we're looking for
18 feedback on. It could be elevation of
19 structures, flood proofing of structures.
20 It could be a combination of that. It's
21 things that don't change the hydrology,
22 but get things to reduce the flood risk
23 to the individual structure.

24 It also includes recommendations for
25 flood management plan updates, flood

1 warning systems, but not structural
2 things like a weir. So that would be a
3 plan for nonstructural only.

4 MS. COLOSIMO:

5 So thanks for that. This is great.
6 So this a good example of where we get
7 wonky as an agency. It depends on where
8 you sit on these terms. So even if you
9 look at the alternatives under evaluation
10 slide, A is relocating structures --
11 bilateral relocation. These are all
12 considered non-structural, but A1 is
13 additional measures to include elevation
14 and flood proofing.

15 So it's really at an additional what
16 most folks would call non-structural
17 measures. And so people define those
18 measures differently. We will clean up
19 the language so it's abundantly clear.

20 ANDREW WHITEHURST:

21 Before it comes out in another form
22 like a Notice of Intent, it needs to be
23 clearer.

24 MS. COLOSIMO:

25 Appreciate it.

1 **ANDREW WHITEHURST:**

2 It's capable of being read a number
3 of ways, so I mean, if you want to list
4 four alternatives, list them and be very
5 tight with them. The way it's written in
6 the NOI is, you know --

7 **MS. COLOSIMO:**

8 Absolutely appreciate the feedback.
9 Like I said, this is a wonky area, so I
10 get exactly what you're saying. Thank
11 you for that.

12 **TOM SHAW:**

13 Ma'am?

14 **MARGIE VICKNAIR-PRAY:**

15 I'm Margie Vicknair-Pray. I'm with the
16 Delta Chapter Sierra Club, which is the state
17 of Louisiana. Everything that Andrew said,
18 we definitely reiterate and are worried about
19 and interested in, and I'm very glad to see
20 Senator Hewitt also here to express the same
21 feelings that we have about the One Lake
22 Project, listening to that.

23 We are very concerned, honestly, about
24 the people, because a lot of people use the
25 Pearl for recreational fishing and oystering

1 down near the mouth of it, and all of that
2 could be affected by reducing the flow. I'm
3 sure y'all are aware of it, but the Pearl
4 River's been named one of America's top three
5 endangered rivers in the United States, so --
6 and it's number three out of all the rivers
7 in the country, and dams and weirs are the
8 main reason for it being endangered, and
9 slowing the flow -- anything that slows the
10 flow or reduces the amount of water coming
11 through the river and through the system.

12 And because of reduced flow, we get
13 dissolved oxygen problems, we have siltation
14 problems, and again, that affects everyone
15 down here, and we also have coliform bacteria
16 problems. I have done tests myself of the
17 river -- the Pearl River -- a couple of
18 locations in the Louisiana area from
19 Pearlington up to around the Bogue Chitto,
20 and the numbers of coliform bacteria are just
21 astonishing and scary.

22 And when you reduce the water flow coming
23 down the river, that means those numbers are
24 going to be in an even higher percentage in
25 the water. In the summer, when the water

1 flows are less, is when people are using the
2 river more -- kids are swimming in it and
3 things like that. So anything that reduces
4 the water coming down the river is a
5 negative, as far as we're concerned.

6 And of course, we're also worried about
7 the endangered species -- things like Gulf
8 sturgeon and the palla fish, which need at
9 least fairly clean water to survive, and the
10 Gulf sturgeon to lay its eggs. People don't
11 realize that it's like the salmon, where it
12 comes up the rivers and lays its eggs, and
13 the babies grow up in the river.

14 The reason we're losing them is because
15 the river, and especially the Pearl, is one
16 of the ones that was a major river nursery
17 for the sturgeon, and it's not able to get to
18 its egg laying grounds and a lot of them have
19 been silted over, and then the flood -- the
20 level of water is so low that the fish can't
21 get upstream. So we are definitely against
22 anything that would reduce the amount of
23 water coming down through this area. Thank
24 you.

25 MS. COLOSIMO:

1 Thank you for that.

2 **TOM SHAW:**

3 Ma'am?

4 **MELINDA WHITE:**

5 Thank you. Thank you. Melinda White,
6 representative District 75, which is
7 Washington Parish, Lower St. Tammany, and the
8 river is the water of my district. It's not
9 only that -- it's part of our life. It's
10 part of our family, it's part of our
11 community, and it's a large basin that is a
12 part of our state and a part of the United
13 States, for that matter.

14 What concerns me right now -- and I came
15 in a little late, so I apologize for that --
16 but did I see that you're not including this
17 area in the environmental impact study?

18 **MS. COLOSIMO:**

19 No, we're including the area.

20 **MELINDA WHITE:**

21 Okay. Because the footprint that I
22 saw -- and I think I took a picture of it
23 -- did not include us.

24 **MS. PROCHASKA:**

25 So when we identify a study area,

1 that is not talking about the hydrolic
2 connectivity area. So that watershed in
3 its entirety is hydrolically connected,
4 so all of that will be assessed. We want
5 to make sure that we're not transferring
6 risk to other places, whether that
7 transferred risk is flood risk,
8 environmental impacts. So that is being
9 studied.

10 The study area is the area that we
11 focus on for flood risk reduction
12 benefits. That is the primary area that
13 is targeted for a project to get the
14 flood risk reduction, so that's what we
15 mean by study area. It's the area that
16 focuses on to achieve the flood risk
17 reduction benefits -- you know, provide
18 protections -- some type of level of
19 flood protection for the community there.

20 It does not mean that the hydrolic
21 activity anywhere else is limited.
22 Anything that's connected is going to be
23 evaluated for different flood sources to
24 make sure there's no transferred risk,
25 there's nothing being impacted, or what

1 those impacts are.

2 **MELINDA WHITE:**

3 Well, we've been waiting for the
4 environmental impact study to get to us so
5 that we can see, validate our concerns. And
6 you know, we've been working with Senator
7 Hewitt on the study, and you know, it's just
8 very hard for us to go along with what seems
9 to be -- you know, we're sorry about what's
10 happening in Jackson. We want relief for the
11 folks that are flooding, but we don't want it
12 to cost all the rest of us down the river
13 with multiple issues, and lack of water flow
14 in this area is a problem.

15 As much as I like to say it's a scenic
16 river, it's a working river, so it has a lot
17 of industry, a lot of municipalities that
18 depend on it. I guess our concern there
19 would be that we're not impacted any further
20 than we already are with all of the manmade
21 projects that are currently on the river that
22 we see 50, 60, 70 years later the problems
23 that we have -- for instance, on the silts
24 that we have on the Bogue Chitto and on the
25 Pearl, for Pearl River Navigational Canal

1 System that I'm sure that many years ago
2 seemed like a great idea. It's not a great
3 idea, and it was not ever used for the
4 purpose that it was established many years
5 ago.

6 So then it becomes real disheartening for
7 us that we're dealing with things that were
8 built many years ago, and we're talking about
9 building more on that river. So when we look
10 at the alternatives for what we can do to
11 eliminate or downsize the issues of the
12 flooding in Jackson, we don't need to think
13 in terms of putting more manmade projects on
14 that river that are going to impact everyone
15 below it, including our Mississippi neighbors
16 below that.

17 So I've taken trips to DC with them --
18 they're also objecting to this. They are
19 feeling the impacts of the structures that we
20 already have on the river, and it just -- it
21 sends a lot of wrong messages down this way.
22 We are not receiving that economic or
23 environmental impact on what this is going to
24 cost and cost us, and whether it's a good
25 idea or not, we would like to make sure that

1 our voices are heard and that we actually see
2 a result for that. I guess that would be my
3 main concern.

4 MS. COLOSIMO:

5 Yeah, thanks, ma'am. I completely
6 hear you; right? So a couple things.
7 First of all, I think since 2018, there
8 was a report produced that did not get
9 released to the public. I don't think I
10 ever saw it at the Secretary's office
11 either, but what we are responding to is
12 that it was basically, effectively,
13 paused; right? So there has been pause
14 for the need of information. Now we have
15 an update needed of that information that
16 was not released.

17 So understand the need for
18 transparency and visibility. We're
19 absolutely about that, and that's why
20 we're holding this session, to let folks
21 know what we're about to launch into
22 without preconceived notions of where we
23 land. So we to be responsive to our
24 direction from Congress. The big change
25 here, though, is that there was monies

1 allocated in the Bipartisan
2 Infrastructure law to solve a flood risk
3 management problem in Pearl, to the
4 extent that it's achievable; right?

5 So there is no pre-decision including
6 potential analysis. Our analysis will
7 include no action. So it is complete in
8 that sense, and you will be able to see
9 all that. We want to make sure we're
10 hearing those ideas. Appreciate
11 everything you've expressed.

12 It sounds like the communities I
13 suspect you're actually talking about are
14 communities we've heard from in a variety
15 of sources already and a variety,
16 perhaps, through some of you, and that's
17 actually one of the reasons the non-
18 structural was put out there, as we
19 believe it's probably going to need
20 planning because we know that some of
21 these other plans, they could pass didn't
22 pass the benefit cost test. And there
23 has been an overarching interest in
24 relocations and buyouts, which would
25 largely happen on a voluntary basis, but

1 we need to put it out there so people can
2 digest it and see if that's what they
3 want. We're definitely all in on that.
4 Did I miss something there? Thank you.

5 MELINDA WHITE:

6 And thank you for allowing us to be
7 able to speak in a public manner and for
8 being here. We appreciate that.

9 TOM SHAW:

10 Sir?

11 HUNTER SESSIONS:

12 How y'all doing? My name is Hunter
13 Sessions and I've got some questions -- right
14 now, not so much about what's going on here.
15 Who decides when the Ross Burnett is opened?

16 COLONEL KLEIN:

17 So the Ross Burnett is managed by a
18 non-federal entity, so that's a local --
19 Craig, who is that?

20 SPEAKER:

21 It's the Pear River Valley Waterway
22 Commission.

23 HUNTER SESSIONS:

24 And what parameters do they use to
25 tell them when it's time to open it up?

1 COLONEL KLEIN:

2 So they've got a water control manual
3 they use to perform that.

4 HUNTER SESSIONS:

5 Do they look at anything down river
6 at the time, like the water levels or the
7 tide?

8 COLONEL KLEIN:

9 That question's probably best for
10 that private entity.

11 HUNTER SESSIONS:

12 Yeah, all right. What about --

13 COLONEL KLEIN:

14 If I controlled the water manual, I
15 could tell you. Sorry.

16 HUNTER SESSIONS:

17 That's a big thing about all this,
18 too, because it's happening now and
19 you're putting something else on top of
20 it without seeing what's going on on the
21 river.

22 MS. COLOSIMO:

23 We do model it based on their manual.

24 COLONEL KLEIN:

25 We do.

1 MS. COLOSIMO:

2 So if they operate it as they're
3 supposed to operate it.

4 HUNTER SESSIONS:

5 How accurate are the monitors that
6 level the water as we speak? How
7 accurate are they, like the water heights
8 in different areas?

9 COLONEL KLEIN:

10 Are you talking about for the model
11 we're using right now?

12 HUNTER SESSIONS:

13 Not right now. Just today, when you
14 pull it up on your phone, like the level
15 at Pearl River or Pearlington, or
16 anywhere. How accurate are those?

17 COLONEL KLEIN:

18 Our USGS -- is it the USGS gauges
19 that we publish on our website? Unless
20 you correct me if I'm wrong, they are
21 probably within a hundredth, .01.

22 HUNTER SESSIONS:

23 I think you need to check those out
24 again. I know they're putting new ones
25 up. I see new ones coming up when I

1 actually worked on the river, but I don't
2 think they're as accurate as most people
3 think they are, because MSU's doing a
4 study right now on the erosion of the
5 sandbars and stuff, and those girls keep
6 coming down here to do their studies when
7 the river's over the sandbars, and she
8 said that their gauges say that it
9 shouldn't be. So you're wasting a lot of
10 their time and money coming down here to
11 do research and they're not getting any
12 research done.

13 MS. COLOSIMO:

14 So we want to be connected. We want
15 to know about that data person you're
16 talking about at MSU.

17 HUNTER SESSIONS:

18 MSU doing a study on it. Just
19 throwing that out there.

20 COLONEL KLEIN:

21 Just let us know who it is.

22 HUNTER SESSIONS:

23 All right. I'll get with you. Thank
24 you.

25 MS. COLOSIMO:

1 Certainly. Thank you.

2 **TOM SHAW:**

3 Yes, sir.

4 **NEIL BENSON:**

5 Good evening. My name is Neil Benson,
6 1174 Yorktown, Slidell. I have some
7 questions regarding the slideshow. You've
8 been dealing with this for several years down
9 here. There's been many proposals over the
10 last nearly two decades, and our concerns
11 have always been the same. We just don't
12 have enough water.

13 As far as my experience with the river
14 and the swamp, I grew up, of course, out
15 there, but I owned an ecological tour
16 business on the Pearl River for 18 years, and
17 I'm currently in the employ of another tour
18 company, so I'm out there every day. I sold
19 my business to them a couple years ago.

20 And the effects we see is further
21 saltwater intrusion of the rivers, which thus
22 causes loss of more swamp and life which
23 holds the ground intact, and thus more
24 erosion. Yeah, we definitely don't have the
25 water flow we used to have now, whether

1 that's due to blockages, sills, or other
2 effects from man. All of those need to be
3 studied, but our concerns are really our
4 water level.

5 A lot of people have brought up tonight
6 -- I've listened when they talked of Wilson
7 Slough, and that has to do with the Walkiah
8 Bluff project that was done in the mid '90s
9 where I believe they were diverting water
10 from the West Pearl to the East Pearl to try
11 to increase waterflow to the East Pearl, and
12 basically, that had to do with navigation up
13 to the Stennis property at the time, which
14 turned out to be a nightmare. Due to Walkiah
15 Bluff, we've lost the West Middle Pearl where
16 it feeds off the West Pearl River. We've
17 lost other smaller waterways in the swamps,
18 such as Mill's Bayou, but there's so many
19 things that need to be address.

20 We know the Mississippi Gulf Coast --
21 your state -- is not favorable of this
22 project because their fisheries have suffered
23 for so long. Their fisheries are finally
24 starting to come back, yet there's still no
25 oyster fishing out there. The reefs have not

1 returned. And it's a fine mix of fresh and
2 saltwater and the Pearl River definitely
3 affects the Mississippi Sound, and all of
4 those, I believe, need to be addressed as
5 well.

6 It's unfortunate, again, that the Corps
7 has to come in and try to help solve problems
8 that could have been addressed in the early
9 '80s by, you know, the leadership in that
10 area through building requirements and green
11 space, but the flooding, apparently,
12 persists. And believe me, our hearts break
13 for the people up there in Jackson because we
14 experience it all too well. But we just want
15 to know that everything's being addressed,
16 you know, as far as this project, not just
17 looking at Jackson.

18 And you know, a lot of these studies, I
19 hope, are being done by the Corps, and
20 they're not taking old studies and other
21 effects, you know, that have been proposed by
22 the Pearl River Vision Foundation, or
23 entities before them, because this project
24 they've been pushing for a long, long time,
25 and it's been renamed and repackaged many a

1 times, and it's been One Lake now for I don't
2 know -- what, Andrew? Ten years now?

3 But again, I just wanted to get on the
4 Record and I wanted y'all to know our
5 concerns and that they are addressed, but I
6 thank Andrew here and Senator Hewitt and
7 Representative White have really made their
8 points as well. Thank you.

9 COLONEL KLEIN:

10 Thanks. And if I could, I'm also
11 hearing too, because Ms. Colosimo
12 mentioned earlier too that status quo, do
13 nothing is an option, too, right, that
14 we're considering, and that's not good
15 either from what I hear from you because
16 we've got saltwater intrusion; right?

17 NEIL BENSON:

18 We definitely have water flow issues
19 when it comes to our water, absolutely.
20 I mean, just from Hurricane Katrina
21 alone, we lost four square miles of
22 wetlands --

23 COLONEL KLEIN:

24 Yes, sir.

25 NEIL BENSON:

1 -- in the Lower Pearl River Basin,
2 and when you have that kind of loss, of
3 course it's going to affect many things,
4 as far as flood protection for us in this
5 area, saltwater intrusion and so forth,
6 and we just want to know that the Corps
7 is looking at all of these issues.

8 COLONEL KLEIN:

9 Okay. I appreciate that. Thanks,
10 sir.

11 TOM SHAW:

12 Any other questions? Yes, sir.

13 BRAD PELLEGRIN:

14 A couple things I've been listening to
15 and not fully understanding is some of the
16 options are weirs, dams. Weirs are deadly,
17 and if you're going to consider doing weirs
18 in that area, the citizens in that area need
19 to know how deadly they are.

20 I've also heard options of elevations for
21 structures to help with flooding and things
22 like that. What good does it do? My
23 brother's house is 14 feet off the ground.
24 He can't get to his house. He has to use a
25 boat. He can't drive. So elevating or

1 building dams around his house, that ain't
2 helping nobody. That's not going to do
3 anything. Anyway, that's a couple of extra
4 thoughts I had.

5 MS. COLOSIMO:

6 Thank you, sir.

7 COLONEL KLEIN:

8 Thank you, sir.

9 TOM SHAW:

10 Any other questions?

11 TONY TRAVIS:

12 Hi, I'm Tony Travis. Thank you for
13 allowing us to speak and for the information.
14 I'm a half life resident of Washington
15 Parish, and a half life resident of St.
16 Tammany Parish. I currently live on the
17 Pearl River Navigational Canal between Lock 1
18 and Lock 2.

19 I can't tell you the number of memories I
20 have of just water skiing up the Pearl River
21 and the canal. It's just multiple memories
22 of recreational skiing, fishing, outdoors.
23 It's a tremendous waterway all along the
24 separation of the Mississippi-Louisiana
25 border.

1 I'm not a hydrologist. I don't
2 understand everything. Can we see the
3 picture of the proposed project? Is that the
4 canal? So we're talking about building --

5 MS. COLOSIMO:

6 Sir, we don't have a proposed
7 project. I think it's just the drainage;
8 right?

9 MS. PROCHASKA:

10 It's just the water.

11 MS. COLOSIMO:

12 Oh, it's just the water.

13 TONY TRAVIS:

14 So this is above the Ross Burnett;
15 right?

16 COLONEL KLEIN:

17 Below.

18 TONY TRAVIS:

19 Below? Oh, okay. Now, first off,
20 we're having water restrictions from the
21 Ross Burnett. As many people have said,
22 it don't seem like we have enough water
23 in the summertime to navigate the river.
24 You can ask my buddies -- they've all
25 gone to jet drives because prop

1 navigation is becoming more and more
2 impossible.

3 The canal does great. Any water flow
4 restriction for the canal, it also
5 affects the river because the canal --
6 which was built in the '40s and is non-
7 natural -- restricts the flow into the
8 Pearl River. So if they restrict more
9 water from the Ross Burnett down, then
10 there's less water to go down the Pearl
11 River from Bogalusa to Lake Catherine, I
12 guess you would say.

13 So you know, I don't want to make a
14 big, long speech, but if there's any
15 further restriction of water flow down
16 the Pearl River, I adamantly reject any
17 modification to the current water
18 structure. I do not want the weirs done
19 at Bogalusa, Bogue Chitto, and Lock 1 due
20 to the recreational value of the Pearl
21 River Navigational Canal.

22 And I also feel that if you cut more
23 water off from Lake Catherine and the
24 saltwater estuaries, then there's going
25 to be that much more demise of our

1 brackish water inhabitants -- shrimp,
2 fish, and what have you. So I don't
3 exactly know -- and I know, like they
4 were saying, every day, we get a gauge
5 reading -- and sure, gauge readings range
6 from Bogalusa to Bush to Pearl River, but
7 I know there's been research on what the
8 levels of the water are every day.

9 And you know, just like, hey, global
10 warming has made the water rise and
11 global warming has made the temperatures
12 hotter, what has the water flow
13 restrictions from Ross Burnett had as an
14 impact on us? Because I can tell you the
15 Pearl River has become the Bogue Chitto,
16 the Bogue Chitto has become the Lee's
17 Creek, and the Lee's Creek has become a
18 ditch, in my opinion, over the 60 years
19 that I've been around this area, because
20 I've watched it all change over the
21 years.

22 So if there's any consideration that
23 there will be a reduction of water flow
24 along the Pearl River or the Lower Pearl
25 Basin, I reject anything other than what

1 you said -- a no action, or whatever.
2 You know, I hate it, but floods come and
3 go. We deal with them, they deal with
4 them. Was that the hundred year flood
5 for them? Because we've had our hundred
6 year flood as well, you know?

7 If flooding affects you, move away.
8 Eventually, New Orleans is coming here.
9 We all know that it's slowly sinking, and
10 you know, it seems like every -- we have
11 good water, but then sometimes we don't,
12 and like the gentleman said over there,
13 who's in control of the Ross Burnett and
14 who says when we're going to get water so
15 that we can navigate our waterway?
16 I'm against any changes other than the
17 natural or easily obtained changes to the
18 basin and the waterway. Okay, thanks.

19 TOM SHAW:

20 Any other questions? Sir?

21 MIKE ZABROWSKI:

22 One more comment. Mike Zabrowski, 109
23 Indian Mound Lane. I live down off the West
24 Pearl, a block back from it. So basically,
25 the West Pearl River's in my back yard. It's

1 up over my dock today and the river's has not
2 fallen still, and that river has only been
3 out of my yard for about three weeks since
4 November. So in combination with the river
5 gets really dry in the summer, well, it gets
6 really wet from November to now, and we're
7 getting hammered with it.

8 And I know we're picking on the people
9 who control Ross Burnett Reservoir, but we
10 need to take into account this environmental
11 impact study of when hurricanes start to come
12 -- and they start coming in on the Pearl
13 River by us. The water starts getting pushed
14 up and Ross Burnett can't -- and they put
15 everything out because it's coming up to them
16 in three, four, five days.

17 So we're caught in this sweet spot where
18 we've got water coming in and we've got an
19 east or south wind pushing in on us, and
20 Pearl River just backs up the whole way up
21 the river. It'll back up to the locks.

22 So I want to make sure when we're looking
23 at these environmental impact studies and
24 from modeling this stuff, we take into
25 account some of these hurricanes and the

1 amount of water they push in, and the amount
2 of water they release at the same time,
3 because as bad as it is when it's low, it's
4 just as bad when it gets high. That was all
5 I had to add.

6 COLONEL KLEIN:

7 Thanks, sir.

8 TOM SHAW:

9 Sir?

10 DARREN BOURGEOIS:

11 Good evening. My name is Darren
12 Bourgeois, I'm from here in Slidell. I just
13 have a couple questions. Correct me if I'm
14 wrong: in 2020, there were about 2400 homes,
15 structures that were flooded in Jackson, and
16 in 2022, there were approximately 3,000. Can
17 you tell me if I'm right? What's the cost of
18 this project?

19 MS. COLOSIMO:

20 We haven't determined the projects.
21 We haven't determined the cost without
22 the proper analysis.

23 DARREN BOURGEOIS:

24 I think it's important that we need
25 to consider the cost versus benefit.

1 Just because we have the money doesn't
2 mean we have to spend it, necessarily.

3 MS. COLOSIMO:

4 Completely agree. That's why we said
5 no action.

6 TOM SHAW:

7 Would anyone else like to make a
8 statement? If you prefer not to come up
9 and take the mic, please provide your
10 comments, your input. Like I said, we've
11 got an email address. There's comment
12 cards still out there. You can mail us
13 the old fashioned way, the U.S. Postal
14 Service.

15 Just as a reminder, we have an
16 additional two sessions tomorrow in
17 Jackson, Mississippi, and then on the
18 first of June, we're going to have two
19 virtual sessions as well, same time --
20 1:00 and 6:00 p.m.

21 Last chance, folks. We want to tell
22 you how much we appreciate you taking
23 time out of your schedules, out of your
24 time with your family, to come provide us
25 your input. It's been very valuable.

1 I'm sure the panel feels the exact same
2 way. Dr. Jeff Burgoyne with Slidell High
3 School and St. Tammany School District,
4 we're very appreciative of you making the
5 facility available to us.

6 So anything else? Okay. We're
7 adjourned.

8 MS. COLOSIMO:

9 Thanks, everybody, for your time.
10 This has been invaluable. Can't say it
11 enough.

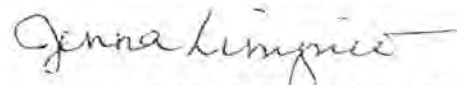
12 (THE PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:36 P.M.)
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REPORTER'S PAGE

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This certification is valid only for a transcript accompanied by my original signature and original required seal on this page.

I, JENNA LIMJUCO, Certified Court Reporter in and for the State of Louisiana, as the officer before whom this testimony was administered, do hereby certify that the foregoing 93 pages is a true and correct transcription of the proceedings herein, taken down by me and transcribed under my supervision, to the best of my ability and understanding, at the time and place hereinbefore noted, in the above entitled cause.

That this testimony was reported by me in the voice-writing reporting method, was prepared and transcribed by me or under my personal supervision, and is a true and correct transcript to the best of my ability and understanding; that the transcript has been prepared in compliance with transcript format guidelines required by statute or by rules of the board.

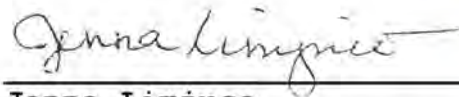
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1 opinions of the board.

2 That I have no actual knowledge of ay prohibited
3 employment or contractual relationship, direct or
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5 litigant in this matter, nor is there any such
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8 That I am not related to counsel or to the parties
9 herein, nor am I otherwise interested in the outcome of
10 this matter.

11
12 IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have affixed my official
13 signature this 23rd day of May 2023 in Slidell,
14 Louisiana.

15
16 

17 Jenna Limjuco
18 Louisiana Certificate No. 2018004
19
20
21
22
23
24
25



May 24, 2023 Transcription: Jackson, MS 1300

1 TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARING OF
2 USACE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT
3 PROJECT MEETING
4 JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
5 DATE: May 24, 2023 at 1:00

6

7

8 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Vicksburg District
9 public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
10 Management Project was held at Sparkman
11 Auditorium, 1150 Lakeland Drive, Jackson,
12 Mississippi beginning at 1:02 p.m.

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22 REPORTED BY: Dawn Dillard, CCR 1763

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 Army Corps of Engineers:

3 Thomas R. Shaw

Robyn Colosimo

4 Colonel Christopher Klein

Brandon Davis

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1 MR. SHAW: Okay. Good afternoon,
2 everybody. Welcome to the first of our two
3 sessions of face to face meetings. Inaudible
4 if you will for me. The Pearl River Flood
5 Risk Management public meeting. This one is,
6 of course, at 1:00. We will have another
7 session at 6:00 p.m. this afternoon. I would
8 just like to thank you. My name is Tom Shaw.
9 I am the project manager for the project. I
10 would -- a couple of housekeeping rules that
11 I'd like to go over. If when you came in one
12 exit most of you on this side, there is a
13 second exit over here in the event we have to
14 have one. So we do greatly appreciate your
15 attendance here. This meeting is -- the
16 purpose is to be informational and
17 educational, but it's also to be -- for us to
18 get feedback, to get input from you the
19 public. And so it's very important to us.

20 And at this time I would like to
21 recognize our panel speakers today. On the
22 far -- your far right hand side we have Robin
23 Colosimo. She is the deputy assistant
24 secretary for the Army for project planning
25 and project review -- or planning review,

1 excuse me.

2 And then next to her is Colonel
3 Christopher Klein. He is the Vicksburg
4 District Commander.

5 And beside Colonel Klein is Brandon
6 Davis. He's is the planning liaison with the
7 Regional Planning Environment Division South.

8 So with that I'd like to open with a
9 couple of real quick things. One is there is
10 a sign up list out there. Of course it's not
11 mandatory but we would love to have a record
12 of your attendance here today. I would ask
13 that you probably not put your personal
14 e-mail on there because it will become part
15 of the public record. I'd hate for somebody
16 to see it and have some e-mail addresses they
17 can start sending to you, so.

18 And so, when you came in there were a
19 couple of boards out there, one of which is
20 what we kind of call the rules of engagement.
21 Why is that important? Well, this meeting is
22 being conducted face to face, and as I said
23 we're asking for input from you. And so we
24 want everybody to get an opportunity to speak
25 that wants to do so. We're also offering a

1 virtual meeting as well. And so that
2 information -- everything that you're getting
3 there now, they will hear as well with the
4 exception being they won't be able to ask a
5 question except through the chatroom in the
6 Webex itself. So I would ask that if you do
7 come up for some -- provide us some feedback
8 or input or comment, try to limit your
9 question -- your comment to three minutes
10 and, likewise, try to avoid interrupting
11 others. And lastly, I would just ask that --
12 please wait to be recognized. I will kind of
13 be the moderator when it comes time. We've
14 to two stations up here for comments.

15 So with that -- all right, let's go
16 to -- I do want to mention, we got boards up
17 on both sides. One of the boards is a study
18 board. You'll see it's got some push pins in
19 it, and we would ask that if you don't mind,
20 if you would place a push pin with your
21 location, where you're from. The assistant
22 secretary of the army is wanting feedback.
23 They also want to go know where the concerns
24 are coming from. So that will be there as
25 well. There's also a board that shows the

1 study area here in the Jackson Metro area.

2 And then we've got two hours allotted
3 for this meeting, so if for some reason we
4 can't get to your comment there's multiple
5 ways to do it. We have a comment box up
6 front where you can physically write them
7 out. There's an e-mail address for you to be
8 able to send in an e-mail question. And
9 then, lastly, if you choose, we can do a
10 video recording of your comment at the end.

11 So with that, let's go ahead -- and so
12 why we're here. We're here because we're
13 looking to provide information to you and get
14 feedback. The Non Federal Interest is
15 Rankin, Hinds, Pearl River Flood and Drainage
16 Control District. That's what we call the
17 Non Federal Interest or NFI. You're all
18 familiar with the history of the Pearl. The
19 Pearl has flooded a lot of times. And once
20 again, we're trying to do something about it.

21 So the Non Federal Interest provided a
22 report, and that report was a draft
23 feasibility study and environmental impact
24 statement. They provided that back in
25 July 2022 and it was written by the ASA's

1 office, comments were generated and then they
2 engaged us, the Vicksburg District, to help
3 resolve the data gaps.

4 So lastly, you'll hear about the review
5 process shortly, but we basically are trying
6 to get the -- the database, get that
7 information to the Assistant Secretary of the
8 Army by the first of September with the final
9 NEPA document to follow-up in January.

10 With that let's get going. Next slide
11 please. So as I mentioned earlier, this is
12 actually the second location that we've been
13 to. We were in Slidell yesterday for two
14 sessions similar to these. We'll have
15 another session here in Jackson at 6:00. And
16 then as I mentioned earlier, we're doing
17 virtual now, but we're also going to do a
18 virtual only on June 1.

19 I also mentioned ways you can provide
20 comments. Next slide please.

21 All right. And so we will get a --
22 Ms. Colosimo, do you want to introduce ASA.

23 MS. COLOSIMO: First of all, thank you
24 everybody for being here. I can't say enough
25 how meaningful it is to have folks to come in

1 person during a workday and share your views
2 here, looking forward to this discussion. We
3 had two great session in Slidell and continue
4 to build on that here. It's hugely
5 important. As we move forward continuing
6 that engagement we need transparency kind of
7 throughout this process to deliver under the
8 opportunity we have before us to meet our
9 goal here. We'll talk more about that today.

10 As said, I'm Robin Colosimo, I do
11 oversee project planning and review and the
12 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil
13 Works office.

14 Long story short, anything that the
15 Corps has to do, it comes through a
16 recommendation that ultimately goes to
17 Congress for authorization or will be
18 delegated to my boss as it has in this case
19 to make a decision, has to come through my
20 group. So see, we are sort of arms length
21 oversee the Corps of Engineers and what they
22 do every day across the nation in all kinds
23 of projects. I'm going to talk a little bit
24 more about why we're here but first I want
25 you to hear it from my boss who is not able

1 to attend today who is Michael Connor, the
2 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil
3 Works. Can we play the video?

4 (Video played.)

5 MS. COLOSIMO: I know it spent a lot of
6 time seeking. We are posting the slides at
7 some point, but also have a video.

8 MR. SHAW: Yes, ma'am, we can make that
9 happen.

10 MS. COLOSIMO: Yeah, we can make those
11 available in case you wanted to hear that.

12 Bottom line for me is that we are
13 honored to have Mr. Connor as our leader and
14 what I want to share with you is that he has
15 vast experience in solving complex water
16 resources problems at the federal level and
17 the state level. His experience includes in
18 and out of government and regional work. He
19 was most recently the Deputy Secretary of
20 Department of Interior, and he brings a lot
21 of that knowledge that's in a different lane
22 of the federal government that benefits here
23 in this kind of space. He is the ultimate
24 decision maker in this situation and we'll
25 come back to why that is in a few minutes.

1 And policy oversight with the Corps of
2 Engineers, a vast agency with important
3 responsibilities, that oversight includes
4 plans, designs and implementation of projects
5 for the entire scope of those activities.
6 And he is obviously very interested in
7 engagement of the public and the community
8 we're talking about here is affected by the
9 flood problems.

10 So why are we here? We're here to
11 advance flood risk management solutions and
12 that includes repetitive flooding in Jackson.
13 We want to hear about your experiences there
14 and what solutions look like. You know, that
15 for over 100 years headwater flooding has
16 plagued the Pearl River area and disrupted
17 businesses and industries throughout Jackson.
18 5000 commercial structures and residential
19 structures impacts on a population of over
20 500,000. And your notable events were in '79
21 and '83 and more recently 2022.

22 I will say a personal note, I was here
23 with Mr. Connor last year in '22 as the rains
24 were coming and the floods were about to
25 arrive. And it was very poignant to arrive

1 home and see what's happening on the
2 landscape where I just stood. We also note
3 that the Pearl River Basin has a tremendous
4 environmental value including wetlands that
5 become waters that eventually flow into the
6 Gulf of Mexico that support thousands of
7 geese, ducks, and migratory birds.

8 For decades, as you know, the Corps and
9 non-federal interests have tried to solve the
10 flood risk management problem in Jackson, but
11 a lack of project justification, community
12 support, and funding has stalled meaningful
13 progress. That's the challenge we're going
14 to solve with you. We look forward to
15 working with you to do that. Next slide
16 please.

17 So the federal interest piece that I
18 want to get back to, why that exists. It's
19 really about what Congress has directed the
20 Corps to do. Congress directs the Corps by
21 authority to study something and by providing
22 monies to implement solutions once those
23 projects are authorized. In this case, in
24 1986 Congress authorized the Corps to plan,
25 design, and implement a flood risk management

1 project. Later, in 2007 they modified that
2 authorization to allow Army Corps Secretary,
3 Mr. Conner in this case, to determine the
4 appropriate plan to implement without further
5 consultation with Congress. That latter part
6 really matters as twice they have said you
7 have federal interest to do something here.
8 Congress has determined it once and then
9 reaffirmed it. And as many folks pointed out
10 in Slidell, others may have amplified it here
11 as well, is we also had specific directions
12 in 2018 to ensure we appropriately considered
13 the potential downstream impacts as well as
14 economic justification of any potential
15 solution.

16 Bottom line is we've had the
17 responsibility to carry out a project here,
18 we just have been unable to make that happen.
19 The difference today is funding. Why is that
20 different? Because Bipartisan Infrastructure
21 Law my boss just mentioned. Monies were
22 allocated because of a bill to plan, design,
23 and implement a project. Once you have
24 inaudible and funding it's a question of what
25 you can implement and that's what we want to

1 scope with all of you. With both of those in
2 hand it allows us to go forward through the
3 decision process with you all. As we end up
4 in that decision we can quickly go to design
5 and implementation. That's a very big
6 departure from normal processes in terms of
7 opportunity. It speaks to the federal
8 interest at hand. And we are looking for all
9 of you to reinvigorate technical and
10 community work to deliver for Jackson.

11 And with that I'm going to turn it over
12 to Colonel Klein to walk through the details
13 of where we are and where we're headed.

14 COLONEL KLEIN: Thank you, Ma'am. And
15 thank you ladies and gentlemen for coming out
16 this afternoon for this public session. We
17 had a really good engagement yesterday where
18 we learned a lot about impacts, even today,
19 with the lower Pearl River but erosion along
20 the banks, silting, impacts of the aging
21 infrastructure down there and how it's been
22 maintained. We also heard a lot of concerns
23 about what's happening with the environment
24 down there and we know that there are coastal
25 restoration solutions the Corps is working on

1 down in our coastal Louisiana. And they
2 really shared and how this river also impacts
3 those as well, so a lot of really good
4 feedback and I think we can get similarly
5 good feedback from you all here about how
6 this river -- what this river means to you
7 and how these latest flooding events have
8 been impacting you as -- here in the
9 community of Jackson.

10 So I'm Colonel Chris Klein. I'm the
11 Commander of the Vicksburg District, the
12 local servicing district for the Corps of
13 Engineers in this watershed. I am also the
14 one overseeing this study and how we're going
15 to move forward with this project.

16 So the Pearl River has got a long
17 history of both navigation as well as flood
18 risk management on it. I know the story of
19 flood control here in the City of Jackson
20 started in 1968 with the construction of
21 those first levee systems. Since then we've
22 had a flood of record in 1979. I've seen the
23 pictures online. And then last year I saw
24 the pictures live in 2022. I was here. All
25 right, watching it all happen, working with

1 the team to how we did the flood fight here
2 locally.

3 In between 1979 and now there have been
4 many locally proposed projects as well as
5 Corps-proposed projects that would deliver
6 that flood risk management solution for the
7 City of Jackson. In this latest locally
8 presented plan was presented under Section
9 211 of the 1996 Water Resources Development
10 Act. The plan was reviewed and pushed
11 forward by the local group, and presented for
12 consideration directly to the Secretary, and
13 that brings us to where we are today and the
14 work that we're doing today. Go to the next
15 slide please, sir.

16 Our latest efforts started the end of
17 last year, 2022, by direction of the
18 Secretary, and our mission is to build off of
19 all previous work that was presented over the
20 years and develop a report that assesses an
21 array of options for technical feasibility,
22 which includes economic feasibility,
23 environmental acceptability, and legal
24 compliance. And the two most critical items
25 that we're working on right now are

1 identification of what is known as the
2 National Economic Development Plan. All
3 right. And that is the plan -- that is the
4 plan that has the best -- for the best
5 financial benefit, provides the most flood
6 risk reduction. All right. So we're working
7 on identifying that plan. And once we
8 identify that plan, that is the plan against
9 which all other arrays will be assessed. And
10 any other option has to provide as much flood
11 risk management as the NEP plan or more. It
12 will never be less.

13 The second thing that we had to do is
14 complete the all included environmental
15 compliance activities and make sure that this
16 is an environmentally acceptable project
17 moving forward.

18 Finally, what we're going to do is we're
19 going to provide an analysis of comprehensive
20 benefits. We have two types of benefits
21 we're looking at. We're looking at
22 quantitative, those that we can measure, you
23 know, be it economically by numbers; as well
24 as qualitative, because we know flood risk
25 management means a lot more than just the

1 numbers. It means a lot, you know, floods
2 take an emotional toll on folks as well. All
3 right. There's also a lot of ancillary
4 benefits that come with other projects, so
5 we're taking a look at the comprehensive
6 range of benefits and, you know, really
7 appreciate your feedback on that.

8 The last thing I want to leave you with,
9 the Corps of Engineers, we're not a proponent
10 or an opponent of any one project. We just
11 want to deliver flood risk management
12 solutions for the nation, and today we want
13 to deliver that for the City of Jackson. To
14 that and take you more through where we are
15 technically in this particular effort I'm
16 going to turn it over to Mr. Brandon Davis.

17 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, sir. And great
18 to be here. My name is Brandon Davis and I
19 am the planning liaison at the Vicksburg
20 District Corps of Engineers. I'm an
21 agricultural environmental economist by trade
22 so I have a lot of experience in that area as
23 well. And echoing what Robyn and Colonel
24 Klein have said, I want to thank you guys for
25 being here today. I'm a local boy and I

1 understand some of the impacts of what's
2 going on in this area, of what you need or
3 what you're looking for, but I also have an
4 appreciation for those that have concerns and
5 I think today it's very vital that we have
6 your input as we go through this, and so I'm
7 just grateful for you to be here.

8 To set the table for these next few
9 slides here on what we're going to go -- what
10 we're going to be talking about. We get an
11 overview of the non-federal interest, the
12 reports that they did. We're going to go
13 over some of the alternatives that are
14 currently being evaluated. We'll look at the
15 study area of this project and then we're
16 going to talk about areas of interest. We'll
17 get to that in a second. I just wanted to
18 lay the table out for you as we go. And if I
19 say something in one of these previous
20 slides, you know, that catches your attention
21 I'll probably get to it before we're done
22 here today.

23 But at any rate, in non-federal
24 interest, their report -- their report was
25 authorized to be completed under Section 211

1 authority of the WRDA Water Resource
2 Development Act of 1996. A memorandum of
3 agreement was executed on July 19, 2012
4 between the non-federal interest and the Army
5 Corps of Engineers that described the terms
6 of the Section 211 authority. Those terms
7 are specified in the 211 feasibility
8 report -- specified, excuse me, in the 211
9 feasibility report will serve as a decision
10 document for the Assistant Secretary of Army
11 for Civil Works for review and for approval.
12 The alternatives that are non-federal
13 interest looked-at and you see up here on the
14 screen, a non-structural plan, a levee plan,
15 a channel improvement plan which was their
16 preferred alternative that consisted of
17 constructing channel improvements, the
18 demolition of the existing weir near the
19 Fewell Water Treatment Plant along I-55
20 constructing a new weir, a low flow gate
21 structure further downstream that would
22 enlarge the existing river channel, federal
23 levee improvements using excavated
24 material -- excavated material plan, and
25 upgrading existing non-federal levee into a

1 federalized ring levee that surrounds the
2 Savannah Street Water Treatment Plant down to
3 the south.

4 So what's been going on since they
5 submitted their report. So, the Assistant
6 Secretary of the Army's office and the Corps,
7 we've been working the non-federal interest
8 on resolving some identified issues that were
9 in their 211 study.

10 Currently, the Corps has been preparing
11 a draft environmental impact statement to
12 identify the National Economic Development
13 Plan, and as Colonel Klein was talking about,
14 the NED, sometimes people get tripped up on
15 that, but really it's how we get the best
16 bang for our buck. To make it as simple as
17 possible, if we know where flood damage is
18 before the project was \$10, and that's just a
19 rough number, if we can implement some type
20 of project that reduces it down to \$5 then we
21 have \$5 in benefits. Again, that's very
22 elementary, I'm just trying to give you an
23 idea. We're trying to implement a plan that
24 maximizes the NED. So that's one of the
25 things we have been charged to do with.

1 When we're comparing the level of flood
2 protection provided by the NED plan that the
3 non-federal interest has determined, and as
4 we said, their preferred plan is the channel
5 improvement plan, we're comparing that to see
6 the level of flood protection of their
7 alternatives versus the alternatives that
8 we're going to be evaluating, but something
9 that needs to be really pointed out that's
10 important is the environmental laws, right?
11 Because we have wetlands down to the Pearl
12 River Basin and we need to make sure that
13 we're a good steward of that. So we're
14 currently in the process of assessing the
15 environmental acceptability and the technical
16 feasibility of these alternatives. We'll
17 provide the Secretary with the necessary
18 information to choose a plan to be
19 implemented. Robyn made that clear that the
20 Secretary is the one who is making -- will be
21 making the recommendation. We just have to
22 provide Secretary Conner the information to
23 do so.

24 Additionally, consistent with Section
25 1176, the WRDA 2018, this draft environmental

1 impact statement will also assess potential
2 downstream impacts in the Pearl River Basin.
3 We talked about that, the importance of
4 protecting the environment, protecting the
5 Louisiana coast, and all areas to the south
6 of us. Next slide please.

7 All right. So the alternatives that are
8 being considered, and this is what the Corps
9 right now, what we are considering, and the
10 first you can see is a non-structural
11 alternative. And that's really something
12 that we do for all of our projects. We look
13 at a non-structural plan. We have Plan A,
14 which is relocating structures, buy-outs and
15 relocating properties both commercial and
16 residential. Also, you see A1 there, it's --
17 additionally, it's a non-structural measure
18 of increasing maybe the elevations of a
19 structure and flood provisions. And, again,
20 these are things we're looking at. I will
21 point out to you guys though that on
22 non-structural alternatives, these are the
23 only alternatives where there are no
24 structural features being considered such as
25 any type of channel improvements. So it's

1 just the buy-outs, the flood proofing,
2 elevation increases, things of that nature.

3 So if we look at Alternative C, this is
4 the Channel Improvement Plan, the recommended
5 plan of the non-federal interest. It is
6 similar to what -- this plan here is similar
7 to what we've seen from other Corps studies
8 of -- around the country. There was a
9 project in Forth Worth District of a river
10 widening and it has similarities to that.
11 What this alternative includes is excavation
12 of widening of a river channel, the use of
13 materials to enhance levees, create islands
14 for environmental habitat, and a real
15 location down towards the south or at some
16 point in the river channel because we need to
17 make sure that we are cognizant of the
18 infrastructure of Jackson with the water. So
19 we're going to put a weir into the system
20 with the water for the City of Jackson within
21 that alternative.

22 There's also some type of a potential
23 for a combination of a hybrid plans. Even
24 though you see a non-structural and you see
25 an Alternative C, that doesn't mean that

1 that's it. There could be a combination of
2 that, some type of hybrid plan to be
3 considered.

4 And there's also looking at other
5 potential alternatives meaning that it's been
6 brought to our attention -- one of the most
7 brought to our attention, there were some
8 students from the University of California
9 Berkeley, they had put together a plan, they
10 submitted that to us and that's something
11 that we'll have to consider as we're going
12 through this process. Next slide police.

13 So our study area, the area, I know it's
14 a little bit difficult for you to see there,
15 I just want to point out that what I'm
16 showing here is a 100 year flood inundation
17 slide. And it's kind of difficult to see.
18 Excuse me, I'm going to stand up just to show
19 you guys. Make sure I've got enough cord so
20 that I don't tell my wife I'm tearing
21 something up.

22 If you can see this area through here,
23 it's a little darker shape gray, that is the
24 100 year inundation sites or the area, the
25 footprint, of this project. So what we're

1 looking at here or what you're seeing, you're
2 seeing up at the top Ross Barnett Reservoir
3 and the mouth of that is the spillway and
4 down to the south, it gives you a good idea,
5 down to the south there is just to -- go back
6 to the east and that's Florence. So it gives
7 you an idea of the 100-year footprint in this
8 area. But also, you need to be -- we need to
9 be cognizant of what's going on downstream as
10 well. Next slide.

11 So areas of interest. Something we got
12 to talk about and this is where I really need
13 your help. I really need your help here. So
14 these are some things that we have considered
15 working with the non-federal interest and
16 working with our project delivery team. But,
17 again, I need to hear from you. You guys are
18 out there and you know the ground-truth, you
19 can tell us. Some of the things we've looked
20 at is flood risk reduction, water supply,
21 water and wastewater treatment, the impacts
22 of the ecosystem restoration in the
23 environment. Also, there's some existing
24 waste sites out there, cultural resources --
25 we want to inaudible fossils and make sure

1 that we aren't damaging culturally sensitive
2 areas. Transportation, how is this going to
3 affect transportation on the interstates, on
4 local roads, things of that nature.
5 Downstream impacts, we talked about that.
6 Recreational access and opportunities,
7 community impacts. Quality of life, if we
8 put some type of project in and how it's
9 going to help, how is it going to, you know,
10 be a part to that.

11 Economic opportunities. We'd love to
12 see more economic opportunities for Rankin
13 and Hinds County. But there are potentially
14 others out there that you guys could help us
15 with that we may not consider. There may be
16 something out there that you have in mind
17 that we would love to hear on maybe the flood
18 risk or whatever it might be, let us know.
19 There may be a process that we haven't
20 thought of, so please be open with us and
21 provide that information. Next slide.

22 All right, well, I'm going to yield the
23 microphone back to Colonel Klein, thank you.

24 COLONEL KLEIN: So this is our timeline.
25 It looks pretty aggressive. Right now that

1 technical teams work is continuing. And
2 we're here today to receive your feedback and
3 take into consideration everything that
4 you're observing on the ground and what you
5 want as a community. By August we'll have
6 the draft report complete. That draft report
7 will go out, again, for review as well as
8 comments. Of course, we understand there are
9 processes and that will inform the final
10 report which we're hoping to be complete in
11 December and will then go to the Secretary
12 for a decision in January. It does seem like
13 a streamline and aggressive timeline, but
14 it's very feasible and that's because we're
15 building on many, many years of work. A lot
16 of information was already there and, you
17 know, with your feedback and with all the
18 work that's being done we can get to a flood
19 risk solution for the City and the community.
20 Thanks a lot folks. We look forward to
21 hearing from you today and thanks for coming.

22 MR. SHAW: Okay. Thank you, Panel.

23 So we are now about to enter into the
24 time where we would like to have input. We
25 would like to have feedback from you. And so

1 before we do that there are multiple ways
2 that you can submit your feedback as well as
3 through your personal testimony here. So I
4 would ask that you come to one of the
5 podiums, please wait to be acknowledged, and
6 then the panel will respond to the questions.
7 So with that we can begin. So whoever would
8 like to come up and make a statement.

9 Yes, ma'am.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BECKY CURRY: I'm
11 Representative Becky Curry, District 92. I
12 have Copiah, Lawrence, and Lincoln Counties,
13 which the Pearl River goes right through my
14 district. And we have very much concerns
15 about this One Lake. It was Two Lake and I
16 understand they're trying to call it
17 something else now because nobody wants it.

18 You said that you're having problems
19 with funding but what you mean is you needed
20 tax money in order to do this and we the
21 people don't want it. One Lake is a private
22 real estate development scheme masquerading
23 as a flood control project. We have some
24 very strong politicians who've made sure you
25 have the money to do it now. And I say a

1 flood control scheme because I don't believe
2 that the flooding in Jackson, Mississippi
3 will be better if you put a dam or whatever
4 you're proposing to do, you're going to have
5 more, more flooding. And I don't think you
6 can assure us that that won't happen.

7 When you have a group of people, rich
8 people who just want to get richer by having
9 reservoir number two, we're going to sell
10 lake front properties and we're going to make
11 sure the water stays up here, you have to
12 understand we have a whole lot of problems in
13 Jackson that come down the Pearl River and
14 it's of nobody's fault in Jackson,
15 Mississippi. We get raw sewage every day
16 from Jackson. What are you going to do with
17 that? Block it up some more. I just don't
18 understand. This does not compute with me.
19 And I don't think the Corps of Engineers
20 wants to be a part of a get rich quick
21 scheme. I just am so upset about this.
22 These waterways are owned by the people of
23 Mississippi. They're not owned by anybody
24 else. They're owned by us. We want to swim.
25 We want to fish. We want to have our

1 wildlife. We can't do that right now because
2 of the sewage that comes through our
3 district, but we have been in hopes for 20
4 years that that would be fixed. If we want
5 to take this much of taxpayers money, for
6 God's sake let's fix the sewage before we go
7 into anything else. There's so many other
8 problems that need to be fixed. You may have
9 to flag me when my time is up because I have
10 a lot to say.

11 One Lake is probably going to raise
12 everybody's property tax, everybody's
13 property tax. I'm in the state legislature
14 and unfortunately unbeknownst to most of us
15 we've passed several bills in a disguise
16 years ago, I've been here four terms, 16
17 years, and I'm unopposed so you have to
18 listen to me for four more, I'm sorry, but
19 they have a levee board who we gave the
20 authority to raise your taxes and they don't
21 have to answer to anybody. How stupid were
22 we, and I apologize for that.

23 We have people in our Congress who are
24 not worried about people south of Jackson,
25 they're worried about Rankin County. Well,

1 don't come looking south of Jackson for a
2 vote let me just assure you because we're all
3 mad. And I'm going to stop there before I
4 say something I'll regret. But I want you
5 guys to know, the people of Mississippi do
6 not want this. Only a handful of people who
7 want to make money off this want this.

8 MS. COLOSIMO: Thank you for your
9 service, first and foremost, and thank you
10 for your input. For reminding me that number
11 one of which is, yes, we do have an
12 opportunity to deliver a project not yet
13 designated here, right. But the number one
14 thing is it could actually be no action as
15 well. So it can be no action, it can be this
16 NAD non-structural thing, the NFI's plan or
17 it can be something else. So also interested
18 in your ideas here that I'm sure you have in
19 your experience about what could work for
20 flooding and flood risk management in
21 Jackson. So please, also take the time to
22 share those with us. Thank you.

23 MR. SHAW: Sir.

24 ATTORNEY JUSTICE GIVENS: First of all,
25 thank you all for putting this on. I'm

1 Attorney Justice Givens. I'm a young
2 professional here in Jackson, born and
3 raised. And one of my main concerns sets in
4 with flooding and issues that's been
5 impacting low income and minority communities
6 in the City of Jackson. I really think that
7 once the issues, the big ticked issues that
8 we've been dealing with is this investment in
9 the City of Jackson, flooding, and also
10 increase in economic development. So there
11 are a few EJ neighborhoods that have
12 unfortunately been experiencing more flooding
13 as a result of the current levee system, the
14 system that's been in place since the 1960s,
15 so I'm looking for solutions for those
16 communities with are within the City of
17 Jackson. I hope that you guys have done much
18 research on those areas that continue and
19 continue and continue to have these problems.
20 And so, again, I think that the current
21 system that we have in place that protects a
22 lot of other areas than those that's been
23 impacted regularly for years and years.

24 So, also, there's a choke point in the
25 current levee system that actually increases

1 the flood levels north of the levee to my
2 understanding. And I believe that at least
3 this is a solution or at least something
4 that's been proposed to help the people that
5 are within the city limits that have been
6 going on with these issues for a very long
7 time.

8 Also, the nonfederal sponsor that's
9 adopted one of the most progressive minority
10 contracting policies that will insure that if
11 a project does proceed that the economic
12 benefits will funnel back into the local
13 communities by this contract and that's very
14 important so that money, of course, can help
15 us with these economic issues that I've been
16 discussing. So thank you, again, for
17 providing this forum.

18 MS. COLOSIMO: Thank you for your
19 comments. On the EJ part, in particular,
20 it's a huge priority to this Administration
21 particularly for my boss. So we want to make
22 sure that any solutions put forward doesn't
23 just deal with maximizing the benefits and
24 leaving communities behind. So if you have
25 particular areas, we want to see what those

1 suggestions are as well; we'll have ideas in
2 our plans, but we want complete solutions to
3 ensure that actually is taken care of. So
4 thank you.

5 MR. SHAW: Sir.

6 MR. DAVIS: Yes, so I just want to add
7 on what Robyn is saying. If we could I'd
8 like to meet with you to see on the map some
9 of the areas you're talking about, impact
10 areas that we are looking at that has the EJ
11 areas that are impacted. We'd like to know
12 if there are more of something that we might
13 have missed. One thing we don't want to do
14 is we want to make sure that whatever project
15 is implemented does not create any type of
16 (inaudible) areas as a result of
17 environmental justice and we're taking care
18 of everyone and no one is going to be singled
19 out. So I really would like to meet with you
20 afterwards so we can see some of those areas
21 on the map. Thank you.

22 COLONEL KLEIN: I appreciate what you
23 said too about getting the contracts going
24 back. And so there's one thing that we're --
25 that this district is really good at and we

1 were just recognized for it by the
2 Mississippi Small Business Association,
3 delivering back to 8(a) and Hub-zone
4 companies and so that is absolutely -- we
5 will need small business owners for all of
6 the work we will be doing. So thanks a lot
7 for highlighting that.

8 MR. SHAW: All right. Sir.

9 MR. ROBERT GRAHAM: Good afternoon. I
10 rise in support of One Lake Project. My name
11 is Robert Graham, Hinds County Supervisor
12 representing District 1. I'm also a Levee
13 Board member. District 1 encompasses north
14 and northeast Jackson. There are over 47,000
15 registered voters in District 1. The
16 majority of those voters live on the east
17 side of Interstate 55, the side that is most
18 prone to flooding. The people on that side
19 of the interstate are the most anxious every
20 time that it rains or that we receive heavy
21 rain knowing that the river is going to rise
22 and that there is a potential for flooding.
23 The household with the most anxiety is the
24 person that lives at 531 Rolling Wood Drive.
25 The reason for their anxiety and fear is

1 because that's the first house that will be
2 flooded in the event that we receive heavy
3 rain in the City of Jackson. Many citizens
4 in north Jackson not only feel the emotion of
5 anxiety but they are also afraid. Afraid
6 that politicians are going to or not going to
7 do anything this time around. Afraid that
8 the One Lake Project is going to slip away
9 one more time. Afraid that we will let
10 politics and good common sense get in the way
11 of us doing something to improve the lives of
12 the citizens of the City of Jackson and Hinds
13 County.

14 So I rise in support of the One Lake
15 Project. I'm speaking on behalf of the
16 people that have been flooded nine to ten
17 times over the last ten years. The people
18 who live on Rolling Wood, River Wood, River
19 Run, downtown Jackson, and many other streets
20 in the City of Jackson. The One Lake Project
21 is not only good for Jackson and Hinds
22 County, but it will help improve the quality
23 of life for the citizens and bring good
24 economic development to the entire area. So
25 it's time. It is time for the vision of

1 Mr. John McGowan to come to light under the
2 One Lake Project.

3 I can sum it up with two words followed
4 by five words. The two words are flood
5 control. The five words, controlling the
6 flow of water. That is One Lake. It's time
7 to get it done. I thank you for your time.

8 MS. BETTY JOYCE JOHNSON: My name is
9 Betty Joyce Johnson and I live at 830 Cypress
10 Trail. I was in the news several times to
11 consider the flood. I lived through the
12 flood and half the people in the community of
13 Pearl River flood. I'm not afraid because
14 God has not given me a spirit of fear but of
15 love. But I know one thing, something new
16 got to start because what we been having it
17 got to end because it not going to work. But
18 one of the things that I have a problem with
19 is that when the flood happened nobody came
20 out and helped us except a few members of the
21 church. Now, our supervisor, they came and
22 did a little bit of looking but nobody came
23 to our rescue. We did not receive any
24 funding and a lot of people had to live in
25 their cars and all over due to the fact that

1 the flood happened. I don't know where y'all
2 spending money at but we did not receive the
3 money. And that was my main concern. Our
4 insurance would not even pay for our hotel.
5 I had to stay in the facility of my church
6 for three months. I had insurance, but you
7 have a lot of folks that did not have
8 insurance and did not have a way to get
9 around due to the fact that the government
10 did not help us. And my house had to be
11 completely remodeled. Now, I don't want this
12 to happen anymore. And I speak on some of
13 the elderly. I'm an elder, 68 years old and
14 some of the elderly have problems with people
15 coming and helping them and then they have a
16 problem with not receiving any type of
17 funding and then you have some people that
18 didn't have insurance.

19 My main concern is what is you all going
20 to do about the welfare. And some people had
21 anxiety, some had depression that hit them so
22 bad -- even I had a little depression because
23 I was tired. I worked the same sort of flood
24 when I got out of college in '76. I worked
25 this area and then it increased. But to live

1 through it myself I saw the residue that it
2 left. And the residue is still upon people's
3 heart. Every time it rains my neighbor get
4 afraid and nobody around there help them.
5 And then any time a little water come up they
6 become afraid because they're afraid of their
7 life, afraid of their property, and a lot of
8 them have invested and they're retired, have
9 invested a lot of debt. And they don't want
10 to leave Jackson. What I want to know as a
11 whole, what are we going to do. We can have
12 politics come up here all day long, they done
13 talked noise, but they not doing anything. I
14 need to know from you all if giving them
15 assurance that if something happens next time
16 that you all are going to be there to help
17 them. I have seen neither one of your groups
18 coming out to help. I didn't see nobody
19 because I had to take a boat in '20 when it
20 happened to go get my medication out of my
21 house. But nobody else came out to help us.
22 But my main thing is for the people's voice
23 is that, what are you all going to do? Do
24 the best thing you can do to ensure that this
25 flood won't happen anymore. And if you have

1 a program, do it well because we depending on
2 you. We not depending on these politicians
3 running around here saying what they going to
4 do because they haven't did nothing so far.
5 So I need to know what happened to the money
6 that was supposed to be allocated for our
7 neighborhood, our streets are still unpaved.
8 Yes, they're paved a few of them running
9 around. I don't have nothing to lose because
10 I'm saying nothing happened, nothing
11 happened. It messed up the treat. It messed
12 up everything but we don't have a voice, but
13 today I want to be part of that voice. I
14 want to be the voice in the wilderness to say
15 I experienced and I've been through it, but
16 I'm not afraid. I'm more concerned about my
17 neighborhood. We as a people have to help
18 each other out in order to secure and let
19 them know that what we all are going to be
20 all right, depending on you all to do y'all
21 part. I don't want to get up anymore, but
22 these things doing this and that, but nothing
23 came out of it. But I want to see -- I want
24 somebody to tell me so I can go back to my
25 neighborhood and give assurance that things

1 are getting ready to change. That's all I'm
2 asking you all today, do the best you can,
3 not the least, because not only did it affect
4 my neighborhood, it affect all these other
5 folks. They tired. These are retired
6 people. They need help because we're not
7 relying on our city officials, we're relying
8 on you. So we help pay your taxes because I
9 pay taxes on my house even as a senior
10 citizen because my house is more than what
11 they allow. I pay tax on my automobiles and
12 I'm expecting you all to do work under this
13 term, that y'all doing something different.
14 And this is the first time me seeing you all,
15 but I want to thank you all for letting me
16 speak. I'm Betty Joyce Johnson and 830
17 Cypress Trail. Thank you again.

18 MS. COLOSIMO: Ma'am, I really
19 appreciate your words on so many levels and
20 we want to make sure we're capturing your
21 experience because it does cost at parts of
22 government, state, local, federal, and we
23 need to do better together, but I clearly
24 heard a lot of what you said, but do the best
25 you can and not the least should be a

1 guidance principle on what we are doing right
2 now and I'm going to take that to heart.

3 MS. BETTY JOYCE JOHNSON: Okay. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. SHAW: Sir.

6 DR. SCOTT CRAWFORD: Good afternoon. My
7 name is Dr. Scott Crawford. I live about a
8 mile and a half away near the intersection of
9 State Street and Meadowbrook Road on Choctaw
10 Road right adjacent to Eubanks Creek. I can
11 speak for everyone in Jackson when I say we
12 all want the risk of another 1979 flood
13 minimized. It was awful, no doubt. You've
14 seen the photos. Doing nothing is not an
15 option. However, I must share that we can't
16 ignore the flash flooding risks along our
17 creeks that run into the Pearl. My neighbors
18 and I on Choctaw Road along Eubanks Creek
19 experience serious flash flooding that gets
20 into some of our houses and threatens the
21 rest of them two to four times a year. Two
22 to four times a year. Much more common than
23 the rare Pearl River floods. I share photos
24 and express these ongoing concerns with the
25 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil

1 Works Jamie Pinkham back in March '20. Why
2 doesn't the current proposal include flash
3 flooding mitigation along Jackson's Creeks
4 Town, Lynch, Eubanks and Hanging Moss?
5 That's the first question. Do you want me to
6 go into the second question or do you --

7 COLONEL KLEIN: Let me start the first
8 one and that is I can assure you that the
9 model that we developed and ran in order to
10 assess all the alternatives includes I know
11 specifically Town Creek as well as I think
12 other tributaries. So when we put in any of
13 the available alternatives we'll be looking
14 all the way up into the tributaries to assess
15 flood risks reduction.

16 DR. SCOTT CRAWFORD: All four? Town,
17 Lynch, Eubanks, and Hanging Moss?

18 COLONEL KLEIN: Yes, sir.

19 DR. SCOTT CRAWFORD: All right. Okay.
20 Second question: I'm aware that the current
21 One Lake plan involves very extensive and
22 invasive dredging excavation of natural
23 wildlife habitats. I'm also aware that a
24 less environmentally destructive structure
25 plan exists offered by a fluvial

1 geomorphologist, basically a hydrologist
2 specializing in rivers. Dr. Matt Kondolf and
3 his graduate students at the University of
4 California-Berkley. That plan involves half
5 the dredging as the One Lake plan and so it's
6 less expensive. It is also less
7 environmentally impactful while mitigating
8 any flooding through measures of just levee
9 set backs and channel restoration. That plan
10 preserves most of the sensitive wildlife
11 habitats while adding helpful downtown parks
12 and green spaces that we all want. It seems
13 to me to be a cheaper and less
14 environmentally destructive plan, which could
15 potentially reallocate the savings towards
16 creek side and flood mediation. Has the Army
17 Corps of Engineers considered this
18 alternative.?

19 MR. DAVIS: Thank you for your comments
20 there. Yes, sir, we received that plan. We
21 are still looking at it. To answer your
22 question we are going to consider that to see
23 if it's something that can be justified and
24 maybe pieces of that can be added to whatever
25 the final array might be. Yes, sir, to

1 answer your question, that will be looked at
2 by us.

3 MR. SHAW: May I also mention, either
4 side if you see the study area maps that
5 shows that 100 year flood elevation, which
6 includes the tributaries as well. So you can
7 see that was modeled.

8 Sir.

9 MR. RONNIE CRUDUP: My name is Ronnie
10 Crudup, the pastor of the Fellowship
11 International Church and also senior pastor
12 of New Horizon Church International in
13 Jackson, Mississippi. I'm also the chairman
14 of the Downtown Jackson Partners and I live
15 in south Jackson, which is the lowest income
16 census track, one of the lowest in Jackson,
17 Mississippi.

18 In 1979 and also '83 I pastored actually
19 inside Jackson and our church got seven feet
20 of water in it. My personal family's house,
21 once again had water up to the roof of it and
22 that house was destroyed. That community
23 that we own property in still gets flooded
24 all the time, and so I am absolutely for
25 flood control and better flood control than

1 we have right now. And so there has to be a
2 better solution.

3 But I'm also here today to say to you,
4 I'm for a tremendous opportunity that I think
5 that lies before us here in Jackson,
6 Mississippi, and that is I support the One
7 Lake Project because I think it becomes an
8 opportunity for particular communities in the
9 southern part of this city to have the
10 opportunity to help out of all the years of
11 degradation and blight and pain and suffering
12 to see something much better happen for them
13 in this city. And I actually believe that
14 what in the past has been a problem can be
15 one of the greatest opportunities that ever
16 happened in the city. And as I look at what
17 happened, once again, with the reservoir area
18 up north, I believe that can happen again in
19 the southern part of the city. Once again,
20 for communities along -- that will now have
21 that kind of shoreline.

22 And so I support the One Lake Project
23 because I think it gives that kind of
24 opportunity for tremendous improvement in the
25 City of Jackson and certainly to see African

1 American business folks as well get their
2 rightful share, once again, of the contracts
3 that will come out of that and people will be
4 put to work. Thank you.

5 MR. SEAN MILLER: Good afternoon. My
6 name is Sean Miller. I live at 585 Ridge
7 River Road, part of the River Road
8 subdivision. It's something I just came here
9 and wanted to share and kind of stress the
10 impact that we have with flooding. One of
11 the things that I would like to see it is
12 what plan can we implement the fastest. I
13 live there. I've been there with Ms. Betty
14 and being displaced twice in the past two
15 years is no fun. Being to the situation
16 where you have to remodel your house, even
17 for me and some of my colleagues in that
18 housing area, well, not colleagues, some of
19 my neighbors, Alice Venables and Casey
20 Smalls. When the impact flood had happened
21 during COVID, I think a lot of people missed
22 the aspect happened with COVID, so not having
23 no resource and being in an environment it
24 almost feels like a refugee. That's how it
25 would feel. And what happened to me, it

1 helped thrive or bring about situations with
2 community involvement. After I unpacked my
3 house and got it moved, we were helping
4 neighbors, elderly. It was a couple that
5 even had COVID at the time and they were so
6 afraid for me to move them because they
7 didn't want to infect somebody else so we had
8 to move them. I, myself, went and got a
9 neighbor and helped pack her stuff to get it
10 loaded into my truck and my trailer. And
11 it's an impact again.

12 So the main solution I want to see is
13 moving to something different as I live
14 there. We live there in a sensitive ticking
15 time bomb. It can flood any day. And me
16 living there understands that any day it
17 could flood, so I don't care to see a process
18 that could take five years. I want to see
19 one that we can put together fastest for
20 somebody that lives there, lives in that
21 community and who lives there on a daily
22 basis.

23 As Ms. Betty said, she lives down there
24 in that part. It's something that -- it's
25 something that nobody should have to deal

1 with. I moved there in 2018 and I never had
2 an idea that I had to be displaced twice
3 since 2018. And, you know, me, I was in
4 school and working at the same time and
5 got kids and it was just hard. We had a
6 neighbor that couldn't afford a hotel room.
7 And as Betty said, we had to invite them to
8 our hotel and eventually we got an apartment.
9 And it was just -- it was just an experience
10 I don't want to go through again, and I feel
11 like we shouldn't have to go through again.
12 And it's something that -- here's what I care
13 about, what decision can we get to fastest to
14 fix the problem. Thank you.

15 MR. SHAW: Sir.

16 MR. PAT SULLIVAN: Hi, I'm Pat Sullivan,
17 and I'm the mayor of the City of Richland and
18 I am downstream of the project. This project
19 is not going to help with flooding in the
20 City of Richland, and I'm here to support
21 this project. And the reasons why are very,
22 very selfish. My childhood home flooded six
23 times because of the backwater of the Pearl
24 River. I -- since then I've inherited that
25 home and I'm the proud owner of a vacant

1 house.

2 Another thing, I was 13 years old when
3 the flood happened in '79. As a young man we
4 were out there sandbagging having a great
5 time. We were out there in boats, you know,
6 could fish out the front door, it was great.
7 Kids were loving it. That's not what we
8 really need. Since then I've gotten into
9 politics and I'm the Mayor and I'm
10 responsible here for the City of Richland.
11 We got a plan for water going both ways in
12 Richland. Either their backed up and come
13 off the Pearl River or they come down from
14 throughout Rankin County into the City of
15 Richland.

16 And as far as economic development is
17 concerned, we plan around that. I built my
18 house on the hill, my new house, but one of
19 the main things that really got me now is in
20 '79 I wasn't worried about a family. I'm now
21 married and have two children. In '79 we
22 were cut off completely from all hospitals,
23 everything, could not get into one if we
24 wanted to. That is something that it's, you
25 know, I have young married daughters. My

1 daughter is young and about to start a family
2 and I can't imagine waiting around and not
3 doing something while we have opportunity to
4 do it to provide a quality of life, to give
5 her opportunity to not be afraid that there
6 would have been a flood to be able to get to
7 a hospital when they're raising their family.
8 I really think that -- this young lady here
9 says, we need to do more, we need to do
10 something. We've got to address this issue
11 and, you know, we always say, Houston, we
12 have a problem; Vicksburg and Washington, we
13 have a problem. Thank you.

14 MR. SHAW: Ma'am.

15 MS. MARTHA WATTS: Good afternoon. I'm
16 Mayor Martha Watts, Mayor of Monticello.
17 We're about 60 miles -- 60 road miles south
18 of Jackson. I hate for you all that flood.
19 I have sympathized with you. We had the '79
20 flood down in Monticello also. We were
21 displaced. I was displaced in '19 or '20. I
22 had to actually -- the first two days I had
23 to hike about a mile from the back of my
24 house to a road. And then when the current
25 went down I took a boat to get to work and

1 had a car on the other side.

2 I am 100 percent against this project,
3 and I'll tell you the reason why. We are
4 south of Jackson. The Pearl is our river,
5 it's everyone's river. It's not one groups
6 river. It's Mississippi's river from Neshoba
7 County all the way down to the Gulf of
8 Mexico, it belongs to everyone. No one can
9 take over this river. That is just not
10 right. This Savannah Street Sewage Lagoon is
11 going to be south on our side of the dam
12 you're going to put in. We're receiving
13 billions of gallons of raw sewage every year
14 from the City of Jackson. That's not going
15 to be corrected. I mean, it hasn't been in
16 what, 14, 15 years since they were issued the
17 reprieve by EPA. Nothing has been done. We
18 have no reason to believe that anything will
19 be done. We'll still be receiving that raw
20 sewage.

21 Since the building of Ross Barnett
22 Reservoir we experience flooding because of
23 that also. It has widened -- this One Lake
24 Project has nothing to do with that, but it
25 is related. The flooding caused by Ross

1 Barnett, we know within two and a half days
2 of what Ross Barnett has done, whether
3 they've shut the gates or whether they've
4 opened them. In two and half days we know
5 exactly what they did and what has happened
6 because it happens that fast. We have lost
7 thousands and thousands of acres of land
8 south of Jackson, Mississippi because of the
9 sudden fall of the river. We're -- now we're
10 in peril of losing recreational opportunities
11 and suffering economic losses with this
12 highly destructive impediment what's known as
13 One Lake with its new dam billion gallons of
14 raw sewage and flooding for going on 13 years
15 will have a solution? Wildlife and wildlife
16 habitat will be in peril from several
17 aspects.

18 And most frightening to me is the eight
19 known toxic waste sites that are going to be
20 disturbed. On our last trip to DC Mr. Clyde
21 Waters spoke to that. He's got an
22 environmental company that he's been in for
23 50 years, has been in several offices in
24 several states. And his business is to clean
25 up and manage toxic waste sites. You don't

1 clean them up. There is no way that toxins
2 are not going to come down to us, they
3 already are.

4 This project is not what our
5 recreational users want or ones that fish for
6 a living. We actually have people that fish
7 for a living. This is not what the 90 plus
8 permitted users south of Jackson can stand.
9 Our town has a permit. Georgia Pacific mill
10 that supports our town has a permit.
11 Others -- 90 something or 100 south of
12 Jackson permitted users, all of those permits
13 are going to change. When you have a local
14 water flow their permits are going to change.
15 Is it going to put us out of business. Is GP
16 going to stay in Monticello? I don't know.
17 But the fact is we -- with the widening banks
18 caused by Ross Barnett rising and falling,
19 the river is wider, the water is shallower.
20 If the water is too shallow GP can not cool
21 from it. If it's too shallow it's got a
22 higher temperature and they can not use it.
23 Their estimations -- they took the EIS and
24 set their hydrologist on it and it will cost
25 them millions of dollars every year to be

1 able to use the water from the Pearl. Are
2 they going to stay there? I don't know.

3 A 15-foot dam even with a gate in low
4 water times will not release the accurate
5 amount of water downstream to have a viable
6 river. The proposed new lake is being dealt
7 for economic development not for the good of
8 the river or the vast majority. The proposed
9 site had to respond to whatever flow the
10 reservoir is sending their way, when the
11 reservoir dumps their water then One Lake is
12 going to dump theirs. When the reservoir
13 holds back to keep theirs at the level
14 they're required to keep it at, well, then,
15 you know, One Lake is going to hold theirs
16 back. And we're not going to get the water
17 downstream and heaven help Louisiana, heaven
18 help Bogalusa, Louisiana with the IP mill.
19 You know, all of us are in peril downstream.

20 The state of Mississippi has invested
21 millions and millions of dollars into our
22 seafood industry. The nutrients coming into
23 the Gulf from the Pearl is vital to the
24 seafood industry. It's astounding to me that
25 our state is willing to throw away all of

1 their effort and all of their funding of our
2 11 billion seafood industry that employs over
3 6,000 workers. This lake is an economic
4 development project, not a flood control
5 project. We want a flood control project.

6 As I say, I know the problems that
7 they're suffering here on these three major
8 creeks in south Jackson. There has to be
9 another way to do it without destroying
10 downstream.

11 MR. SHAW: Sir.

12 MR. GRAY DAY: Good afternoon. I am
13 Gray Day, and I pastor here in south Jackson.
14 I live in south Jackson. I am an advocate
15 for Mississippi as a whole and I'm an
16 advocate for Jackson and south Jackson. What
17 I've seen in the past few years we have a
18 number of challenges here in the City of
19 Jackson. And what I think is that we have an
20 opportunity with this project to write a new
21 narrative for our city.

22 In the church that I pastor I also have
23 preschools and after schools and academies
24 and I'm excited about this project because
25 for one, if you don't experience flooding

1 like we do in Jackson on a regular basis, you
2 can not understand our plight. We experience
3 flood on a regular basis in Jackson and this
4 project is a way to minimize that flood.

5 Like I said, they may be facing many
6 challenges here in our city lately with
7 garbage, with blight, with crime, and I see
8 this project as a way to bring an economic
9 empowerment to our city. I see this project
10 as a way that could help our educational
11 system with the children that are here in
12 Jackson. An opportunity to assess the
13 environment and better understand the
14 environment. I believe that this plan is a
15 game changer for Jackson. I believe that it
16 can address the flooding. It can make a
17 future way for our water to be possible
18 because you all know we do have a challenge
19 with water in our city. It can also be an
20 incredible educational opportunity for future
21 generations of Jacksonians who can get
22 connected to their environment in a way that
23 now is not possible. I want our young
24 children to understand that the environment
25 is their friend and how to save our

1 environment. So I believe that this project
2 will help us in a way economically as well
3 as -- I heard the Colonel say, can bring
4 quality as well as quantity benefits to our
5 community. God bless you.

6 MR. SHAW: Sir.

7 MR. PETE PERRY: Thank you, sir. I'm
8 Pete Perry. I live here in Jackson. I
9 wasn't planning to come up here and speak
10 today until my friend, and I mean literally,
11 my friend Representative Curry got up here
12 and started this conversation. Being the
13 good politician she is, she was speaking for
14 everybody saying nobody wants this, nobody --
15 well, I live here in Jackson and I will speak
16 differently saying, yes, a lot of people want
17 this. I live in Jackson. I moved here in
18 1981. I moved here from Neshoba County,
19 Mississippi where the Pearl River starts. I
20 spent a good bit of 1979 and 1980 down here
21 in Jackson. I was in commercial/industrial
22 construction business. And after coming down
23 here on Monday and helping friends move their
24 friends over on and a couple of others get
25 their furniture out of the houses because it

1 was flooded, we had crews that came down here
2 and helped a dozen or so friends rebuild
3 their houses all through '79 and '80. So I
4 saw it up close and personal then.

5 I moved here in '81 for other reasons,
6 but during that time I have heard studies,
7 I've been to hearings. I've known these
8 politicians. I've heard the proposals. I've
9 looked at all these things. I'm probably the
10 only person in this room that went to the
11 hearing on Shoccoe Dam in my hometown area
12 with the dry dam proposal back in the early
13 '80s and listened to all of them since then.

14 Right now I live in Jackson and I
15 live -- I can walk to the Pearl River. I'm
16 not going to get flooded, I'm up high. But I
17 can walk from my house just a mile and be at
18 the Pearl River. I've been familiar with it
19 all my life. I canoed it back in the '60s
20 before they built the Ross Barnett Reservoir.
21 But I'm not a wealthy Jacksonian. I'm not a
22 rich developer. I'm none of those things
23 that were said earlier for the old people
24 said that wanted it. I'm somebody that's
25 sitting here and in '79 and in '83 and again

1 in 2020 and '22 helped friends move their
2 stuff out of their houses that had heck of
3 floods and watched and seen what it's done in
4 all those areas. I'm saying it's time to
5 quit the studies. It's time to get something
6 done. I appreciate where you are and the
7 timeframe you discussed earlier that it's
8 moving forward and the funding is there. I
9 support the One Lake Plan. I support getting
10 something done, and One Lake Plan is the best
11 plan I've seen over the Two Lake and
12 expanding Two Lake plus a lake or expanding a
13 levee, all of those have been gone through
14 over the years. I just want to see something
15 done. And I'm glad to see the Secretary and
16 everybody else moving that way. Thank you.

17 MR. SHAW: Sir.

18 MR. JOHN HORN: Thank you. And to
19 Colonel Gray and your team members, we
20 appreciate your presence here, your mission
21 to find out what the right decision needs to
22 be to go forward and solve this problem.
23 We're talking about a problem that is more
24 than 40 years old without a solution. We've
25 been waiting for a solution for flood control

1 and in this community for almost a half
2 century. And we don't have it yet, but have
3 something within our sights and it's the One
4 Lake Project. So as a State Senator I'm John
5 Horn. I'm a 31 year veteran of the State
6 Senate and I've been waiting for a solution
7 for several decades now. I will say that in
8 the large part of my career as a legislator I
9 focused on economic development and I have a
10 number of years and served as chairman of
11 that committee for several as well as for
12 several years in the field. And I will say
13 that my focus has been particularly on
14 development in and around the metro area. A
15 lot of the development working with
16 minorities, small business contractors as
17 well as a general economic side of things in
18 the metro area.

19 Prior to my election I was fortunate
20 enough to have included as my jobs running
21 the Governor's office for federal-state
22 programs serving as the director for the
23 State of Mississippi. And so my introduction
24 to this project factors in and forms from
25 those experiences that I had in this case as

1 a policy maker and how we manage flood
2 control. But also as an economic developer,
3 we need to look at how we leverage this
4 project in addition to dealing with the
5 solution of flood control and other problems
6 that brings -- to be able to do and create
7 jobs and create economies around what this
8 opportunity presents. I also looked at a
9 federal-state program initially and seeing
10 what the challenges are to even get a project
11 that combines resources of the federal
12 government as well as state and local
13 government. And as a tourism developer, I
14 have been involved in recreational
15 development and creating destinations in
16 Mississippi that we can attract businesses
17 and tourists to.

18 So I say that in conclusion, of this
19 project, probably addresses three major
20 problems that we got in Jackson. One is
21 fresh water and waste water insecurity right
22 now. And somebody mentioned that we've
23 got -- down river we've got issues with raw
24 sewage and whatnot, that's not going to be
25 addressed by this project. This project --

1 that's going to be addressed through a
2 completion of the consent decree that a
3 federal judge currently has under his
4 authority giving responsibility to a 3rd
5 party administrator who's been already
6 assigned to deal with our
7 fresh-water/drinking water problem. He's
8 going to get that waste water issue, and I
9 think the raw sewage issue is going to be
10 addressed in that regard. This has nothing
11 to do with that issue that's downstream. One
12 Lake has nothing to do with that. But I
13 think that the locally proposed flood control
14 plan, we've got -- it's option C if I
15 remember correctly, solves all three of these
16 challenges that we've got. We've got
17 problems with fresh water, waste water
18 insecurity, got a problem with flooding and
19 we have the issue of economic development.
20 The plan provides protection for minority
21 groups that haven't been protected in
22 decades. I'm talking about communities that
23 we call (inaudible), which is down in the
24 south part of downtown Jackson, not to
25 mention homes that get flooded over in

1 northeast Jackson, as well as the homes that
2 are flooded down in south Jackson, but it
3 also makes possibility for us to create a
4 water treatment facility for south Jackson
5 that's had a lot of issues with regard to
6 safe delivery of water to that part of town.
7 It makes possible for us to construct a water
8 treatment facility, if needed, and to
9 reconnect Jackson residents to an urban water
10 front. The Jackson economy needs this shot
11 in the arm. And I'm not saying that this is
12 all about economic development because it's
13 not. At the heart of it, it's about flood
14 control. It's about making this environment
15 safe for our residents and resolving issues
16 with flooding now and in the future. But it
17 also has an economic development benefit and
18 it has to include Jackson and this area of
19 our state, but Jackson will never be a great
20 city, will never be a great city until we
21 develop our waterfront potential. And I
22 think that's a part of our obligation to make
23 sure that this city is great and is
24 prosperous, that it's as productive as it
25 possibly can be while keeping its citizens as

1 safe as possible. Every other city that has
2 embraced urban waterfront development has
3 seen an explosion of economic development.
4 And I'm talking about cities like
5 Chattanooga, San Antonio, Tulsa, Oklahoma
6 City, Little Rock. Jackson suffered from
7 years of disinvestment and population
8 problems, and this project gives us a real
9 shot at reversing those trends and different
10 opportunities for small business owners to
11 start creating wealth, for medium size
12 businesses to start building larger projects
13 and longer range projects to compete with the
14 rest of the world. Doing this has had a
15 100 percent success rate in making for
16 positive economic impact.

17 MR. SHAW: Sir, can I ask that you
18 close.

19 MR. JOHN HORN: I will say this, I
20 really didn't to be the coat tail that got
21 pulled today, but I am.

22 As we say, the rising tide lifts all
23 boats, and I can tell you that a rising -- an
24 attempting deepening of the channel in this
25 case will function of this project is also

1 going to lift our boats. We need the flood
2 control. We need the water security. And
3 also we need economic development. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. ASHBY FOOTE: Thank you. My name is
6 Ashby Foote. I'm the councilman for Ward 1
7 in Jackson and also the current president of
8 City Council for the City of Jackson. I
9 appreciate y'all being here today to
10 represent this program. This is through the
11 different voices. The Ward 1 is right at the
12 point where we suffer flooding two different
13 ways. We get it when the Pearl River rises
14 up above 31.5 feet or so it starts to
15 inundate a number of --

16 MR. SHAW: Sir, we're not hearing you.

17 MR. ASHBY FOOTE: Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse
18 me. So when the Pearl River rises above 31.5
19 feet or so we get the rising water that comes
20 into a lot of our communities along the Pearl
21 River, which is the east boundary of Ward 1.
22 And then when we have heavy rainfall across
23 Hinds and Madison County we suffer flash
24 floods, urban flash floods that have gotten
25 worse and worse over past 30 years as more

1 hard surfaces have been built up in the
2 Madison County area whether it through roads
3 or rooftops, whatever. So while the creek
4 flooding that Dr. Crawford talked about is
5 the same sort of thing, in addition to the
6 creeks he mentioned there's also Purple
7 Creek, and White Oak Creek that suffer a lot
8 of the flash floods, particularly White Oak
9 Creek is probably the poster child for
10 erosion and serious issues that inundate the
11 back yards of the people that live along side
12 White Oak Creek, but you're not here to solve
13 the flash flood issue at this point, but it
14 is something -- we get flooded different ways
15 and I really appreciate the fact that y'all
16 are here with this plan to try to address the
17 flooding that comes from the higher water of
18 the Pearl River and I'm a big supporter of
19 that. I think it will benefit Ward 1
20 significantly.

21 A lot of the communities that have seen
22 their home values depreciate because the
23 water rises up in their yards or maybe their
24 houses every four or five years, if you can
25 get control of that that will really see

1 increased home values in those communities,
2 be a big plus and it will help the morale of
3 a lot of the folks that live in that area.

4 And lastly, I'd like to thank y'all.
5 Last August we had high water that got to
6 about 35 feet or so in -- over in Jackson.
7 And on short notice from the MEMA, the Corps
8 of Engineers supplied -- brought over a
9 sandbag machine that you had there, came over
10 to the First United parking lot and in about
11 six hours produced about -- and along with
12 the help of the county supervisors
13 maintenance department and public works
14 department, produced about eight tons of
15 sandbags which was very beneficial for the
16 citizens that were seeing water getting close
17 to their houses. So I really appreciate the
18 Corps efforts in that as well. Thank you so
19 much.

20 MR. SHAW: Ma'am.

21 MS. CHRISTY SIMMS: Thank you. My name
22 is Christy Simms. I'm the Executive Director
23 of Internal Affairs at the University of
24 Mississippi Medical Center. I noticed -- am
25 I doing something wrong. I noticed on your

1 slides that you are seeking input on the
2 water systems and also on economic
3 development and I want to focus on that
4 today.

5 The University of Mississippi Medical
6 Center is located just down the street here
7 in the heart of Jackson and is Mississippi's
8 only academic medical center and serves as
9 the state's primary safety net hospital. We
10 are home to seven health sciences schools and
11 we have an enrollment of over 3,000 students
12 across all of our programs. Each year we
13 graduate nearly 1,000 students that are ready
14 to enter the work force. We have the only
15 children's hospital in the state, the only
16 level 1 trauma center, the only level 4
17 neonatal intensive care unit, the only organ
18 transplant program, and any specialty
19 services that are only available here in
20 Jackson. We serve over 350,000 patients
21 across the state every year. And that
22 accounts for -- I'm sorry, 5.2 million
23 individuals each year. We have more than
24 10,000 employees here on our Jackson campus
25 and we're the largest employer in the City of

1 Jackson and the second largest employer in
2 the state of Mississippi after the ship
3 builders down on the gulf coast.

4 We bring in more than 100 million
5 dollars of external research funding and that
6 brings in researchers into Mississippi from
7 outside of the state. So all together we
8 have a 1.8 billion dollar annual budget that
9 is quite a significant contributor to the
10 City of Jackson both directly and indirectly.

11 I say all that to say that we bring a
12 lot to the city. We care a lot about the
13 future of the city and we want to continue to
14 grow in all of our missions and want to grow
15 with Jackson hand in hand. So as we think
16 about our future growth one of the things
17 that's very important is the reliability and
18 consistency of city services and utilities
19 including water, sewer, flood control, and
20 while it's true that we have our own domestic
21 well water systems on the main campus as most
22 large hospital systems do, we are relying on
23 the city for water for all of our numerous
24 off campus clinics including the Jackson
25 Medical Mall to ensure our people are

1 healthy.

2 In many cases our water supply system is
3 disrupted in the City of Jackson, we have to
4 completely suspend patient care until the
5 water can be restored to the sites, which is
6 disruptive for patients, but in some cases it
7 can actually be dangerous, you know, in the
8 case of dialysis for example.

9 Another key to the growth of UMC is
10 being able to attract and retain health care
11 professionals, educators, and researchers in
12 Jackson. And we think we can do that best by
13 capturing those that are already here in
14 Jackson. You know, like I said, we have so
15 many students that are graduating from our
16 programs but there are several higher
17 education institutions here in Jackson that
18 are educating highly trained capable young
19 people who seek to live in a vibrant city
20 where they can live and work and raise their
21 families. And so we believe investing in our
22 city's critical water infrastructure will
23 signal to the next generation that there's a
24 foundation here on which to build a career
25 and to build a future.

1 It will also help counter the national
2 narrative that Jackson is the city that's
3 plagued by insurmountable and ongoing water
4 problems, which is a message that works
5 against all of our collective efforts to
6 attract students, faculty, and researchers to
7 our city.

8 And then finally from a health
9 perspective, benefits of reliable clean water
10 can not be overstated. Mississippi suffers
11 from a myriad of health challenges. Many
12 chronic diseases that are exacerbated by lack
13 of health care access, exercise, and healthy
14 food. Of course, having healthy clean water
15 in communities that are safe from flooding
16 and exposure to sewage is critical. By
17 investing in the quality of life for
18 Jacksonians, a better health of our
19 communities and ultimately a healthier state.
20 Thank you for the opportunity.

21 MR. SHAW: All right.

22 MR. TOM TROXLER: Yes. Thank y'all for
23 being here. My name is Tom Troxler. I'm the
24 executive director of Rankin First, also on
25 the Executive Committee for the Greater

1 Jackson Partnership and Greater Jackson Life.
2 I'll be quick.

3 Obviously, the floods have been
4 mentioned. They previously had a traumatic
5 effect on Rankin County, especially the flow
6 of the Pearl in Richland areas as the mayor
7 of Richland said. But it created hundreds of
8 millions of dollars of loss and we certainly
9 support any type of flood control project,
10 this particular project here today to stop
11 the flooding.

12 From the economic development
13 standpoint, we get questions all the time now
14 because of the flooding and the international
15 and national press that covers the flooding
16 and water issues in Jackson, so we're very
17 supportive of a strong Jackson, a resilient
18 economic led by a vibrant Jackson because it
19 hurts the whole metro area. And I know Jeff
20 behind me will speak to this, but what
21 happens in Jackson affects the whole area
22 because if you're in Chicago or you're in
23 London and you have a prospect and trying to
24 bring industry to Mississippi, all you see is
25 the negative news. They don't know Rankin

1 County. They don't know Madison County.
2 They don't even know Hinds County. But they
3 know Jackson because that's what we're
4 reporting on. So we support any project that
5 creates a stronger Jackson and creates a
6 project like this.

7 And one last thing that hasn't been
8 brought up today is a water feature such as
9 this, on an economic development standpoint,
10 will very much help the brain drain that we
11 experience right now in our area. It will
12 bring the quality of life, the type of things
13 that young people that are graduating from
14 college, it will bring some of the wildlife
15 that they're interested in, the lakes and the
16 items and all those things, it will help
17 create an area that young people will want to
18 live and it will help stop some of the brain
19 drain from our local universities as well as
20 our own children and grandchildren when they
21 graduate wanting to stay in the Jackson area.
22 Thank you very much.

23 MR. SHAW: Sir.

24 MR. ANDY HIGGINS: Good afternoon. My
25 name is Andy Higgins, and I want to talk to

1 you from a couple of perspectives that I
2 observed on this project and how it affects
3 people down south and south of town here. As
4 a young child I can remember in 1979 going
5 and wading in the water and unloading and
6 moving furniture at my grandfather's house in
7 the Rockport community in Covich County that
8 flooded. And so I'm very sympathetic to
9 those of you that experience floodings --
10 that has experienced flooding since '79 and,
11 you know, I am concerned about it. But as a
12 farmer I've -- years ago in the '90s I rented
13 land in Lawrence County and along the banks
14 of the river and year after year after year I
15 saw the effects of -- at that time I believe
16 it was mismanagement of the river and how it
17 eroded the banks of the river. I continue to
18 see that today. I also own land in Jefferson
19 Davis County and have two miles of a
20 tributary, Silver Creek, that flows to the
21 Pearl River south of Monticello. And I know
22 whatever I do on that creek, it affects those
23 above me and below me. If I worked on it,
24 widened it, those effects are going to flow
25 downstream and also have effects upstream as

1 this project will that we're talking about
2 today.

3 In my day job I'm Executive Director of
4 the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, and
5 I represent members from one end of the state
6 to the other. And the only problems I hear
7 anything dealing with the Pearl River are
8 those that live below Jackson below the Ross
9 Barnett Reservoir. And it's primarily with
10 erosion. I can cite one of them in Lawrence
11 County that's lost approximately 40 acres of
12 land as a result of erosion along the banks.
13 Just this past week, we see in the news of a
14 graveyard with a coffin exposed along the
15 banks of the river due to erosion along the
16 banks.

17 Recently I had a misguided step and I
18 entered politics and I'm the Senator elect
19 unopposed in District 35, which covers
20 Copiah, Simpson, Lawrence, and Jefferson
21 Davis Counties, so I have a large portion of
22 the Pearl River along its banks. And when I
23 talk to people in that district, bank erosion
24 is the primary concern that I hear on the
25 Pearl River and it's a valid concern. And so

1 I'll sum up my comments real quickly in that
2 we look back and can see a big change from
3 the time that the Ross Barnett Reservoir put
4 in to the river down below it and I believe
5 those people were convinced that another man
6 made structure will do anything but make more
7 problems for us. Thank you.

8 MR. JEFF RENT: Good afternoon. My name
9 is Jeff Rent, and I'm the president and CEO
10 of the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership.
11 We're probably the city's oldest and largest
12 chamber of commerce. We cover Hinds, Rankin,
13 and Madison Counties. We have approximately
14 1,400 members, and half of them are in the
15 City of Jackson.

16 My other part of my job is also to
17 industrial improvement and economic
18 development under the umbrella of Greater
19 Jackson Alliance. We go out and conduct
20 traditional economic development and
21 industrial recruitment activities all over
22 the country. And as Mr. Troxler said before
23 me, when we leave the area that we're
24 identified solely through the name Jackson
25 and the headlines have been devastating

1 lately to some of our prospects with the
2 water issues, repetitive flooding, repetitive
3 loss, and how that acts as a barrier to
4 recruiting companies besides the drinking
5 water issues, with repetitive flooding and
6 repetitive loss, you're talking about how it
7 affects your work force and your potential
8 work force. You would have a work force that
9 is unsure if they're going to be able to get
10 to work due to being cut off due to flooding,
11 or they're going to be displaced. You may
12 have a business that gets cut off. Well,
13 then you don't have customers who are able to
14 access that business.

15 And so the effect compounds itself and
16 companies decide to locate elsewhere. And
17 we -- that's what they need, more economic
18 development. We want good jobs. We want
19 better jobs and we work hard every day to try
20 to make that happen here in the City of
21 Jackson and Hinds County and Rankin and
22 Madison Counties. So what happens in Jackson
23 affects the entire region.

24 Also, we have a river, an amazing river
25 that has also public access right now. So

1 the quality of life component can not be
2 understated. Quality of place and quality of
3 life drives economic development projects
4 more so than any of my more than a decade
5 experience has ever seen. Right now is one
6 of the first questions they ask: what are
7 people going to do when they're not in the
8 office, when they're not at work. And it's a
9 boom for us.

10 This is truly a transformative project
11 and so I'm here today just to voice my
12 support for the One Lake solution. Thank
13 you.

14 MR. DON UNDERWOOD: I'm Don Underwood.
15 I am currently the republican Alderman at
16 Large for the City of Brookhaven. Brookhaven
17 is 20 miles from the Pearl River on Highway
18 84. Way back in the '80s and early '90s I
19 was the representative for District 92 that
20 Becky now represents and I know about Shoccoe
21 because one of the -- and there were probably
22 many votes that I'd like to go back and
23 revisit, I voted against Shoccoe because the
24 folks of Neshoba County and Choctaw and all
25 said, oh, don't put this on us. And Shoccoe

1 might would have helped this situation, but
2 it was the Corps' third plan and everybody
3 said, well, why haven't you done anything.
4 It was Shoccoe and the state rejected it.
5 There was the levees, the state rejected it.
6 It's a history of the state rejecting what
7 the Corps wanted to do.

8 But then after that I became Executive
9 Director of the Mississippi Soil and Water
10 Conservation Commission. And in that
11 position I literally wrote the Mississippi
12 Watershed and Rehabilitation Act word for
13 word. And I see some of the senatorial
14 reporter staff back there and some of them
15 remember when we did this. I worked with the
16 staff of Senator Cochran to develop a six
17 state pilot project to invest federal funds
18 into watershed repair and rehabilitation of
19 federally constructed flood control shortage.
20 That program has now become part of the Farm
21 Bill over the last decade. It's available in
22 all 50 states. And those of you from the
23 Corps, some of you have been around long
24 enough to remember that we have worked on the
25 projects.

1 The only reason I get up today is quit
2 calling this a flood control project. Some
3 of you people get up and say this is going to
4 stop flooding. It is not. You build -- I
5 have overseen dozens of these. You build
6 flood control structures to either protect
7 downstream because you control the water or
8 you build storage capacity above stream. And
9 if you're going to fill it up and have a lake
10 front, you are not developing storage
11 capacity. If y'all want to build an economic
12 development boondoggle, get after it, but
13 quit lying to people and calling it a flood
14 control project.

15 MR. JUAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you all for
16 having this meeting. My name is Juan
17 Hernandez, I live in Jackson. I made two of
18 them yesterday. So as I mentioned yesterday,
19 my sources come from the 2000 DEIS and the
20 agency technical review. I understand that
21 these things tend to be outdated and old,
22 please forgive, it's the only thing I have.

23 MR. SHAW: Excuse me. Could you speak
24 up just a little?

25 MR. HERNANDEZ: Absolutely. Yes. So

1 I'll just go from here and I think everyone
2 probably agrees that there is a dire need for
3 flood risk mitigation in Jackson Metro.

4 So, for one, I think you started, like,
5 saying that no option -- no action is an
6 option. I don't think that's an option for
7 us. That's something that I think everyone
8 here agrees on. Something that I think is
9 also in dire need is for education on what
10 the current options, particularly the One
11 Lake offers in terms of flood protections.
12 Just to name a couple of locations, two of
13 these have been mentioned out here by the
14 people. Multiple speakers have mentioned the
15 need for flood risk mitigation in northeast
16 Jackson. And at least one person has
17 described the need for flood risk mitigation
18 in south Jackson.

19 So what's in these documents that I
20 mentioned? Document '18 DEIS and your agency
21 technical review has to say about these
22 locations. Northeast Jackson, flooding will
23 continue along other neighborhoods, Canton
24 Avenue Estates and North Canton Club. North
25 Canton Club is the one pictured at the

1 beginning of your neighborhood. I am not
2 certain that any of those speakers who have
3 come up here and said that they need flood
4 protection understand that the One Lake
5 Project will not -- won't reduce the
6 frequency of flooding nor the heights of
7 flooding, but flooding will continue in these
8 neighborhoods.

9 South Jackson, at least one person
10 mentioned this. Per comment 7058837 and the
11 DEIS Appendix C, flooding will not change in
12 south Jackson and will be nearly no
13 reductions of flooding south of Lynch Creek.

14 Now, to the last gentleman who spoke
15 about the dam. I agree that there needs to
16 be more communication about what the
17 infrastructures components are offering.
18 Referring to ATR comment 8285727, a new dam
19 will not offer any increase in capacity or
20 storage capacity. Flood reductions will be
21 offered primarily by the relocation of the
22 levee and very likely by the increase
23 channelization of the river. This
24 information has been public -- has been
25 available for I don't know how many years and

1 people here still speak about this
2 infrastructure as the dam was providing flood
3 control. They still talk about south Jackson
4 and northeast Jackson receiving complete
5 benefits from this.

6 There is a dire need for education and
7 it's not been provided by the current
8 sponsor. And I think that the US Army Corps
9 of Engineers needs to step up to make sure
10 that people are educated on what the
11 alternative actions you offer. Thank you.

12 MR. ANDY GRAIN: Thank you very much.
13 My name is Andy Grain. I'm with Jackson
14 Association of Neighborhoods. We work with
15 neighborhoods all over the city and just
16 wanted to reiterate Dr. Crawford's point
17 about creeks.

18 So I understand by looking at the 100
19 year event, I guess, with a circle around it,
20 you know, oval that shows that and all the
21 creeks that are within that. And I know that
22 you said that the modeling includes the
23 creeks, I just want to make sure that it's
24 driven home and that it is part of the Pearl
25 River watershed, so there's no reason to

1 leave those out of the plan. And so as we go
2 forward it's not -- those creeks need to be
3 cleaned out regularly. That's a big part of
4 the flash flooding, the cause of the flash
5 flooding events, so there could be funding
6 available for that as well as finding the --
7 like the biggest problem spots throughout the
8 city along all those creeks.

9 And then, you know, building a solution
10 there. The organization that I work for is
11 revitalizing the city and we're currently
12 working in west Jackson along Lynch Street to
13 use abandoned properties to do flood
14 mitigation parks and those are going to be --
15 it's kind of a test project. It's an area,
16 it's called "the Bottom", it's a neighborhood
17 near the bottom of the drainage. And so
18 that's along Lynch Street. And think we
19 could -- if we widen the scope of the project
20 to include all those areas it would be very
21 helpful and I'd be glad to work with you in
22 identifying the locations of those problems.
23 And then also maybe thinking of ways to plan
24 in the future when it comes to maintenance,
25 so we can always keep those creeks cleaned

1 out. Thank you.

2 MR. SHAW: Sir, you're next.

3 MR. ANTHONY HARKNESS: Hello. My name
4 is Anthony Harkness, pretty much a lifetime
5 citizen of Jackson, and I'd just like to say
6 that let's not get caught up on side issues
7 on this. One of the things that I heard from
8 one of my great friends in life in college
9 and I often tell it, do something less you do
10 nothing. The problem will continue. As you
11 point out the things that are problems or
12 concerns, well, let's put that in the plan.
13 Let's do something about it. Think about the
14 Wright Brothers. And I say this oftentimes
15 because I like to look successful recipes.
16 The Wright Brothers were told we got to clear
17 this, we just celebrated being in an
18 airplane, right. Well, they were told, if
19 God meant for us to fly we would have wings.
20 We don't ever think about that. They were
21 told no, but what they did was every time a
22 problem was pointed out, they solved that
23 problem. The first car that was driven, that
24 was a ridiculous idea. We have horses, why
25 do we need to build something that doesn't

1 need horses to move for. Well, they kept
2 figuring out the problem. And the next thing
3 you know we got interstates that are
4 overloaded with motor cars.

5 I'm saying that to say, maybe if you
6 don't call it flood control, what if we call
7 it flow improvement, that make it better or
8 more acceptable? But something does need to
9 be done. And we can solve these problems.
10 We have the mind. We have the will. Right
11 now there's funding available and the talent
12 is available. We don't have to hurt the
13 people downstream, but those of us who are up
14 here in Jackson don't have to continue to
15 suffer.

16 MR. THOMAS CLARK: Good afternoon.
17 Thomas Clark. I'm recently retired pastor of
18 Ascension Lutheran Church in Jackson where I
19 served for 34 years. And I am currently a
20 member of the Hinds County Disaster Recovery
21 Loan Service coverage committee.

22 Jackson does need a lot of the
23 developmental funds for all sorts of areas.
24 But flood control and the focus should be on
25 that. It should be, I think, on -- the focus

1 should be on the water coming into Jackson
2 from the north. I grew up in Winston County.
3 My family was living outside of Louisville,
4 the headwaters of the Pearl River. In 1979
5 when the water -- the flood from 1979,
6 floodwaters were not so much floodwaters that
7 came here from Jackson. They were waters
8 that fell north of Jackson in a watershed
9 area, and so when those waters arrived in
10 Jackson that's largely the cause of the 1979
11 flood.

12 So it seems if you want to control
13 flooding in Jackson the focus shouldn't be on
14 the flooding here, but rather something north
15 of the city that's ultimately controlling the
16 water coming in. I know that there have been
17 other projects in the past that have looked
18 at that, but to me that just seems to make
19 sense.

20 MS. COLOSIMO: Thank you.

21 MR. SHAW: Sir.

22 MR. ANDREW WHITEHURST: Hello, my name
23 is Andrew Whitehurst. I live in Madison,
24 Mississippi. I was one of your guests last
25 night and I wanted to bring up something that

1 I talked about in Slidell. The two statutes
2 that give authority for this delineate the
3 three legs of the analysis. And that's
4 whether WRDA 2007 is whether this is
5 economic, whether this is environmentally
6 acceptable, and technically feasible.

7 And then the Water Resource Development
8 Act of 2018 entered language to say this had
9 to be economically justified. And last night
10 I talked about the economic effects of
11 everything downstream. The permits, the
12 seafood industry, the recreation, and so much
13 of the discussion today has been economic
14 development. And let's do something to the
15 river to make it economically attractive to
16 keep students here or to -- all these other
17 things. And the focus has not always been a
18 discussion on flood control. So after some
19 of us went to Washington in 2020 to meet with
20 R.E. James' staff I looked up the three legs
21 of analysis, and stuck with the economic
22 part. So I wrote Secretary James a memo and
23 I looked at the engineering notebook that
24 governs the location of this project, and I
25 noted that 10 million-dollars in location

1 benefit analysis comes from building lands
2 that are now wetlands on the batture side of
3 the levee, primarily in Rankin County. So
4 there's an executive order 11988 from the
5 Carter administration, it's a presumption
6 against flood plain development. I brought
7 that up from my memo to R.E. James and I'm
8 going to send it to whoever on your staff is
9 the proper person to read it.

10 Again, because I think points are still
11 valid. There's some factors that you analyze
12 in figuring out whether a project can or
13 can't go forward if it does have flood plain
14 fill-in, Sec 404 Army Corps Flood Plain that
15 notate against it and one excuse. There's
16 one, you know, way to get into flood plain.

17 You know, I analyzed this project,
18 looking at the factors, and I don't see
19 coming down on flood plain fill-in. I don't
20 see a way to go against a presumption of EO
21 11988. So who can I talk to and correspond
22 with about this in the next weeks or months
23 about this economics piece.

24 MR. SHAW: Yes, sir. If you will,
25 there's an e-mail address, if you'll send

1 comments in they will be included in the
2 record and --

3 MR. ANDREW WHITEHURST: Can I have a
4 person's name and e-mail please?

5 MR. SHAW: Yes, sir.

6 MR. ANDREW WHITEHURST: Talk to you
7 after this?

8 MR. SHAW: Absolutely. Craig, can you
9 go back to the first slide. Slide 2 or 3.

10 MR. ANDREW WHITEHURST: I have it. I
11 mean, I took a picture of it last night.

12 My first job as a law clerk with LDEQ in
13 Louisiana was help figure -- help the agency
14 figure out how it could avoid one of its regs
15 on -- that was about disposal of radioactive
16 waste from dentist offices. We had a famous
17 football player that was a dentist and didn't
18 want to pay his fees. And so my very first
19 law clerk job was figuring out how an agency
20 didn't have to follow its own rules. That's
21 what agencies sometimes do. I want this
22 agency to follow its own rules on this
23 wetland business.

24 MR. SHAW: Yes, sir. If you'll see me
25 right after I'll get you the info. Anybody

1 else?

2 MS. COLOSIMO: Thank you for coming to
3 another event. We appreciate it. And, of
4 course, Andrea and I work every day for the
5 Assistant Secretary, so just continue to make
6 sure you resend the same document you send in
7 there to make sure it gets where it needs to.
8 Thank you.

9 MR. SHAW: Yes, ma'am.

10 MS. JILL MASTROTOTARO: Good afternoon.
11 I'm Jill Mastrototaro. I'm the Mississippi
12 policy director for Audobon Delta. I live
13 and work in metro Jackson and across the
14 state. Thanks for having this meeting today.

15 I did want to underscore and appreciate
16 our dialogue over the last few years with the
17 Assistant Secretary's office more on Pearl
18 River issues. I did want to reiterate the
19 disappointment that I have had with how the
20 Corps has rolled out this next phase of the
21 process. Of course, I've shared my concerns
22 in e-mail to the agency but I did want to
23 underscore the value of public input and the
24 importance of giving people adequate notice
25 so advertising these meetings at least two

1 weeks in advance of when they're going to be
2 held. These meetings were announced, I
3 think, in several e-mails that came several
4 days before the Federal Register notice.
5 When the meetings are advertised, information
6 should become available via a variety of
7 formats and platforms including burned and
8 social media, direct mailers, utilizing
9 community organizations, neighborhood base
10 organizations, newspapers, online platforms,
11 and there should be -- the information should
12 allow for at least two weeks review of what's
13 going to be presented in advance of community
14 meetings. There should also be a lengthy
15 comment held so people can digest information
16 a period of at least 90 days. And given the
17 seriousness and the many years of study
18 around the Pearl River, the public deserves
19 more notice of it being engagement
20 opportunities, clarity of the process that's
21 underway, and a solid understanding of how
22 past and future input is going to and is
23 expected to shape the final plan, so that
24 local communities can get the flood
25 mitigation meanwhile protecting the

1 environment, public health, and downstream
2 interest.

3 In fact, alternatives appears twice in
4 which those set forth by the local levee
5 board in 2018 with the current NFI
6 recommended plan outfunding what is commonly
7 known as One Lake, and during the Levee
8 Board's 2013 planning and 2018 draft EIS
9 processes, hundreds of environmental, social
10 justice, Facebook, business and industry
11 sectors and elected and community leaders
12 express opposition about One Lake. They
13 called for neutral based nonstructural
14 solutions to help the Metro Jackson
15 community. Solutions that will benefit
16 wildlife and also respect the downstream
17 interests and the public health interest of
18 the community at large.

19 And so we're deeply disturbed that One
20 Lake remains the top alternative despite the
21 broad and sustained opposition and the
22 multitude of environmental public health and
23 economic concerns that we and many others
24 have shared at length with the Assistant
25 Secretary's office and the Corps. And the

1 fact that there are more effective and more
2 environmentally sustainable, more immediate
3 flood solutions available today.

4 I did want to recognize the fact that
5 the last iteration of One Lake will destroy
6 about 2,500 acres of important habitat flood
7 plain and wetland habitat that already
8 protects the local metro community. It's
9 also for wildlife.

10 We know that there are eight
11 contaminated sites that will be in the
12 footprint of that project either directly or
13 near by. There's no plan to protect public
14 health at these sites containing heavy metals
15 and (inaudible) hydrocarbons that will be
16 suspended in the air, the water, and the
17 soil. Not just to the detriment of the local
18 community but downstream interests as well.

19 There's also the issue of flash
20 flooding. And it was clear from the 2018
21 draft study that One Lake will do nothing for
22 the flash flooding concerns that people have
23 expressed today and they've expressed in the
24 past of the tributaries that flood through
25 Jackson and connect to the Pearl River. In

1 fact, One Lake will make that flooding worse
2 because we'll now have an elevated lake that
3 will cause water to back up all the time into
4 those creeks, those lower creeks, and rain
5 water will actually have more of an impact
6 every time we have that kind of event. We
7 also know that the Fewell plant, the drinking
8 water plant, the one of two that worked
9 during the recent water crisis that provided
10 drinking water to 30 percent of the City of
11 Jackson will have to be temporarily shut down
12 for three to four years, three to four years
13 shut down during the construction of the
14 project because of the turbidity in the
15 water. And so there's going to have to be a
16 temporary drinking water supply found for
17 that segment of the Jackson Community. And,
18 of course, there's an array of downstream
19 impacts both environmental and economic that
20 others have spoken to today and in the past.
21 And I'll just remind the audience that the
22 Corps in years past has rejected the One Lake
23 Project. They rejected any project that was
24 a lake. And so it's really a time for the
25 Corps and the other federal agencies that are

1 now reviewing this as an opportunity to
2 deliver true meaningful flood relief for the
3 Metro Jackson area, to put all options on the
4 table, and that would ensure that we have the
5 environment, the community at large including
6 our Louisiana neighbors, and public health at
7 the core.

8 And one last thing I'll just mention is
9 there was a government accounting office
10 report done after the 1979 flood fight and
11 that report found that it was majority human
12 error, and the fact that the City of Jackson
13 had built an illegal 66-inch sewer pipe
14 through the levee that contributed
15 significantly to the flooding that happened
16 in downtown Jackson. So for folks that would
17 like to learn more about Audobon's position
18 on the issue we're happy to meet with you and
19 share more. Thank you.

20 MS. COLOSIMO: So a couple of things to
21 make sure we're clear. First of all, it's
22 early engagement and that one is on us. We
23 wanted to make sure it was early engagement,
24 not engagement in perfect form going on that
25 Mr. Connor requested. So we knew there was

1 going to be a little short fuse that got into
2 that. We didn't want things to only go out
3 in an e-mail. We know there's going to be
4 more. We haven't figured out what those are.
5 So it's not perfect, understand you're
6 probably not fully supportive.

7 Beyond that I would say a couple of
8 things that I want to be very clear about,
9 there is no situation including the
10 recommended project shutting down the water
11 supply or the water treatment in any way
12 shape or form. Anything that implicates that
13 we'd act on that. Certainly not public
14 consumption, so that is not a consideration.
15 And in fact, Mr. Klein has specifically said
16 the investments that are happening at EPA to
17 help the current situation, the work we're
18 undertaking under our Section 219 program,
19 all those things are going to make sure those
20 investments are protected as they're put in
21 place. So we need to make sure that we're
22 not undermining other things going on.
23 That's always the case.

24 But more importantly, the Corps is arms
25 length and so is the Secretary's office on

1 what solution. One Lake is not a priority
2 solution, no action is not a priority
3 solution, neither is the NED. Right now
4 we're in a what are the great alternatives
5 that can address the problem at hand
6 consistent with direction and that's why
7 we're here. While we are here today, want to
8 continue to get that from all of you. This
9 is the process. Arms length. And this is
10 the Secretary's office here as a part of that
11 process to direct arms length (inaudible).

12 MR. SHAW: Sir.

13 MR. TAYLOR NICHOLAS: Thanks. I know
14 we're rolling up on 3:00 so I'll --

15 MR. SHAW: Turn your microphone on
16 please.

17 MR. TAYLOR NICHOLAS: Thanks. I know
18 we're rolling up on 3:00 so I'll -- is that
19 better. Sorry about that. So I'll make mine
20 kind of swift.

21 My name is Taylor Nicholas. I serve as
22 the Executive Director of the Great City
23 Foundation. We're relatively new, started
24 about a year and a half ago. Out of -- as a
25 sincere recognition that a lot of us in the

1 city want a strong state. And if we're going
2 to have a strong healthy state we're going to
3 have a strong healthy capital city. And so
4 as we look around us to the quality of life,
5 right, economic opportunity and
6 infrastructure. And so I think as we
7 recognize here, economic heartbeat our entire
8 state is in Jackson. And we've heard a lot
9 of first hand accounts about flooding. It's
10 been a multi-year issue. When I was a kid --
11 sorry, this mic. When I was a kid in
12 northwest Rankin County growing up, of
13 course, with a foot in Rankin and a foot in
14 Jackson and even still today, I wasn't
15 allowed to go to the Pearl River, but you
16 can't access that here. And I think that's a
17 disadvantage to a lot of our young people
18 here. Where our river is hidden behind
19 levees that has contributed but failed
20 really. And it's attributed to honestly one
21 of our state's greatest resources being under
22 valued, under appreciated, and under used.
23 And so I'm all for, and hear both sides of
24 the equation here. Clean water not just to
25 fish, right, swim in it, but at the same time

1 we need a reliable levee structure that's
2 going to protect our citizens. And so I'm
3 for the -- and I understand that this has
4 gone multi year, 15 plus years of review,
5 thank you all for talking about that so I'll
6 speak up. That moving the weir from where it
7 is now south can provide clean reliable
8 drinking water, we just saw last year that
9 flooding exacerbated our drinking water. It
10 does provide the ability for our community to
11 actually access and engage our river, right.
12 So I see an opportunity for a restoration and
13 resiliency project. That to me is huge.

14 I'm going to keep my comments brief I
15 promise, probably under three minutes.
16 Forgive my rambling and I'm going to
17 encourage you all to engage in the final
18 review process, that we have a once in a
19 lifetime opportunity to make a generational
20 impact, right. To boldly move forward with
21 something that will have up-sized impacts on
22 our most challenged residents. And it's not
23 just our choice to do this in my opinion,
24 it's our duty. I speak on behalf of a lot of
25 people who live in this area, Rankin, Hinds,

1 our capital city matters. So in times like
2 this when we have resources, an opportunity
3 to take action and do good, right, these
4 times are few and far between. So let's not
5 waste this opportunity, all right. Let's
6 embrace the Pearl River, you know. I'd love
7 to restore it. I'd love to be sure that
8 Jackson will be resilient. So to that extent
9 I thank you for your time here, thanks for
10 everything you guys are doing and I yield the
11 mic. Thanks.

12 MR. SHAW: Last opportunities. Any
13 further feedback? Any closing remarks, Sir,
14 Ma'am?

15 COLONEL KLEIN: Ladies and Gentlemen,
16 again, thanks for coming out this afternoon.
17 A lot of very good feedback that will work
18 it's way into the future analysis. Remember,
19 we're going to do this again at 6:00 so maybe
20 we'll see some of y'all there.

21
22 (Hearing concluded at 3:06 p.m.)

23
24
25

1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

2 I, Dawn Dillard, Court Reporter and
3 Notary Public, in and for the State of
4 Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing
5 contains a true and correct transcript of the
6 public hearing of USACE Pearl River Flood Risk
7 Management Project, as taken by me in the
8 aforementioned matter at the time and place
9 heretofore stated, as taken by stenotype and later
10 reduced to typewritten form under my supervision
11 by means of computer-aided transcription.

12 I further certify that under the
13 authority vested in me by the State of Mississippi
14 that the witness was placed under oath by me to
15 truthfully answer all questions in the matter.

16 I further certify that, to the best of
17 my knowledge, I am not in the employ of or related
18 to any party in this matter and have no interest,
19 monetary or otherwise, in the final outcome of
20 this matter.

21 Witness my signature and seal this the
22 4th day of August, 2023.

23
24 DAWN DILLARD, #1763
CCR

25 My Commission Expires:
March 7, 2025

May 24, 2023 Transcription: Jackson, MS 1800

1 TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARING OF
2 USACE PEARL RIVER FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT
3 PROJECT MEETING
4 JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
5 DATE: May 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

6
7
8 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Vicksburg District
9 public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
10 Management Project was held at Sparkman
11 Auditorium, 1150 Lakeland Drive, Jackson,
12 Mississippi beginning at 6:04 p.m.

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22 REPORTED BY: Dawn Dillard, CCR 1763

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 Army Corps of Engineers:

3 Thomas R. Shaw

Robyn Colosimo

4 Colonel Christopher Klein

Brandon Davis

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1 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Good afternoon. I'd
2 like to welcome you to our fourth session
3 public meeting for the Pearl River Flood Risk
4 Management Project. As I mentioned we
5 already had three sessions. Two yesterday in
6 Slidell, Louisiana with one being here this
7 afternoon at 1:00 p.m. My name is Tom Shaw.
8 I am the project manager for Vicksburg
9 District for this project. I've got a few
10 open remarks, but before I do so I would like
11 to recognize our panel.

12 On your far right is Robyn Colosimo.
13 She is the deputy assistant secretary of the
14 Army for project planning and policy review.
15 Next to her is Vicksburg District Commander
16 Colonel Christopher Klein. And next to the
17 Commander is Brandon Davis. Brandon is
18 Planning Liaison with the Regional Planning
19 Environment Division South.

20 And so a few housekeeping things just to
21 make sure we don't miss anything is, is when
22 you came in you probably came in that door
23 there and there's another exit here and
24 there's at least one more right here, so if
25 anything were to happen I want to be sure

1 people can get out.

2 So when you came in the door there is a
3 sign-in list and a lot of people were putting
4 their information on it. It's not required
5 but we would love to have a record of you
6 attending this for the public record because
7 all of what we're doing will become part of
8 that record.

9 This is, of course, is a face to face
10 session, but we actually -- this is going on
11 virtually as well on a Webex site, and so if
12 you will permit me to give you what we call
13 our rules of engagement. So when we get
14 through with the presentation here you'll
15 have an opportunity to come up here to give
16 us feedback, input, comments, if you will.
17 Go to the microphone stations there. I would
18 ask that you try to limit your comments to
19 about three minutes so that the -- we do have
20 a good many people here and we'd love
21 everybody that wants to provide any to be
22 able to do so.

23 In addition to that there are multiple
24 ways that we can collect information. And so
25 you'll see on some -- the following slide

1 presentations there is a website that you can
2 go to to find information. There is an
3 e-mail site that you can send your comments
4 or feedback to. There's also comment cards
5 up front, which you can actually fill out a
6 hard copy.

7 And then one of the things that I would
8 like to be sure is, is that you see we got
9 some study boards over here that indicate the
10 area of the study under consideration.
11 There's a board over there that's got kind of
12 a red section of the lower part of the Pearl.
13 If you would please place a push pin in there
14 if you don't mind. We would like to know,
15 you know, where you're from and where your
16 concerns at -- relate to.

17 So with that I think we are good to go.
18 So why we're here. We're here to provide
19 some information to you and hope to have a
20 little bit of an educational experience, but
21 also, like I said, we want feedback. We want
22 your input into assisting us in moving
23 forward with this process. So there is a
24 term that you are going to hear that is
25 called the non-federal interest. The

1 non-federal interest in this case for this
2 particular project is the Rankin Hinds Pearl
3 River Flood and Drainage Control District.
4 The authorizations, the Corps basically can't
5 do anything without authorization and
6 appropriation. So the authorization is
7 listed up there for you. We will go into
8 those in detail, we'll talk about the Pearl
9 River Project.

10 Any of you from anywhere around Jackson,
11 Mississippi you understand the issues that
12 occur on the Pearl. The Pearl flooded many
13 times and we will talk about the history of
14 the project a little bit.

15 And so how we got here today. The
16 non-federal interest submitted their draft
17 feasibility study, environmental impact
18 study. Excuse me, they submitted that to the
19 ASA, Assistant Secretary of the Army, for
20 Civil Works back in July of 2022. The ASA
21 made comments and there were some data gaps
22 they identified that they charged the Corps
23 of Engineers with trying to fill in those
24 data gaps to provide the information back to
25 them. And we will talk about the review

1 process in some depth. So with that I'm
2 going to turn it over to Ms. Colosimo.

3 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Thanks everybody for
4 taking time out of your day to be here and to
5 share with us your experiences and views on
6 what success looks like for the Pearl River
7 drainage. I can't thank you enough. The
8 three sessions we've had so far have been
9 well attended and have shared a lot of great
10 information. This is most important as we
11 work through this process to address flood
12 risk management problems in the Pearl
13 drainage area that have long plagued
14 communities and you all know it much better
15 than I do.

16 My name is Robyn Colosimo, and I do
17 oversee the project planning and review in
18 the Army Civil Works office. You're going to
19 hear my boss in a minute. And just quickly
20 what that office does is we provide oversight
21 for the Corps of Engineers. That's twentyish
22 people that are overseeing 40,000 people
23 through the mission that puts forward
24 projects like what's being proposed and
25 considered here in the Pearl drainage. So

1 those things have to come through my office
2 to ultimately get to my boss to clear and go
3 to Congress. And so I'll come back to that.
4 I just wanted to give a sense of what we do
5 because it's not always clear. So with that,
6 let's play the video from my boss,
7 Mr. Conner.

8 (Video played.)

9 MS. COLOSINO: We are honored to have
10 Colonel Conner as our leader. He has vast
11 experience solving complex water problems at
12 federal and regional levels including a prior
13 assignment as Deputy Secretary of Department
14 of Interior. And being in the federal
15 government that's really important, because
16 leveraging and understanding how other
17 agencies are able to solve problems in
18 similar ways across the government is hugely
19 important particularly in issues like this.

20 He is ultimately the decision maker here
21 for any recommendations relative to how to
22 use the funds that have been allocated by the
23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law relative to
24 flooding in Jackson and more involvement as
25 we go through this next bit of presentations.

1 Big thing here is he wants to make sure we
2 are engaging the public regarding work
3 underway and that is what today is all about.

4 Why are we here? We're really here to
5 advance that flood risk management solution
6 after decades of flooding in Jackson. We
7 can't say that enough that you all know that
8 better than I do. For more than a hundred
9 years, headwater flooding on the Pearl has
10 caused disruption of businesses and industry
11 throughout Jackson, Mississippi. 5,000
12 commercial and residential structures have
13 been involved. Impacts of a population
14 greater than a half million. Multiple floods
15 in '79 and '83 and more recently '20 and '22.
16 Mr. Conner and I were here in '22 as he noted
17 as the water rain started to come. We
18 happened to actually be at pump station
19 talking about the age of some of these pumps
20 your town has maintained them. And as we
21 were leaving and arriving back home we were
22 finding out how bad that rain was that was
23 coming. So it was very poignant to have been
24 here and see what emerged right after that.

25 The 1979 event, in particular, flooded

1 transportation routes, homes and businesses
2 and cost more than 220 million dollars in
3 damages in 1979 value. So that's crazy when
4 you think about it today.

5 The highest crest was in 2020 and most
6 notably impacted two minority and two low
7 income areas of Jackson.

8 The Pearl River also has tremendous
9 environmental value including wetlands that
10 filter waters that eventually flow into the
11 Gulf of Mexico and support thousands of
12 geese, ducks and migratory birds.

13 From my view and my boss' view, for
14 decades the Corps and non-federal interest
15 has fought to solve the flood mismanagement
16 problem of Jackson, but for one, the lack of
17 the project justification; two, community
18 support; and three, funding have stalled
19 meaningful progress.

20 We do look forward to working with you
21 to solve this and moving past that long
22 plagued community situation and delivering.
23 Next slide please.

24 In terms of federal interest we have to
25 be very clear about how we got here and where

1 we go. We'll go in a little bit more detail
2 as we move through is fundamentally, it's
3 just the way we see it.

4 In 1986 Congress directed the Corps to
5 plan, design, and implement a flood risk
6 management project. Essentially to study,
7 design, construct. That authority in and of
8 itself is unusual. You usually have to plan,
9 come up with a plan, and then go back to
10 Congress to get authority to design and
11 ultimately implement.

12 So you already had what seemed like a
13 streamline process at the time, but we
14 weren't able to deliver a project.

15 In 2007 that authorization was modified
16 to further allow the ASA(CW) to make a
17 decision on what that plan is and that's
18 where we have derived most of what we bring
19 today going forward is that my boss can make
20 that determination subject to what that
21 authority says and we'll discuss that in a
22 bit more detail.

23 And then in 2018, specific to the
24 direction there was the highlighting of the
25 need to include an analysis of potential

1 downstream impacts. We were in Slidell last
2 night and heard a lot about that. That
3 direction was just to signify how important
4 it was to make sure these projects don't
5 implicate challenges in other areas by
6 solving something here. Always a good
7 business model. Encompassing all of that, of
8 course, is making sure it's a project worthy
9 of economic justification broadened to
10 include a number of benefits.

11 Bottom line, federal interest for
12 decades but there wasn't a plan and there
13 wasn't funding. So what's now different?
14 It's a tremendous opportunity created by the
15 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The boss just
16 quickly mentioned that, but money has been
17 set aside in that law for Jackson. The
18 question is how that money will be used to
19 address flood risk management. And so that
20 provides this small window of opportunity
21 with tremendous value to Jackson to get after
22 of these flood problems that have been long
23 stalled. Advancing solutions now happen
24 quickly and I was talking to a few people
25 before the meeting and even in the meetings

1 prior, it's really fundamental, and I can't
2 say this enough, is once we get to a point
3 where there's information to put forward and
4 my boss makes the decision, we quickly move
5 to design and construction because we have
6 that responsibility and we have those funds
7 on hand. You're not standing in line trying
8 to get those monies. That's a pretty big
9 deal in everybody's world and every community
10 would be excited about that opportunity. So
11 in that regard we're excited to reinvigorate
12 the technical community work to deliver for
13 Jackson whatever that looks like within these
14 authorities and we look forward to involving
15 all of you in beginning this important
16 process.

17 One thing I wanted to raise in the last
18 few sessions is this meeting kind of came out
19 of nowhere and that we really wanted it to
20 happen in May and it really took a little
21 while to find some meeting halls we could do
22 it in for a variety of reasons, but if we
23 didn't do it this week we had to wait
24 probably another three weeks. This is early
25 engagement for us. This isn't the end of

1 engagement. This is just letting you know
2 what's happening, giving you transparency and
3 as we move through this process we will
4 continue to engage in outreach sessions. So
5 with all that I turn it over to Colonel Klein
6 to walk through some of the details.

7 COLONEL KLEIN: Thank you, ma'am.

8 Ladies and gentlemen, first of all,
9 thank you all for coming this evening and
10 participating in this public process. The
11 first thing I want to do is I want to talk to
12 all the young folks out there, the youth.
13 And I want you all to know that your
14 testimony is important too, so don't be
15 afraid to come up to the microphone and give
16 us your testimony. Just like you, I grew up
17 on a small creek, not unlike Town Creek,
18 okay, and I have good memories of running
19 through the woods, catching frogs, catching
20 fish. I also have memories of when a, you
21 know, a chemical firm up the river dumped
22 chemicals in there and killed all the fish.
23 All right. I've got memories of hurricanes
24 coming through my hometown and flooding my
25 creek. And y'all -- I want to hear your --

1 you young folks testimony too because you are
2 the future of this city and probably the
3 ones -- you may be the ones who may be
4 growing up in it so don't be afraid to come
5 up to the microphone.

6 All right. With that, over the past
7 three sessions we have been receiving a lot
8 of testimony. We've heard about silting
9 problems on the lower Pearl, erosion, the
10 aging infrastructure and its impact on the
11 river. We've heard about concerns over
12 habitat impacts and then even today we heard
13 about how it's really important that we do --
14 you know, we had flood risk management -- a
15 project in place for the City of Jackson,
16 it's going to revitalize sections of the
17 city. It's going to reconnect the community
18 of the river. And so we want to keep hearing
19 your stories, your concerns, and especially
20 hear what the river means to you.

21 So I'm Colonel Chris Klein. I'm the
22 Commander of the Vicksburg Districts. We
23 service nine watersheds in this area, the
24 Pearl River watershed being one of them. And
25 we've put a lot of work in Jackson lately.

1 It's really great to be back in Jackson
2 getting ready to deliver for this city again.

3 So along the Pearl River, it's got a
4 long history of both navigation and flood
5 control, and that story of flood control
6 started in 1968 with the construction of the
7 first levee. You can see that around the
8 boards in the picture form and then we have
9 the flood of record in 1979. And since 1979
10 there have been multiple projects proposed
11 locally as well as by the Corps of Engineers.
12 Multiple proposed solutions, and so this
13 latest locally presented plan prepared in
14 Section 211 of the 1996 Water Resources
15 Development Act, it's been reviewed and it
16 was presented directly to the Secretary under
17 that authorization. And that really brings
18 us to the work that we're doing today. Next
19 slide.

20 Which are our activities. And the
21 latest efforts started at the end of last
22 year at the direction of the Secretary. And
23 our vision is to build off of all previous
24 work, right, and that's all previous work,
25 every -- all previous proposed plans and all

1 the studies that have been done and develop a
2 final report that assesses an array of
3 options for technical feasibility, which
4 includes economic viability and
5 justification, environmental acceptability,
6 and legal compliance. And right now the two
7 most critical items that we're looking for
8 are identifying the National Economic
9 Development Plan, and Brandon will put it in
10 better basic terms than me because he did the
11 last session, but essentially what it means
12 is it is the project that's going to provide
13 the greatest flood risk benefits at the best
14 cost. And so what that means is we need to
15 identify that plan because that becomes the
16 baseline plan off of which all other arrays
17 are then assessed. And every single one of
18 the other arrays must provide at least the
19 amount of flood control that the National
20 Economic Development Plan provides or more.
21 So we're never going to go for a lesser
22 standard than the National Economic
23 Development Plan.

24 And then the last thing we have to do is
25 we must complete all the environmental

1 compliance activities so that this becomes an
2 environmentally and legally compliant project
3 in the end, whichever project that may be.

4 We're also going to do incorporation of
5 this is provide analysis of the comprehensive
6 benefits of each of the arrays. And those
7 comprehensive benefits are both quantitative,
8 so those that you measure either in financial
9 terms, numbers impacted; but also
10 qualitative, and that's where your testimony
11 really comes in is the qualitative impacts of
12 what a proposed project could do in the
13 community, both positively and negatively.
14 So looking forward to those qualitative
15 assessments as well.

16 Last thing before I hand it over to
17 Brandon, I want to just remind everybody the
18 Corps of Engineers, we are neither a
19 proponent or an opponent of any one projects.
20 Our focus is delivering flood risk management
21 solutions to the nation and we're here today
22 to find a flood risk management solution for
23 the City of Jackson. So with that I'm going
24 to turn it over to Mr. Brandon Davis who is
25 going to take us through our tech lines.

1 MR. DAVIS: Well, thank you, sir. I had
2 a great analogy stole from me, but I'll do my
3 best to pull another one off. But, no, it's
4 a Wednesday night, 6:30, you guys are sitting
5 here, that says a lot about you and what this
6 project means to you, and I thank you for
7 that because I live in Vicksburg and we're
8 neighbors, so it's very important to me to be
9 able to help solve this issue that's going on
10 over here in Jackson that's really -- so
11 thank you for being here tonight echoing what
12 the Colonel and Robyn said.

13 My name is Brandon Davis. I am the
14 planning liaison for Colonel Klein in
15 Vicksburg. I also wear the hats quality
16 control and agricultural and environmental
17 economist by trade. And so love being
18 outside, grew up on a farm so I understand
19 what a lot of you are concerned about with
20 this project both for and against, so if I
21 could set the table for you right now, what
22 we're going to do over the next couple of
23 slides that I have is we'll go over an
24 overview of the non-federal interest report
25 that they produced. We're going to look at

1 some of the alternatives that are being
2 evaluated right now. We'll talk about the
3 study area as a whole. One thing that we
4 will go over are areas of interest or topics
5 of interest for you guys. I say all that,
6 that way if I go over something in one of the
7 slides, I may have skipped over it but again,
8 as you provide input, if there's a question
9 you have for me, please feel free to bring
10 that with your input. But thank you for the
11 collaboration. It's very important that we
12 work together towards a solution here.

13 So on this slide here, so the
14 non-federal interest feasibility report was
15 completed under the Section 211 Authority of
16 Water Resource Development Act of 1996.
17 There was a memorandum agreement that was
18 executed July 19 of 2012 between the
19 non-federal interest and the Army Corps of
20 Engineers and it describes the terms of the
21 Section 211 authority. The terms were
22 specific that the 211 feasibility report that
23 the non-federal interest produced would serve
24 as a decision document for the Assistant
25 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, for

1 review and for approval. The alternatives
2 that you can see up there that was proposed
3 in that report was a nonstructural plan, and
4 we'll go into what nonstructural means
5 momentarily in the next slide. There was a
6 levees plan, and then there was a channel
7 improvement plan, which was their preferred
8 plan that included channel improvements,
9 demolition of weir near the Fewell water
10 treatment plant up next -- close to Woodrow
11 Wilson. Construction of the new weir, the
12 low-flow gate structure downstream of the
13 already existing river channel, and federal
14 levee improvements, excavation of material
15 and upgrading the existing non-federal levee
16 into a federalized ring levee around the
17 Savannah Street Wastewater plant down toward
18 the bottom of the reach.

19 I will say that this project that they
20 had proposed was similar to what the Corps
21 has seen in the past in some of the river
22 widening studies that have been done. One
23 particular was in the -- around the San
24 Antonio, Texas area by the Fort Worth
25 district. So we go through all of that to

1 say, you know, we're currently in the process
2 of assessing the environmental acceptability
3 and the technical feasibility of the
4 alternatives that we have. I also want to
5 remind you that when we talk about our
6 alternatives, we are comparing what was
7 already done to what the analysis that we're
8 doing right now. As Robyn and Colonel Klein
9 said, we're going to provide the Secretary
10 the necessary information to choose and
11 implement a plan.

12 Additionally, consistent with Section
13 1176 of WRDA 2018, this draft EIS that we are
14 putting together will assess potential
15 downstream impacts to the Pearl River Basin.
16 There's a lot of wetlands, a lot of areas
17 we've heard a lot of testimony from towns
18 downstream worried about sewage in-flow and
19 things of that nature. So we have been
20 required to look at those impacts and study
21 those as well. Next slide.

22 All right. So the alternatives that are
23 being under consideration right now, again,
24 these are only under consideration. A
25 nonstructural alternative. One, would be

1 relocating structures through buy-outs and
2 relocations. I will say that we had a
3 question earlier about where these buyouts
4 would be. It's really too early to tell.
5 It's just something that's on the table for
6 us to look at. We'll be glad to discuss that
7 with you, but really during the infant stages
8 of trying to determine that if it was to
9 happen.

10 The A1 would be additional nonstructural
11 measures, increasing elevations of
12 structures, residential and commercial, and
13 flood proofing of those structures.
14 Something I want to point out to you guys is
15 that with these nonstructural -- excuse me,
16 the nonstructural alternatives, these
17 alternatives did not have any type of
18 structural features to it, like channel
19 improvement that's being said, it's just a
20 straight nonstructural side.

21 So the alternative C, which is similar
22 to the plan that the non-federal interest has
23 proposed and is their recommended plan, is a
24 channel improvement plan. Like I said, it's
25 similar to other studies that have been done

1 throughout the work. Again, I don't want you
2 to think anything's been picked or chosen,
3 but we have seen these be successful around
4 other parts of the country. We just have to
5 make sure it was something that would work
6 here. This alternative includes excavating
7 and widening the channel, using the material
8 to enhance levees, create islands for
9 environmental habitat, relocation to assist
10 with the Jackson drinking water
11 infrastructure. It's very important that we
12 help maintain the infrastructure of Jackson.
13 We know the concerns that people have about
14 that, so that's one thing that we would look
15 at.

16 Also want to really highlight that we
17 also can have a combination or a hybrid plan
18 of all these various alternatives, or there
19 could be other potential alternatives that
20 are out there. You may provide input tonight
21 to give us ideas, that's the reason you being
22 here is so important to us. But we also
23 received input from some students from the
24 University of California, Berkeley that have
25 plans that we are looking at to see if this

1 would be accessible for trying here. Next
2 slide.

3 So this is the study area, and a while
4 ago I tried to get up and about tripped over
5 my own feet and I'm not going to do that for
6 my embarrassment this time. But there is a
7 map over on the far wall where you can look
8 at the 100 year inundation over there. Yeah,
9 thank you, Tom, there's one over there as
10 well. But what I'd like to highlight to you,
11 if you can see, there is a gray looking area
12 that is adjacent to these river channels and
13 these backwater channels, these various
14 creeks, that is the 100 year inundation
15 study.

16 Now, this project would go all the way
17 down and look at the impacts as we talked
18 about down the Pearl River. But what we want
19 to point out is the 100 year inundation here
20 in this area. You can see that starting up
21 at the Ross Barnett Reservoir, the southeast
22 there and going down, to kind of put it in
23 perspective for you, if I get to the furthest
24 reaches at the bottom back to the east would
25 be Florence, Mississippi. So just south of

1 Florence is where this study area is being
2 located. Next slide.

3 All right. This is an area where it's
4 really important. Your input is going to be
5 vital for us here is areas of interest.
6 These are some of the main areas of interest
7 or topics that we look at for our analysis,
8 but we welcome your input. And some of the
9 things we want to look at is flood risk
10 reduction, water supply, water and wastewater
11 treatment, ecosystem/environmental impacts,
12 existing waste sites in this area, cultural
13 resources. There's a lot of culturally
14 sensitive areas. We want to make sure we are
15 doing our due diligence with Section 106.

16 The transportation, how does this impact
17 the transportation? What is the "So what?"
18 of impacting our interstates and local
19 highways and local ways through here.

20 Downstream impacts, we talked about
21 that. It's very important that we look at
22 the impacts this could have on the wetlands
23 downstream, do our best and try to determine
24 what we would need to do to prevent that or
25 minimize that.

1 Recreational access and opportunities.
2 One thing we heard a lot in the previous
3 sessions is there was a lack of ways to get
4 down to the Pearl River for recreational
5 opportunities. So we'd like to hear that.

6 And then also community impacts, the
7 cohesion, the quality of life. Some of the
8 things you don't think about with flooding is
9 how does this impact mental health, something
10 we don't talk a lot about. But you think of
11 the anxiety that someone has it, their house
12 is flooded. Is it going to happen again? We
13 want to hear that.

14 And then also the economic
15 opportunities. And then the potential
16 others.

17 Now, we've listed a lot up here, but
18 there may be some nuances to what we have
19 that we haven't thought about. So we'd love
20 to hear from you on that. And then anything
21 that we've missed.

22 So I think that's all that I have. I'm
23 going to yield the mic back to the Colonel.
24 But, again, thank you all for being here and
25 we look forward to hearing from you.

1 COLONEL KLEIN: Ladies and gentlemen,
2 that brings us to the timeline where we're at
3 today. And today the technical team's work
4 is continuing. That's why you're about --
5 your input at this point is very valuable.
6 We're here to receive that feedback and
7 incorporate that into the assessment and
8 final report that we're doing. We'll have a
9 draft report completed at the end of August
10 that will also go out for review, public
11 review, and that will then inform our final
12 report, which will go in December to the
13 Secretary and the Secretary intends to make
14 his decision in January timeframe. This is a
15 very streamlined timeline, seems bad math,
16 but it is feasible. It's feasible because
17 we're building on years and years of work.
18 So thank you again for coming out this time,
19 the next step in the process, and we look
20 forward to hearing your feedback. I turn it
21 over to Tom.

22 MR. THOMAS SHAW: All right. Thank you,
23 sir.

24 So that's the first part of this
25 meeting, and that's the informational part

1 for you. Now, as we mentioned before, we
2 need to collect your input and your feedback.
3 It's very vital to us. And so before we do
4 that, I would mention a couple of things.
5 One, is we're accepting comments through the
6 end of June, and so we truly want your
7 feedback. As I mentioned earlier, there's
8 multiple ways to do it. There's an e-mail
9 address that you can send e-mails to.
10 There's, of course, regular old normal postal
11 service that's there. And then there's a
12 project website so that you can keep up with
13 what's going on. And as progress is made for
14 this -- providing information to the ASA, we
15 will be updating the slide deck. I mentioned
16 earlier, there are comment cards over there
17 too. So we really appreciate you giving us
18 some input and some feedback there.

19 So recall when I first started I talked
20 about some rules of engagement. We've got
21 two microphones here, and basically what
22 we'll do is if you have comments, input you'd
23 like to provide, we would like you to step to
24 the podium. Please wait until I recognize
25 you so that we can do it in a coordinated

1 manner and try to limit your statements to
2 three minutes. I will sit. When you start
3 getting close to your time I will stand back
4 up and the idea being that you then come to
5 the conclusion on your statement would be
6 great. With that, I think we're ready to go.

7 So if you will, there's two microphones.

8 COLONEL KLEIN: Thanks, Tom. And when
9 you were coming in and saw the tri-folds,
10 there are QR codes because we're high tech
11 like that. All right. So there is a QR
12 code, scan that QR code and it will take you
13 to the website.

14 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Thank you, sir. Yes,
15 ma'am.

16 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Well, good evening.
17 I am Zakita Summers. I serve as state
18 representative for House 68, which covers
19 West Jackson and Hinds County and Pearl and
20 Richland in Rankin County. I don't know that
21 I am a young person, Colonel, but I do have a
22 young person that's coming to the Corps of
23 Engineers in Rock Island. He just graduated
24 from the University of Iowa, so I'm excited
25 about that. I would --

1 ROBYN COLOSIMO: It's one of my favorite
2 districts.

3 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Good, very good.

4 ROBYN COLOSIMO: It's right next to
5 Vicksburg.

6 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Oh, I'm glad you
7 said that.

8 (Unintelligible discussion.)

9 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: I lived most of my
10 life in West Jackson and there is a glaring
11 environmental justice issue that affects this
12 side of the Pearl River. When heavy rains
13 hit the area we can almost guarantee that
14 communities in West Jackson will experience
15 flooding, severe flooding. That's because
16 the levee does not protect these communities
17 in our district who are hit hardest as a
18 result. Not only does the current levee
19 system leave large parts of Jackson adjacent
20 to the Pearl River unprotected from flood,
21 but the Corps 1960s levees design has
22 adversely impacted minority areas in the City
23 of Jackson. There's a choke point in the
24 current levee system that actually increases
25 flood levels. And neighborhoods in that area

1 experience more flood impacts as a result of
2 the current levee system. This has been a
3 historical problem for the black community
4 for many years. I'm talking Duterville,
5 Battlefield Park, Washington Addition,
6 (unintelligible) Circle, Westland Plaza
7 subdivision, Pecan Tree neighborhood, Jane
8 Avenue neighborhood, and all of the areas in
9 between. Several of those residents from
10 those communities are actually here today.

11 After the severity of the 2020 flood
12 many of you mentioned already, my colleagues
13 in the legislature and I helped two
14 communities to gather data from the neighbors
15 about those impacts. We heard story after
16 story of homeowners, pastors, and other
17 concerned citizens about how they were up to
18 here with the lack of infrastructure and
19 maintenance. They wanted answers and they
20 wanted them right now, and they want them
21 even today. They told us how high the water
22 got, how they were scared, how they felt like
23 prisoners in their own homes. They cannot
24 afford to move, and insurance premiums
25 increased after every claim.

1 In addition, motorists could not travel
2 the streets or under viaducts. Our scholars
3 could not attend school. And electives, we
4 were doing the very best that we could to
5 scout sandbags to take to our vulnerable
6 members like the elderly, and make sure that
7 they had bottled water.

8 Of course, the flooding impacts water
9 insecurity, economic development and public
10 health. I believe the locally proposed
11 flood -- proposed flood control plan solves
12 these problems by mitigating those impacts
13 and correcting the design flaw. The plan
14 provides protection for minority
15 neighborhoods that hasn't been protected for
16 decades. All citizens of Jackson need safe
17 water and flood protection so that no one is
18 faced with a traumatic decision of staying or
19 going.

20 I would also like to read a statement
21 from Ted Henefin, who is our federally
22 appointed third party Jackson Water System
23 administrator, and he states that the ITPM
24 supports the channel improvements plan
25 because it preserves the broadest options for

1 Jackson's long term drinking water needs.
2 With a new weir, a new water intake structure
3 could be located anywhere along the river
4 from the current location downstream to the
5 new weir. Having more options will allow
6 optimization of valuable plants to provide a
7 significant community benefit, elimination of
8 flood risk and flooded facilities and the
9 best hydraulic location for pumping water
10 throughout the system without limitations
11 created by the location of the existing weir.
12 So currently it protects Rankin County.

13 We believe that the proposed project
14 provides relief, protection, opportunity, and
15 extends benefits to minority and low income
16 households in Jackson. It's a win-win for
17 district 68 and stand in support of it. We
18 thank the Corps and the Biden Administration
19 for all of their efforts to help the City of
20 Jackson, and we look forward to progress.
21 Thank you so much.

22 COLONEL KLEIN: Representative Summers,
23 thank you for your testimony there. EJ is
24 something very important we're looking at.
25 It's one of the initiatives that we've been

1 directed to look at. And I don't know what
2 your availability is, what timeline you're
3 on, but we have a good idea of those areas.
4 But if you could, I would appreciate it if
5 you could show me on maps of the areas that
6 are of interest to you. We can make sure
7 that we capture that and don't miss it.

8 MS. ZAKITA SUMMERS: Absolutely.

9 COLONEL KLEIN: All right. Thank you.
10 Get with me after. Thank you.

11 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Sir.

12 RICHARD THIGPEN: Thank you. Good
13 afternoon. My name is Richard Thigpen, and I
14 am an officer and President and CEO of
15 Jackson Official Destination Marketing
16 Organization. We are the tourism arm for
17 Jackson. Jackson's economy is benefited by a
18 strong tourist environment. A lot of people
19 don't understand that. I can give you some
20 examples. Last year we hit 67 million
21 dollars in tourism business. Generated 115
22 million dollars in economic output. 48,000
23 Jacksonians have benefited from tourism
24 community. In fact, tourism is Mississippi's
25 fourth largest employer in the state.

1 Jackson tourism generated 19.4 million in tax
2 revenue, which impacted each Jacksonian's
3 household by about \$313 on an annual basis.
4 That should offset those property taxes by
5 2.8 million dollars. Tourism is big business
6 for Jackson. Tourism is big business for the
7 state of Mississippi.

8 A dependable water system that
9 eliminates flooding will help attract tourism
10 assets, developers, including hotels,
11 restaurants, historical and cultural
12 attractions, and similar events. All these
13 will help enhance the economy. Those 48,000
14 Jacksonians that benefited in the tourism
15 industry are low to middle income citizens.

16 If you think about how the impact of
17 what happened with our flooding and our
18 water, how that negative impacts my positive
19 marketing investments that go across the
20 United States and across the world and how
21 well could it come back, what one of the
22 marketing assets we have are resilient people
23 that -- the restaurant tourists that know how
24 to deal with boil water notices, but when we
25 have that water issues compounded with

1 flooding, it just drastically impacted our
2 ability to be a strong economic contributor
3 for not only the City, not only the state,
4 because we have a special story, yet it can
5 happen in Jackson, Mississippi. It can
6 happen in Mississippi. Just think about the
7 things that happen so negatively in the Civil
8 Rights movement in Mississippi, in Jackson.
9 We are the cradle of the Civil Rights
10 movement because of the things that we were
11 able to do in Jackson, because of the things
12 we were able to do in Mississippi, including
13 changing our flag just a couple of years ago.
14 We are a model for this country. We are the
15 conscience for this country. If it can
16 happen in Jackson, if it can happen in the
17 state of Mississippi, we can continue to
18 impact positively this nation and the world.
19 Thank you.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've got a couple
21 of questions. My first question is all the
22 money that would be used in the project, to
23 complete the project, is it all federal
24 money?

25 COLONEL KLEIN: So a portion of it will

1 be federal money. Again, we haven't
2 determined exactly what the project is.
3 Determining what the NED plan is, you know,
4 the experts don't want to get it wrong, the
5 NED plan sets what the federal government
6 will pay for the project, essentially. And
7 the NAV becomes, like, kind of a cost share
8 discussion as to how the final cost will be
9 broken out.

10 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Yeah, that's all true,
11 but simply stated there's 220 million that
12 were allocated by the Bipartisan
13 Infrastructure Law for a project we haven't
14 determined yet. Once we determine that we
15 will apply the law of cost sharing. So how
16 much of that cost sharing depends on the
17 benefits produced for flood risk management.
18 That's the simplest way to say that. It will
19 require a non-federal sponsor.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My second
21 question is will private landowners be
22 required to contribute to the cost of the
23 project in any way whatsoever and that
24 includes increased real estate taxes?

25 ROBYN COLOSIMO: I can't answer that

1 question. I think that question is probably
2 more for who the sponsor is and how they pay
3 their share. We have, the federal
4 government, will not be excising any tax of
5 any sort.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So there's money
7 coming in from sponsors other than you all
8 that's to help finance the project?

9 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So that has not been
10 decided. Let me give you an example how it
11 works nationwide anywhere we are. So if we
12 have a flood control project or any kind of
13 project the Corps builds, federal law
14 dictates how much a non-federal sponsor has
15 to cost share. That non-federal interest is
16 typically a public entity, meaning a state or
17 local government, and they determine how to
18 use their money, so it's either in their
19 capital budget or other means to pay for
20 those funds. That's part of their public
21 process, so I can't provide visibility on
22 that. I think that's part of the discussion.
23 Who would the sponsor be for the project that
24 gets recommended and how are they financing
25 that. That's definitely the visibility you

1 want through this process.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And, of course,
3 I'd like to address the elderly and homeless
4 not on top of the list and that's on my mind.
5 What process do you have in place to make
6 sure that the balanced plan for eminent
7 domain and that there's only reasonable and
8 necessary taking of private property as well
9 as some government oversight in the process?

10 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So I'm going to ask
11 another question. Are you worried about a
12 particular type of eminent domain, like
13 individual houses?

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. Taking of
15 private property. Taking of land.

16 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Okay. I'm going to let
17 the Colonel talk about the real estate
18 process.

19 COLONEL KLEIN: I can guide you, sir, on
20 the actual real estate process, but I tell
21 you, eminent domain is not step 1 ever. So
22 we would be working really closely with the
23 non-federal sponsor for acquisition of land.
24 Federal law governs how that process works,
25 and it is a long drawn process, but we think

1 we can link you and the right folks to answer
2 questions on that.

3 ROBYN COLOSIMO: And then just one
4 follow up on that. So we talked about
5 nonstructural potential buyouts, there was a
6 question about this at the end of last
7 session. In terms of any buyouts that we're
8 able to somehow offer, it would be voluntary
9 only. We would never do eminent domain to
10 have people moved off their property. My
11 boss is a Native American and he feels
12 particularly strong about that point when it
13 comes to relocating communities, right, so I
14 have to be honest there, but when it comes to
15 the line, the line for levees, there's a lot
16 more to that and we can make that connection
17 happen, but eminent domain is not going to be
18 a proposition.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But African
20 Americans know something about that, also.

21 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Of course, that's why I
22 mentioned it.

23 MS. TAMEKA JENKINS: Good evening. My
24 name is Tameka Jenkins. I am the Executive
25 Director for Economic Development here in

1 Hinds County. I came to Hinds County last
2 June, and I came just in time to see the
3 impact of flooding in this area. It's way
4 past time for this project to come to action,
5 so residents don't have to worry about water
6 in their homes or in their businesses, and
7 businesses don't have interruptions when they
8 are supporting the economy here in Hinds
9 County.

10 I have three quick points I want to make
11 to explain my perspective of why the Economic
12 Development Organization in Hinds County is
13 in support of this flood control project.

14 The first one is attraction and
15 retention. Before a company comes and wants
16 to expand to Hinds County they're looking at
17 us on the news. They're doing their research
18 online, and they're pretty much doing their
19 thing before I ever even get a phone call or
20 an e-mail. And if we have national news
21 about how this area is flooding, companies
22 are not going to want to come here.

23 And as far as the retention aspect, this
24 kind of goes with my point number 2, the
25 water. So last fall, when the area flooded,

1 it did interrupt the water process. We have
2 three major industries in Hinds County that
3 depend on water to cool the machines during
4 their processes. So if we don't have water,
5 those machines aren't cool, those companies
6 are losing money. And we're talking about
7 millions of dollars per second if, you know,
8 that machine doesn't catch that cooling
9 process to, you know, make their product. So
10 we have three companies like that, and one
11 company that I visited recently literally
12 told me they lost, I think, 5 million dollars
13 in, like, two minutes because the water went
14 out and they weren't prepared. They do not
15 have a well. They're dependent on the
16 Jackson water system. So it's very important
17 for the retention of companies. And, you
18 know, you'd be surprised on how water affects
19 the industries here in this area.

20 My last point is quality of life
21 possibilities. So last year on the
22 International Economic Development Council,
23 which I'm a part of the board, we had our
24 conference in Oklahoma City. I don't know if
25 anybody knows this, but in Oklahoma City they

1 literally rerouted a river, and they also
2 changed an interstate. Now, our river is
3 right here in one location. I'm sure we can
4 get some funding and get the community on one
5 page to fix this flooding project. If they
6 can reroute an interstate and a river, surely
7 we can do something to control this flooding.
8 And now that they've done that, they have a
9 beautiful residential and commercial
10 development along a -- kind of on the river
11 in downtown Oklahoma City. You can take the
12 bus there. You can spend all day there just
13 chilling out.

14 Also, we have Memphis, which is one of
15 the bigger -- the Mississippi River. They
16 have a walk that, you know, lays below the
17 floodplain. But, you know, there are
18 opportunities that, you know, we can do to
19 mitigate this risk. And the Economic
20 Development Organization is 100 percent in
21 support of this project and whatever you can
22 do to help within the law. Thank you.

23 COLONEL KLEIN: Give me one second, Tom.
24 Thank you for the example of Oklahoma City.
25 For others that are interested, about two

1 weeks ago, I was up in Fargo, North Dakota,
2 and there's a project, Fargo to Morehead
3 Diversion project where they're diverting the
4 Red River of the north. And it's a
5 phenomenal story of how the community came --
6 a flooding community came together in order
7 to make a project like that happen. So,
8 ma'am, thank you for your testimony. If you
9 want to read that I'm sure you can Google the
10 Fargo-Morehead Flood Risk Management Project.

11 CJ ROSE: Good evening. I am CJ Rose,
12 resident of Jackson and Hinds County,
13 Mississippi, also pastor of Mt. Helen Baptist
14 Church, which is a church in downtown
15 Jackson's historic -- Farish Street Historic
16 District. I'm also plugged into the
17 Vicksburg area as Interim Director of the
18 Myrlie Evers-Williams Honors Program at
19 Alcorn State University. We help to train
20 students in environmental justice and civil
21 rights advocacy. The past few years have
22 amplified and exasperated Jackson's water
23 insecurity, flooding, economic development
24 issues.

25 Back in 2020, though, my northeast

1 Jackson home wasn't affected during the
2 flood. Just about a mile down the road, many
3 of my friends and church members were
4 flooded, and of course, several other
5 residents and businesses were flooded
6 downtown in the areas near I-55 and I-20
7 stack.

8 I believe that the proposed flood
9 control plan helps to resolve all three of
10 these issues. One, this particular plan, as
11 I noted earlier, impacts and helps to protect
12 largely black and economically disadvantaged
13 neighborhoods in Jackson in those flood
14 areas. Flooding in those areas, especially
15 tough on citizens who can't afford to
16 relocate from flood risk areas. Living in
17 Northeast Jackson there are those who are
18 inconvenienced by flooding and relocate out
19 of Jackson, but when you have very, very
20 limited income it is hard to do that.

21 As a pastor, our church has provided
22 pastoral care, charitable aid, and short term
23 relief to flood victims displaced in those
24 times. Of course, with all our water
25 security issues have impacted members and

1 nonmembers alike that we service. Really
2 since the 1980s, but in higher speeds since
3 about 20 years ago, Jackson suffered from
4 years of investment and population decline,
5 making imaginative and urgent changes
6 necessary not only to this whole issue of
7 flooding and water security, but what kind of
8 city we want, what kind of county we want to
9 attract and retain citizens. And
10 particularly as a millennial, I may not be as
11 young as the person you were speaking to,
12 Colonel, but I am 41 and relatively young
13 still, many of us look to places like Memphis
14 and other places that have a lot of other
15 recreational opportunities. Young people,
16 young families, particularly young people who
17 attend our local colleges and universities we
18 want to keep in Jackson, keep in Hinds
19 County, prefer more opportunities for
20 recreation and we think this would afford
21 them this as well. Thank you so much.

22 MS. LEANN CAMPBELL: Good evening. My
23 name is Leanne Campbell. I'm here tonight
24 representing Mississippi for a Great New
25 Deal. We are in alliance with over 40

1 grassroots organizations across Mississippi,
2 including groups of front line working class
3 folks in Jackson who are impacted by
4 environmental justice issues including Pearl
5 River flooding and they are concerned for
6 themselves, their families, their communities
7 and their wellbeing. So I'm here tonight to
8 represent those concerns, and in particular
9 concerns around the proposed One Lake Project
10 Alternative.

11 Based on our research and our engagement
12 in this process, we are deeply opposed to the
13 One Lake Project Alternative. One Lake is a
14 private real estate development scheme
15 masquerading as a flood control project that
16 will only put more people and property in
17 harm's way. The Army Corps rejected One Lake
18 years ago and should reject it today. One
19 Lake construction will expose local
20 communities to toxic contamination by
21 disturbing eight dangerous waste sites and
22 further exacerbating the City's water crisis.
23 There is no plan to protect the public health
24 with only 8 million dollars set aside for
25 clean up.

1 Jackson residents already face toxic
2 lead levels in the water system. And we all
3 know the current water treatment system is
4 fragile. The JH Fewell Water Treatment
5 Plant, which supplies 30 percent of City of
6 Jackson's drinking water and operated during
7 the recent water crises, would not be able to
8 operate during construction on One Lake
9 because of dredging induced water quality
10 problems, forcing Jackson to somehow find and
11 pay for another temporary water supply for
12 over three years.

13 Jackson's residents deserve a solution
14 that will not further threaten their access
15 to clean drinking water.

16 One Lake will not alleviate the rain
17 induced flash flooding that already impacts
18 neighborhoods along the Pearl River and main
19 tributaries that flow through Jackson, but
20 instead will make flash flooding worse by
21 permanently elevating parts of these creeks
22 and creating new backflooding problems in
23 other areas. We've been canvassing in the
24 Eubanks, Town, and Lynch Creek neighborhoods
25 to hear residents concerns. These are low

1 income, working class folks who can't afford
2 increases in insurance, can't afford threats
3 to access to their roads and transportation,
4 and cannot afford the neighborhood
5 infrastructure threats that the One Lake
6 Project would propose.

7 Finally, One Lake will likely raise
8 Mississippians property taxes. Passed in
9 2017 State Legislative Session House Bill
10 1585 gives the local levee board a blank
11 check to raise property taxes for owners they
12 determine are "directly or indirectly"
13 benefited by the project.

14 Working people and businesses in Jackson
15 should not foot the bill for a flood control
16 project. Instead of a disruptive One Lake
17 Project, Jackson residents and businesses
18 deserve effective, sustainable flood relief
19 solutions that benefit all people, not just
20 those who stand to gain financially from the
21 One Lake Project. The Corps should
22 prioritize the more effective, less costly
23 options that truly address flooding concerns,
24 include improvements to existing levees,
25 elevating homes and buildings, or offering

1 voluntary buyouts for properties with a
2 history of flooding problems. Thank you.

3 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Thanks for your
4 comments. A couple of things I just want to
5 clarify. This came up in the last session as
6 well. In no uncertain terms, the Corps of
7 Engineers would never construct a project
8 that would enable a water treatment plant to
9 shut down. That's just simply a fact. There
10 may be some concerns about turbidity that we
11 have to include that analysis. Obviously,
12 appreciate that fact, but in no case did that
13 happen.

14 More further important things to amplify
15 that I might have said later or earlier. In
16 terms of plans, we haven't made a decision.
17 We've asked the Corps, we the Secretary's
18 office, asked the Corps to do an analysis,
19 not make a recommendation, but do a very
20 specific analysis of the alternatives, the
21 benefits, the costs, the pros, the cons, all
22 those things that are involved but stop short
23 of making that decision. That includes no
24 action. We can just remain status quo. It
25 could also include this "combination

1 thereof". There's a lot of good ideas out
2 there.

3 In fact, one of the reasons Alt A and A1
4 came about as a nonstructural plan actually
5 builds on a lot of things we've heard from
6 people over the years, and so we're looking
7 to build these out. All those things are on
8 the table. Just want you to have confidence
9 when the decision has been made. We're
10 here -- what you say is important to us to
11 help think about those formulations, and
12 ultimately bring something forward. No more
13 diplomacy, give us your good ideas. Thank
14 you.

15 MR. RICHARDSON: My name is
16 (unintelligible) Richardson and I'm a Jackson
17 native. And as matter of fact, I live right
18 across the street overlooking Mayes Lake. I
19 know how these areas flood. I remember the
20 '79 flood. We probably wouldn't have been
21 able to meet in the '79 flood right where we
22 are now from the creek behind us. That's one
23 of the creeks that's going to be directly
24 affected by this.

25 And I'm going to keep this kind of

1 personal. We dealt with the river side. I'm
2 a long time employee of Eaton Aerospace. I'm
3 a retired citizen. This is my retirement
4 home. We are right next to the most affected
5 area. This hits me very personally.

6 As I said, I know exactly where these
7 streets are going to flood and do flash
8 floods. There's a storm drain right behind
9 the gas station up here running along
10 Lakeland Drive, which also flash floods. You
11 know, when they raise the river level by
12 eight feet, where's that water going to go,
13 it's going to come back into Jackson. It's
14 going to ruin Mayes Lake. I walk in that
15 park almost every day. We've got hostile
16 legislature and government, not everybody, of
17 course. For example, the Governor vetoed the
18 golf course improvements. The museum trail,
19 I could have walked here via a pedestrian
20 bridge bridge if they hadn't rejected that
21 money. I was looking forward to retiring
22 next to a golf course, they rejected that
23 money. They don't care about Jackson. As
24 they said, it was a real estate project
25 disguised as a flood control project. They

1 don't care about Jackson. Mayes Lake is
2 going to turn into a stinking turtle pond.
3 When you change the Pearl River ecosystem to
4 a lake ecosystem you're going to have Asian
5 carp and gar, it's not going to be a
6 recreational area unless you like to catch
7 carp and gar. Nobody is going to want to go
8 to an island and fish the water. It's not
9 going to be a magic solution that they say it
10 is. It's a development project. State
11 Street Group is pushing it because presumably
12 they want to buy what is currently wetlands
13 and build on them. It's just -- it's
14 heartbreaking to see what they are doing to
15 our city, and the Governor in particular is
16 totally hostile to Jackson. Do not think
17 this is the magic solution that they say it
18 is. It's a development project.

19 DR. ELAINE JACKSON: Thank you so much.
20 I am Dr. Elaine Anthony, acting president of
21 Jackson State University, which is located
22 right in the heart of the City of Jackson.
23 Jackson State is a key economic contributor
24 to our city and it is a pillar of the
25 community.

1 During the flooding and the water
2 crisis, it affected our students a great
3 deal. We found out, as we already knew, that
4 water was very, very vital. We had to do
5 certain things like in terms of scholarships
6 and in terms of classes. We had to go
7 virtual in several instances and it
8 definitely affected our students. Many
9 students had to leave campus and go home
10 during that crisis. We need safe and
11 reliable water and a resilient city that
12 doesn't flood. We also need a revitalized
13 community with economic opportunities so that
14 our graduates, our students, will want to
15 stay in the Jackson area and in the state of
16 Mississippi. We don't want a brain drain
17 because of this. We need a comprehensive
18 project that solves flooding and the water
19 supply and economic opportunity for our
20 students. It is vital that we look seriously
21 at this project because the future of our
22 city and of our state depends upon it. Thank
23 you very much.

24 MR. SHANDA YATES: Thank you. I'm
25 Shanda Yates. I'm a representative. I

1 represent District 64, which is primarily
2 Northeast Jackson, parts of Reservoir,
3 Ridgeland, and Madison. And I'm here to be
4 very brief, you've heard a lot of what I
5 would have already said, so I'll just
6 reiterate a few key points.

7 I represent many of the neighborhoods in
8 Northeast Jackson that are most at risk for
9 flooding. A lot of those off of Old Canton
10 Road. The current levee system does not
11 protect those neighborhoods in Northeast
12 Jackson. In fact, it actually makes the
13 flooding worse for those neighborhoods
14 because of those choke points that were
15 mentioned downstream. Those neighborhoods
16 are full of working families who either
17 cannot afford to move because of flooding or
18 should not have to move because of flooding.
19 That should not have to be a choice that they
20 have to make, to give up their home that
21 they've paid for, they may have lived in
22 their entire lives because of continued
23 flooding. They don't have the resources to
24 do that. Again, nor should they have to.

25 There have been two floods in the last

1 three years, which is unacceptable. We have
2 been talking about flood control measures and
3 possibilities for as long as I've been alive,
4 so more than 40 years at this point. I live
5 in Jackson. I have an eight year old son who
6 lives in Jackson, obviously with me, and we
7 plan to stay in Jackson, but having
8 neighborhoods and having businesses that do
9 not flood is a large part of that.

10 And again, having a project that would
11 also prioritize economic development and
12 things like that is a huge part of brain
13 drain that was just mentioned a moment ago.
14 There are neighborhoods in states immediately
15 surrounding us, communities and neighborhoods
16 immediately surrounding us with riverfronts,
17 businesses, districts, and you see young
18 people flocking to those areas. Jackson has
19 nothing like that. Mississippi has nothing
20 like that by and large. If we can have a
21 comprehensive flood control project that not
22 only takes care of the flooding, but also
23 offers opportunities like that for young
24 people and gives incentives for those people
25 to stay in the City, to stay in Jackson, that

1 is most certainly an added bonus.

2 I would also like to mention, again,
3 that Ted Henefin has supported the project.
4 He is the federally appointed third party
5 administrator for the water sewer system.

6 If you live in the United States you've
7 heard about Jackson and its many problems in
8 the last year or so. This is a problem that
9 there is a solution for, a readily available
10 solution. Not all the problems that you have
11 heard about related to Jackson have a
12 solution that is readily available at our
13 fingertips. Residents see this problem, but
14 they also see a solution and they are ready
15 for action. And I would urge the Corps to
16 start the action as soon as possible.

17 MS. SUSAN GARRARD: I'm Susan Garrard,
18 and in my professional life I lead the
19 state's largest cultural institution for
20 children, the Mississippi Children's Museum
21 with its flagship canvas across the street on
22 the bluff looking over -- at LeFleur's Bluff.

23 And I also serve as a founding member of the
24 Great City Mississippi Foundation. Thank you
25 for your work and consideration of our

1 community's input.

2 I'm a strong supporter of the local plan
3 for many reasons, and primarily many that
4 have already been stated. It's a
5 comprehensive solution that addresses the
6 potential to reduce flooding, provide an
7 opportunity to ensure safe and clean water
8 supply, provide needed outdoor education and
9 recreation opportunities, and very
10 importantly, to allow economic growth for
11 generations of children and families in our
12 state's capital.

13 The Mississippi Children's Museum serves
14 over 200,000 children annually here in
15 Jackson and has award winning programs
16 serving children all over our city and state,
17 including an onsite after school program with
18 children from five different schools in the
19 Jackson Public School System. We can see
20 daily some of the social emotional anxiety
21 that comes during these major flood events.
22 We watch as the river rises and the children
23 watch Eubanks when it begins to flood Museum
24 Boulevard. And many of these children are in
25 neighborhoods and schools that begin to see

1 this. We think that -- we would love for
2 children to know about the river in a more
3 captive way and they have little access to
4 play or to have water recreation in our city.

5 We can have a new vision for our river
6 and for our city. I can see the river as a
7 place to educate, provide outdoor
8 opportunities. I can see improved parks,
9 beautiful greenway trails that not only
10 connect us to the river, but to each other.
11 Access to water recreational resources and
12 reduce the possibility of flooding, reduce
13 polluted streams and tributaries. The local
14 plan can be transformational for Jackson. It
15 can make a future water plant possible. It
16 could address repeated flooding. We can
17 build and create a healthier community and we
18 can provide more certain and optimistic
19 economic future for our children if we have a
20 plan of resiliency and restoration to create
21 a more prosperous and beautiful city that our
22 children can be proud of. Thank you.

23 MR. JOE LAUDERDALE: Good afternoon.
24 Thanks for putting together this hearing. I
25 think I've been to, probably over the last 28

1 years, probably six or eight of these in
2 Jackson. I'm Joe Lauderdale. I live in
3 Jackson, northeast Jackson, own a business in
4 downtown Jackson on South Farish Street, been
5 there about 40 years, just staying and making
6 it work. A lot of great associates there
7 that live in Jackson and they're wonderful
8 people.

9 Whenever the -- and my property is next
10 to Town Creek and in the last two and a half
11 years we have to kind of stop work and move
12 our equipment, our machines out, you know, I
13 rented an 18-wheeler, you know, covered vans
14 and put supplies in them that can't get wet
15 in anticipation of the flooding. Lately the
16 Pearl River Water Supply District has done a
17 great job on what managing they can of the
18 Reservoir outflow. I'm really proud of them.

19 A lot of people have put a lot of time
20 and money into this project to do something
21 about flooding. It's been studied more than
22 any project I've ever been around. I'm a
23 licensed professional engineer. I worked
24 with a consulting engineering firm for ten
25 years, and it flooded on Lakeland Drive in

1 1979, so I waded in there moving our
2 engineering drawings up, you know, all
3 through the night while flood waters rose, so
4 it's really, really -- it was really scary,
5 really scary, but there's a solution. We
6 know there's a solution to this.

7 To the people that are totally against
8 it, there's nothing that we can do, we've
9 addressed everything in the world to try to
10 calm your feelings, but for some people, you
11 can explain everything until the end of the
12 earth and they'll still not agree to it. So
13 I hope some people realize that we need to do
14 this project, get it -- get it done. It's
15 under a deadline, which I know that it can be
16 done. I used to do a lot of design work, I'm
17 very familiar -- I did a lot of design work
18 for the Corps of Engineers back in the '70s,
19 so I'm real familiar with the process and I
20 know this process, I know you have to follow
21 it, but I think we just need to do this.
22 It'll help with our water supply. It'll help
23 with flooding. It'll help us with
24 development, which we badly need here to keep
25 our young people in our city and the area.

1 I've got two kids. They each have two
2 children and married, and they love the area.
3 I don't want to see it go down. I want to
4 build it up. And I know there are a lot of
5 people that feel the same way I do. We've
6 got a great city with a lot of potential and
7 we can make it -- we can get it back like
8 that, but we just need some help. My company
9 is -- I'm staying in Jackson. I thought
10 about leaving, but I'm not going to do it
11 because I know there's a solution in sight,
12 and I think we're about to break and do
13 something to help our city, both economically
14 and, you know, in a healthy safe atmosphere.

15 So thank you very much for y'all's time
16 and everybody here. Thanks for the help. I
17 always love to hear from the environmental
18 people too, thank y'all. Hope y'all have a
19 good evening. Thank you.

20 MS. JESSICA RUSSELL: My name is Jessica
21 Russell and I live in the Belhaven
22 neighborhood in Jackson, so the Pearl River
23 is about a five minute walk on foot from my
24 house. I'm here because I love Jackson and I
25 love the river, and I know that our town

1 deserves a river that works with our
2 community, works for our community and not
3 something that is a problem or an issue.

4 I know that when we talk about the river
5 we can't not talk about the community, and
6 we're here as a community. Our answers, I
7 believe, are in the community and I thank you
8 for hearing from the community.

9 I know that you are exploring options
10 and that you haven't chosen an option, so I
11 just wanted to represent some viewpoints to
12 consider, actually explore different options.
13 It's really fun and exciting to think about
14 tourism and the economy and all the things
15 that development can possibly bring, but I
16 also think it's important to remember that a
17 healthy economy depends on a healthy
18 environment and any decision made that does
19 not consider the environment and its
20 foundation, especially in a city that has
21 been -- well, everyone knows that cities with
22 high minority populations and environmental
23 justice are -- we don't have a good track
24 record there, so this is an important thing
25 for us in Jackson, healthy environment. We

1 do want to help the economy and we deserve
2 that. But first things first, I think we
3 have to do right by our people and by their
4 health and by the flooding of their homes,
5 and we have to do right by our nature and our
6 environment. And so I just think that that's
7 a really important thing to consider that you
8 are able to show in the plan that's chosen
9 the ways in which that was considered.

10 Also, I have a question, and I would
11 also like to just do a quick comment about
12 the vision. I think it's really important
13 for people in the community to talk about the
14 visions that they have.

15 And when it comes to flood control, I
16 just want to say that I envision a future in
17 a town where people aren't afraid every time
18 it rains, but also that we're able to walk
19 from our homes to the river or drive to the
20 river and have access to a healthy, clean
21 river that looks like a river, that behaves
22 like a river, that has healthy landscape
23 beside it, supporting healthy environment.
24 And not around -- and maybe not so much
25 having condos and shops, but maybe a beach

1 that maybe parents and wilderness and those
2 things that are so important that are proven
3 to -- talk about social and emotional
4 anxiety, access to nature is proven to
5 relieve that and people in Jackson don't have
6 enough of those experiences, but we could and
7 they're right here and they can be free. And
8 you don't have to spend money as a person to
9 go be in the woods, and you want to be in the
10 woods where it's nice and safe, so all that.

11 I do have a question. It seems like --
12 and I'm really excited to ask this. We
13 aren't able to address the Army Corps of
14 Engineer people very often. But it seems
15 there's an emphasis in a lot of communities
16 on undoing restrictions to rivers. How do
17 you approach considering whether or not to
18 add additional water restrictions?

19 COLONEL KLEIN: That's a really good
20 question. So, you know, through our plan
21 formulators, there's a multi step process,
22 taking in the considerations that Brandon
23 went through earlier. That includes weighing
24 in how we remove structures as well, right.
25 So we talked about how do you get things out

1 of the river that were put in the river that
2 are now causing adverse effects like erosion,
3 siltation, things that we talked about,
4 specifically we heard about in the lower
5 Pearl, right. So that requires another
6 study. We're studying the things that we
7 studied that we've already put in, because
8 what happens, you know, as you're aware, is
9 you put in these structures and now you've
10 already changed the ecosystem, right. And so
11 new habitat has created because of those
12 features. And so now we've got -- before we
13 just go in and, you know, move those things
14 out, we've just got to study it, determine
15 what the benefit is, make sure that we're not
16 destroying, you know, potentially a habitat
17 that now is fostering a native species or
18 something like that or some other aspect.

19 What else am I missing, Brandon, as I
20 ramble? So, yeah, what it's going to require
21 is another step that results in a chief's
22 report that then goes up to Congress for
23 consideration.

24 MS. RENEE COTTEN: Good evening, I'm
25 Renee Cotten. Chief of Staff at Hinds

1 Community College. I'm here tonight on
2 behalf of our president Dr. Stephen Vacik who
3 is out of town but wanted to be represented
4 here because this is so important to us as an
5 institution but more importantly to the
6 community.

7 Hinds is the largest community college
8 in the state of Mississippi and probably the
9 most comprehensive as far as services that we
10 provide. We've been in business for over 100
11 years. We serve five counties, we have six
12 campuses and two of those specifically are in
13 Jackson.

14 What we need in Jackson is a vibrant
15 community that includes a stable water source
16 that allows us to continue to serve our
17 mission, and that is provide education to the
18 residents. And not only education, but we
19 also have the responsibility to help
20 businesses build a workforce, and we do that
21 every day. We need companies that can thrive
22 and survive in Jackson so that we can help
23 put people to work and stay in the community
24 that they live and nobody should be forced to
25 move because of issues that can have a

1 solution. You know, the continued loss of
2 population has definitely had an impact on
3 our campuses, but more importantly, the
4 challenges that we've had with the water
5 source have had a tremendous impact on our
6 campuses.

7 We have one campus on Chadwick Drive,
8 it's our Nursing Allied Health Center where
9 we train in 14 different health related
10 fields for employees to go to work. Every
11 time there's an issue with the water, that
12 causes us to close campus, causes us
13 challenges, particularly in the laboratory
14 settings. You cannot operate in a medical
15 environment without water, and so that
16 impacts our students.

17 We talk about the stress that that
18 brings to them as an individual who is trying
19 to complete their educational endeavors, but
20 it also affects us from an accreditation
21 standpoint. There are standards that we have
22 to fulfill and we want to do that, most
23 importantly for our students.

24 And then we have a Jackson campus that
25 is on Medgar Evers Boulevard, and the

1 commitment that Hinds made back in 1970s,
2 Jackson was the first satellite campus for
3 the college. And at one time at it's peak we
4 had 1600 students at that campus serving both
5 academics and career technical programs. The
6 continued challenges that we have, the
7 flooding, water, et cetera, have an impact on
8 us every day.

9 So as an institution, we are 100 percent
10 in support of the study to find a solution so
11 that we can continue to serve the community,
12 communities in our neighborhood, and that's
13 what we want to do.

14 I would also add that, you know, it's
15 not just about Jackson. Jackson is the
16 centerpiece of our state and Jackson is the
17 centerpiece of the area that we serve.
18 Jackson's success is success for the counties
19 surrounding us and the state as well. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. JEFF GOOD: Thank you, sir. My name
22 is Jeff Good. I'm a restaurateur here in
23 Jackson, Mississippi. Resident for 40 years.
24 I have three restaurants, employ 220 people.
25 I'm going to speak off the cuff, I hope my

1 points are direct and still able to see.

2 I don't think this flood control project
3 is going to fix the water supply system
4 problems that have caused me enumerable
5 shut-downs and problems. I don't think the
6 flood control problem is going to fix the
7 sewer problems we have, which are a mess, and
8 larger than the water. The thing about it,
9 none of that will be fixed. I think the only
10 way it's going to be fixed is by greater
11 resources and working together.

12 And when I first met Ricky Thigpen 30
13 years ago, when I opened my first restaurant,
14 he was a junior officer at the Convention and
15 Visitor's Bureau of Jackson when the city was
16 at its zenith. We had 200,000 people who
17 lived in the city. We have 150,000 now. We
18 had 33,000 kids in Jackson public schools.
19 We have 16,000 this year. Our city is
20 failing. Our city systems are failing. When
21 we did one of our first projects together, we
22 were working to try to keep WorldCom, MCI
23 WorldCom in the downtown building they were
24 in. We wanted to keep them in Jackson. This
25 week's news article is that Cracker Barrel is

1 closed. This is hard medicine for those of
2 us who live in Jackson. I speak more to our
3 fellow citizens than to the federal
4 government because you guys are going to do
5 what's right, you've been studying this for
6 years and there are competing challenges on
7 this. And there's the environmental versus
8 the economic development angle. The economic
9 development angle is not part of your core
10 plan. It is flood control. Thank God. We
11 need it.

12 But this city, this city needs economic
13 development. This city is not going to be
14 able to pay for fixing the water system, pay
15 for fixing the sewer system, pay for these
16 gentlemen I see in the back that join us from
17 JPD. We can't pay our bills and we need some
18 type of economic shot in the arm. And we
19 need an economic shot in the arm that
20 provides economic opportunity for all.

21 So the arguments about who gets the
22 contracts and who gets to build it and who
23 gets to carry the dirt, these are issues that
24 happen after the project is created. The key
25 is that there's a project on the table that

1 could fundamentally change the trajectory of
2 our city along with what Ted Henefin is doing
3 and along with citizenry, for once get
4 excited about something that we could do
5 together to provide some form of relief, not
6 just flood relief, but relief from the
7 constant drudgery of living in our city where
8 every single day is another challenge.

9 So I beg and plea that our citizenry
10 truly look at the opportunity that is here
11 and perhaps we can park some of our
12 prejudices about how we get here, sausage is
13 not made pretty boys and girls, I sell it all
14 the time. It ain't pretty, but the benefits
15 here could be extraordinary. I am
16 unabashedly for this project.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good evening,
18 everyone. Now, I've heard everything that's
19 been said and believe you me, some of it is
20 true and some of it is not.

21 Now, I live not too far from here, right
22 up in Northeast Junction, right off of Old
23 Canton Road, right below the spillway, and
24 the North Canton Club Subdivision. Then we
25 have the Canton Avenue Estates. Then we have

1 the Rolling Meadows, which is McLeod. Three
2 neighbors right here, right off of the river.
3 In '20, the houses along that line all the
4 way from the spillway itself is flooded
5 severely. Now, my neighbors behind me, the
6 water got in their homes. And what it did
7 for my house came right up to the door and
8 went up into our cul-de-sac. You can't tell
9 me that a God that I serve didn't stop that.
10 When the flood came again in '22, the waters
11 were gushing and they were about to do the
12 same thing, they was coming across the creek
13 right behind my neighbor. We stood there,
14 Mr. Warren and I, we watched the waters as
15 they were coming. And we just, you know,
16 within ourselves, hey, we fixing to go
17 through this again. Didn't want to deal with
18 it, but we had no choice. All of a sudden
19 the water stopped at some point in time as if
20 somebody had pulled a big drain plug up and
21 the water receded and went back. You have to
22 have been there to see it. Once again, my
23 God.

24 But I want you all to know, you people,
25 and I thank God for you all because you all

1 are the only somebody that's in this equation
2 that seems to have some sense about getting
3 some kind of resolution to this problem.
4 This comprehensive plan, yes, you do need a
5 comprehensive plan and it needs to be
6 filtered right now because I was at home a
7 few minutes ago just removing sandbags and
8 putting them out in the back near my car.
9 And when I thought about it, I said, I hope
10 these bags don't have to be used again
11 because sandbag, sandbag, sandbag, that's all
12 we've been doing.

13 We have neighbors that were around us we
14 never met, but this flooding thing, it has
15 brought our communities together, and we're
16 going to do the best that we can as these
17 three communities to work with you all and to
18 work with anybody and everybody that wants to
19 get this plan that's going to help Jackson,
20 not only from the spillway but all the way
21 down to the Gulf Coast as well, because the
22 big lake problem, which is the Ross Barnett
23 Reservoir, is one of the biggest problems.
24 I'm just going to tell you, be honest with
25 you and tell you the truth.

1 Now, when the waters come from the
2 Yockanookany up in Attala County all the way
3 down to -- back into River Bend, it gets into
4 the river there, then it comes into the Ross
5 Barnett Reservoir. Then when the reservoir
6 is so full and the houses that are there,
7 these boats that are there, that riverfront
8 lakefront property, which they can't control,
9 the lake is -- it's too full. So what do we
10 do? We open the flood gates, let the water
11 down and flood Jackson. That's the way it
12 happens. Let's just be honest.

13 We have a Governor that doesn't care
14 about us. We have a Mayor that doesn't know
15 what to do. Now, my thing is when you don't
16 know what to do about something you find
17 somebody that knows. Now, there's nothing
18 wrong with not knowing because a lot of us
19 don't know everything. You all don't know
20 everything, but if we all come together as
21 that business man over there said, and we
22 come up with this plan, and we develop this
23 plan and it may include the One Lake Project,
24 which some people think, you know, it's going
25 to help -- it's not going to help, it's going

1 to hinder. Who knows? Let's come together
2 and let's get some kind of resolution because
3 I'm not leaving. The only reason I'm still
4 here now is because of my parents. In '79 I
5 was 15 years old, scared to death because I
6 thought Jackson was just going to be wiped
7 away. You know we were under water. Here it
8 is, something, something years later right up
9 here.

10 My dad passed right before the pandemic
11 in '19. And I was glad in a sense that he
12 was gone because we talked about the flooding
13 and what was going to happen. He didn't see
14 this here. But my mother, when I had to
15 relocate her in '20 and then in '22, she
16 thought the flood was fixing to come back up
17 again, I don't want to put my mother through
18 this again.

19 The snakes that have been at our house
20 right up here in northeast Jackson. I was
21 fixing to go one Sunday morning on my way to
22 church, there was one of the biggest
23 moccasins coming right up to our front door.
24 If I open the door he's coming in just like
25 he lived there. There was a bookcase under

1 my garage with my books from Jackson State
2 when I finished my Master's program, and one
3 slithered -- I moved the thing, and when I
4 got home one day, I mean, snakes on top of
5 snakes.

6 Water and all this that's going on,
7 let's just resolve this issue. I mean, I'm
8 not leaving Jackson. I'm not leaving
9 Northeast Jackson. And all the people that
10 are up there with us, we're going to get
11 together if I have to go and pull all of them
12 out of there and bring them out here because
13 we going to be with -- here with you all for
14 the duration of this thing. There's a doable
15 plan. Roger Wicker was out there. He says,
16 this is a doable plan. Whatever the plan is,
17 we'll do the comprehensive one, it can and
18 will be done. I heard our president even say
19 that the funding is there, whatever we need.
20 Now, did you all hear that? He said it.
21 Okay.

22 And another thing, election time is
23 fastly approaching us. If we want to get rid
24 of the rim-rack that don't want to help us,
25 now is the time. Get up off of your behind

1 and go out and do what you need to do. It is
2 just that easy, go and vote. Then we won't
3 be complaining about this, that, and the
4 other. But I'm one of the younger persons
5 that you wanted to give you what you want,
6 and I don't mind telling it like it is,
7 because I'm going to get all my young posses
8 up here and around in the Jackson area and we
9 going to show these people something. We're
10 going to show them that we deserve to be
11 heard. We're going to show them that we
12 deserve to be fellow citizens of Jackson, and
13 we are not something that you can just sweep
14 in the corner and just leave by the wayside.
15 We deserve better. Don't y'all think y'all
16 deserve better than this. All of us deserve
17 better. And Ms. Yates, you going to be
18 hearing from me.

19 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Sir, can I get you to
20 do your final comments?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, you can.

22 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Thank you.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Like I said, when
24 it comes down to whatever comprehensive plan
25 you all come up with, we have confidence in

1 you all that y'all can do this. It can be
2 done. We're going to be here, like I said,
3 to support you all and whatever you all need
4 from us as a community up there in Northeast
5 Jackson, we're here for you. We're going to
6 help. We're going to do everything and
7 everything that we possibly can.

8 MS. MADELINE COOKS: My name is Madeline
9 Cooks. I'm going to try to go quick because
10 I know we are running out of time. I would
11 just like to say this project will make
12 flooding worse for much of Jackson. People
13 will be displaced from their homes, black
14 homeowners and landowners. So this is not an
15 issue -- I see all the white millionaires in
16 here salivating at the idea of another
17 reservoir and economic development for
18 Jackson because that economic development
19 will not include the black low income
20 residents of Jackson right now today. As a
21 community member and resident of a historic
22 neighborhood, Washington Addition, West
23 Jackson, an environmentalist, I oppose this
24 project with every fiber of my being and it
25 should not pass. It's a disgrace,

1 disgusting.

2 MR. MORRIS MOCK: Hello, I also oppose
3 this project. My name is Morris Mock.
4 There's two meetings going on right now.
5 There's a meeting that's saying this is
6 riverfront property, right. There's a
7 financial gain in a lot of these communities.
8 Some people are here because they feel like
9 they're going to make more money off this
10 project. The land has already been bought
11 all around.

12 Now, we're not talking about building,
13 we're not talking about flooding, like,
14 Madison area or even widening the reservoir.
15 There are other alternatives, correct. There
16 are other alternatives. We're going with
17 this extreme alternative where we're going to
18 have grandma's house up for sale, where we're
19 going to offer -- we're definitely not going
20 to offer them fair market value on this
21 house, right. So there's generational
22 wealth. There's the fine print. I'm going
23 to say the fine print that has not been
24 shown. The schools are at risk. The
25 hospitals are at risk. The grocery stores

1 are at risk, right. While everyone -- while
2 one group is just thinking about beachfront
3 or riverfront property, while the other is
4 saying, hey, how is grandma going to --
5 grandma going to pay her bill, or how is she
6 going to sustain her living, right.

7 I think that we are definitely not as
8 transparent. I think that every group is not
9 well represented here. I feel like there's
10 groups that's in Jackson -- how can I explain
11 this to Grandma? How can I explain what's
12 going on right now to Grandma? And we're
13 having a conversation about this, but there's
14 plenty of grandmothers in Jackson. There's
15 plenty of people in Jackson and we have a few
16 days just to make this decision and they
17 don't have a clue what's going on of the
18 decision with people are -- the only thing
19 they care about is riverfront property.

20 I hear a lot about, oh, well, my
21 business and the area that I live. I
22 respected your business, all due respect, I
23 do respect your business. The thing is, is
24 that Grandma's house, this is generational
25 wealth that she's going to lose. This is it.

1 Where she's going to go. You know, I mean,
2 and that -- and I feel it's a shame that
3 every -- because I'm one of those canvasers
4 that knocked on doors. And we're definitely
5 going to vote some people out. I'm one of
6 those canvasers that knocked on doors in
7 Jackson.

8 And this project has not been well
9 described. We don't even know. All we know
10 right now is that there's a plan and y'all
11 are going to do something. But the rich
12 people know exactly what y'all going to do
13 because they've already bought the property
14 around. But all we know are you telling us
15 is just this vague, there's a plan and trust
16 us with it and we're going to have some money
17 to fix this plan. I think it's a disgrace.
18 I don't feel like every group is well
19 represented here today, and I want to say
20 that. It's a shame.

21 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So, sir, I completely
22 appreciate everything you just said. And I
23 think this is a great opportunity to
24 reemphasize where we are in this process,
25 right. This is early engagement to let you

1 know the road ahead. There is no plan.
2 There is a plan people talk about, which is
3 One Lake plan that is submitted that you all
4 know a lot about, but we're still forming and
5 starting these other plans and we want to
6 hear your ideas. And there's meetings coming
7 that we haven't calendared yet. We've got
8 this kind of jammed in because we wanted to
9 get out ahead of the holidays, start to hear
10 down, hearing what's on your mind. These
11 sessions have been phenomenal, right.

12 So we have a lot of work to do. We want
13 to be transparent. We want to be inclusive.
14 We're going to need your help though, right.
15 We need people to talk to each other. We're
16 all here to roll up our sleeves and find
17 those solutions that get this community where
18 they need to be and not a flood risk and the
19 other things that may come with that.

20 MR. SAM DAVID: I'm Sam David. I'm a
21 resident of Jackson. I live at 255 Eastbrook
22 Street, just up the street off of Lakeland
23 Drive behind the firehouse. Most of my life
24 I've lived in Belhaven and Belhaven Heights
25 neighborhood. I have an office downtown.

1 I'm a lawyer. We have a central business
2 district. We have skyscrapers. We have
3 people working in those buildings. We have a
4 large capitol complex. I'm in support of the
5 lake project. It is designed to protect our
6 downtown from flooding. Our central business
7 district is a key economic component of the
8 state of Mississippi. We also have an
9 enormous post office downtown where a good
10 bit of the mail in Mississippi is distributed
11 overnight. That would be inundated by a
12 flood.

13 I've heard discussions about this being
14 some private deal. This is a -- the lake
15 project is a project of the levee board which
16 is comprised of Mayors and members of the
17 Board of Supervisors of Hinds and Rankin
18 County. It has drawn support of the
19 Mississippi Legislature, which has members
20 from every area of the state. It has been a
21 major project of the Metro Jackson
22 Partnership or Chamber of Commerce.

23 The Lake project is designed to protect
24 Lakeland Drive going out towards the airport.
25 Increasingly, that has become the medical

1 corridor for central Mississippi. We cannot
2 have that area flooded. We can't have
3 doctors and nurses not being able to come to
4 work at the two hospitals there and the
5 various clinics.

6 And I don't mind saying this, I kept up
7 with the appropriation process. I read the
8 Washington Post, Politico, and the Wall
9 Street Journal, that \$221,000,000 wasn't
10 really for some, I guess, theoretical
11 concept. Political leaders had in mind a
12 project that's been developed at the local
13 level, which is the Lake project, where a
14 consensus has been built around that.

15 And the fact that Congress included that
16 in the infrastructure bill should give this
17 Corps a signal about what the elected
18 branches of government want out of this
19 agency and others.

20 And I don't mind saying the Lake project
21 is a lot of things, but it's also a
22 construction project. It will put men and
23 women to work. They will be paid, paid and
24 making wages. In all likelihood, the
25 contractors will have to get skilled laborers

1 from the Union halls, from the operating
2 engineers, the laborers, electricians, and
3 plumbers, and pipefitters. That's a good
4 thing in this area. There's a lot more I
5 could say but I'll just leave it at that.

6 MR. SOCRATES GARRETT: Good evening.
7 I'm Socrates Garrett, and I've been in
8 Jackson a long, long time. And we've studied
9 this process and this project for 20 plus
10 years, and we continue to hear that we have
11 to study. It was very, very difficult for us
12 to get these communities together. I served
13 as past chairman of the Greater Jackson
14 Chamber Partnership. I served as a member of
15 the levee board. It was difficult to get
16 Rankin County and Hinds County and all of
17 these various Mayors on one page, but we came
18 to a consensus that this was best for the
19 metropolitan area.

20 Now, a lot of conversation has focused
21 on Jackson, and rightfully so. Jackson is
22 not the only beneficiary of this Lake
23 project. On both sides of the river there
24 stands to be tremendous economic opportunity.

25 Now, one thing I would like to say about

1 the local partners, we have been in agreement
2 for a long time. I made so many trips to
3 Washington, D.C. in support of this project.
4 The late Senator Thad Cochran was in support
5 of this project. We lost so many people that
6 fought this fight so valiantly. Leland Speed
7 fought this fight so valiantly until the end.
8 And people have contributed their time and
9 their money to try to make this project come
10 forward.

11 And so let's focus on Jackson just a
12 little bit. Jackson cannot grow to the
13 north. There's no growth opportunities
14 there. It cannot grow to the east, it's
15 bound by locked boundaries there. It cannot
16 grow to the west. Clinton has it blocked
17 there. It cannot grow to the south, it runs
18 into Byram, incorporated there. Jackson is
19 locked into its field geographically without
20 any potential for growth. The only potential
21 for growth that it has is within that
22 footprint. And the only opportunity that we
23 have now is to make this river that God
24 blessed us with, be a blessing to the
25 citizens of Jackson and provide the economic

1 opportunity that makes this place become a
2 tourist attraction, makes us to have a river
3 beachfront that we can walk on, that we have
4 hotels in the middle of the river, that we
5 have all of these businesses that are
6 surrounded. It's the only chance that
7 Jackson has got to grow and attract a new tax
8 base because other than that, it's on a very
9 downward spiral.

10 This project will do more than just stop
11 the flooding in Jackson. The One Lake
12 Project that's been recommended to the Corps
13 for the last 20 years, and when -- we came
14 all together as local citizens, our problem
15 was trying to get the Department of the Army
16 and the Corp on the same page. It was a
17 tremendous challenge as it continues to be a
18 challenge now because you still have not
19 committed to the local preferred project,
20 which we would have hoped that you would have
21 done so by now.

22 It's critically important that Jackson
23 has an opportunity, and the metropolitan area
24 has an opportunity to develop this river. It
25 is the single most important asset that we

1 have. We cannot allow it to continue to be
2 underutilized in the way that it's currently
3 being done. We must protect our citizens and
4 our homes from flooding, but we must grow our
5 economy. It must grow our base. It must
6 make Jackson a place that is a destiny spot,
7 which we currently have no other way of doing
8 that other than this river. Thank you very
9 much.

10 MS. DELL MOCKER: My name is Dell
11 Mocker, and I don't think we've heard a lot
12 from people who actually live in the areas or
13 who actually were impacted by the flood.
14 Like, my house was flooded in 2020. I've
15 been in my house -- well, I've had my house
16 ten and a half years approximately. My house
17 flooded in 2020. Well, March of 2020 -- no,
18 February 2020, Covid happened March of 2020,
19 so everything was kind of put on hold. I
20 moved back into my house in March of 2022, so
21 just approximately a year or so back in my
22 house.

23 A lot has been stated here. I'm glad
24 that you all, you know, talked about the
25 mental health toll that it takes on you.

1 It's a lot of anxiety that came about because
2 of having to deal with the floods, all the
3 stress, loss of material things. The flood
4 insurance prices are astronomical. I learned
5 a lot living in the flood zone. Can't, you
6 know -- well, my situation with the flood
7 insurance is flood insurance, it has to be
8 paid January of every year. And for my
9 house, you know, in a low area it's \$6,000
10 that has to be paid out of pocket. I can't
11 afford that, so I had it through the bank
12 because I still owe on my house and they're
13 all concerned with making themselves whole.
14 So at some point it's going to come a point
15 of where I owe less than what I can repair my
16 house with because the cost of everything has
17 gone up. So I am for these voluntary buyouts
18 or whatever that you all are proposing
19 because at some point my house is going to
20 flood again and I'm not going to be able to
21 afford to repair it.

22 So, yeah, I'm also not in the best shape
23 to have to be trying to pack up and move my
24 belongings that I am trying to save. I've
25 had to, you know, call on family and friends

1 at the last minute. For the August '22 flood
2 that occurred, thank God the water didn't get
3 in my house this time, but water did come
4 halfway up my yard. Ants got in my house
5 trying to escape the flood up on window
6 sills. That was the first time I had seen
7 something like that happen. What else?

8 So, yeah, I am a proponent of a
9 solution. And also, Jackson, Mississippi, we
10 are 100 years behind a lot of other places
11 with great economic, you know, facilities,
12 entertainment. I consider myself to be -- I
13 don't know, on the average side of middle
14 age, but I did leave the state for better
15 opportunities. I'm not going to lie, I did
16 for a couple of years. And I came back
17 because of family and the pandemic. And I
18 encourage young people that I interact with
19 in my family to get out of Mississippi
20 because you are limited here. And I know
21 that's not good, that's not great, but with
22 the resources, with the lack of resources
23 that we have, and all our issues that we are
24 faced with in Mississippi and in Jackson,
25 it's the best opportunity for young people

1 because I saw first hand myself.

2 Now, one concern that I do have was when
3 you talked about, like, a non-federal
4 partnership because of our hospital
5 legislation that somebody talked about in our
6 hospital local government, I do have concerns
7 that, you know, we all formulate your plan
8 and propose it that they're not going to come
9 together to do what needs to be done to help
10 this come to fruition. And that's all.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Unintelligible
12 younger speaker.)

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (unintelligible)
14 lifetime Jackson resident. I'm a -- I'm not
15 quite retired, but (unintelligible) years as
16 a nurse. I live now in Washington Addition.
17 So Town Creek runs past our neighborhood and
18 it does flood every time rain comes. It sits
19 right immediately to the street next to the
20 creek, there's a school. There's two
21 schools. Jim Hill High School and Isabelle
22 Elementary. So they are impacted already.
23 And that creek is a creek that the plan
24 developers said is going to flood with the
25 One Lake plan. They predict that.

1 I want to raise a couple of points.
2 One, this is not the only way to create
3 economic development. We all agree Jackson
4 needs economic development. Make the river
5 accessible to the 80 percent black population
6 that's not able to get to it, that doesn't
7 live in Belhaven. Let's start there.

8 Lots of organizations have weighed in on
9 why this is a bad plan. So the fact that the
10 local government is pushing it and it hasn't
11 been accepted, that ought to clue all of us
12 in that it's probably not good for us.
13 That's why they don't want it to happen.
14 That's why they're probably is push back.

15 This year, April 18, 2023, the American
16 River Association put the Pearl River number
17 three endangered river directly related to
18 this proposed -- what they call it is flood
19 mitigation. It's an economic development
20 posting like it's flood mitigation basically.
21 It's a wolf in sheep's clothing. And I'm
22 disappointed in all of our local leaders that
23 they signed on this and sold out the majority
24 of Jackson. That's really what it feels
25 like.

1 The Pearl River is the number four
2 contributing river that feeds right into the
3 Gulf Coast. I'm not smart enough, I'm not
4 versed in all of the biological diversity
5 that we would be damaging, but I know it's
6 bad because I've read enough about it.
7 Numerous species of birds, numerous species
8 of fish. I think anyone in this room is
9 aware that our climate is an issue right now
10 globally, so why do you want to decimate
11 further in the name of flood? Hold on a
12 minute. People keep coming up here
13 testifying. I don't think anyone thinks
14 floods are good. Is there anybody in here
15 who is pro flood? I don't think so. And we
16 don't need to pretend like this is the only
17 solution. I've seen the alternative. The
18 one from the Berkley students is wonderful,
19 but I'm, again, not an engineer, so I'm sure
20 there are other ideas. I've read that the
21 American Rivers Association specifically
22 reached out to you all and said, please don't
23 consider this plan, consider something that's
24 more environmentally sustainable and that you
25 can side with readily. We don't need to

1 guess about how to mitigate a flood in a
2 healthy way. Nature teaches us. We can
3 follow that pattern and those lessons. It's
4 good that engineers have been able to
5 manipulate rivers and put them where they
6 want them so that people can spend money and
7 clap, but it's not going to matter if we
8 don't have fish and we don't have birds and
9 we don't have the Pearl River because it's
10 endangered right now associated with this.
11 Thank you very much.

12 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So thank you for that.
13 Just for true transparency, organizations
14 like American Rivers and all kinds of
15 organizations come to see us, we always take
16 those meetings, but we also always come here
17 to the communities so that we listen to all
18 views, but particularly the folks who live
19 here, right. So don't want anyone to think
20 that that's not happening. It's happened all
21 across the area and it's our responsibility
22 to do so.

23 MR. ANDY HILTON: Hi, my name is Andy
24 Hilton, lifelong Jackson resident and Pearl
25 River recreator. First of all, a comment, I

1 think there's a misconception that our water
2 crisis was caused by flooding. I mean, it
3 was, but it wasn't -- the plant never
4 flooded, it's a chemistry change in the
5 reservoir. I think a lot of people --
6 somehow that's gotten tied together. No
7 flood control project would have prevented
8 that. A properly funded water plant would
9 have prevented that.

10 Public comments and maybe a question. I
11 just returned from a national conference on
12 floods, the ASFPM, saw some presentations
13 from some of your colleagues. It seems like
14 there's a nationwide trend where people are
15 removing dams, setting levees back,
16 connecting the river to the flood plain,
17 which is actually the presentation that
18 someone from the Corps gave, it seems like
19 this project is way out of line from the
20 national trend. Is there anywhere else in
21 the country where people are building a new
22 impoundment like this?

23 ROBYN COLOSIMO: Yes, when we design
24 projects to meet the community's resilience
25 needs, yes, there are places that we're going

1 to set back levees. There are places where
2 we're building infrastructure impounds.
3 There's places where dams are being moved.
4 Those are all different reasons for different
5 things. Some places the dams no longer meet
6 their need and they come down. In one of the
7 sessions earlier there were navigation
8 channels lost and then turned over because we
9 no longer provide navigation. So it kind of
10 depends on the situation. But, yes, all
11 those are always an option.

12 MR. ANDY HILTON: Thanks very much.
13 Thanks.

14 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: My name is Emmy
15 Herrington and I have a few questions
16 concerning the One Lake Project. My first
17 question was what is the assessment of the
18 environmental impact? I've done some
19 research in the last -- on the One Lake
20 Project in the past few days with
21 contradicting results. Some say that
22 environmental species could be endangered
23 species in the Pearl River -- will be
24 endangered by the One Lake Project and some
25 say that that has already been proven to not

1 be the case.

2 BRANDON DAVIS: What was your name
3 again?

4 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Emmy Herrington.

5 BRANDON DAVIS: Well, thank you for
6 coming up, that's -- I couldn't stand up
7 there at your age and do that, so thanks for
8 your question. So good question.

9 So what we're going to do is once we
10 know what all the plans are, the various
11 alternatives we're looking at, we will have
12 to go through and look at the environmental
13 impacts of all of those. One of the things
14 that we have been required to do is to offer
15 a plan to the Secretary that is the least
16 environmentally damaging plan. So to answer
17 your question is that, yes, right now, I
18 wouldn't have an answer for you, but what we
19 will do is we will go through and look at
20 everything to make sure that we are proposing
21 or offering something to the Secretary that
22 will be the least environmentally damaging.
23 Does that answer your question?

24 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Yes, sir, it does.

25 And also, I read in my research

1 something about communities south of the
2 river, that they might get affected
3 negatively by the One Lake Project. Is this
4 true?

5 BRANDON DAVIS: So, we talked about that
6 earlier. It's one of the things that we're
7 required to do with the state, we have to
8 look at the downstream impacts as well. So
9 any town south of Jackson that you're talking
10 about we would have to look and see what the
11 impacts would be. And that was based on, I
12 believe, one of our -- I'm not going to bore
13 you with the long legislation, but it's
14 legislation that appeared to us that we have
15 to look at downstream impacts as well.

16 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Okay. Thank you.

17 COLONEL KLEIN: Let me continue on that
18 one, too. It's a really good question. We
19 just came from Slide, so we just had two
20 sessions down there where we heard from local
21 communities down there, and today there are
22 negative impacts that they're experiencing
23 down the river. Okay. Silting, because that
24 is -- it's mostly because a lot of the aging
25 infrastructure on the river. They're

1 experiencing some low flows. Other testimony
2 comes in and says they're experiencing
3 extended flooding down in that stretch of the
4 river. There's silt build up in these
5 various areas. And so we've received a lot
6 of really good feedback from them that is
7 going to inform, you know, and help us inform
8 and go back to our leadership and let them
9 know what the impacts are comprehensively
10 along the whole stretch of the river.

11 MS. EMMY HERRINGTON: Thank you. So in
12 conclusion the environmental impacts have not
13 been completed for this plan that we have
14 here. Okay, thank you.

15 MR. KEN MORGAN: I'm not an engineer and
16 I'm not a hydrologist. Ken Morgan. I live
17 in Marion County, Mississippi, which is about
18 100 miles down south of here. I served the
19 Legislature at the present time in the House
20 of Representatives.

21 Two gentleman, in truth, covered what I
22 would have said, one in that brown shirt
23 right there and the gentleman with that red
24 hat on, told it just like the problem it is.
25 You going to check and see to start with, you

1 need to start with the Ross Barnett
2 Reservoir. When that thing was built I
3 remember it. I'm a little older than maybe
4 they are. It was issued and passed to be
5 used for flood control. Well, now they'll
6 tell you they don't have the authority to do
7 with anything to do with flood control. They
8 can't come up with a daily operation
9 procedure manual about the Ross Barnett
10 Reservoir. They can run it by telephone.

11 With that said, I want y'all to know we
12 didn't move is the state line. Talking about
13 Hinds and Rankin County. This things going
14 all the way to Biloxi, Gulfport, Pascagoula,
15 down in that area, all the way through
16 because we're not talking about economic
17 development, we're talking about flood
18 control. Flood control could be alleviated
19 to a degree, but you're not going to cut it
20 off 100 percent. New Orleans proved that.
21 Baton Rouge proved that. Eagle Lake proved
22 that because they trying to get pumps over
23 there on Steel Bayou and that didn't ever
24 happen. When the water falls within, you
25 have 12, 13, 15 inch rain, it's going to

1 flood. That's God's way of doing things.
2 Just the way it is. But we can help this
3 river and probably save some this river
4 because we have actually lost a large part of
5 the river.

6 When I was a kid growing up I knew what
7 it looked like. All my property, my
8 granddaddy's property developed right on down
9 through generation and generation we had
10 property on the Pearl River, had a farm out
11 there. Believe it or not, when I was 12 or
12 13 years old I was standing on the bank of
13 the river in October squirrel hunting and
14 look down there and see the catfish swimming
15 in the river, just the clarity of the water.
16 You can't do that today. That's a major
17 problem. We have problems with drinking
18 water. We have problems with sewage. We
19 have problems with too much water.

20 And you're right, we're going to have to
21 work together and your leaders is going to
22 have to take responsibility to fix these
23 things because they are behind the times.
24 The sewage processing plant is deleted, it's
25 old. It needs to be updated. The water

1 system, as you well know. Drinking water,
2 residents, businesses, cafes, restaurants
3 can't even serve food because they don't have
4 drinking water. There's no excuse for that.

5 And this price tag for this thing, it's
6 not just going to affect the people in Hinds
7 and Rankin County, it's going to probably put
8 the burden on every taxpayer in the state of
9 Mississippi to fix this One Lake plan and
10 it's no guarantee it's going to work. And
11 you talk about you get lake front property to
12 live on, they had cotton fields and corn
13 fields out there on 43 years ago, soybean
14 fields, agricultural products. You couldn't
15 buy that property and you couldn't hardly
16 sell it along the river. Lake goes in, that
17 \$3,500 an acre land become \$60,000 a pop.
18 People won't be able to afford it. You ain't
19 going to have a lake on your property. It's
20 going to need an upgrade. It needs to be
21 upgraded, but you got levees protecting, One
22 Lake Plan. How you going to get water across
23 to meander across the levee? You going to
24 have to have pumps in it somewhere.

25 There's more to this than -- the big

1 picture is not being shown. I'm going to be
2 truthful about that. This thing is one of
3 the biggest realty scams that's ever took
4 place in the state of Mississippi. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Ma'am.

7 MS. LAURENE RYDER: My name is Laurene
8 Ryder. I've been a resident of Jackson for
9 23 years. My family grew up here, my
10 children grew up here. Over the years we
11 went to LeFleur's Bluff repeatedly. We hike
12 there. We picnicked there. We barbecued
13 there.

14 From what I understand -- it's very hard
15 to look at these maps and see exactly what's
16 going to happen, but my understanding is this
17 park will be destroyed, it will be flooded.
18 It already is flooded a couple of months a
19 year, but with this One Lake Plan it will be
20 destroyed and I think that it is tragic that
21 we have to destroy such a gem in the City of
22 Hartford to supposedly control flooding. I
23 think this One Lake Plan was -- I see people
24 are laughing because they think this is
25 funny. This One Lake Plan is a real estate

1 plan. It was developed with that in mind and
2 it's obviously just to create prime real
3 estate development. It's obvious from
4 everybody talking here that we do need a
5 flood plan. I would highly urge you to
6 consider alternatives to the construction of
7 One Lake Plan, such as channeling or other
8 alternatives like that. Thank you.

9 MS. JAN HELOWITZ: Hello, my name is Jan
10 Helowitz. I live in Jackson. I came to a
11 meeting here quite a few years ago the last
12 time I remember hearing about, and I was very
13 disappointed in that meeting because people
14 made speeches and then we were invited to go
15 around the room and have individual
16 conversations with people about things that
17 were posted on easels like this and so there
18 was no real feedback for everybody to be able
19 to hear.

20 I have not looked up anything in advance
21 to coming to this meeting. I expected to
22 come and hear what the office had been doing
23 since that last meeting to come up with a
24 better plan than what you had before, and I
25 heard there's no plan. I don't know what

1 that means or why you're having a meeting or
2 feedback about no plan. Because it's
3 certainly clear that nobody's pro-flood.
4 Everybody's pro-economic development.
5 Everybody's for environmental justice. I'm
6 just not sure why this meeting was called.

7 Now, when -- I guess you're new here or
8 something. New to this process. Who's been
9 doing something all these years because the
10 problem hasn't been solved. It hasn't been
11 addressed. You haven't -- I'm just a little
12 confused as to why there isn't something to
13 be looking at, something to hear, the detail.
14 We proposed this for this area. And then
15 people come up to a board and say it's good
16 because, or the people come up and say that
17 it would be a problem because. Then we can
18 look at what the different views are of the
19 particular things. Other than that, why are
20 we here? Or -- and I'm sorry that there's --
21 at least in the beginning it seemed like
22 there were two sides to what was happening,
23 and we sure don't need that because we all do
24 want a good plan that helps everybody don't
25 we? I think the whole process and -- I don't

1 know, whatever else is is supposed to be
2 going on here and come back here with some
3 particulars that you think are the best and
4 some good reasons, tell us why, and then
5 listen to particulars about what it is that
6 people are concerned about and possibly pay
7 attention.

8 ROBYN COLOSIMO: So, ma'am, thank you
9 for that. Couple of things, and can't do it
10 quickly, but you're exactly right. In the
11 few years the things have stopped and
12 started, that's true. That's absolutely
13 true. The last time the Corps actually
14 released a report was in 2007 I believe.
15 From that time forward because there was no
16 decision made, there wasn't an implementable
17 plan, not a lot happened. Beginning in 2018
18 Rankin-Hinds pursued a feasibility study that
19 was submitted to us in '22, right. So we are
20 now acting on that activity that they did
21 under their authority. So we are responding
22 to that, opening that process to get in with
23 these early engagement meetings to say we've
24 been directed to go look at that study as
25 well as other alternatives by Congress. We

1 have money out there that's -- Bipartisan
2 Infrastructure Law set aside for Jackson.
3 The question now is how we can use this
4 process to communicate with you what those
5 ideas are. And since it's been a long time
6 since we've engaged to get to hear what folks
7 say in this session, other sessions. We'll
8 have two more virtual ones next week, and we
9 will be coming back with those plans. We
10 don't have a timeline on when exactly, but
11 we'll have an additional outreach session.

12 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Sir.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I stand before
14 you today as a citizen, advocate, young
15 person of the resilient city of Jackson,
16 Mississippi. I'm here to speak and advocate
17 on the opportunity that holds the potential
18 to completely change the trajectory of this
19 city's future. The opportunities to local
20 preference, Alternative C. This opportunity
21 is more than just a flood control measure,
22 it's an investment in our city's future.
23 It's a path towards economic prosperity. And
24 above all, an opportunity to enhance quality
25 of life for all Jacksonians.

1 First, the primary purpose of the
2 project, flood control. For years we've seen
3 the devastating impact of floods on our city,
4 lives disrupted, properties damaged, peace of
5 mind destroyed. By expanding the river's
6 capacity we can dramatically reduce the risk
7 of floods and create a safer environment for
8 all our citizens.

9 Now, let's dive into the economic
10 potential of this project. It seemed less
11 prone to floods or a more conducive
12 atmosphere for businesses to thrive, reduce
13 risk, increase confidence, attracting both
14 local and outside investments. Imagine the
15 job opportunities, the rise in property
16 values, and the overall economic prosperity.
17 This is the city. This is the Jackson we're
18 aiming to build, a vibrant city with
19 opportunities. The benefits don't stop there
20 with flood control. Picture this, a new
21 state of the art water facility powered by
22 the river's flooding. Clean, stable,
23 drinkable water for every corner of Jackson.

24 Further, the project has power to not
25 only shape the City's future, but can

1 reconnect us with the part of Jackson that is
2 for too long been assigned to the background.
3 That is our waterways with the Pearl River
4 and the creeks, provides an opportunity to
5 bring our citizens closer to nature, foster
6 deeper appreciation for our waterways into
7 the parts of our lives, for a meaningful
8 relationship with those waterways. Imagine a
9 city where a river could not solely just be a
10 waterway but be a focal point for community
11 life. A city where waterways become our
12 pathways encouraging citizens of all ages to
13 explore, learn, and appreciate.

14 By integrating parts and trails of this
15 project, access to nature is not just about
16 to those that are given. This plan will
17 actually have green spaces for families to
18 gather, bridges for our community to come
19 together and seeing vibrant examples of
20 cities like Chattanooga and Austin. By
21 integrating our lives with the river we are
22 fostering appreciation to the values of the
23 (unintelligible). Beauty and
24 (unintelligible) and importance of
25 conservation. The Pearl River water project

1 is an opportunity to bring nature closer to
2 the doorstep, foster community -- and foster
3 a community that's not just aware of its
4 surroundings, but is deeply integrated with
5 it. The Pearl River One Lake project isn't
6 just an engineering project. It's a symbole
7 of the City's resilience and it represents
8 the determination to protect our citizens, to
9 fix our economy and to enhance our quality of
10 life.

11 This is your chance to redefine the
12 narrative of our city, transform Jackson from
13 a city at rest to a city that thrives. I
14 encourage you to seek this opportunity.
15 Let's create a safe and more prosperous
16 environment for Jackson for all. Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To Colonel Klein.
18 In looking at the two maps here of the 1965
19 channelization I've got a two-part question.
20 The reservoir was operational in 1965, right.
21 Why was it necessary to channelize three
22 years later? First part of the question.

23 And then why didn't the channelization
24 work is the second part?

25 And then why do we think it's going to

1 work now with another plan?

2 COLONEL KLEIN: You are really testing
3 my engineering skills right now because I was
4 not involved in that project. So the Ross
5 Barnett was not a federal project, so that is
6 not -- it's not a federal project. At that
7 time.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (unintelligible.)

9 COLONEL KLEIN: Yeah, that's fair.
10 Actually, you know, you go up and down, you
11 know, I-55 and you're talking about some old
12 infrastructure that was designed for a
13 specific purpose with the technology that we
14 had at that time.

15 There's another thing in that picture
16 that you're highlighting over there. Two
17 other major pieces of infrastructure. I-55
18 and I-20 are now there, right. So were we,
19 you know, I don't know the full history about
20 it. I don't know why Ross Barnett was there,
21 why, you know, how Eisenhower's visions for
22 an interstate system and how that was
23 developed to connect through Jackson, but
24 it's all tied together. So the
25 channelization probably is how the vision for

1 the interstate system and that's why the
2 channelization is set up. Is it working? I
3 think that's a --

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (unintelligible)
5 floods all seem to be after 1968. There was
6 not a lot of flooding that I'm aware. I'm
7 not -- I've been in Jackson my whole life. I
8 was born in '58.

9 COLONEL KLEIN: Yeah, we can take a look
10 at that for sure. It's hard to know 100
11 percent the history to why we put in what we
12 did. It's a lot more comprehensive than one
13 singular answer. I'll have to get back to
14 you on that.

15 MR. THOMAS SHAW: I will just mention,
16 if you would, please note that on your
17 comment card. That would help us get that
18 into the record and get that addressed, if
19 you would, please. Thank you.

20 MS. JESS ENRIQUEZ: Hello. So I may be
21 the last person, so thank you for taking more
22 comments. My name is Jess Enriquez. I work
23 for the Immigrant Alliance for Justice and
24 Equity. And I can't say that I've ever been
25 in the immigrant community, I'm not an

1 immigrant. My dad is an immigrant. But I do
2 work with this population that when there's
3 flooding and when there's environmental
4 disasters, manmade or natural disasters, they
5 don't have access to MEMA or FEMA or any kind
6 of resources to assist when these things
7 happen. Like, there's been a lot of talk
8 about being citizens of Jackson and being
9 citizens of Mississippi, but there are people
10 here that are residents that call Mississippi
11 and Jackson home. And I just wanted to make
12 that space and hold that space for them.

13 But the reason that I'm here is because
14 I oppose the One Lake Project. And the
15 reason that I even know about the One Lake
16 Project is because of a young man that
17 brought this to our attention, to the
18 attention of my organization. So I just,
19 yeah, want to hold space and make sure that
20 you all know that I and my organization
21 oppose the One Lake Project. Thank you.

22 MR. THOMAS SHAW: Any last comments or
23 feedback?

24 If not, we reached our allotted time
25 limit, so we would very, very much like to

1 thank you for your participation in being
2 here. It was invaluable to us all and will
3 help inform the decisions made going down the
4 path forward. As we mentioned earlier, they
5 will become part of the public record. So
6 thank you all and please take care going
7 home.

8 (Hearing concluded at 8:24 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

2 I, Dawn Dillard, Court Reporter and
3 Notary Public, in and for the State of
4 Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing
5 contains a true and correct transcript of the
6 public hearing of USACE Pearl River Flood Risk
7 Management Project, as taken by me in the
8 aforementioned matter at the time and place
9 heretofore stated, as taken by stenotype and later
10 reduced to typewritten form under my supervision
11 by means of computer-aided transcription.

12 I further certify that under the
13 authority vested in me by the State of Mississippi
14 that the witness was placed under oath by me to
15 truthfully answer all questions in the matter.

16 I further certify that, to the best of
17 my knowledge, I am not in the employ of or related
18 to any party in this matter and have no interest,
19 monetary or otherwise, in the final outcome of
20 this matter.

21 Witness my signature and seal this the
22 20th day of August, 2023.

23
24 DAWN DILLARD, #1763
CCR

25 My Commission Expires:
March 7, 2025

June 1, 2023 Transcription: Virtual Meeting 1300

WEBVTT

1 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:01:35.970 --> 00:01:39.750

Okay, okay.

2 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:01:39.750 --> 00:01:42.840

Did y'all hear anything? I said Russia start over.

3 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:01:44.280 --> 00:01:54.000

You're all muted to start over. Okay. All right. I'll do more. Welcome again. Welcome. This is Tom with. I'm the project manager for the Pittsburgh district.

4 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:01:54.000 --> 00:01:59.880

We're here to have a public engagement meeting for the Pearl River FRM Project

5 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:01:59.880 --> 00:02:03.030

For risk management project.

6 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:03.030 --> 00:02:08.640

This is the 3rd in a set of virtual meetings, the 1st, 2.

7 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:08.640 --> 00:02:13.710

Last Tuesday, we held a meeting on the 23rd.

8 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:13.710 --> 00:02:25.620

In spot, Louisiana we followed that up with meetings there in Jackson, Mississippi and so today is a virtual only session.

9 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:25.620 --> 00:02:29.160

Now, at 1 P. M. and then an additional one at 6. 0. P. M.

10 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:29.160 --> 00:02:33.480

I would just like to take this opportunity to welcome me. We.

11 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:33.480 --> 00:02:38.850

So why are we here, we're gathering and doing this because we desire to have.

12 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:38.850 --> 00:02:41.970

Your feedback you're input.

13 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:41.970 --> 00:02:49.500

With respect to how flooding on the Pro river has impacted deaf and, and we will be talking about.

14 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:49.500 --> 00:02:57.120

The plan is, is it currently based.

15 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:02:57.120 --> 00:03:00.180

So, I need to go over some housekeeping issues.

16 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:00.180 --> 00:03:04.770

When we were meeting face to face, it's fairly easy to get.

17 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:04.770 --> 00:03:08.130

We would like to obtain the

18 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:08.130 --> 00:03:13.890

Names and addresses for folks that attended, and we even had a push on the map.

19 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:13.890 --> 00:03:20.250

We don't have that option available to us virtually, but what I would ask is if you would please put your name.

20 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:20.250 --> 00:03:25.920

In your address basically, is your contact information in the chat if.

21 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:25.920 --> 00:03:31.980

I think most everybody knows how to Chad, if you don't, you might want to experiment with that a little bit, but it's.

22 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:31.980 --> 00:03:36.630

Usually in the lower right hand corner of your, your Webex window.

23 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:36.630 --> 00:03:45.840

Uh, so that would be the way that we would be able to record your attendance. We are recording the doing the video of this.

24 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:45.840 --> 00:03:48.840

Powerpoint and this presentation.

25 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:48.840 --> 00:03:53.700

Um, okay.

26 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:53.700 --> 00:03:57.690

Looks like, we've got a lot of meeting there, so, um.

27 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:03:59.070 --> 00:04:03.540

I think Leslie with you, so I neglected dimension.

28 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:03.540 --> 00:04:10.590

Literally for tasca, she has a plan formula that like, plan formulator there with the.

29 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:10.590 --> 00:04:13.680

Uh, regional planning environment, division, South.

30 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:13.680 --> 00:04:24.930

And she is going to be briefing as well. So I would like to, as I mentioned a little bit of housekeeping. Let me go over the, what? We would call the rules of engagement, which basically helps us.

31 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:24.930 --> 00:04:32.489

As we go forward, so because this is a virtual meeting, we need thanks just a little bit different.

32 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:32.489 --> 00:04:37.409

If you have a microphone on your computer, you will have the ability to.

33 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:37.409 --> 00:04:40.919

Ask a question, but I will just ask that she please remain muted.

34 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:40.919 --> 00:04:46.709

Until you're recognized, I'll let, you know, if you have a question.

35 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:46.709 --> 00:04:51.539

We would ask that you limit your speaking times of about 3 minutes.

36 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:51.539 --> 00:04:54.659

We would also ask because.

37 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:04:54.659 --> 00:05:00.689

The more people we get down here, the more bandwidth it basically goes up if you will. So, if you would.

38 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:00.689 --> 00:05:03.809

Please turn your cameras off um.

39 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:03.809 --> 00:05:07.439

Until you just use our space.

40 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:07.439 --> 00:05:10.589

I would ask it to you please be respectful.

41 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:10.589 --> 00:05:17.849

And please don't offer or interrupt the panel for the moderator.

42 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:17.849 --> 00:05:23.699

And then if for some reason, we can't get to you and you cannot have the opportunity to speak.

43 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:23.699 --> 00:05:26.969

At the very end of this presentation.

44 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:26.969 --> 00:05:32.609

There is an email address that you can either make a statement.

45 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:32.609 --> 00:05:38.669

Or or provider a question there you also have the ability to chat and ask.

46 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:38.669 --> 00:05:49.019

Questions ask for feedback there. So, the other thing is that we have a website out there in that website.

47 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:49.019 --> 00:05:52.829

Continually being populated is if things are developed so they're.

48 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:52.829 --> 00:05:56.159

There are multiple, uh.

49 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:05:56.159 --> 00:06:05.309

Slides if you will out there that show the study, it shows that the ultimate, that kind of information. So.

50 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:05.309 --> 00:06:09.329

We've got basically 2 hours allotted for this meeting and so.

51 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:09.329 --> 00:06:16.439

Um, you'll see how many different ways that you can provide feedback on that very last slide. So, with that, I would like to, uh.

52 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:16.439 --> 00:06:20.129

Go ahead and kick things off and get us going.

53 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:20.129 --> 00:06:23.519

Okay, so if you will.

54 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:23.519 --> 00:06:26.549

Go to I think it's the next slide.

55 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:26.549 --> 00:06:30.359

Okay.

56 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:30.359 --> 00:06:33.929

Okay, there's the study area.

57 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:33.929 --> 00:06:47.069

Next slide please, I think we've got these are this well, this is Paul. Just 3rd. We're trying to get the the correct presentation.

58 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:47.069 --> 00:06:52.379

So, I'm going to continue on, so.

59 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:52.379 --> 00:06:59.219

Why are we conducting this meeting? This meeting is being done is we're providing opportunities for you the public.

60 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:06:59.219 --> 00:07:02.909

To give us some feedback to provide your comments.

61 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:02.909 --> 00:07:07.919

Respect to flooding in the Department of and.

62 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:07.919 --> 00:07:11.039

Particularly with respect to rank and enhance the counties.

63 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:11.039 --> 00:07:14.879

Uh, part of the reason that we're doing this.

64 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:14.879 --> 00:07:20.039

Is the nonfatal interest, which is the rank enhance per river?

65 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:20.039 --> 00:07:23.549

Uh, control and dryness district.

66 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:23.549 --> 00:07:27.719

Submitted a section 211.

67 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:27.719 --> 00:07:32.489

Draft feasibility study, environmental impact statement to the.

68 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:32.489 --> 00:07:36.299

Uh, and if that was done.

69 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:36.299 --> 00:07:40.169

Um, the ASA generated comments.

70 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:40.169 --> 00:07:51.719

And there were some data gaps, they essay turned around and charged us the quarter engineers in particular, the Vicksburg district we're trying to resolve those data gaps. So that's why we're here.

71 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:07:51.719 --> 00:08:00.059

Very briefly, we've got the authorization this section 334 of the water resources development act.

72 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:00.059 --> 00:08:13.079

2007, it basically said we may construct the plan, the locally preferred plan or a combination subject to certain determination. And then there's a modifier and section.

73 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:13.079 --> 00:08:22.169

176 of 2018 border that basically said that we would assess the downstream impacts. So.

74 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:22.169 --> 00:08:27.719

The next thing is the history there and Mr conference. We'll talk about that.

75 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:27.719 --> 00:08:32.519

We spoke of the report that was submitted last July.

76 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:32.519 --> 00:08:38.789

And then you'll also hear of the review process that is ongoing. Now.

77 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:38.789 --> 00:08:42.059

So, if you were working next slide.

78 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:42.059 --> 00:08:49.049

Okay, uh, as I mentioned earlier, there's the meetings that we've had our virtual meeting is there on the top.

79 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:08:49.074 --> 00:09:02.154

Right there is a phone number there for if, you know, somebody who's interested, but head does not have this. I mentioned public input. There are multiple ways we can do it.

80 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:09:02.184 --> 00:09:08.124

We've had self addressed comment cards that are part of the face to face. Traditional email is shown there as well.

81 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:09:08.429 --> 00:09:11.519

That address and then.

82 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:09:11.519 --> 00:09:19.319

The that you say that army dot mil is a, that you can use next slide please.

83 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:09:19.319 --> 00:09:25.469

Are we doing the video now?

84 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:09:25.469 --> 00:09:28.889

Well, not quite on.

85 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:09:28.889 --> 00:09:34.319

All right, miss Walker, if you would, would you take over with project importance?

86 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:09:34.319 --> 00:09:38.699

Absolutely, if you can yes, thank you.

87 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:09:38.699 --> 00:09:41.789

Come check you got me. Yes, ma'am.

88 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:09:41.874 --> 00:09:48.774

Excellent. All right. Thank you. All for participating in today's virtual meeting for the Pearl river basin study.

89 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:09:49.164 --> 00:10:02.934

Um, we look forward to working with all of the interested parties, like each of you to solve the flood risk management problems that have long plagued the Pearl river basin in communities throughout the drainage basin.

90 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:10:03.414 --> 00:10:13.644

I'm Andrew Walker and I work in the project planning and review branch of the office of the assistant secretary. The army for civil works.

91 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:10:14.214 --> 00:10:27.684

Um, our leader is shown here on this slide. Michael Connor, he is the assistant secretary of the army for civil works. He could not be with us here today, but we do have a video from him that he would like us to share.

92 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:10:27.684 --> 00:10:29.694

If we could go to that video, please.

93 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:10:48.029 --> 00:10:52.319

While the video loads, um.

94 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:10:53.399 --> 00:10:57.119

Hi, everyone I, my Congress is fairly army.

95 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:10:57.119 --> 00:11:03.569

Okay.

96 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:06.089 --> 00:11:09.599

This conversation we spending.

97 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:12.719 --> 00:11:17.519

Hi, everyone I, my Congress isn't necessarily army because of the work.

98 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:17.519 --> 00:11:22.379

Policy oversight interaction for the U. S. Army Corps of engineers. So, what's the program.

99 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:22.379 --> 00:11:29.489

Thanks for joining us at the community engagement session of solutions to address flooding along the corridor in the.

100 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:29.489 --> 00:11:34.259

Look forward to hearing from you about the need, your needs and concerns regarding funding issues.

101 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:34.259 --> 00:11:37.319

And the proposed project to address these challenges.

102 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:37.319 --> 00:11:43.769

Is the objectives that he has? It's very devastating recently at 2020.

103 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:43.769 --> 00:11:52.109

2022 I saw some of this flooding in August of last year to discuss the proposed project.

104 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:52.109 --> 00:11:57.599

Is the priorities provide people Jackson effective near term solutions to the budget?

105 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:11:57.599 --> 00:12:01.619

And we have a tremendous opportunities to deliver the solutions through the buyer.

106 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:01.619 --> 00:12:04.919

5 parts and infrastructure law funding provides to do that. Good.

107 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:04.919 --> 00:12:10.589

This administration and efficient funding to complete planning and implementation of a plan.

108 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:10.589 --> 00:12:16.079

Consistent, but this is an authority and a compliance with federal environmental.

109 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:16.079 --> 00:12:20.849

You're in this day, and the final technical report for this effort will for my decisions.

110 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:20.849 --> 00:12:25.229

Other solutions we will then we can plug that in Jack.

111 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:25.229 --> 00:12:29.729

I appreciate your time and today we work together, find the best solutions.

112 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:29.729 --> 00:12:33.239

For Jackson in this region that the.

113 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:12:33.239 --> 00:12:41.669

Thank you very much for your time. Okay so as back to the slide deck, um.

114 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:12:41.669 --> 00:12:44.994

We are honored to have Mr Connor serve as our leader.

115 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:12:45.174 --> 00:12:57.174

He has a vast experience of solving complex water resource problems at the federal and regional levels, including his prior assignment as deputy secretary of the Department of the interior.

116 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:12:57.479 --> 00:13:07.439

Secretary Connor will ultimately be the decision maker for any recommendation relative to flooding in Jackson and throughout the basin.

117 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:13:07.439 --> 00:13:11.969

Um, our office of the Department of army for civil works.

118 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:13:11.969 --> 00:13:17.879

Provides policy, oversight of the U. S Army Corps of engineers civil works program.

119 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:13:17.879 --> 00:13:22.229

We oversee the plans design, construction and operation.

120 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:13:22.229 --> 00:13:29.639

Of flood navigation, ecosystem and other projects for communities throughout the country.

121 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:13:29.639 --> 00:13:43.049

I echo a secretary commerce statement that we look forward to hearing from each of you about your needs and concerns regarding flooding and a potential flood risk management project to address these challenges.

122 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:13:43.049 --> 00:13:47.849

We can go to the next slide.

123 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:13:51.264 --> 00:14:04.254

Okay, so, as Tom said, why are we here we are here to advance a flood risk management solution after decades of repetitive flooding in Jackson and throughout the basin.

124 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:04.559 --> 00:14:18.389

For over a 100 years, headwater flooding throughout the Pearl river has caused disruption to businesses industry residents and the way of life for many folks again, throughout the basin.

125 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:18.389 --> 00:14:23.909

Over 5,000, commercial and residential structures have sustained damages.

126 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:23.909 --> 00:14:28.469

Impacts have affected a population of over 500,000.

127 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:28.469 --> 00:14:33.509

Notable flood events include those from 9,979.

128 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:33.509 --> 00:14:39.059

983 and most recently in 2020 and 2022.

129 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:39.059 --> 00:14:44.039

The 79 flood event flooded transportation routes.

130 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:44.039 --> 00:14:52.949

Homes businesses and costs more than 223 Million dollars in damages in 1979 values.

131 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:52.949 --> 00:14:58.799

Says substantial the highest press was experienced in 2020.

132 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:14:58.799 --> 00:15:03.599

Notably impacting 2 minority and low income areas of Jackson.

133 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:15:03.599 --> 00:15:11.369

In 2022 secretary Connor was touring the Jackson area when the rain was falling.

134 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:15:11.369 --> 00:15:25.049

And the river stages were rising. So, um, the Pro river basin also provides a tremendous environmental value, including wetlands that filter waters that eventually flow into the Gulf of Mexico.

135 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:15:25.049 --> 00:15:29.249

And support thousands of geese, migratory birds.

136 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:15:29.249 --> 00:15:33.449

And endanger turtles and more, um.

137 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:15:33.449 --> 00:15:45.119

For decades, the core and non federal interests have sought to solve the flavors management problems in Jackson and throughout the basin, but a lack of project justification.

138 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:15:45.119 --> 00:15:48.119

Community support and funding.

139 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:15:48.119 --> 00:16:01.499

Have stalled meaningful progress. We look forward to working with interested parties like each of you to solve the flood risk management problems that have long plague. The communities throughout the Pearl river drainage.

140 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:01.499 --> 00:16:05.489

We can have the next slide please.

141 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:05.489 --> 00:16:09.449

So there is a federal interest.

142 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:09.449 --> 00:16:12.509

In providing floodwaters management.

143 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:12.509 --> 00:16:21.509

Through the Pearl river basin in 986 Congress, authorized the poor to plan design and implement a flood risk management project.

144 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:21.509 --> 00:16:32.579

In 2007 that authorization was modified through section 3104 of the water resources development act of 2007.

145 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:32.579 --> 00:16:37.919

That authorization allowed the secretary of the army for civil works.

146 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:37.919 --> 00:16:46.289

To select and implement an appropriate flood risk management plan without the need for further consultation by the Congress.

147 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:46.289 --> 00:16:50.729

Normally, we have an authorization to study a problem.

148 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:50.729 --> 00:16:55.739

We have to go back to the Congress for an authority to.

149 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:16:55.739 --> 00:17:01.499

Implement a project in this case, Congress gave us all of that at 1 time, which is.

150 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:01.499 --> 00:17:14.609

Unheard of specifically, 31 and 4 of the water resources development act of 2007 allowed that the secretary may construct the National economic development plan.

151 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:14.609 --> 00:17:19.439

A locally preferred plan, or some combination thereof.

152 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:19.439 --> 00:17:24.599

With the requirement that the secretary make a determination.

153 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:24.599 --> 00:17:36.864

That if an LP is recommended that it provides at least the same level of flood damage reduction as the National economic development plan, which will explain it a little further.

154 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:37.434 --> 00:17:40.044

And that if the locally preferred plan is.

155 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:40.349 --> 00:17:45.599

Recommended that it'd be environmentally acceptable and technically feasible.

156 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:45.599 --> 00:17:52.529

Following this authorization in the water resources development act of 2018.

157 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:52.529 --> 00:17:59.159

Section 1176, we acquired that. The secretary also assess downstream effects.

158 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:17:59.159 --> 00:18:09.089

Bottom line, there's continued federal interest in providing a solution to the flood risk in the Pearl river basin.

159 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:09.089 --> 00:18:13.079

But in the past, we have not had a plan, and we have not had funding.

160 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:13.079 --> 00:18:22.469

Now, we have that tremendous opportunity has been created by the bipartisan infrastructure law.

161 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:22.469 --> 00:18:35.249

That law provided funding for the corps of engineers to identify design and implement a flood risk management project subject to the approval by the secretary of the army.

162 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:35.249 --> 00:18:38.399

So, now we have the authorization.

163 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:38.399 --> 00:18:45.779

And the funding needed to provide resolution to the residents of the Pro river basin.

164 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:45.779 --> 00:18:52.739

Advancing the solution can now happen more quickly because we have the pieces that are necessary to make.

165 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:52.739 --> 00:18:58.139

Change we are excited to reinvigorate the technical and community work.

166 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:18:58.139 --> 00:19:03.569

To deliver for Jackson we thank you for your participation in today's session.

167 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:19:03.569 --> 00:19:07.799

This is the beginning of an important process that can yield quick.

168 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:19:07.799 --> 00:19:12.359

And responsive solutions, but we need to hear from the public.

169 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:19:12.359 --> 00:19:15.659

Of what your concerns are and what your ideas are.

170 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:19:15.659 --> 00:19:20.399

At this time I will turn it over to Colonel Klein to discuss the road ahead.

171 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:19:20.399 --> 00:19:23.699

Thank you.

172 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:19:27.899 --> 00:19:31.559

It's trying to me.

173 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:19:32.639 --> 00:19:45.929

Hello.

174 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:19:45.929 --> 00:19:50.279

Draw we're having problems with your audio.

175 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:19:50.279 --> 00:19:55.379

What name is.

176 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:19:55.379 --> 00:20:02.909

Well, maybe oh, Amanda. Derek Williams. Amanda John. Oh, okay.

177 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:20:02.909 --> 00:20:05.969

There we go.

178 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:20:07.439 --> 00:20:10.919

Troy, maybe we, I think we can hear you now.

179 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:12.059 --> 00:20:16.349

Still shows on mute, but all right. Thanks.

180 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:16.349 --> 00:20:21.839

Thank you very much. So my name is Troy. Constance I was introduced that, you know, I'm the.

181 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:21.839 --> 00:20:31.739

Uh, chief of the regional planning and environment division, and I'm standing in for current decline, he is, we'd love to be here, but he has another engagement.

182 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:31.739 --> 00:20:34.949

So, I'll give you a little bit of a history.

183 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:34.949 --> 00:20:39.749

And as our has already been stated the interest in blood risk and management.

184 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:39.749 --> 00:20:44.579

For the recognize communities has been ongoing effort for many decades.

185 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:44.579 --> 00:20:53.639

In 968, the Jackson East and West levies were constructed, but not all the flood risks were managed by this project.

186 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:53.639 --> 00:20:57.659

In 996, the local interest proposed.

187 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:20:57.659 --> 00:21:04.079

The the floor linked flood control plan consisting of an upper and lower lakes.

188 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:04.079 --> 00:21:08.939

On the Pearl river south of the Ross barnette reservoir.

189 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:08.939 --> 00:21:14.999

This plan was an alternative to the comprehensive Levy plan.

190 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:14.999 --> 00:21:28.949

In 2007, you says, prepared a preliminary feasibility report and draft the EIS evaluating that local interest plan as well as a comprehensive plan.

191 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:28.949 --> 00:21:37.709

This report in were not noticed in the Federal Register. However, it should be noted that Levy plan.

192 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:37.709 --> 00:21:41.039

Did not have local support.

193 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:41.634 --> 00:21:54.684

In March of 2012, the non federal interest prepared, a preliminary hydrologic and hydraulic report for a channel improvement concept along with some initial inquiries of the local communities,

194 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:54.684 --> 00:21:58.734

or a preferred plan with a smaller footprint. a smaller footprint

195 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:21:59.399 --> 00:22:03.299

Okay.

196 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:22:03.299 --> 00:22:07.794

What risk management efforts? Excuse me?

197 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:22:07.794 --> 00:22:20.184

By the flood risk management effort was continued in 2013 by the non federal interest, and they've re-scoped the project and review previous alternatives with input from the use case. the use case

198 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:22:20.579 --> 00:22:35.304

Additional agencies in the public to efficiently and effectively consider as many measures as possible previous reports were used and where possible reevaluating and considering over 60 alternatives.

199 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:22:35.699 --> 00:22:44.099

And during this effort plans were updated through cost estimating modeling and other analysis where appropriate.

200 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:22:44.099 --> 00:22:55.919

Using this reporting, you say, says conducting assessment and where needed re, analysis of engineering, economic and environmental factors of the alternatives.

201 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:22:55.919 --> 00:23:00.539

Next slide please.

202 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:23:00.539 --> 00:23:08.639

So, as stated in 31.4, our current efforts is to start with.

203 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:23:08.639 --> 00:23:23.454

The non federal interest report as we reviewed by the secretary of the army, and we're looking to fill any data gaps, apply the current procedures and processes of the core of engineers.

204 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:23:23.934 --> 00:23:37.284

Our goal is to develop a draft to inform the sector decision. And in this effort, we're directed to identify plan and the plan is the National economic development plan.

205 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:23:37.284 --> 00:23:41.664

And that is a plan that maximizes benefits net benefits.

206 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:23:41.999 --> 00:23:51.089

Compared to cost, we need to compare the levels of the alternatives that we're looking at for flood protection and capabilities.

207 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:23:51.089 --> 00:23:57.479

And also assess the environmental acceptability and technical feasibility of any of those alternatives.

208 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:23:57.479 --> 00:24:05.819

And then finally, in assessing all those alternatives, we would continue to review all the potential impact downstream.

209 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:24:05.819 --> 00:24:11.429

And this information would be provided in our report to the secretary to help inform.

210 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:24:11.429 --> 00:24:19.679

His decision, thank you. I think at this point, we turned it back over to Lesley to start walking us through.

211 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:24:19.679 --> 00:24:24.629

Some of the alternatives and actions that we're undertaking to meet this directly.

212 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:24:24.629 --> 00:24:33.509

Hi, I'm Lesley for, but the regional planning and environment division South is a plan formulator next slide.

213 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:24:33.509 --> 00:24:39.959

The 1st go over, what was in the section 211 report, but the non schedule interest.

214 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:24:39.959 --> 00:24:51.749

You'll see that there were 3 plans that were part of the final plan. We have been working collaboratively with the non federal interest and understanding their final.

215 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:24:51.749 --> 00:25:04.559

Plan final plans are presented and they included the non structural plan that was for the relocation of structures and the purchasing of the property of the structures world.

216 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:25:04.559 --> 00:25:07.559

We're on within the 500 ear floodplain.

217 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:25:08.064 --> 00:25:12.084

That, and you'll hear that also reference later on as alternative a,

218 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:25:12.894 --> 00:25:23.694

is a non federal interested in structural plan and there was a levy plan that included grading existing levies constructing of additional Levy segments.

219 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:25:24.089 --> 00:25:37.259

And or flood walls, unprotected areas, and the addition of pumps corrugated structures as applicable. So, there was a channel improvement plan.

220 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:25:37.584 --> 00:25:51.954

That is the non federal interest preferred plan that was submitted that consisted of excavations to increase the channel capacity demolition of the existing.

221 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:25:52.344 --> 00:25:58.494

We're near the J. H fuel water treatment plant.

222 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:25:58.829 --> 00:26:04.259

A construction of a new year with a low flow gate.

223 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:04.464 --> 00:26:12.354

And this passage structure further downstream, it also included the schedule Levy improvements,

224 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:14.034 --> 00:26:24.414

which is where the location and placement of excavated material suggested was in that plan, and upgrading of an existing non federal Levy.

225 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:24.534 --> 00:26:32.634

That is currently around the Savannah street wastewater treatment plan to make it a federalized ring lobby around it.

226 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:32.939 --> 00:26:36.869

Okay, next slide.

227 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:36.869 --> 00:26:44.669

So that was what was submitted by the non federal interests, and there are 2 sections to under section 211 report.

228 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:44.669 --> 00:26:52.979

To the ASA office, the assistant secretary of the army of civil war.

229 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:52.979 --> 00:26:58.019

Now, currently what we're working on, being the core of engineers.

230 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:26:58.019 --> 00:27:05.309

We have in further working to understand what the on their last 3 plans.

231 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:27:05.309 --> 00:27:14.664

Including understanding from built upon historical information of what is going on on the ground. What is the real flood risk going on there?

232 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:27:15.414 --> 00:27:20.334

So we can get a greater understanding sometimes reports don't always totally.

233 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:27:21.719 --> 00:27:36.054

Cooperate that related information, so that working with them clearly has been very helpful, but taking it a step further the core of engineers is preparing the draft environmental impact statement,

234 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:27:36.294 --> 00:27:44.964

which again is going to identify the NTD plan is discussed the National economic development plan based on flood risk contributions.

235 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:27:45.539 --> 00:27:55.919

That goes into the flood measures, why it brings for flood reduction is what's going to contribute to the National economics for that plan.

236 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:27:55.919 --> 00:28:03.719

And I'll compare the flood protection provided by that plan to level flow production, provide alternatives, being assessed.

237 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:03.719 --> 00:28:12.389

Um, additionally the report will assess the potential downstream impacts the Pro river basin. We're just stating this again, because it is so critical.

238 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:12.389 --> 00:28:17.339

What what we're going to do the comparison of plans.

239 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:17.339 --> 00:28:21.869

Are going to include those those final 3 plans as mentioned.

240 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:21.869 --> 00:28:36.209

There was submitted by the non federal interest, but also getting additional plans. And those are the, a, is the non federal plan that we've already mentioned the non federal interest is submitted, but we're going to.

241 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:36.234 --> 00:28:40.854

Also evaluate another non structural alternative that's an alone.

242 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:40.914 --> 00:28:54.324

No other features to it besides non structural that can consist of elevating of residential structures and fly proofing of non residential structures.

243 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:54.774 --> 00:28:58.554

Some residentials may be considered for historical structures.

244 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:28:59.039 --> 00:29:08.249

So that would be that plan there could be potential for bios. We've heard from the public and so forth. So that plan is still being developed.

245 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:29:08.249 --> 00:29:15.839

Alternative see, that's a non federal interest, recommended plan their section to 11 report that we just went over.

246 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:29:15.839 --> 00:29:19.739

We author authorize to.

247 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:29:22.044 --> 00:29:35.004

For secretary Connor to possibly approve a plan, that's a combination or hybrid alternative of the plan and a non federal interest plan. So there is that there's 1 of those that will.

248 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:29:35.639 --> 00:29:41.429

Potentially, assess another potential alternatives as it comes in from the public.

249 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:29:41.429 --> 00:29:47.549

And again, we just want to reiterate that the.

250 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:29:47.549 --> 00:29:59.039

It's not going to make a recommendation, the environmental impact statement rather it's going to provide a comparison of alternatives. So assistant secretary of army for civil work. Mr. Connor.

251 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:29:59.039 --> 00:30:07.259

Can decide the range of flood risk management options to approve next slide.

252 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:30:07.259 --> 00:30:18.509

So, here's the study area and I'm going to explain this a little more detail, just because we did have a lot of questions that came up in in our in person public meetings.

253 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:30:18.509 --> 00:30:22.469

Um, in the circle area.

254 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:30:22.469 --> 00:30:36.719

It's just it's just a circle of friends, but you can see in the gray. That is the area for the 100 year. Inundation that we've brand preliminary information with our hydraulics.

255 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:30:37.194 --> 00:30:52.074

So study area, when we define that as a core of engineers, and our planning processes that we follow, it's the area we are focusing on to achieve flood, risk reduction benefit. It doesn't mean that.

256 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:30:52.379 --> 00:30:59.669

If anything hydraulically connected, or may have a potential impact that we're only going to study it within this area.

257 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:30:59.669 --> 00:31:12.924

That's actually gonna be a much larger footprint as the science and hydrology tells us to expand to make sure we're getting a full assessment but again, the study areas to focus on the area to achieve flood risk benefits,

258 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:31:13.554 --> 00:31:16.614

and it includes the Pro river watershed.

259 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:31:17.279 --> 00:31:29.249

And major territories, primarily in the area of Vermont, 270, which is located, just south of Richland, Mississippi, and then goes North.

260 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:31:29.249 --> 00:31:35.639

To revert all 302, which is located just south of.

261 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:31:35.639 --> 00:31:45.834

The Ross BARNET reservoir dam, the study area includes parts of Hinds and ranking counties and Mississippi.

262 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:31:46.434 --> 00:31:52.164

So again, the study area is where we're focusing to achieve blood risk reduction benefits.

263 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:31:54.329 --> 00:31:59.549

Okay, and I'm going to handle it hand it back to Troy Constance.

264 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:31:59.549 --> 00:32:03.689

It looks like.

265 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:32:05.664 --> 00:32:18.984

Oh, that's actually me. Sorry. That's the part of to give the information to and form Dr Connor to make a decision.

266 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:32:19.319 --> 00:32:29.429

Is we'll also look into comprehensive benefits is a fancy term for other areas of interest. There could be potential other areas. Um.

267 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:32:30.569 --> 00:32:37.199

That we're not thinking of that, that this is a much broader look than just blood risk management. So.

268 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:32:37.199 --> 00:32:48.804

While this will not go into, to identifying what the National economic development plan. It gives us more robust idea for to help inform Mr. Connor to make a decision.

269 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:32:49.284 --> 00:32:57.354

And we're really looking for your feedback on these areas and and things that maybe we have not identified yet.

270 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:32:57.864 --> 00:33:09.414

To help inform, we will be summarizing and providing him the information while we provide a summary all the comments will be put into an appendix included as part of the process.

271 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:33:10.164 --> 00:33:18.084

But here's some of the things that we identify, obviously flood risk reduction, which is our primary, but then water supply.

272 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:33:18.839 --> 00:33:27.389

It's something we've heard waste water and waste water, treatment, ecosystem, environmental impacts, existing waste sites.

273 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:33:27.389 --> 00:33:35.939

Cultural resources, transportation, downstream impact, recreational access and opportunities.

274 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:33:35.939 --> 00:33:39.539

Community impacts such as confusion.

275 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:33:39.539 --> 00:33:49.554

In quality of life for the people living in the study area and downstream and in potential economic opportunities. So that's what we thought of.

276 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:33:49.554 --> 00:33:57.894

But this is really where we get into the open session and you'll hear Tom bring back up additional information. I can provide input.

277 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:33:57.894 --> 00:34:04.824

We're looking for that input to give a full picture of of what is impact in the communities.

278 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:34:05.399 --> 00:34:13.229

The next slide see what it.

279 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:34:13.229 --> 00:34:20.909

Okay, so we're here today, we started out public engagement in outreach in May.

280 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:34:20.909 --> 00:34:28.349

But just a little background, in the way we generally operate before we meet with the public, what we generally will do assess.

281 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:34:28.349 --> 00:34:38.669

The the area for its existing conditions, and in this case, we had a non federal interest report that came in. So we begin our effort by assessing.

282 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:34:38.669 --> 00:34:53.244

And ground truth thing, what we know and understand, and that is our existing condition and we may produce project out the future conditions as well that positions us to be able to present information and have a dialogue.

283 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:34:53.634 --> 00:34:57.744

So that we can start to develop alternatives, collaboratively with you.

284 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:34:58.139 --> 00:35:03.539

That brings us today and as you've heard a few times, we have a charge.

285 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:35:03.539 --> 00:35:16.469

We have some alternatives that were starting from, but open and continuous dialogue with the public is important in order to develop an alternative that we can present to the secretary for his full understanding and decision making.

286 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:35:16.944 --> 00:35:26.634

So, from today, throughout the summer, we'll be doing those technical evaluations, which would include the engineering, the environment, the other social effects,

287 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:35:26.634 --> 00:35:41.514

because we have a heavy focus on not only the engineering and science and environment, but people and so we'll be working hard on that over the summer, our goal is to deliver a draft feasibility report.

288 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:35:41.964 --> 00:35:55.374

Well, in this case would be a draft report with a draft, because we are post authorization. Forgive me for using the term disability. That report would be again, put out to the public for review and comment.

289 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:35:55.769 --> 00:36:04.259

That information would come back to us, and we would take that and make any modifications as appropriate based on your input to us.

290 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:36:04.824 --> 00:36:19.614

To prepare a final to go back to the secretary for his final decision, with the open intent that into January timeframe the secretary can make a final decision and develop a record of decision. So it is pretty fast paced.

291 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:36:19.644 --> 00:36:31.464

We understand that. But we are building off of all of the information that's been generated for decades. So we have some good information from all the hard work that the core of engineers and non federal sponsors use, the public have done.

292 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:36:31.794 --> 00:36:44.154

And I think if we bring all of this together, we can be successful in informing the secretary so that he can make the best decision for the people of rank in hind as well as, for all downstream considerations of this effort.

293 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:36:44.519 --> 00:36:49.139

And at that point, I think I turned it back to you Tom.

294 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:36:49.139 --> 00:36:54.389

All right, thank you so much, Andre, you.

295 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:36:54.389 --> 00:36:58.559

Leslie and Troy, so next slide please.

296 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:36:58.559 --> 00:37:02.699

So, where we're at today, um.

297 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:02.699 --> 00:37:09.149

We tell you this multiple times where we really didn't want to hear feedback. We really want your input.

298 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:09.149 --> 00:37:18.959

We will be accepting input on the project through the 30th of this month to 30 gene. The email address is right down screen. So you can see it.

299 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:18.959 --> 00:37:27.479

Of course, you can always do written mail to the US Postal service. That address is in the middle of the slide. There.

300 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:27.479 --> 00:37:37.589

And then, as we've mentioned, there is a project website it's out there, we will just keep this slide up here so that you have the opportunity to.

301 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:37.589 --> 00:37:40.679

Capture a text photo, whatever you need to.

302 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:40.679 --> 00:37:48.779

With respect to that website, as Andre noted in the chat we have, um.

303 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:48.779 --> 00:37:55.739

Many of the download the presentation, but many of the, the slides.

304 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:37:55.739 --> 00:38:07.164

And map that kind of stuff is out there that website will continue to be developed and grow as we move along. This will not be the last public meeting by any means.

305 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:07.644 --> 00:38:11.274

And so but it is our desire.

306 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:11.520 --> 00:38:20.550

To to hear you and so that's that's really we wanted to do informational. I think we've got that.

307 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:20.550 --> 00:38:24.720

Uh, and but we do need to get some, um.

308 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:24.720 --> 00:38:31.410

Feedback from me, so I haven't seen any other questions yet on the chat.

309 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:31.410 --> 00:38:35.970

I will go ahead and if somebody has a question, if you will.

310 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:35.970 --> 00:38:47.280

Um, either chatting in or raise your hand. Let's let let's do the Webex portion of it. 1st before we do the chat. So I'm just.

311 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:47.280 --> 00:38:53.400

I've got a hand up right there. My apologies looks like a mark of Watts.

312 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:38:53.400 --> 00:39:02.340

Hi, we're not hearing you, ma'am. Oh, you got to be unmuted? Excuse us?

313 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:39:02.340 --> 00:39:06.840

Now.

314 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:39:09.390 --> 00:39:12.600

This 1 just might be needed on your end.

315 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:39:12.600 --> 00:39:15.690

There it is. All right.

316 "Martha Watts" (1061664768)

00:39:17.815 --> 00:39:30.445

My 1st question is, you have spent years on this non federal partner plan. How many years have you been studying? Downstream? The 200 miles down stream. stream

317 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:39:34.890 --> 00:39:40.350

Bam, I'm not sure of what the, the timestamp of looking downstream.

318 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:39:40.350 --> 00:39:52.020

We'll have to look into that and get you a better number, but for this particular effort, we're looking all the way down until the influences of any efforts that we propose here would terminate.

319 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:39:52.615 --> 00:39:58.795

And if you don't mind, I just want to kind of make it clear, because we get these questions.

320 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:39:58.795 --> 00:40:08.305

I get these questions inside the core of engineers study area and influence area are both considered in, in our, our evaluations.

321 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:40:08.305 --> 00:40:15.985

The study areas are generally defined by the authorization of Congress that you are looking at ranking behind this particular case.

322 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:40:16.410 --> 00:40:21.510

Influence areas we look at that the effects of any action.

323 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:40:21.510 --> 00:40:27.780

For as far down as as the influences exist. So, in this case, we're we are.

324 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:40:27.780 --> 00:40:34.830

Looking at Pearl river as far down as to we see nothing else that changes from any. Actually we take.

325 "Martha Watts" (1061664768)

00:40:34.830 --> 00:40:38.040

When do you expect that to begin?

326 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:40:38.965 --> 00:40:48.655

We started the hydrology now, we have the existing conditions of what we've determined that the future conditions and that's without project. Do not change.

327 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:40:48.745 --> 00:41:01.105

The way we look at it is, if for climate change, particularly in the coastal area, you see a change in water surface area from today out into the future, when you get, in the upland areas, it's really about rainfall changes.

328 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:41:01.315 --> 00:41:08.905

And for this particular region, the rainfall changes between now and the 50 year period analysis are not significant to see a change.

329 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:41:09.270 --> 00:41:13.260

So, we, we believe that we've captured both today and 50 years out.

330 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:41:13.260 --> 00:41:18.150

For existing conditions, we are about to begin to run alternatives.

331 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:41:18.150 --> 00:41:27.300

Uh, as you said, we've started this public dialogue right now to make sure we, we capture any input that we need to evaluate. And when we start those.

332 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:41:27.300 --> 00:41:32.970

We'll start looking at downstream because our hydrologic model is set up to look all the way down.

333 "Martha Watts" (1061664768)

00:41:36.060 --> 00:41:39.780

All right.

334 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:41:39.780 --> 00:41:45.300

So, I haven't seen any other hand go up just yet.

335 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:41:45.300 --> 00:41:49.500

Yeah, 1 for 1 Fernandez.

336 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:41:49.500 --> 00:41:52.800

Please please provide your input.

337 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:41:54.505 --> 00:42:05.695

Hey, thank you for holding this panel again so I have I have a handful of questions they might err more on the technical side, but I hope that some of the panelists can help me with them.

338 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:42:06.895 --> 00:42:20.695

The 1st question is about expected model changes and so I want to know what is the likelihood that the flood reduction predictions that were listed in the 2018 will change by more than say 1 foot.

339 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:42:20.845 --> 00:42:32.215

So, for example, there's a table, it's table 3 dash 3 and appendix C, which shows that a 100 year flood event near 194 will be 8.3 feet lower with alternative. C.

340 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:42:32.215 --> 00:42:44.245

is it reasonable to expect that the updated predictions will show something greater than 9.3 feet or less than 7.3 feet? greater than nine point three feet or less than seven point three feet

341 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:42:44.520 --> 00:42:49.470

So that's 1 question right there. And I don't know if it 1 of the panelists can take that on.

342 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:42:50.515 --> 00:43:04.015

I'll start with that as I said, we have the existing conditions in future without, which happens to be the same in this case. Those models done and we've updated that with the most recent hydrology, all the way up until. I think it was 2020.

343 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:43:04.015 --> 00:43:14.455

I think is where they so we have the hydraulic period record going all the way back to the current and that said, we haven't done any of the evaluations. of the evaluations

344 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:43:14.730 --> 00:43:24.240

Of alternatives as I stated before so it would be a little bit inappropriate for me to say what what those outcomes would be. We just ignore the numbers check it.

345 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:43:24.240 --> 00:43:31.830

Okay, thank you. Um, okay, so you guys also covered, um, some of the authorization. Um, and if.

346 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:43:31.830 --> 00:43:42.420

I, I would word at 2007 always had some confusingly, which I just wanted to see if you guys could also help me and possibly other. Uh.

347 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:43:42.420 --> 00:43:50.190

People understand, I know that it authorizes the agent to construct a project quote unquote. Generally in accordance.

348 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:43:50.190 --> 00:43:58.770

With the 2007 projects studied the project studied in 2007, the link project, um.

349 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:43:58.770 --> 00:44:07.800

What qualifies as generally in accordance is there is there a, an agreement on this or is it more of a, you'll know it when you see it kind of thing.

350 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:44:10.165 --> 00:44:17.305

Um, 1, this is Andrew Walker. I, I think it's more the latter of we'll see it when we get there. Yeah.

351 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:44:17.365 --> 00:44:30.775

Of course, that authorization was based on the 2007 preliminary draft report, which Mr Constance mentioned earlier that report evaluated a levy plan. a levy plan

352 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:44:31.255 --> 00:44:46.195

And a local plan, and that was just never finalized. So, again, both of those were targeted towards providing floods production and that's what we're still focused on. So, that would be generally in accordance.

353 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:44:46.225 --> 00:44:49.435

But we will certainly reevaluate that as we.

354 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:44:49.740 --> 00:44:56.760

Better to find alternatives and features and so forth. Gotcha. Gotcha. Um.

355 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:44:56.760 --> 00:45:01.440

Okay, so questions on any benefits, um.

356 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:45:01.440 --> 00:45:13.860

Is it so a quick question followed up more is that number 1 is accurate to say that the National economic development benefits associated with alternative.

357 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:45:13.860 --> 00:45:25.470

Is the long term reduction of flood damages to homes and structures and I think someone might have actually noted, like, Amanda might have mentioned that. But I just wanted a clarification. Is that the main benefit associated with day? 1.

358 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:45:26.485 --> 00:45:31.585

Well, national economic development benefits is the broad spectrum of possible outcomes.

359 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:45:31.585 --> 00:45:45.265

It's a reduction of impact in general dollars 2 dollars of what you would prevent in the case of you would be effectively removing flooding structures from the floodplain and the damages. That would be incurred.

360 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:45:45.625 --> 00:45:48.625

If they were not, that's the comparative. Does that help? Yeah.

361 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:45:48.960 --> 00:45:57.360

Yeah, yes. Um, and I am I know that you said that there's multiple benefits I am sticking with the, because it sounds like that's.

362 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:45:57.360 --> 00:46:02.940

What the authorization hinges on so to follow up on that is there um.

363 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

00:46:02.940 --> 00:46:09.390

I'm sorry, uh, are there any other significant national economic.

364 "Juan Fernandez" (2777449984)

00:46:09.390 --> 00:46:17.970

Any deep benefits associated with alternative besides removing structures from the flood plain.

365 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:46:17.970 --> 00:46:24.720

Well, I think it'd be more effective to talk about how we look at benefits in general. Um.

366 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:46:24.720 --> 00:46:36.835

Because we look at all possible benefits for each alternative. Some obtain those benefits. Some do not, but you have a broad span of benefits to include monetary as well as non monetary.

367 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:46:37.165 --> 00:46:46.585

This administration has provided policy and guidance to look at comprehensive benefits and the comprehensive benefits are very inclusive.

368 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:46:46.915 --> 00:46:55.075

And so they contain impacts that we traditionally, which, if you've reviewed reports before do not capture. And that is.

369 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:46:55.410 --> 00:47:09.895

Informative for the secretary and others to make the decision, and those would be regional benefits or impact to minority communities or, you know, that sort of thing. So as well as environmental impact, et cetera.

370 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:47:09.925 --> 00:47:15.235

So it's pretty inclusive. How you categorize them and how you measure them. It's a little different.

371 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:47:15.600 --> 00:47:24.570

For each of those categories, but all of them are compared against all alternatives and, as I said, yes show the benefits some do not.

372 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:47:24.570 --> 00:47:38.100

Thank you. Excuse me Kim can we allow some other folks to? Absolutely. Thank you so much. Dennis Rakhi. I believe you've got your handout.

373 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:47:38.100 --> 00:47:42.870

You know, like.

374 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:47:42.870 --> 00:47:46.470

Okay.

375 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:47:47.700 --> 00:47:50.850

Mm, hmm.

376 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:47:50.850 --> 00:47:56.340

We're not hearing you, sir can you on mute.

377 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:47:56.340 --> 00:48:01.230

What do you hear me now?

378 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

00:48:01.230 --> 00:48:11.040

Yes, sir, thank you. Okay. I just like to ask if this presentation will be put on the project website for future reference.

379 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

00:48:11.040 --> 00:48:14.970

Yes, or it should actually be out there right now Thank you.

380 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

00:48:14.970 --> 00:48:19.530

You're very welcome.

381 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:48:19.530 --> 00:48:25.860

Anybody else have their hand right? And then Evan Parker.

382 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:48:28.530 --> 00:48:32.280

Mr. Barker.

383 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:48:32.280 --> 00:48:36.480

Let's just make sure we get you unmuted.

384 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:48:37.770 --> 00:48:44.850

We're not hearing you just yet. Uh, hi, my name's Kevin Parker. I'm a Jackson residence.

385 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:48:44.850 --> 00:48:51.600

Um, and I am a professor of anthropology here and mill saps college.

386 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:48:51.600 --> 00:49:02.640

And a frequent visitor to the Pearl river bottom lens. Uh, and, uh, as far as my input here is concerned.

387 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:49:02.640 --> 00:49:15.810

I am a professional archeologist and, um, I hope that in looking at the scope of these various alternatives, that all of the cultural resources.

388 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:49:15.810 --> 00:49:22.920

Especially archaeological and historical, um, will be reviewed and studied.

389 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:49:23.485 --> 00:49:35.605

From what I have been able to see a series of letters dating to 2006, 2007, issued by the Mississippi Department of archives in history. Uh, it appears that, um, in response to a 2006.

390 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:49:35.605 --> 00:49:38.755

um in response to a two thousand and six

391 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:49:38.940 --> 00:49:42.630

Draft report, uh, issued by archaeology, Mississippi.

392 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:49:42.630 --> 00:49:47.070

Pursuant of responsibilities under section 106.

393 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:49:47.070 --> 00:50:01.920

Of the National Historic Preservation act that there would have potentially been quite a few archaeological sites affected by the floors lakes project, uh, an earlier project that was under review.

394 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:50:02.365 --> 00:50:07.735

Uh, from what I understand this project, and its potential impact area would be smaller.

395 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:50:08.155 --> 00:50:22.795

Uh, I am unable to access at the moment, at least a reports showing where these archaeological sites would be located that could be potentially impacted, but based upon, uh, what I have reviewed.

396 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:50:22.825 --> 00:50:32.155

Um, there's several sites and Heinz and ranking county archaeological sites that could be adversely impacted due to dredging.

397 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:50:32.665 --> 00:50:45.895

Or flooding, uh, these include sites, um, mound sites, dating, perhaps to woodland and Mississippian periods and even some sites that might date to your cake, period, uh,

398 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:50:45.925 --> 00:50:48.265

contemporaneous with poverty point.

399 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:50:49.135 --> 00:51:03.895

Uh, there have been other archaeological sites destroyed due to the construction of the Ross Barnett reservoir. Uh, perhaps as many as a dozen, uh, and there have even been poverty, point, areas sites destroyed in the Jackson area.

400 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:51:03.955 --> 00:51:18.955

Um, I would just ask that the scope of these projects include cultural resources specifically, because the archaeological and historic record is a non renewable resource. Once this is destroyed.

401 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:51:18.955 --> 00:51:31.495

Once these sites are destroyed, uh, the knowledge that they contain as last to us forever. And, of course, I also hope that all of this, all these studies are being conducted.

402 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:51:31.770 --> 00:51:38.400

In collaboration with, uh, a Native American tribes in Mississippi and Oklahoma.

403 "Parker, Evan" (1416254976)

00:51:38.400 --> 00:51:42.330

All for your time, and thank you for doing this panel.

404 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:51:42.330 --> 00:51:47.190

Thank you very much for those comments and we share.

405 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:51:47.190 --> 00:51:58.230

Your appreciation for for our rich heritage, and we have opened up section 106, and we're working towards a programmatic agreement to address those.

406 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:51:58.230 --> 00:52:04.680

Resources, actually, as you pointed out great, great value to to all of us.

407 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:52:04.680 --> 00:52:10.800

Okay, um.

408 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:52:10.800 --> 00:52:13.920

Actually, a hand raised from dominant.

409 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:52:16.200 --> 00:52:21.150

Sure.

410 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:52:21.150 --> 00:52:24.990

Do you hear me now? Yes, sir.

411 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:52:24.990 --> 00:52:30.120

Thanks I have 2 questions. I'll ask them and.

412 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:52:30.120 --> 00:52:38.400

Uh, listen for your answers 1st question is and I'm reasonably well versed in, um.

413 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:52:38.400 --> 00:52:46.200

The various permutations of flood control projects I just kind of want to understand the process.

414 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:52:46.200 --> 00:52:51.360

The previous presentation was essentially in my view.

415 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:52:51.360 --> 00:52:58.350

Organized and run by, I guess, what we would call the non federal interest the proponents of the 1 project.

416 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:52:58.350 --> 00:53:04.860

And the public meetings they held actually didn't really allow public input. So I'm glad this.

417 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:04.860 --> 00:53:11.040

Meeting is happening and the other meetings have happened. Am I to understand that?

418 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:11.040 --> 00:53:16.410

Other than them presenting that group, presenting that plan.

419 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:16.410 --> 00:53:22.920

They are not involved, or they are not the intermediary to the community.

420 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:22.920 --> 00:53:27.840

That this will essentially be the community communicating.

421 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:27.840 --> 00:53:32.220

With the Army Corps of engineers so that's kind of my 1st question.

422 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:32.220 --> 00:53:39.240

2nd question is pretty simple. I was at 1 of the in person meetings and someone mentioned the Berkeley plan.

423 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:39.240 --> 00:53:45.930

Um, who was on stage I can't remember who said that, and I just wondered if you could speak any more about that.

424 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:45.930 --> 00:53:50.640

Um, I understand it's an alternative plan that's being reviewed.

425 "Dominic DeLeo" (2129888000)

00:53:50.640 --> 00:53:56.010

So those are my 2 questions. Thank you.

426 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:53:56.010 --> 00:54:01.440

Thank you Dominic, I'll answer this 1, uh, for the team. Um.

427 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:01.440 --> 00:54:09.210

With respect to the locally preferred plan that is a plan that the rank and Hines flood and drainage control district has put forward.

428 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:09.210 --> 00:54:13.890

Again, going back to the authorization, the secretary can select.

429 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:13.890 --> 00:54:18.360

And any D plan, uh, locally preferred plan, or a combination thereof.

430 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:18.360 --> 00:54:23.550

So, we are working with the recognized flood and drainage controlled district.

431 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:23.550 --> 00:54:26.580

To utilize the information that they collected.

432 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:26.580 --> 00:54:34.440

For the corps of engineers to then fill any gaps and do any further assessments and evaluations on other alternatives.

433 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:35.185 --> 00:54:49.885

So I hope that answers your 1st question that yes, we're working with them, but we're building upon their work and filling in and moving forward with respect to the plan developed by U. C. Berkeley and Jackson State.

434 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:50.185 --> 00:54:55.585

Um, I understand that was just rolled out in a formal public.

435 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:54:55.860 --> 00:55:08.245

Session last month, we still have to get together and coordinate with that team so we can better understand their recommendations and how that might fit in with our alternatives analysis.

436 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:55:08.245 --> 00:55:12.415

So we're working on that don't have much to share at this time over.

437 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:55:12.720 --> 00:55:15.840

Hello.

438 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:55:15.840 --> 00:55:19.590

Go to the on.

439 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:55:19.590 --> 00:55:22.650

Wow.

440 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:55:22.650 --> 00:55:26.160

He wants to know about the dot cost estimate on the bridges.

441 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:55:26.160 --> 00:55:30.720

Okay, Hello?

442 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:55:30.720 --> 00:55:34.980

Yes, so I own property on the portal river.

443 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:55:34.980 --> 00:55:39.630

South of Jackson, and I'm concerned about the.

444 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:55:39.630 --> 00:55:43.230

Reduction in water flow if the 1 lakes.

445 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:55:44.280 --> 00:55:54.000

Option is implemented and my role Sue is coming out of the city of Jackson.

446 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:55:54.000 --> 00:55:58.440

And my ability to enjoy my property safely.

447 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:56:02.220 --> 00:56:07.140

I'll send you those to this 1.

448 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:56:07.140 --> 00:56:18.480

That those 2, the, the 1st, 1, as far as the, the design that has been put forth by the non schedule interests.

449 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:56:19.105 --> 00:56:30.535

For their local preferred plan for channel improvement does include a low flow gate. So that should pass a typical flow under normal conditions.

450 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:56:31.855 --> 00:56:41.275

Under a typical conditions is what it would be designed for. That's what's been proposed again. Our team is assessing that, but that's what's been proposed.

451 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:56:41.550 --> 00:56:47.280

Um, if there were any changes to the downstream flow, that would be.

452 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:56:47.280 --> 00:56:54.060

Provided in the report, and it's being assessed, but at this time, the way it's presented, it's not.

453 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:56:54.060 --> 00:56:58.320

The way things initially designed, um.

454 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:56:58.320 --> 00:57:07.920

So, we don't, we're going to be further assessing that, but the way it was proposed by non federal interest with the low flow gate.

455 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:57:07.920 --> 00:57:11.280

It should provide.

456 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:57:12.810 --> 00:57:22.620

For the report that was submitted the steady state, being current conditions, it shouldn't change the flow. So we will, we will validate that. So.

457 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:57:22.620 --> 00:57:30.900

Right now, in the hottest part of the year, when we have, at least amount of rainfall, I can walk across the river.

458 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:57:31.920 --> 00:57:39.270

And never get above my waist and now I'm concerned, we're talking about reducing that flow even further.

459 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:57:41.010 --> 00:57:45.930

Top of that on top of the raw sewage.

460 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:57:45.930 --> 00:57:49.980

The city of Jackson continues to dump into the river.

461 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:57:49.980 --> 00:57:53.100

That will be South of where.

462 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:57:53.100 --> 00:58:01.320

This low head dam is being proposed. I don't know about anybody else, but I don't want my children and grandchildren playing in raw sewage.

463 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:58:01.320 --> 00:58:04.710

So, if this project, in any way.

464 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

00:58:04.710 --> 00:58:10.620

It's going to increase that. I don't I don't even understand why we would be even considered.

465 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:58:13.080 --> 00:58:24.985

So thank you, sir, for for that comment, and we are aware of those concerns, and we'll continue to evaluate that that would be part of our downstream impacts.

466 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:58:25.615 --> 00:58:37.405

And as you said, you know, with downstream impacts from the responsibilities of the project, and we would make those appropriate recommendations to the secretary for consideration.

467 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

00:58:37.770 --> 00:58:41.670

But thank you for that comment and we, we do appreciate the concern.

468 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:58:44.275 --> 00:58:53.995

Yeah, if I could just add, um, so we are several comments at our meetings last week about low lows and high high. So we're looking at everything in between.

469 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:58:54.355 --> 00:58:59.965

I also saw your comment in the chat about the bridge impacts and the cost of those.

470 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:59:00.655 --> 00:59:10.345

Requirements certainly on our minds, and we will certainly be doing more detailed investigation on that as well. So you're not alone.

471 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

00:59:10.345 --> 00:59:18.145

We've heard these comments before and we, thank you for continuing to raise them to elevate our understanding of the importance of those areas.

472 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:59:18.330 --> 00:59:25.230

Thank you okay next up the Kristen robot and, uh.

473 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

00:59:25.230 --> 00:59:29.040

Um, what would you like to tell us.

474 "Kristen Rorabaugh" (3434832640)

00:59:34.375 --> 00:59:36.715

All right. Hi, everybody my name is Christian robot.

475 "Kristen Rorabaugh" (3434832640)

00:59:37.435 --> 00:59:50.845

I'm a civil engineer down here in Hancock county and so my concern, or, I guess question is whenever you're considering both the environmental impact as well as the cost impact of this project,

476 "Kristen Rorabaugh" (3434832640)

00:59:51.835 --> 00:59:59.845

are you taking into consideration that? The Pro river does act as a discharge point for many wastewater treatment plants all along the river.

477 "Kristen Rorabaugh" (3434832640)

01:00:00.145 --> 01:00:08.635

But what comes to mind is here on the Gulf coast in Hancock County, we just recently had to relocate the outfall points of our waste water treatment plants.

478 "Kristen Rorabaugh" (3434832640)

01:00:08.665 --> 01:00:19.075

The Pro river, because other reverse credit support it so any reduction or inconsistency in flow does it just impact our seafood industry and estuaries?

479 "Kristen Rorabaugh" (3434832640)

01:00:19.285 --> 01:00:28.045

But it reduces the similar capacity of the river, which would lead to massive infrastructure costs on the golf coast. And in other counties.

480 "Kristen Rorabaugh" (3434832640)

01:00:29.310 --> 01:00:35.010

To have to relocate our own discharge points if you reduce the flow of the river downstream.

481 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:00:37.710 --> 01:00:42.420

Thank you very much. I appreciate that input. We'll be mindful of that. Thank you.

482 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:00:42.420 --> 01:00:56.280

Okay, uh, next I see someone with the Pearl riverkeeper has their their hand up if you would please identify yourself and, uh.

483 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:00:56.875 --> 01:01:04.495

Make your comment. Good afternoon. This is Abby Brandon for keeper.

484 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:01:04.525 --> 01:01:13.285

We appreciate the opportunity to comment in this format as this is the 1st time in the process that open question and answer has been available. So thank you for that.

485 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:01:13.590 --> 01:01:28.585

Uh, we were left with many questions after the release of the 2018 and your core of engineers technical reviewers noted 9 critical issues that could not be resolved at the end of their review of the 1. like, so I have 2 questions and a comment.

486 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:01:28.585 --> 01:01:29.305

and a comment

487 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:01:29.610 --> 01:01:38.455

So, according to the 2018, the higher water level of 258 feet at a new 1, like weird dam will increase the flood profiles along all and tributaries.

488 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:01:38.455 --> 01:01:47.485

So, flood risk management for residents living along Eubanks Lynch town and other drinks creeks was not addressed in the 2018.

489 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:01:47.485 --> 01:01:52.585

so, my, my question is, will the core consider the base as a whole,

490 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:01:52.585 --> 01:02:04.435

and include the Jackson tributaries in there flood risk management studies and if not how many residents of Jackson who live along those creeks will be taxed to pay for the new lake but receive no flood risk management solution.

491 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:02:04.435 --> 01:02:08.155

the new lake but receive no flood risk management solution

492 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:02:08.875 --> 01:02:22.315

My question number 2 is the Army Corps of engineers, independent review team recommended that the non federal interest conduct further testing of a hazardous toxic waste sites in the project area and they noted that the non federal interests areas,

493 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:02:22.315 --> 01:02:26.305

complete financial responsibility for all necessary cleanup costs.

494 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:02:26.670 --> 01:02:32.095

So my question is, what point in the process will the conduct further testing of those sites,

495 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:02:32.395 --> 01:02:46.975

and will remediation of those sites like the flu release harmful contaminants to the local and downstream environment and will it require closure of the drinking water plant during the duration of project construction as suggested in the 2018.

496 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:02:46.975 --> 01:02:57.175

my final comment is your own core reviewer state in the 2020 report that quote, the existence of a 1908 does not create any additional blood storage or conveyance capacity and that quote setback.

497 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:02:57.175 --> 01:03:04.075

Levy, most likely will be the feature with the greatest flood risk reduction input.

498 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:03:04.075 --> 01:03:17.215

So, we urged the corps of engineers to closely evaluate whether a lake development will provide less expensive, less environmentally, disruptive, more effective flood, risk management than a combination of Levy setbacks and non structural measures. Thank you.

499 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (2376591360)

01:03:17.215 --> 01:03:25.705

And I appreciate any comments on my 2 questions. Thank you. and i appreciate any comments on my two questions thank you

500 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:03:29.545 --> 01:03:41.275

I'll answer the 1st, 1, is that, yes, we've captured all the tributaries in our inventory of structures. We generally will go out to a 500 year flood to the image that you're shipping sock.

501 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:03:41.275 --> 01:03:45.415

We've captured structures outside of that and we'll. we'll

502 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:03:45.780 --> 01:03:51.690

We'll analyze those in its entirety for effects of any particular alternative. Um.

503 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:03:51.690 --> 01:04:06.505

We are aware of the W sites and we'll treat that the way engineers does and you accurately stated that we'll have to be tested before any of the activities are actually taking place in our state before we thank you for your

504 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:04:06.505 --> 01:04:14.035

reminding of us of the issues. Revolving around low flows and transferring of effects downstream. And that's part of our analysis as well.

505 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:04:14.310 --> 01:04:27.270

So, as far as the wire supply being impacted, and potentially close down before that, there would be no.

506 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:04:27.270 --> 01:04:32.100

That would not happen. We would not shut down and potentially compromise the water supply.

507 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:04:32.100 --> 01:04:37.440

Those plants would not be shut down as far as this project.

508 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:04:39.060 --> 01:04:44.340

And concern, and I think there was 1 more comment about the comments.

509 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:04:45.480 --> 01:04:53.700

So, we are reviewing all the comments provided to us by our view teams as well as those in ASA, as part of our response to our charge.

510 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:04:58.860 --> 01:05:04.890

Okay, Lee a Campbell header hand up a minute ago.

511 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:05:04.890 --> 01:05:08.040

Thanks.

512 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:05:08.040 --> 01:05:13.350

We'll get you on me to here in just a 2nd.

513 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:05:13.350 --> 01:05:17.640

Okay.

514 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:05:17.640 --> 01:05:26.340

Mr. frame asked to comment that is difficult for some people that the virtual meeting by Webex.

515 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:05:26.340 --> 01:05:31.770

Will recording this meeting be available? It will. And they, it just takes a little while. These things posted.

516 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:05:31.770 --> 01:05:35.070

All right.

517 "Lea Campbell" (669813504)

01:05:35.070 --> 01:05:45.000

Hi, yes, thank you. And actually MS Brahmin from Pearl river Keepers addressed my concern as well. I have concerns around, um.

518 "Lea Campbell" (669813504)

01:05:45.000 --> 01:05:55.260

The Jackson water supply and potential infiltration of the water supply with contaminants from the surrounding toxic waste sites and the potential closure of.

519 "Lea Campbell" (669813504)

01:05:55.495 --> 01:06:05.365

The fuel water, treatment plants I appreciate MS. also raising that concern. And so, I guess from from your answers, I understand that.

520 "Lea Campbell" (669813504)

01:06:05.365 --> 01:06:12.685

Your assessment is that with any of these are, you will not select an alternative that, um.

521 "Lea Campbell" (669813504)

01:06:12.960 --> 01:06:16.410

That risks, closure of any of the.

522 "Lea Campbell" (669813504)

01:06:16.410 --> 01:06:19.470

Jackson water treatment plants is that correct?

523 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:06:21.180 --> 01:06:28.075

We are, we are continuously reminded by the secretary of our responsibilities towards the water supply and water quality.

524 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:06:28.975 --> 01:06:40.195

And what we're telling you is that we would not take an effect that would jeopardize that in some cases, the way to handle it is to mitigate it, which would mean take an action before you take any other construction.

525 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:06:40.530 --> 01:06:45.690

But at this point, we again, we, thank you all for continuously reminding that make it.

526 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:06:45.690 --> 01:06:50.730

Hi, I'm on our priority list, but yes, we are aware and we will work.

527 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:06:50.730 --> 01:06:53.730

With everything we have to make sure we don't impact that.

528 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:06:53.730 --> 01:07:00.060

Thank you. All right. Very good. Um, a hand raised from.

529 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:07:01.470 --> 01:07:07.770

Bob.

530 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:07:08.790 --> 01:07:12.120

Are you there, sir?

531 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:07:12.120 --> 01:07:16.680

Ah, yes, I'm here. Can you hear me? Yes, sir Thank you.

532 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:16.680 --> 01:07:20.550

Uh, I'm noticing the, uh.

533 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:20.550 --> 01:07:25.440

A presentation on the thing, uh, that.

534 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:25.440 --> 01:07:28.650

Uh, considered, uh, affected.

535 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:28.650 --> 01:07:35.700

There is no mention of the Jackson field underground storage area and I.

536 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:35.700 --> 01:07:43.080

Had previously asked that 1, like, attorney key Turner about how that will be affected.

537 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:43.080 --> 01:07:50.670

And he said it will not be affected is that the Army Corps of engineers assessment.

538 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:50.670 --> 01:07:57.570

2, and then I have another question, I'd ask that attorney.

539 "claude" (423065600)

01:07:57.570 --> 01:08:03.720

Turner, or about a, my app or a description of how.

540 "claude" (423065600)

01:08:03.720 --> 01:08:07.080

Each land owners, property.

541 "claude" (423065600)

01:08:07.080 --> 01:08:19.050

Will be affected by whatever plan y'all come up with and he said they're working on that, but I've never received anything on that, but I'd like to know how.

542 "claude" (423065600)

01:08:19.050 --> 01:08:23.700

Each landowners property is going to be affected by this project.

543 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:08:27.750 --> 01:08:37.410

Well, sir, at this point, I can't tell you how exact pieces of parcels will be effective because we still have to evaluate the alternatives.

544 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:08:37.410 --> 01:08:49.260

But it will say that clearly anything we recommend, moving forward. The core of engineers and non federal interests would be required to obtain any appropriate.

545 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:08:49.260 --> 01:08:53.340

Real estate, um.

546 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:08:53.340 --> 01:08:57.840

Requirements I'm drawing a blank now. Um, okay.

547 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:08:57.840 --> 01:09:11.155

Clearly any non structure alternative that affects individuals, property and home structures that would be in a voluntary basis. We certainly don't want to do anything more than that.

548 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:09:11.155 --> 01:09:18.475

We will evaluate based on voluntary participation. And then again, if a more structural.

549 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:09:18.780 --> 01:09:24.720

Feature is selected for implementation. We'd have to determine what the appropriate escape would be.

550 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:09:24.720 --> 01:09:27.750

So, we don't know at this time, but more to come certainly.

551 "claude" (423065600)

01:09:29.040 --> 01:09:37.650

Okay, what about the underground storage area? How will that be affected by the project?

552 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:09:37.650 --> 01:09:51.090

So, we appreciate you bringing to attention. Unfortunately, I don't have our engineering staff here, but we'll bring your comment to them and ensure that that is addressed.

553 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:09:51.090 --> 01:09:54.840

In our, uh, report back to the secretary.

554 "claude" (423065600)

01:09:54.840 --> 01:09:58.950

Okay, thank you very much.

555 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:09:58.950 --> 01:10:08.850

Just looking through the, the folks that are on the Webex and I'm not seeing any other questions just yet.

556 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:10:08.850 --> 01:10:19.110

Okay, thank you Melissa. Your hand is right?

557 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:10:20.970 --> 01:10:25.590

Thank you so much in the.

558 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:10:25.590 --> 01:10:40.200

I appreciate the opportunity to provide some comments here. We will. I'm the legal director for water resources, and post with the national holiday federation and we will be providing very detailed technical scoping comments.

559 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:10:40.200 --> 01:10:50.190

As you're calling them, although it's not quite scoping in the future. But I did want to highlight a couple of things that I think are particularly important to make sure that they are.

560 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:10:50.190 --> 01:10:55.230

I'm fully addressed and, um, and it will start by saying.

561 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:10:55.230 --> 01:10:59.760

I don't see how any of these problems that I'm going to highlight.

562 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:10:59.760 --> 01:11:03.330

Cannot be, um, so large that.

563 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:03.330 --> 01:11:07.830

I don't see how you can address them and do 1 link. You just don't see.

564 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:07.830 --> 01:11:18.480

How you could build 1 leg, approve 1 leg and not have this whole host of cascading problems for fish and wildlife and very, particularly for the.

565 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:18.480 --> 01:11:26.190

Residents of city of Jackson, so I just wanted to start by that. And, of course, as we've talked to Andrea in the past.

566 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:26.190 --> 01:11:29.370

And while they Federation very much opposes 1 lake.

567 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:29.370 --> 01:11:36.450

And we urged the corner to select 1 lake and to do something different here that will help people and wildlife both.

568 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:36.450 --> 01:11:40.020

I did want to highlight a couple of, um.

569 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:40.020 --> 01:11:46.470

Issues or a particular concern that I'm hoping this will actually very carefully assess.

570 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:46.470 --> 01:11:52.380

Um, from from starting from the straight environmental, uh, perspective issue.

571 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:11:52.380 --> 01:12:01.710

While it's been documented, it's gonna cause destroying some 2008 because a flood plain wetlands and other flip and habitat.

572 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:01.710 --> 01:12:10.380

And also going to eliminate about 2000 acres of diverse in stream river, habitats, and ecologically vital streams.

573 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:10.380 --> 01:12:22.080

And that piece of it always seems to get lost. So, the extreme habitat professional all that, of course, is extremely important. And I think that needs to be assessed as does the loss of natural flood protection.

574 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:22.080 --> 01:12:26.910

Or specifically, what will the impacts be to increase flooding.

575 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:26.910 --> 01:12:31.050

Resulting from building this type of a project, um.

576 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:31.050 --> 01:12:34.950

So that was 1 thing that I, I wanted to highlight, um.

577 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:34.950 --> 01:12:39.390

I also want to highlight as I'm sure the core is well aware.

578 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:39.390 --> 01:12:42.870

Going back to the issue of contaminated toxic sites.

579 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:43.345 --> 01:12:53.575

So, as we understand that there are potentially up to 8, highly contaminated toxic sites and the project area that would either be directly affected, or potentially indirectly affected.

580 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:12:54.235 --> 01:13:06.085

And I understand that the core has said that the local federal sponsor has to actually clean all that up before any construction will begin. But I think it's critical to highlight.

581 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:06.085 --> 01:13:10.915

And hopefully the core will assess this very carefully in the, that.

582 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:11.220 --> 01:13:15.420

Cleaning up toxic sites is 1, extremely expensive.

583 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:15.420 --> 01:13:21.870

Too extremely costly, Ah, Ah, in terms of time and resources and 3.

584 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:21.870 --> 01:13:28.860

Not always very successful and some toxic sites still aren't cleaned up after 20, 30 years of efforts to do. So.

585 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:28.860 --> 01:13:34.260

So, if all that clean up doesn't happen, and it doesn't happen properly.

586 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:34.260 --> 01:13:41.070

Before any construction begins community members will, in fact, be exposed to toxins from 1 lake.

587 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:41.070 --> 01:13:52.435

I think that's just something that really needs to be acknowledged and accounted for, um, in the, and it can also be, of course, the exposure if the cleanups aren't done properly. So plus all the cost of doing that.

588 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:52.735 --> 01:13:57.685

So, that's just something I think is gonna be really important to make sure you're really honing in on in the.

589 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:13:58.680 --> 01:14:06.840

I certainly appreciate the fact that the core has said that they will not compromise. Jackson's water supply.

590 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:06.840 --> 01:14:11.580

Since 1 is in the area of the intake, uh.

591 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:11.580 --> 01:14:15.300

For the plan, we don't see how.

592 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:15.300 --> 01:14:27.540

That could happen and still allow 1 to move forward. So we're hoping that that is fully accounted for both the impacts that will result from the dredging during construction that could take 3 4.

593 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:27.540 --> 01:14:34.530

Maybe longer years who knows? Um, and also then the adverse impacts on that plant and how hard.

594 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:34.530 --> 01:14:40.380

It would be to operate it going forward with their degraded water quality, following up.

595 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:40.380 --> 01:14:44.700

Um, Allen plane, construction, uh, the 1 that construction.

596 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:44.700 --> 01:14:50.970

So the other thing is, of course.

597 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:50.970 --> 01:14:56.280

The importance of 1, like, actually providing blood storage capacity.

598 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:14:56.280 --> 01:15:05.550

And if it doesn't, it is not a flood mitigation plan. We believe it does not. We believe that the core technical reviewers I know the core technical reviewers.

599 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:15:05.550 --> 01:15:10.170

At least 1 has said it does not create full storage, so it doesn't create flood storage.

600 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:15:10.170 --> 01:15:16.650

And then it is not a flood project and I'm hoping that the yeah, yes. We'll fully acknowledge that.

601 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:15:16.650 --> 01:15:26.010

We would like the same it. Can we give an opportunity for somebody else to ask a question we greatly appreciate your input.

602 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:15:26.010 --> 01:15:33.630

Yeah, if I could just have a chance to just highlight 2 other quick points, and then I will be quiet. Um, but.

603 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:15:33.630 --> 01:15:41.400

Would ask the core to look at a new alternative that's not evaluate has not been highlighted. And that's 1 that.

604 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:15:41.400 --> 01:15:46.950

Uses a combination combination of carefully targeted, elevations.

605 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:15:46.950 --> 01:15:56.490

Voluntary relocation's, Reverend flood plain restorations. Let me set back. Then other similar actions that in combination can reduce blood impacts.

606 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:15:57.055 --> 01:16:06.805

So, not just an, all or nothing we have to buy everything out, but look really carefully at this combination of issues also properly accounted for the projects. True.

607 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:16:07.165 --> 01:16:20.455

The true cost of wallet is going to be critical because those costs are going to fall many of them onto the residents of Jackson and certainly, and they're going to be enormous. And also, ideally, the core would be taking a step back.

608 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:16:20.760 --> 01:16:26.580

From the draft developed by the drainage district that yeah, I asked was so full of problems.

609 "Melissa Samet, National Wildlife Federation" (18558720)

01:16:26.580 --> 01:16:39.090

Is that from our perspective, it shouldn't be used as a starting point for the course analysis. Um, so I just wanted to highlight those things and I appreciate you letting me speak so long and talking for extra time. Thank you. All right. Thank you.

610 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:16:40.230 --> 01:16:46.920

Charles fiber had had his hand up earlier. Do you still have a comment, sir?

611 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:16:48.030 --> 01:16:54.660

Hello hi. Can you hear me.

612 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:16:54.660 --> 01:17:02.130

Yes. Okay. Thank you. Um, Charles sniper uh, I'm on the board of objecting all black society.

613 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:02.130 --> 01:17:07.980

Thank you for this opportunity opportunity to speak and present the points of view.

614 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:07.980 --> 01:17:12.810

The main thing I wanted to bring up today was, uh.

615 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:12.810 --> 01:17:18.120

Potential probable well, certain, I guess.

616 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:18.120 --> 01:17:23.520

Impact of choice C1 late on the flourish bluff state park.

617 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:23.520 --> 01:17:28.740

I would say that a healthy city values that screen spaces.

618 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:28.740 --> 01:17:33.210

And the 1, like, proposal, by all accounts that I've heard.

619 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:33.210 --> 01:17:36.480

Well, well damage the Florida State part.

620 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:36.480 --> 01:17:40.980

Which is the premier green space and the Jackson area.

621 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:40.980 --> 01:17:44.100

It's in between pro and the Pro river and Jackson.

622 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:44.100 --> 01:17:50.040

Re spaces or something that it's very hard to put a.

623 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:50.040 --> 01:17:54.930

A dollar value on, but but I would say that the, uh.

624 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:54.930 --> 01:17:58.560

The part serves the community by providing fishing.

625 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:17:58.560 --> 01:18:03.480

Walking hiking, camping, educational opportunities.

626 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:03.480 --> 01:18:07.890

It's a National Audubon important bird area.

627 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:07.890 --> 01:18:14.490

And the park is location of the jets and Audubon monetary warbler.

628 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:14.490 --> 01:18:18.060

Project which has been going on 23 years.

629 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:18.060 --> 01:18:25.050

Plus the 5 year scientific study, it's a subject of a national magazine article last year.

630 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:25.050 --> 01:18:28.110

And it's scientific paper, uh.

631 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:29.490 --> 01:18:33.540

Proprietary warbler for.

632 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:33.540 --> 01:18:37.110

Those of you, that may not be for people. Is that gorgeous?

633 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:37.110 --> 01:18:40.980

Yellow Bird, it's a bird of conservation concern.

634 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:40.980 --> 01:18:44.790

They have undergone a 40% population decline.

635 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:44.790 --> 01:18:56.520

Since 970, so not on the endangered species list, but getting them in fairly good numbers is where you want to be to keep them off of the list.

636 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:18:56.520 --> 01:19:00.570

So, what's the value of a green space?

637 "Charles Pfeifer" (1316983808)

01:19:00.570 --> 01:19:05.610

I say priceless and with that, I relinquish the floor.

638 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:19:05.610 --> 01:19:19.140

Thank you, sir, I appreciate that. We heard some similar comments about how people treasure the Florida State Park last week. So appreciate you elevating that to us. Thanks.

639 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:19:19.140 --> 01:19:22.620

Hello.

640 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:19:22.620 --> 01:19:27.570

As I was involved for 1 comment, as was mentioned.

641 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:19:27.570 --> 01:19:38.970

Earlier call, Christopher, client of expert district commander could not be with us for this afternoon session. He will be a part of this evening session, but.

642 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:19:39.175 --> 01:19:51.655

1 of the things that he is made very clear to each and every person is associated with the project is that the core engineers is neither a proponent for this plan or an opponent for this plan.

643 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:19:51.655 --> 01:19:57.085

So we are charged with unbiased evaluation. So.

644 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:19:57.450 --> 01:20:03.510

I will play that and looking for any other. Right? Pans. I'm not seeing any right now.

645 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:20:03.510 --> 01:20:08.370

Are we on mute.

646 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:20:08.370 --> 01:20:12.330

Cool.

647 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:20:12.330 --> 01:20:19.230

Hello.

648 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:20:19.230 --> 01:20:23.520

Hello.

649 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:20:23.520 --> 01:20:34.920

Yes, uh, Craig just gave me a reminder all there are multiple ways that you can submit comments.

650 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:20:35.905 --> 01:20:48.535

Of course, you can always send them to the US mail that can be submitted to the email address that we have the dot army.

651 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:20:51.565 --> 01:20:52.135

This.

652 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:20:52.590 --> 01:20:59.100

Session is being recorded. The chat is being recorded as well so.

653 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:20:59.100 --> 01:21:02.280

We, we very much value.

654 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:21:02.280 --> 01:21:07.260

Um, your input Mr Smith.

655 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:21:07.260 --> 01:21:13.590

Back up again. Mr. Vance is your hand? Ray? Sir? Is there do you have another statement?

656 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

01:21:13.590 --> 01:21:20.190

I just wanted to make sure you understand it. I'm not angry at any of you. And I do appreciate very much.

657 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

01:21:20.190 --> 01:21:23.730

Your willingness to listen to the opposition to this 1.

658 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

01:21:23.730 --> 01:21:29.070

Absolutely, no don't let our emotions.

659 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

01:21:30.330 --> 01:21:33.450

Make everyone just work in there.

660 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

01:21:33.450 --> 01:21:37.560

Think that we're angry at you. We're just emotional about this project.

661 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:21:38.880 --> 01:21:44.880

Yeah, thank you that. I will tell you the team is listening to your comments.

662 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:21:44.880 --> 01:21:48.180

And we take your emotions just as.

663 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:21:48.180 --> 01:21:51.420

How important this project is to you and it's tell us.

664 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:21:51.420 --> 01:21:56.040

As well, thank you.

665 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

01:21:57.720 --> 01:22:01.770

Thank you very much.

666 "Harlan Allen Spence" (1783976192)

01:22:01.770 --> 01:22:08.640

Uh.

667 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:22:08.845 --> 01:22:21.655

Looking for any additional input, I'm not seeing any hands raised and nothing new in the chat. Just mark a, just a reminder. Excuse me? Ms. just a reminder.

668 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:22:22.525 --> 01:22:24.535

If you haven't entered your.

669 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:22:24.990 --> 01:22:33.060

Your information within the chat as to who you are, your address, that kind of thing we would ask that you please do that. Um.

670 "Martha Watts" (1061664768)

01:22:33.060 --> 01:22:47.250

So, that we may have, if you will a documentation into the public record that you've made the statement this what I believe I had signed in with my email address and information, but maybe not, I don't know.

671 "Martha Watts" (1061664768)

01:22:47.250 --> 01:22:58.710

Will you be amending the costs in the well, you all you all will look at that again right? And get the true Constance. It's very far.

672 "Martha Watts" (1061664768)

01:22:58.710 --> 01:23:08.160

Undervalued as far as the bridge replacement and the wayside cleanups and some other things will, will you all.

673 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:23:08.160 --> 01:23:21.180

Be responsible for bringing that current to what it should be. Yes, ma'am. We're looking at cost. In fact, I think we have a meeting with cost engineering next week to start talking about that.

674 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:23:21.180 --> 01:23:25.140

Thank you.

675 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:23:25.140 --> 01:23:28.320

Okay.

676 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:23:28.320 --> 01:23:34.110

Mr. Fernandez okay. Mr. Fernandez?

677 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:23:36.715 --> 01:23:46.285

Thank you for letting me double dip here. Um, so a lot of the questions that come up are about cost and I wanted to return to 1 about the. So, I understand.

678 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:23:46.765 --> 01:23:53.695

I forgot who said that there are a lot of benefits that are going to be considered, but I am just sticking with any D since it seems like that's.

679 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:23:53.970 --> 01:24:06.565

Explicitly stated in the authorization, so another question about any of the benefits, the Berkeley plan, it's my understanding it calls for removing or mitigating obstructions along the river uh,

680 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:24:06.595 --> 01:24:21.235

particularly between Lakeland drive and interstate 20. so, are there any any benefits associated with removing abandoned structure? Because I know at some point, this plan called for the removal of an old railroad bridge near the water plant.

681 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:24:21.535 --> 01:24:28.585

Do you guys know if there's any, like, in general if that's there are any deep benefits associated with removal of old infrastructure.

682 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:24:32.905 --> 01:24:42.055

That's kind of a tough question and I can tell you that removal there is a cost associated with it and how that affects benefits.

683 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:24:42.085 --> 01:24:50.095

Well, that would have to come out and the modeling will come out and get some assessment and how it ties back to other other actions. So, I can't say.

684 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:24:50.575 --> 01:25:01.825

Okay, yeah, and I guess I know that in all of these things, the flood reduction is a benefit. Um, so the question is more directed at, at other financial benefits that might be associated with it.

685 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:25:02.605 --> 01:25:16.915

Similarly, with removing or replacing. We're improving bridges such as the Kansas City railroad, or the old Brandon road bridge. I know that those, um, the models show that they, they, they do create checkpoints.

686 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:25:17.275 --> 01:25:18.025

Um.

687 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:25:18.330 --> 01:25:22.410

So, I understand that there's going to be benefits and.

688 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:25:22.410 --> 01:25:31.410

If these things are replaced or updated, but I don't know if there's any other benefit that you guys are aware of.

689 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:25:31.410 --> 01:25:35.400

The, the state government or the city government would.

690 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:25:35.400 --> 01:25:40.890

Be replacing these bridges at a subsidized cost. Is that something that you all can comment on?

691 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:25:40.890 --> 01:25:47.220

Well, let me answer the part about the benefits. Um.

692 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:25:47.220 --> 01:25:59.160

And as I think, Andrea said, you start to see it when you generate information, as you gain more insight, you start to be able to focusing where you can gain better.

693 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:25:59.160 --> 01:26:13.320

That may be something that you would focus on. Maybe not. I just, I just don't know until we look at all of the psychology with respect to subsidies and things like that that's outside of my field. And perhaps Andrew could answer.

694 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:26:13.320 --> 01:26:25.140

Unfortunately, I can't add to that. That might be something we'll have to just take down as a do out from this meeting is to look into that, as we move forward.

695 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:26:25.140 --> 01:26:35.490

Yeah, okay. Um, and 1 quick statement, uh, there are a lot of questions. Will there have been a couple of questions about the Berkeley plan? Um, I am.

696 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:26:35.490 --> 01:26:40.645

I, I was with the faculty and staff when they were formulating it.

697 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:26:40.645 --> 01:26:54.895

So I say that number 1, when we talk about it being a birthday plan, I think that you will also start to get a narrative that it's like, somehow outsiders coming in. And I do want to work against that, because it was made with local support.

698 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:26:55.465 --> 01:27:08.875

Abby Brahmin proper keeper was also active in that if someone has questions on that, I would love to try to answer them, like, at another place. But I don't know what the latest iteration of that plan looks like.

699 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:27:08.875 --> 01:27:18.175

So I wouldn't necessarily be giving you the most up to date plan but that's it. Once again Thank you. All for, letting me double dip in public statements.

700 "juan fernandez" (2777449984)

01:27:18.535 --> 01:27:25.855

And if you don't mind, I might have another another statement this evening, just because I love you all so much. But thank you everyone and goodbye.

701 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:27:26.130 --> 01:27:29.160

But thank you, sir.

702 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:27:29.160 --> 01:27:35.250

All right, I'm not seeing any additional hands raised.

703 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:27:35.250 --> 01:27:42.810

I saw Andy frame, took him to him. Oh, muted.

704 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:27:42.810 --> 01:27:47.640

Brian, can you hear us? I can.

705 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:27:47.640 --> 01:28:01.080

All right, um, I had I know that a lot of people have talked about the creeks and the tributaries and, um.

706 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:01.080 --> 01:28:07.680

And I mentioned that is at the 1 of the last in person meetings last week. Um.

707 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:07.680 --> 01:28:10.770

But my question is when.

708 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:10.770 --> 01:28:14.670

The army corps does a project like this? Is it possible?

709 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:14.670 --> 01:28:23.340

To develop something, obviously the project itself will be an ongoing project, but like to develop something that.

710 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:23.340 --> 01:28:28.380

Is variable going forward when it comes to the creeks so, like, let's say.

711 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:28.380 --> 01:28:33.030

Um, this the, the.

712 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:33.030 --> 01:28:37.770

1, like, project happens or something like that happens.

713 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:37.770 --> 01:28:41.130

And it results in the creeks being higher.

714 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:41.130 --> 01:28:47.130

And and it's really difficult to determine what the effects of that will be.

715 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:47.130 --> 01:28:52.710

Until we actually see it in place, you know, I know that we can model it, but like.

716 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:52.710 --> 01:28:56.010

A lot of the community, the neighborhoods throughout the city.

717 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:28:56.010 --> 01:29:00.330

Already experienced flooding just from regular rainfall.

718 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:00.330 --> 01:29:03.930

Um, because of the creeks and so.

719 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:03.930 --> 01:29:16.680

1, like, can we, then in the Army Corps, cause the creaks as I understand it are under the responsibility of the city of Jackson. So if, um, if the city Jackson public works is now.

720 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:16.680 --> 01:29:22.830

Going to be responsible for what happens because of this project could Army Corps.

721 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:22.830 --> 01:29:26.040

Have a kind of more direct relationship with the city.

722 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:26.040 --> 01:29:31.500

To support those that project because this this project could potentially.

723 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:31.500 --> 01:29:34.710

Cause more flooding, um, and then.

724 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:34.710 --> 01:29:38.520

Like, would there be.

725 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:38.520 --> 01:29:42.840

Other potential flood, mitigation solutions.

726 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:42.840 --> 01:29:46.650

That we could find all throughout the city along these creeks.

727 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:46.650 --> 01:29:54.750

If this project causes more flooding in the creeks so, I guess, do you get what I'm saying? Like, once we get in there, is it possible for the Army Corps to say, okay.

728 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:29:54.750 --> 01:29:58.860

This happened now, this is happening and now we can resolve that as well.

729 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:30:03.810 --> 01:30:08.460

So, when we do an analysis, we look at the entire system.

730 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:30:08.460 --> 01:30:22.855

And what you're describing is if there were impacts, that would be accounted for, in our decision making in, in general, we don't implement plans that generate impacts. We're in the business of reducing impacts.

731 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:30:22.855 --> 01:30:27.955

And so, if there are, then we would have to include in our plan. Some measure of addressing that.

732 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:30:28.560 --> 01:30:33.330

Now, there are projects within the nation that are pretty old.

733 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:30:33.330 --> 01:30:41.820

And there's been changes, and there are programs within the core of engineers capability to go back and modify.

734 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:30:41.820 --> 01:30:48.630

And so, but in the final part, the decision that we make is along with the sponsor.

735 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:30:48.630 --> 01:30:59.160

Um, which would include the city of Jackson, the counties themselves, the state of Mississippi, and ensure that there is a holistic approach to managing this system.

736 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:30:59.160 --> 01:31:04.860

Yeah, I think 1 thing would definitely help is.

737 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:31:04.860 --> 01:31:09.120

You know, a, just a general clean up of all the creeks.

738 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:31:09.120 --> 01:31:15.180

Um, and and that could be something if the Army Corps had funding to do right now.

739 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:31:15.745 --> 01:31:29.785

Would be amazing to just go clean up the creek right now. Yeah. Like, I mean, work with the city of Jackson public works, but like, you know, this is something that we could actually help solve a problem right now by, by doing that. And it's a really.

740 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:31:30.210 --> 01:31:34.830

Big need in the city, and then it would actually help us figure out.

741 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:31:34.830 --> 01:31:45.840

You know, what is needed and how these, how this project would actually impact those communities because what we're basing off of right now is creeks that need to be cleaned out.

742 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:31:45.840 --> 01:31:55.769

Good, thank you for that comment and do fully appreciate what you're bringing to our attention. And as we learn more.

743 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:31:55.769 --> 01:32:03.329

So we'd like to continue that I want to make sure that we're covering for your concerns. And as far as.

744 "Andy Frame" (163864832)

01:32:04.529 --> 01:32:07.859

Thank you very much.

745 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:32:16.409 --> 01:32:20.519

Any hands f***? Nope.

746 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:32:20.519 --> 01:32:27.059

Okay, not seeing any more hands raised and no more.

747 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:32:27.059 --> 01:32:30.779

Questions in the chat, um.

748 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:32:30.779 --> 01:32:33.809

Okay.

749 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:32:33.809 --> 01:32:40.049

Any last close and statements from any of our panel members.

750 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:32:40.049 --> 01:32:48.869

So, Andrew, if you don't mind, I'd like to say, thank you all for participating. This is the 3rd, 1 that I participated in.

751 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:32:48.869 --> 01:32:57.449

It's been very informative and believe me, it's extremely helpful for us and analyzing projects and putting forward information that.

752 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:32:57.449 --> 01:33:02.549

That informs the secretary keep them coming, keep us informed.

753 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:33:02.549 --> 01:33:09.449

We really look forward to more dialogue and you certainly look forward to your responses to the draft that we intend to put out.

754 "Amanda Jones" (3328062208)

01:33:09.449 --> 01:33:14.129

Of before we finalize our our Tasker back to the to the secretary. So.

755 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:33:14.574 --> 01:33:27.834

Thank you very formative. Yes, I will echo that. Troy. This has been a great dialogue. The ones we had in person, and this 1 today and I'm looking forward to hearing more this evening.

756 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:33:29.454 --> 01:33:41.364

It's imperative that we hear where your concerns lies. So we make sure nothing. Is overlooked as was mentioned earlier the core is not a protocol for and on any of the plans.

757 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:33:41.394 --> 01:33:54.054

They are to evaluate plans, present the pros and cons benefits, impacts and so forth to the secretary for him to make a determination on which plan to move forward with.

758 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:33:54.144 --> 01:34:07.554

So, again, we're hoping to do this very quickly. We have the authority. We have federal funds. I think the time is now that we can do something quickly for the spacing. So thank you.

759 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:34:09.029 --> 01:34:17.519

Okay, this is Tom before we adjourn. I would just remind everybody to check the website periodically.

760 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:34:17.519 --> 01:34:31.709

As we, we will have updates there information with respect to these, the public meetings. So, with that we will yes.

761 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:34:31.709 --> 01:34:34.889

I'm seeing a hand up from Dennis.

762 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:34:36.209 --> 01:34:42.629

Cranky. Okay Dana.

763 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:34:42.629 --> 01:34:45.929

Good.

764 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:34:45.929 --> 01:34:49.889

Okay, can you hear me.

765 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:34:49.889 --> 01:34:53.519

Yes, so since there is funding available.

766 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:34:53.519 --> 01:34:58.769

And since there is a plan, can we assume that.

767 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:34:58.769 --> 01:35:03.299

Once the secretary or assistant secretary of the army.

768 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:35:03.299 --> 01:35:09.839

Issues a record of decision something is going to get built.

769 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:35:11.909 --> 01:35:24.449

That is the plan at this time. Sir again, there is not a plan selected at this time. We are still doing our evaluations, but theoretically, what would happen is.

770 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:35:24.449 --> 01:35:35.219

The secretary would make a decision, he would sign the record of decision. We will we have those federal funds that we need to cost share with a non federal sponsor.

771 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:35:35.219 --> 01:35:49.194

So, we need to ensure we have that sponsorship available to us and we would have to do the design and prepare for construction and get appropriate agreements in place, real estate in place.

772 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:35:49.224 --> 01:35:57.894

I mean, there, there's a lot of work. It doesn't happen instantaneously, but certainly, we're in a better position than we ever happen in the last several decades.

773 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:35:57.989 --> 01:36:02.699

Could you review the, the non federal car share?

774 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:36:02.699 --> 01:36:08.969

Is this still 752,575, federal and 25 non federal.

775 "Andrea Walker" (1398984192)

01:36:10.169 --> 01:36:24.149

Um, I don't want to miss speak, it's either 7,525 or 6,535. um, but we will cross that bridge with those requirements when we get closer to our recommendation.

776 "Dennis Riecke" (2378289920)

01:36:24.149 --> 01:36:29.909

Thank you. Yes, sir.

777 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:36:29.909 --> 01:36:36.239

Okay, maybe I just make 11 statement here. Um.

778 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:36:36.239 --> 01:36:40.409

As miss Walker said, we don't have a plan.

779 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:36:40.409 --> 01:36:43.409

Going forward we have multiple alternative.

780 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:36:43.409 --> 01:36:47.459

We are engaging you as early as possible.

781 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:36:47.459 --> 01:36:52.469

To try to get your feedback, that's the purpose in these meetings and.

782 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:36:52.469 --> 01:37:01.019

It has been very valuable to the entire, the feedback that we received in the face to face and on this virtual meeting.

783 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:37:01.019 --> 01:37:05.849

Um, any lucky any last.

784 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:37:05.849 --> 01:37:14.219

Okay, well, with that, we will adjourn and call this meeting to a close. We will do this again at 6 0 PM today.

785 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:37:14.219 --> 01:37:17.429

Okay, cool.

786 "Thomas Shaw" (2281481984)

01:37:17.429 --> 01:37:22.049

Thank you. Bye. Bye.

June 1, 2023 Transcription: Virtual Meeting 1300 Virtual Chat

from Amanda Jones to everyone: 1:01 PM

We can't hear you.

from Andrea Walker to everyone: 1:03 PM

Can I my mute be unlocked so that I can offer opening remarks following Mr. Shaw

from Craig Thompson to everyone: 1:04 PM

Craig Thompson

from Lea Campbell to everyone: 1:04 PM

Lea Campbell

from Jae-Young Ko to everyone: 1:04 PM

Jae-Young Ko, Jackson State University

from Dennis Sayre to everyone: 1:04 PM

Dennis Sayre, sayre.dennis@epa.gov

from Lea Campbell to everyone: 1:04 PM

Lea Campbell, email leacampbell76@gmail.com

from Craig Thompson to everyone: 1:04 PM

800 Gillespie Street, Jackson, MS 39202

from Charles Pfeifer to everyone: 1:04 PM

Charles Pfeifer, 30 North Hill Parkway, Jackson, Ms. 39206. cptragopan@aol.com

from Mary Hossley to everyone: 1:04 PM

Mary Hossley

from TC to everyone: 1:04 PM

Tamara Campbell

from Jamie Becker to everyone: 1:04 PM

Jamie Becker, becker.jamie@epa.gov

from Jae-Young Ko to everyone: 1:04 PM

Jae-Young Ko, Jackson State University, jae-young.ko@jsums.edu

from Dennis Riecke to everyone: 1:05 PM

Dennis Riecke

from L Mayo to everyone: 1:05 PM

Lydia Mayo, R4 USEPA, mayo.lydia@epa.gov

from Parker, Evan to everyone: 1:05 PM

Evan Parker; 447 Dunbar Street, Jackson, MS; parkeea@millsaps.edu

from jim davis to everyone: 1:05 PM

James Davis - District 7 Council

St. Tammany Parish Government

from Dennis Riecke to everyone: 1:06 PM

Dennis Riecke, Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, 1505 Eastover Dr., Jackson, MS 39211, 601-432-2207

from Jennifer to everyone: 1:06 PM

Jennifer West

from Mary Hossley to everyone: 1:06 PM

Mary Hossley, M2hossley@yahoo.com Forrest County Branch NAACP, Healthcare Promotions
Hattiesburg, MS

from Kayla Kimmel - USFWS to everyone: 1:08 PM

Kayla Kimmel, USFWS, 237 Parker Coliseum Baton Rouge, LA 7803

from Andy Frame to everyone: 1:08 PM

Andy Frame, andy@revitalizems.org

from Andrea Walker to everyone: 1:08 PM

ASA = Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

from Andrea Walker to everyone: 1:11 PM

I need to be unmuted again, sorry

from Andy Frame to everyone: 1:12 PM

It's very hard to hear Mr. Connor. He's not as loud as other speakers have been.

from Dennis Riecke to everyone: 1:13 PM

Is this presentation on a project website?

from Andrea Walker to everyone: 1:26 PM

Much of our meeting materials and slides are found on the project website.

from Andrea Walker to everyone: 1:26 PM

<https://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Programs-and-Project-Management/Project-Management/Pearl-River/>

from Pearl Riverkeeper to everyone: 1:27 PM

Pearl Riverkeeper, pearlriverkeeper@gmail.com

from Thomas Shaw to everyone: 1:46 PM

please enter your question in the chat window and not the q&a

from jim davis to everyone: 1:46 PM

Can't hear

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 1:47 PM

how much is the water flow down river reduced?

from Charles Pfeifer to everyone: 1:48 PM

I am seeing a June 20 deadline for written comment in some messaging and June 30 here and some others. Are we saying that June 30 is the definitive deadline?

from Thomas Shaw to everyone: 1:50 PM

June 30 is the comment cut off date

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 1:56 PM

with the DOT cost estimates for the bridges on the interstate why is the "One lake" option even being considered? How much will that same option effect the down river flow? what about the 4.7 million gallons of raw sewage that was released by the City of Jackson? We know that is not going to change any time in the future.

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 1:58 PM

mute me when u do not like my questions.

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 1:59 PM

Thanks!

from Andy Frame to everyone: 2:05 PM

One comment I have is that it's difficult for some people to access this virtual meeting via webex. Will a recording of this meeting be available?

from Andy Frame to everyone: 2:05 PM

Okay, thanks.

from Thomas Shaw to everyone: 2:07 PM

The video of the evening Slidell meeting is on the project webpage and the Vicksburg District YouTube channel.

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 2:16 PM

I agree with many of your points Ms. Samet

from Juan Fernandez to everyone: 2:17 PM

Juan Fernandez. judacha@gmail.com

from Juan Fernandez to everyone: 2:17 PM

from Jennifer to everyone: 2:21 PM

Jennifer West Jwest@jacksonms.gov, City of Jackson- Neighborhood Services

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 2:22 PM

I want to thanks all of you for being willing to listen to our concerns and do not take our emotions the wrong way.

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 2:25 PM

Allen Spence

from Harlan Allen Spence to everyone: 2:27 PM

moparallen1@yahoo.com The property I own is in Lawrence County (Monticello). I reside on the Pearl close to the Gatesville Rd. Bridge in Copiah County.

June 1, 2023 Transcription: Virtual Meeting 1800

WEBVTT

1 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:01.050 --> 00:00:04.439

I will just go ahead and get started here.

2 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:04.439 --> 00:00:14.279

And so next slide, please buggy and so why, why are we here? Well.

3 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:14.279 --> 00:00:21.090

This this meeting that the series of meetings are actually being held so that we can.

4 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:21.090 --> 00:00:24.360

Provide some information.

5 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:24.360 --> 00:00:32.520

A little bit of education about the project as as it currently sits and to get feedback and information from, you.

6 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:32.520 --> 00:00:38.940

We talk about an of the non federal interest that is the rank and hands.

7 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:38.940 --> 00:00:43.650

Pearl river flood and dryness control district.

8 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:44.670 --> 00:00:49.770

Why are we here we are here because they made a submittal of a draft.

9 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:49.770 --> 00:00:55.080

A feasibility study, environmental impact statement. They made that submission.

10 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:00:55.080 --> 00:01:08.790

Uh, to the assistant secretary of the army for civil works Mr. Connor, they made that submittal as a part of an authorization from section 3104 and we'll talk about the authorizations just a little bit.

11 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:08.790 --> 00:01:17.670

And the whole history of this, we'll get into this in some detail, but as you all aware, the flood river has flooded.

12 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:17.670 --> 00:01:23.640

Numerous times in the last 100 years with significant impacts to.

13 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:23.640 --> 00:01:26.790

People in property.

14 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:26.790 --> 00:01:33.660

And the report that we're speaking of would be the non federal interest report that was prepared and submitted to.

15 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:33.660 --> 00:01:38.850

The assistant secretary of the army for civil works his office in July.

16 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:38.850 --> 00:01:45.420

Of 2022, and we'll talk about the review process in just a moment. So next please next slide.

17 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:48.780 --> 00:01:52.830

Okay, so as I mentioned earlier, um.

18 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:52.830 --> 00:01:56.640

This is there have been a series of meetings we held meetings.

19 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:01:56.640 --> 00:02:01.140

Last Tuesday and Wednesday, you think was in Florida we had 2 sessions.

20 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:01.140 --> 00:02:06.960

And Wednesday was in Jackson, Mississippi, we had 2 sessions so this is the last.

21 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:06.960 --> 00:02:10.200

Session for this virtual meeting today.

22 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:10.200 --> 00:02:14.100

I wouldn't mention that there will be other public engagements.

23 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:14.100 --> 00:02:20.340

I have I mentioned earlier, please keep up with the website address.

24 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:20.340 --> 00:02:23.610

As we would, you know.

25 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:23.610 --> 00:02:31.770

That would be 1 of the best way to keep you informed of the status of where we're going and not only that it gives you the opportunity to provide some input.

26 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:31.770 --> 00:02:38.400

Speaking of input, that's the very bottom of this slide. You see that we have multiple ways of doing. So, um.

27 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:38.400 --> 00:02:49.170

Currently at this public meeting, we don't have any self distress address, comment cards. You can use of course, but traditional mail. There's an address and then there's an email address.

28 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:49.170 --> 00:02:52.380

Next slide please.

29 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:52.380 --> 00:02:56.070

Okay.

30 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:02:56.070 --> 00:03:04.470

And at this time, this call, I'm sorry, miss Walker, who is speaking from golfing on her behalf.

31 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:03:04.470 --> 00:03:10.710

All right. Can you hear me.

32 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:03:10.915 --> 00:03:25.165

Yes, ma'am. Excellent. All right. Thank you. Everyone appreciate you participating this evening and giving up some of your valuable evening time with your family or dinner plans and so forth. So thank you very much for participating.

33 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:03:26.155 --> 00:03:33.715

We look forward to working with you and all interested parties to solve the flood risk management problems that have long plague.

34 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:03:34.020 --> 00:03:47.880

Communities in the Perl river drainage, as was mentioned, my name is Andrea Walker, and I work in the project planning and review branch in the office of the assistant secretary of the army for civil works.

35 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:03:47.880 --> 00:04:01.350

Our leader is Michael Connor, who serves as the assistant secretary of the army for civil works. He could not be with us this evening, but we do have a video with a message from him that we would like to share.

36 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:04:01.350 --> 00:04:06.900

Wow.

37 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:04:06.900 --> 00:04:10.500

Okay.

38 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:04:10.500 --> 00:04:20.190

Hi, everyone I might Congress, the army festival works.

39 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:04:20.190 --> 00:04:25.020

I provide a policy oversight and direction for the U. S. Army Corps of engineers civil works program.

40 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:04:25.020 --> 00:04:30.239

Thank you for joining us at this community engagement session on solutions to address funding on the.

41 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:04:30.239 --> 00:04:39.989

Co river in Mississippi look forward to hearing from you about the need your needs and concerns regarding funding issue, and a proposed project to address these challenges.

42 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:04:39.989 --> 00:04:47.759

As long as, you know, city of Jackson, Mississippi has experienced devastating, but as recently as 2020 and 2022.

43 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:04:47.759 --> 00:04:54.839

I saw some of this flooding in August of last year in a visit to discuss a proposed project.

44 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:04:54.839 --> 00:05:00.299

It is the priority to provide the people that Jackson is effective near term solution to their flood risks.

45 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:05:00.299 --> 00:05:07.589

And we have a tremendous opportunity to deliver these solutions through the by bipartisan infrastructure, law, funding, provided through that mechanism.

46 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:05:07.589 --> 00:05:12.479

This administration has satisfied sufficient funding to complete planning and implementing.

47 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:05:12.479 --> 00:05:18.749

Plan consistent with existing authorities and in compliance with federal, environmental laws.

48 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:05:18.749 --> 00:05:23.489

You're in, but final technical report for this effort will for my decision.

49 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:05:23.489 --> 00:05:28.019

Other solutions, we will implement to reduce that risk in Jackson.

50 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:05:28.019 --> 00:05:37.349

I appreciate your time and input today, and we work together to find the best solution for a liver Jackson in this region in Mississippi. Thank you very much for your time.

51 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:05:37.349 --> 00:05:45.449

Thank you, um, we are very honored to have Mr Connor as our leader.

52 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:05:45.449 --> 00:05:59.399

Um, he has vast experience in solving complex water resource problems at the federal and regional levels, including his prior assignment as the deputy secretary for the Department of interior.

53 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:05:59.399 --> 00:06:06.749

Secretary Connor will ultimately be the decision maker for any recommendation relative to flooding in Jackson.

54 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:06:08.514 --> 00:06:19.044

So, we'll discuss more on that as we go through again, our office provides policy oversight of the U. S Army Corps of engineers, civil works program.

55 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:06:19.344 --> 00:06:33.354

We provide oversight for the plans design, construction and operation of infrastructure. That currently address flood, navigation, ecosystem, restoration and other needs for communities and citizens of this country.

56 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:06:33.629 --> 00:06:45.269

I echo secretary Congress statement that we look forward to hearing from you about your needs and concerns regarding flooding issues, and a potential flood management project.

57 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:06:45.269 --> 00:06:49.109

To address these challenges, uh, next slide please.

58 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:06:52.079 --> 00:06:53.904

So, again, why are we here?

59 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:06:53.934 --> 00:07:08.544

We're here to talk further about the flooding effects from the Pearl river, we want to advance flood risk management solutions after decades of repetitive flooding in Jackson, and throughout the basin for over 100 years headwater,

60 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:08.634 --> 00:07:17.244

flooding in the Pearl river has caused disruption to businesses industry. And citizens throughout Jackson, Mississippi. mississippi

61 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:18.659 --> 00:07:29.849

In this time, more than 5,000 commercial and residential structures have sustained damages, which have created impacts to a population of over 500,000.

62 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:29.849 --> 00:07:39.119

Notable flood events in 979 and 983 and more recently in 2020 and 2022.

63 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:39.119 --> 00:07:42.149

In 979.

64 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:42.149 --> 00:07:45.419

The flood, uh, events.

65 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:45.419 --> 00:07:49.169

Flooded transportation routes, homes and businesses.

66 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:49.169 --> 00:07:59.549

1979, the damages from that event alone were more than 223 Million dollars in 1979 values.

67 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:07:59.549 --> 00:08:09.659

The highest crest on the Pearl river was in 2020, and it notably impacted at least 2 minority and low income areas of Jackson.

68 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:09.659 --> 00:08:13.019

During the 2022 event.

69 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:13.019 --> 00:08:20.099

Secretary Connor was touring the Jackson area when the rain was falling and the river stage was rising.

70 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:20.099 --> 00:08:28.379

In addition to these impacts, I've already discussed the programmer base and also has a tremendous environmental value.

71 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:28.379 --> 00:08:41.579

Including wetlands that filter waters that eventually flow into the Gulf of Mexico and support thousands of geese birds, migratory, migratory words and turtles and beyond.

72 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:41.579 --> 00:08:45.989

For decades the core and non federal interests.

73 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:45.989 --> 00:08:51.929

Have sought to solve the flood risk management problems in Jackson, and throughout the basin.

74 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:51.929 --> 00:08:59.639

But a lack of project justification, community, support and funding have stalled meaningful progress.

75 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:08:59.639 --> 00:09:10.169

Again, we look forward to working with parties like yourself, just the flood risk management problems that have long plagued communities throughout this basin.

76 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:09:10.169 --> 00:09:16.139

Next slide hold on.

77 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:09:16.139 --> 00:09:27.564

So there is a federal interest for this issue, and trying to provide flood risk management solutions to Jackson, Mississippi and throughout the basin in 1986,

78 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:09:27.564 --> 00:09:35.424

Congress authorized the core to plan design and implement a flood nurse management project.
implement a flood nurse management project

79 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:09:35.669 --> 00:09:44.789

In 2007, that authorization was modified to allow the secretary, the army for civil works.

80 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:09:44.789 --> 00:09:52.319

To select and implement an appropriate management plan without the need for further.

81 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:09:52.319 --> 00:09:58.649

Effort by the Congress, normally, the core would get an authorization for a study.

82 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:09:58.649 --> 00:10:03.749

And make a recommendation, and then we'd have to get another authorization to implement that.

83 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:03.749 --> 00:10:13.649

Through this section, 3104 of the water resources development act of 2007 Congress gave us all our permission at 1 time.

84 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:14.124 --> 00:10:28.944

That is a big deal so, getting back to the 31 and 4 authorization, we were directed that the secretary may construct a national economic development plan, which will describe later. later

85 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:29.279 --> 00:10:33.569

The locally preferred plan, which is 1 that.

86 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:33.569 --> 00:10:38.009

The ranking flood and drainage control district has put forward.

87 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:38.009 --> 00:10:41.669

Or some combination there up.

88 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:42.864 --> 00:10:50.184

Additionally, the secretary must make a determination that if a locally preferred plan is selected,

89 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:50.484 --> 00:10:57.923

that it provides at least the same level of flood damage reduction as that national economic development plan.

90 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:10:58.229 --> 00:11:02.969

And further a plan needs to be environmentally acceptable.

91 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:11:02.969 --> 00:11:16.344

And technically feasible and then lastly, we received an additional authorization in the water resources development act of 2018, which directed the secretary to also assess downstream effects.

92 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:11:16.344 --> 00:11:18.474

assess downstream effects

93 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:11:18.569 --> 00:11:26.939

So, bottom line, this has demonstrated that there is a federal interest in looking into this issue.

94 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:11:26.939 --> 00:11:41.309

Um, we have not been able to do so in the past, because we lack the plan, and we lacked funding, but thanks to the bipartisan infrastructure law. We now have funding to go along with that authorization.

95 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:11:41.309 --> 00:11:45.119

Can I have the next? No.

96 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:11:45.119 --> 00:11:54.989

Okay, um, I'm sorry. So, as I was saying, the bipartisan infrastructure law has provided funds for the secretary.

97 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:11:54.989 --> 00:12:01.109

To direct the core to identify design and implement a flood risk management project.

98 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:12:01.109 --> 00:12:05.279

Subject to the approval by the secretary, the army for civil works.

99 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:12:05.279 --> 00:12:08.729

So, now we have the authority and we have federal funds.

100 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:12:08.729 --> 00:12:14.039

We can advance a solution quickly. The pieces are falling into place.

101 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:12:14.039 --> 00:12:20.249

We are excited to reinvigorate the technical and community work to deliver for Jackson.

102 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:12:20.249 --> 00:12:27.959

Again, I, thank you for your participation. This evening. I look forward to our dialogue, and I will turn things over to Colonel client.

103 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:12:28.074 --> 00:12:40.494

Thank you. Hey, good evening. Everybody, uh, I'm Chris Klein command or the Vicksburg district. We oversee the Pro river watershed. That's 1 of 9.

104 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:12:40.764 --> 00:12:46.044

watersheds that we oversee and execute the civil works project on.

105 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:12:47.004 --> 00:12:51.024

So these are these sessions we've received a lot of really,

106 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:12:51.024 --> 00:13:02.304

really good feedback and thank you everybody for tuning in tell did these virtual sessions were good whether it was 1 person or a 1000 people the feedback that you provide is absolutely phenomenal.

107 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:13:02.424 --> 00:13:15.624

So, what we've learned up to this point, it's been a huge, huge learn. You know, we're seeing downstream effects now. All right, we've got salt water intrusion. We've got flash flooding. We've got erosion and silting issues.

108 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:13:16.224 --> 00:13:27.804

We've heard a story, you know, the story of aging infrastructure and those impacts as well as we've heard the concerns about impacts of habitat. That is habitat downstream.

109 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:13:28.014 --> 00:13:34.374

We've also heard the concerns about what's going to happen in Jackson that includes habitat and wetland impacts.

110 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:13:34.679 --> 00:13:47.814

We've also heard, you know, the opportunities for hope how folks are seeing this as an opportunity for revitalization and providing that feedback of really what, you know, what folks want and that is, you know, a river that works for them.

111 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:13:48.114 --> 00:13:53.544

So, how do we connect the community back to the river? How do we, um.

112 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:13:53.909 --> 00:14:08.634

Uh, and we ensure that, you know, water is staying out of communities that aren't supposed to have water in on their streets. And really that's that's where our focus is today. And so thank you everybody for participating in this in this public process.

113 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:14:09.479 --> 00:14:13.014

Uh, if you can go to the next slide, please blocking. Yeah.

114 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:14:13.014 --> 00:14:27.924

So the program has got a long history of both navigation and flood control navigation has stopped and especially in lower Pearl and now we're focused on flood control and the

115 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:14:27.924 --> 00:14:35.964

flood control start story, started in Jackson with the initial Levy structures in 1968 and then we had that flood of record in 979, since that flood of record in 979,

116 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:14:35.964 --> 00:14:44.064

there have been multiple locally proposed as well as corps of engineers proposed solutions to mitigate the flood risks to the city of Jackson.

117 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:14:44.064 --> 00:14:51.324

of engineers proposed solutions to mitigate the flood risks to the city of Jackson

118 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:14:52.674 --> 00:14:59.544

This, uh, in this latest locally presented plan, he was prepared under section 211, or the water resources development act of 996.

119 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:14:59.544 --> 00:15:10.884

it's been reviewed and it's been presented underneath that authority to the secretary for consideration, which brings us to the work that the secretary has asked us to do today. asked us to do today

120 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:15:11.279 --> 00:15:14.939

You go to the next slide, please.

121 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:15:15.204 --> 00:15:28.674

So, our latest efforts started at the at the end of last year, 2022 by the direction of the secretary and our missions to build off of previous work and that's all previous work to develop a report that assesses an array of options for technical feasibility.

122 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:15:28.674 --> 00:15:41.814

Which includes being economically justifiable environmental acceptability and legal compliance, and really in here, the 2, the 2, most critical items that we're looking for, at this point,

123 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:15:41.814 --> 00:15:55.824

are identifying the National economic development plan. You heard miss Walker mentioned that term the National economic development plans. What is that? That is the plan that has the greatest benefit. has the greatest benefit

124 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:15:56.274 --> 00:16:07.194

To meet national economic growth priorities. It is also the plan that has that has the greatest economic benefit in prevented prevention of damages.

125 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:16:07.674 --> 00:16:15.744

And so that's what we're, that's what we're working to identify uh, right now as well as complete our environmental compliance activities.

126 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:16:17.184 --> 00:16:31.884

When we do identify that any D plan, we have to understand that any D plan becomes the baseline, the baseline it's the baseline against which all other options and arrays are assessed off of and any other option must provide, uh,

127 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:16:31.884 --> 00:16:37.794

at least as much if not more flood protection than that plan.

128 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:16:39.714 --> 00:16:49.764

In addition to identifying the plan and doing what we do normally is the core the secretary is also directed us to provide an analysis of the comprehensive benefits.

129 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:16:49.854 --> 00:16:57.504

So these are both the quantitative as well as qualitative benefits quantitative being those things that you can measure.

130 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:16:57.869 --> 00:17:03.264

Qualitative being those options that don't necessarily present themselves through numbers.

131 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:17:03.264 --> 00:17:08.244

So, hey, how we, how we reconnect the community to a river, uh,

132 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:17:08.274 --> 00:17:22.434

opportunities for revitalization what are those things that a project could potentially afford to the community in the future that aren't normally measured during our processes? What communities are impacted? Those communities are relieved.

133 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:17:22.434 --> 00:17:37.404

So, we're taking a really hard look at those qualitative benefits of any project that is presented. I want to remind folks again that the core of engineers is neither a proponent or an opponent of any 1 projects.

134 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:17:37.494 --> 00:17:52.344

What we want to do is we want to deliver a flood risk, mitigation and flood risk management solution for the city of Jackson this I'm going to turn it over to Lesley's and take us through what the technical team is doing and where we're at.

135 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:17:54.384 --> 00:18:05.904

Hi, so, unless labor costs goes a planned formulator and with the regional planning and environment division South and again, thank you so much for your time today, go to next slide.

136 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:18:05.934 --> 00:18:14.454

But I'm going to go ahead and give you some details of what the non federal interest report what the alternatives were.

137 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:18:15.024 --> 00:18:28.944

So the non digital interest report that was submitted was under section 211, and it built upon the historical studies and assessed over 60 different flood reduction features. features

138 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:18:29.309 --> 00:18:43.229

At the conclusion of that report, 3 plans were identified further assessment that looks the most promising that was a non structural plan, a levee plan, and a channel improvement plan.

139 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:18:43.229 --> 00:18:47.399

The non structural plan included the.

140 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:18:47.399 --> 00:18:56.369

Relocating infrastructures, and the purchase of the property that the structures were on within the 500 or 5 plan.

141 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:18:57.654 --> 00:19:10.614

The 2nd alternative was a levy only plan, which included upgrading existing levies, construction of additional Lovey segments and or firewalls and unprotected area.

142 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:11.394 --> 00:19:15.324

And in addition of pumps and or David structures.

143 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:15.899 --> 00:19:20.999

The 3rd alternative was a channel and premium plan.

144 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:20.999 --> 00:19:25.469

That was the non federal interest preferred planned.

145 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:25.469 --> 00:19:30.059

And I consisted of increasing the channels capacity.

146 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:30.059 --> 00:19:40.619

Through excavation demolition of existing we're near J. H fuel water treatment plant site.

147 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:40.619 --> 00:19:43.769

A construction of a new where.

148 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:43.769 --> 00:19:50.129

With a low flow gate and fish pass the structure further downstream.

149 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:50.129 --> 00:19:58.109

Federal Levy improvements, which is where pose the location for the placement of excavated material.

150 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:19:58.109 --> 00:20:07.829

And upgrading an existing non federal Levy into a federalized ring lobby around a Savannah street wastewater treatment plan.

151 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:20:07.829 --> 00:20:18.509

That was a spinal array, the vital 3 alternative from the report moving forward in next slide.

152 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:20:21.084 --> 00:20:33.294

Since that report, submittal, the U. S, Army Corps of engineers and ranking hands have been working collaboratively when understanding the locally prefer plan in our final race in the middle.

153 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:20:33.599 --> 00:20:44.759

From there as stated, we're going to go ahead. The US corps of engineers, we're preparing the draft environmental impact statement.

154 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:20:44.759 --> 00:20:49.439

To identify the, any plan is previously discussed.

155 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:20:49.439 --> 00:20:57.149

Compare the level of protection in that plan, the level side protection provide by all alternatives, being assessed.

156 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:20:57.149 --> 00:21:02.939

And additionally going, assess the downstream impacts the Pro river basin.

157 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:21:02.939 --> 00:21:14.249

The comparison of plan is going to include the non federal intersection 211, final plan, as discussed in the previous slide.

158 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:21:14.514 --> 00:21:22.224

Non structural narratives those are ones where it's only non structural. You're not building something that's going to change the hydrology.

159 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:21:22.704 --> 00:21:34.644

So, a, being the non 1, then there's going to be a 1 that's a new 1 that we're currently working on and developing in collaboration with the public feedback, which is going to be finding.

160 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:21:36.114 --> 00:21:50.214

Such items as potentially elevating residential structures, flood proofing, commercial and non residential structures or residential, that are historic properties, it could be potential for bios.

161 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:21:50.694 --> 00:22:00.954

So that plan is in development. That's a new plan. Then you have alternative C, which is a channel improvement plan from the section to 11 0 submitted by the.

162 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:02.849 --> 00:22:15.119

Then we as authorized, we could potentially assess a combination or hybrid alternative of any D. N. A. L. P. locally preferred plan.

163 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:15.119 --> 00:22:20.189

And other potentials that are currently being brought for the forefront.

164 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:20.189 --> 00:22:25.799

Or potentially be included in this draft.

165 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:25.799 --> 00:22:31.739

Next 1.

166 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:31.739 --> 00:22:44.609

But just to reiterate a plan has not been identified, we are recommending evaluating these systems that we are considering to assess at this point.

167 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:44.609 --> 00:22:51.479

So, here their study area, the primary, so the Pro river.

168 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:51.479 --> 00:22:55.799

Watershed it's really large. It's over 8,000.

169 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:22:55.799 --> 00:23:07.409

Square miles, it's a very large area, but what we're focusing on for the primary study area is we're, we're trying to achieve flood risk management benefits.

170 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:23:07.914 --> 00:23:21.444

Um, it's including that we're focusing between river mall 270, which is located, just south of Richmond, Mississippi River mall 302, which is at the foot of the Ross Barnett reservoir dam.

171 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:23:21.444 --> 00:23:32.934

And if you look at this figure here, you can see that this both sides. The Eastern West compromise, Heinz, and ranking counties and Mississippi. heinz and ranking counties and mississippi

172 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:23:33.804 --> 00:23:46.674

And the tributaries are shown here, so our model modeling for existing conditions. The preliminary model right now that we're looking at, for the 100 year event is shown on the screen and gray preliminary.

173 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:23:47.034 --> 00:23:53.994

But you can see the tributaries there being assessed are now included in the hydraulic model. model

174 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:23:58.314 --> 00:24:02.244

1 other items had mentioned that we've learned, we heard a lot of feedback,

175 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:02.244 --> 00:24:17.184

was that the downstream impacts to know even though the study area is focused on assessing and developing the benefits for reducing flood risk by no means limited to this area for

176 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:17.214 --> 00:24:25.614

us to evaluate. And assess for the area of influence where there could be potential, hydraulic impacts environmental impacts. That is a much larger area.

177 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:25.614 --> 00:24:33.174

If there's an area that is where anything with project of potentially influence will be considered in the assessment.

178 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:33.449 --> 00:24:37.709

Right next.

179 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:37.709 --> 00:24:46.799

So, in addition to find that any plan and comparing it for a blood level of risk reduction.

180 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:46.799 --> 00:24:51.419

You her colonel find discuss comprehensive benefits.

181 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:51.419 --> 00:24:57.269

Comprehensive benefits 8 K, laymen's terms areas of interest.

182 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:24:57.269 --> 00:25:03.029

It's presented here, we've identified some preliminary ones so far.

183 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:03.029 --> 00:25:17.964

But this is not limited, and this is where we're asking for the feedback and chat to include what things are helping us, tell a story and get the input out there to help inform. Mr.

184 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:17.964 --> 00:25:18.684

Conner.

185 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:19.019 --> 00:25:32.904

For his decision, so how can we best tell him exactly concerns and impacts concerns regarding of benefits? Give a full picture for Mr. corner.

186 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:33.564 --> 00:25:40.284

Some of the things they've been identified right now the primary item is, of course, flood risk reduction.

187 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:41.099 --> 00:25:46.619

But water supply, we understand that. It's very important.

188 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:46.619 --> 00:25:53.819

And that no compromise to the water supply system is a huge concern.

189 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:53.819 --> 00:25:57.809

And something that we're definitely going keeping.

190 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:25:57.809 --> 00:26:03.989

In the forefront water and waste water treatment treatment.

191 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:03.989 --> 00:26:11.279

Plants into the river system, ecosystem, environmental impacts, existing waste sites.

192 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:11.279 --> 00:26:15.569

Cultural resources transportation.

193 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:15.569 --> 00:26:20.759

Downstream impacts recreational access and opportunities.

194 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:20.759 --> 00:26:24.359

Community impacts such as cohesion.

195 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:24.359 --> 00:26:28.049

Quality of life and economic opportunity.

196 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:28.554 --> 00:26:42.864

Do you want to point out on the cultural resources that we do have an eye currently out on our website regarding notice of intent to develop a programmatic agreement under section? 106, hundred and six

197 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:43.199 --> 00:26:47.129

So, you can find that notice of intent on our website as well.

198 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:26:47.129 --> 00:26:51.899

Okay, I'm going to hand it back over to Colonel Klein. Thank you.

199 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:26:51.899 --> 00:27:01.559

Thanks, Leslie, if we go to the next slide, uh, this is going to show us our timeline and where we're at. And, uh, right now the technical teams.

200 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:27:01.559 --> 00:27:08.519

The team's teams work is continuing, and we're here in the public public agency outreach.

201 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:27:08.904 --> 00:27:23.454

We're here to receive your feedback and incorporate that into the work that we're doing by August we'll have a draft report complete that's going to go again out for review that will inform the final report,

202 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:27:23.454 --> 00:27:37.824

which will be complete in December and submitted to the secretary for decision it's a really streamlined timeline, but it's feasible because we're building on years of work that years. Many, many years of work. Many many.

203 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:27:37.854 --> 00:27:52.794

Here's a feedback. And so just know that that is all being taken into account into this, this final stage as well, and will inform the Secretary's decision. So, with that, we're going to turn it over back over to our moderator and open up for public comments.

204 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:27:54.234 --> 00:27:55.164

Thank you. Sir.

205 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:27:56.249 --> 00:27:59.579

The next slide please.

206 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:27:59.579 --> 00:28:06.089

So I mentioned at the very beginning of the meeting, we did value your feedback and your input.

207 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:06.089 --> 00:28:13.859

We will be accepting feedback and input through the 30th of June of this year.

208 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:13.859 --> 00:28:17.999

There are multiple ways in which you can provide that feedback. Of course.

209 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:17.999 --> 00:28:24.179

There is an email there and we're going to lead this slide up for the remainder of the.

210 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:24.179 --> 00:28:32.339

Of the meeting, of course, there's normal mail to the US Postal service. The address that need to go to is there.

211 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:32.339 --> 00:28:37.349

And then, lastly, I mentioned the project website, our project website is listed right there.

212 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:37.349 --> 00:28:44.309

Uh, many materials are currently out there. Minimal will be added as we go along.

213 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:44.309 --> 00:28:51.989

And so with that, I just remind everybody as we start into the.

214 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:51.989 --> 00:28:56.999

The feedback, period try to limit your questions to basically 3 minutes.

215 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:28:56.999 --> 00:29:10.289

And please, wait until you're recognized before you begin last time we started with people raising their hands, let's go straight to the chat this time booking and let's look at the chats of any.

216 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:10.289 --> 00:29:16.799

Comments there, we've got several people that have done just exactly what we asked. They've listed.

217 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:16.799 --> 00:29:20.099

Their name and who they are and what they're doing.

218 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:20.099 --> 00:29:24.899

I'm trying to see if anybody's actually got any, any statements.

219 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:26.789 --> 00:29:30.869

There was a gentleman just a few minutes ago.

220 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:30.869 --> 00:29:34.319

That made a statement, I don't.

221 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:34.319 --> 00:29:38.489

So he is right now, he said he want to make a public statement. 1st time was Leo.

222 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:38.489 --> 00:29:44.819

Sir are you still on the line? Yes, sir I am doing this evening.

223 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:29:44.819 --> 00:29:49.919

Okay Mr. here. Okay.

224 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:29:51.389 --> 00:29:55.109

It's certainly a concern is the 1, like, project.

225 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:29:55.109 --> 00:29:58.589

Uh, in particular I want, I wanted to ask about.

226 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:29:58.589 --> 00:30:02.099

The flooding downstream that, that you all mentioned.

227 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:30:02.099 --> 00:30:06.359

And I want to ask, have we have we considered..

228 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:30:06.359 --> 00:30:11.129

Uh, the environmental impact of neglected tropical diseases and, and.

229 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:30:11.129 --> 00:30:15.059

The impact that that would have on those communities in these.

230 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:30:15.059 --> 00:30:18.269

Thank you.

231 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:30:18.269 --> 00:30:21.539

Hello.

232 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:30:21.539 --> 00:30:31.769

Um, I have to say, that's a new comment, but I'm certainly glad you brought that to our attention and we'll see what we can't do as far as investigating that. But.

233 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:30:32.274 --> 00:30:41.754

Thank you appreciate that. Can you say the type of disease is 1 more time so I can write it down correctly down slide down.

234 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:30:41.754 --> 00:30:53.544

We did here about California bacteria, build ups down low, lower down, lower Pearl, because of low oxygen oxygenation and low flow. But I just want to make sure I get that. Right?

235 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:30:55.199 --> 00:30:59.219

Uh, it's, it's, uh, neglected tropical diseases.

236 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:30:59.219 --> 00:31:03.299

The study was done by Dr.

237 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:31:03.299 --> 00:31:06.419

Um, University.

238 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:31:06.419 --> 00:31:11.189

I think that the say that I'm talking about before station and.

239 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:31:11.189 --> 00:31:14.489

And in water, in these communities.

240 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:31:14.489 --> 00:31:17.999

We need like the topic of diseases, like.

241 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:31:17.999 --> 00:31:22.349

And and other diseases.

242 "Leo Carney" (1401512448)

00:31:24.509 --> 00:31:29.069

It's great, thank you.

243 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:31:29.069 --> 00:31:33.689

Okay, um.

244 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:31:35.189 --> 00:31:38.729

Looks like, we had a.

245 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:31:38.729 --> 00:31:43.529

Mr. Whitehurst Andrew you have a verbal comment.

246 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:31:48.059 --> 00:31:51.959

Can you hear me.

247 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:31:51.959 --> 00:31:55.259

Yes, okay. I had a.

248 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:31:55.259 --> 00:32:02.489

A comment about recreational access and opportunities that's 1 of your scoping factors. It wasn't talked about.

249 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:02.489 --> 00:32:05.699

Adequately at the previous meetings.

250 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:06.324 --> 00:32:18.384

Speakers at the May 24th, public engagement meeting in Jackson complained about the lack of public access to the Pearl in urban Jackson. There is public access to the river and Jackson for canoes kayaks and small boats.

251 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:18.384 --> 00:32:23.994

There's access on public lands to trails along oxbow, lakes and river banks. river banks

252 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:24.209 --> 00:32:30.059

In the floors bluff state park on the Pearl, just downstream of the highway 25 bridge.

253 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:30.059 --> 00:32:41.069

The floors website part has the Mississippi museum of natural science on its grounds, and the park and museums share a 2 mile trail system, including the museums purple trail.

254 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:41.069 --> 00:32:46.889

Color coded along the Pearl river that ends at the parks, public boat round and parking lot.

255 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:46.889 --> 00:32:50.069

There's demonstrated public use.

256 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:50.069 --> 00:32:56.964

Of the river in the park, the museum of natural science built it science education program around the state park,

257 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:32:56.994 --> 00:33:07.494

using wetlands and floodplain forest along the Pearl to teach thousands of students to train hundreds of teachers at project, wet and project wild workshops.

258 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:33:07.709 --> 00:33:17.309

The museum reached its 1st 1 Million visitor mark about 2010, and is 1 of Jackson's award winnings tourism and educational attractions.

259 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:33:17.309 --> 00:33:29.609

The alternative C project will dredge away many acres of the floor's bluff state park along the Pearl along the river trail, and would take 1 of the most beautiful spots in the city.

260 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:33:29.609 --> 00:33:36.959

And it would reduce the quality of the park experience. Riverbank line. It's a mature 90 year old, hardwood trees.

261 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:33:36.959 --> 00:33:50.124

And a network of floodplains lose and oxbow lakes with mature cypress and Tupelo gums, in the part would be removed by dredging and replaced by banks devoid of trees in a shoreline stabilized by sheep,

262 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:33:50.124 --> 00:34:00.084

piling concrete or limestone rip route. The people promoting alternative sea do not care whether the floors bluff state park is dredged.

263 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:00.329 --> 00:34:10.199

These people don't need public green spaces. They have gentleman's hunting camp's in the Mississippi Delta, and they fish for tuna in billfish in the Gulf.

264 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:10.199 --> 00:34:16.919

I wanted to speak up for a well used and appreciated 390, acre piece of public green space.

265 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:16.919 --> 00:34:22.319

That is close by well used and it doesn't require a membership.

266 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:22.319 --> 00:34:26.819

So, when you come back to Jackson, I'd like you to go see.

267 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:26.819 --> 00:34:37.919

Lower section of the floor's bluff state park and go see the science museum that interprets the park and interprets the Pearl river. It was put there on purpose.

268 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:37.919 --> 00:34:41.189

Moved in 1999, from downtown.

269 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:41.189 --> 00:34:47.309

So, I just thought the public use of the section, the river needed.

270 "Andrew Whitehurst" (652705792)

00:34:47.309 --> 00:34:50.939

To have the floor's bluff state park highlighted thanks.

271 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:34:50.939 --> 00:35:01.679

Thank you Mr. Whitehurst and yes, we have heard from others of concerns they have with potential impacts.

272 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:35:01.679 --> 00:35:05.189

To the floor bluff state park.

273 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:35:05.189 --> 00:35:15.984

Um, and, yes, um, 1 of my visits to Jackson, I would love to go and see these wonderful facilities. Public always wants more if they can.

274 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:35:15.984 --> 00:35:21.684

So, if we have an opportunity to do something about that, that's always a good thing.

275 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:35:22.019 --> 00:35:25.049

Um, but we'll certainly be mindful of, um.

276 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:35:25.049 --> 00:35:28.319

The state park impacts going forward, thank you.

277 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:35:28.319 --> 00:35:35.249

Thank you. Okay next let's recognize Santo Domingo.

278 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:35:36.449 --> 00:35:40.289

Yes. Hello? Everyone can you hear me? All right.

279 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:35:40.914 --> 00:35:41.934

Awesome,

280 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:35:42.444 --> 00:35:57.264

hi on behalf of American rivers members and supporters Thank you so much for the opportunity to share our concerns about the 1 lake project specifically American rivers is a premier National Organization working

281 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:35:57.264 --> 00:36:05.874

to protect and restore all rivers from remote mountain streams to urban waterways. We know that clean water is a fundamental human right?

282 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:36:05.874 --> 00:36:13.914

And that without healthy rivers communities suffer rivers, provide our drinking water, grow our food and sustain our spirits.

283 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:36:13.944 --> 00:36:26.904

Their proposed 1 link project threatens all of that for real estate development project to create new waterfront property. That is being falsely packaged as a solution to the communities flooding problems.

284 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:36:28.224 --> 00:36:41.274

Large infrequent floods can take lives and destroy property, which is why we've tried so hard to control them with levies and tams. Unfortunately, most people don't realize how harmful these engineered structures can be.

285 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:36:41.574 --> 00:36:55.194

These structures can be overwhelmed by large floods when they break or overtop. They release massive amounts of water all at once threatening lives, destroying homes and businesses, and costing Americans, millions of dollars dams.

286 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:36:55.194 --> 00:36:57.594

Like, the 1 proposed on the Pro river often,

287 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:36:57.594 --> 00:37:12.534

prioritize the needs of downstream communities in the name of flood control while exacerbating flooding for communities upstream of the dam and impoundment the creation of 1 lake will permanently elevate water levels and 8 tributary creeks that flow

288 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:37:12.534 --> 00:37:25.044

through primarily low income, black neighborhoods in Jackson. So, this means that it will take far less rain and runoff for vulnerable neighborhoods to flood. The cascading effects of building. Don't stop there.

289 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:37:25.224 --> 00:37:37.644

If approved 1 lake would expose communities to toxic pollution, worse injections, drinking, water, crisis industry floodplain. And wetland habitat that provides natural flood protection for local communities.

290 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:37:38.124 --> 00:37:49.674

Instead we are urging U. S, Army Corps of engineers to protect the Pearl river for people and wildlife that it supports by rejecting the 1 project.

291 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:37:50.334 --> 00:38:01.584

The army corps should prioritize non structural and natural infrastructure solutions, such as some of those proposed in the National economic development plan that could provide effective,

292 "Chantel Dominguez she/her" (662093056)

00:38:01.584 --> 00:38:13.194

environmentally sustainable flutter leaf to Jackson while protecting the river's unique ecology and wildlife. I thank you all so much for your time and thank you for listening.

293 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:38:15.300 --> 00:38:21.570

Absolutely, thank you. Okay. I see Audrey Harrison has her hand up.

294 "Audrey Harrison" (3791849472)

00:38:24.990 --> 00:38:30.000

I do thank you so much for opening this public forum.

295 "Audrey Harrison" (3791849472)

00:38:30.000 --> 00:38:34.560

Can you hear me? Okay right? Yes, we can.

296 "Audrey Harrison" (3791849472)

00:38:34.560 --> 00:38:44.670

I am a Heinz county resident, and I have more of a question than a comment. I am curious as to.

297 "Audrey Harrison" (3791849472)

00:38:44.670 --> 00:38:58.350

If or when there has been a comprehensive baseline floral and funnel assemblage survey, conducted within the project area. So, an assessment that is.

298 "Audrey Harrison" (3791849472)

00:38:58.350 --> 00:39:07.650

Comprehensive of the plants and animals that occur within the project area and I have a follow up question, depending on the answer.

299 "Audrey Harrison" (3791849472)

00:39:08.850 --> 00:39:12.990

To the question.

300 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:39:12.990 --> 00:39:16.080

Yup.

301 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:39:16.080 --> 00:39:28.350

That is going to be part of our existing conditions that we're going to assess and write to, in coordination with our coordinating agencies that will build upon that.

302 "Audrey Harrison" (3791849472)

00:39:28.350 --> 00:39:40.620

Okay, would the core be responsible for that assessment? Or would that be the non federal sponsor doing that assessment?

303 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:39:40.620 --> 00:39:44.460

It will be a part of the course report.

304 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:39:44.460 --> 00:39:51.630

So, it'll be the core with some of the coordinating agencies and building on some of the work that's been done.

305 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:39:51.630 --> 00:40:01.980

Okay, thank you. I see your hand raise from Pearl riverkeeper. If you would please identify yourself.

306 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:40:02.485 --> 00:40:15.235

Then go ahead and ask good evening. This is Abby with here Thank you for the opportunity to ask us 2 more questions. So the U. S fish and Wildlife service, and the U. S.

307 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:40:15.235 --> 00:40:29.965

Army Corps of engineers, independent reviewers, both consider all C1 lake, the most environmentally damaging plan their comments include quote, in my opinion, we are neither compliant with nor operating within the spirit of the Clean Water act and quote,

308 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:40:29.965 --> 00:40:40.405

and quote there appears to be little consideration for environmental impacts within the selection process in the 2018 did not contain any adaptive management or mitigation plans.

309 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:40:40.405 --> 00:40:53.005

So, my 1st, question for you are will the released by the core and September includes specific adaptive management and mitigation plans with associated costs for each project alternative.

310 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:40:53.005 --> 00:40:59.965

And will your identify the location of property in the watershed? property in the watershed

311 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:41:00.240 --> 00:41:08.700

That could provide appropriate mitigation for the 2000 acres of wetlands, loss associated with all sleep. Well.

312 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:41:09.720 --> 00:41:13.050

Okay.

313 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:41:13.050 --> 00:41:21.685

Um, speaking to the real estate, we're just beginning to look at the real estate requirements. A plan has not been identified once the plan's been identified.

314 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:41:22.135 --> 00:41:29.965

The real estate requirements will be further looked into the anticipated, be standard core processes. Um.

315 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:41:30.300 --> 00:41:41.790

As far as alternate see being assessed for environment, we are revisiting those impacts right now with the U. S. special model service as well.

316 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:41:41.790 --> 00:41:46.230

For that alternative speaking to that, that 1st question.

317 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:41:46.230 --> 00:41:58.740

Okay, so, in this, so you're gonna plan on releasing the, your in September correct? September. 1st so, at that time, um, will there be, um.

318 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:41:58.740 --> 00:42:06.270

Property, um, identified that could be mitigation for the wetland sauce.

319 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:42:08.040 --> 00:42:18.330

Perhaps, okay. Yeah, I think we'll have general locations of of features. We may not be down to the exact parcels.

320 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:42:18.835 --> 00:42:23.245

But we will definitely identify general areas. Okay.

321 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:42:23.455 --> 00:42:36.055

And as you know, in the 2018 comment letter syndicated Department of transportation stated that if the predicted scour deaths occur, there will be catastrophic failure all 7 of the main channel bridges. I know. You're very familiar with that.

322 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:42:36.055 --> 00:42:49.825

So does all see 1 lake in your include a plan to maintain integrity of our Jackson interstate bridges and what is the cost of that plan? And the costs reflected in the cost of in your new?

323 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:42:50.815 --> 00:42:57.205

Because in the 2018, there was no cost for bridges associated. was no cost for bridges associated

324 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:42:57.480 --> 00:43:03.060

Our team is currently assessing that right now the engineering division.

325 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:43:03.060 --> 00:43:07.230

Okay, thank you for your time.

326 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:43:07.230 --> 00:43:11.220

Thank you.

327 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:43:11.220 --> 00:43:15.120

Lucky do we have any more hands raised in the more interest.

328 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:43:16.770 --> 00:43:22.320

Why we got to Charmaine Morris.

329 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:43:23.400 --> 00:43:28.020

Charmaine Morrison did you want to make a statement.

330 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:43:29.040 --> 00:43:33.745

Yes, good evening. Charmaine Morrison with earth justice.

331 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:43:34.465 --> 00:43:44.575

I'll start by saying that robust public involvement is essential to an informed decision making process regarding the proposed when we project.

332 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:43:44.820 --> 00:43:54.210

And as we've already heard from other commenters, the project threatens a series of severe, environmental and public health impacts, including.

333 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:43:54.210 --> 00:43:58.980

Destruction of many acres of bottom and hardwood forest and marine habitats.

334 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:43:58.980 --> 00:44:02.250

And the disturbance of several contaminated waste sites.

335 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:44:02.250 --> 00:44:13.080

So, moving forward, the core must engage with the public in a manner that complies with NEPA and all other relevant authorities in order to ensure that the agency understands.

336 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:44:13.080 --> 00:44:18.060

And closely evaluates the full scope of potential impacts of 1 lake.

337 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:44:18.060 --> 00:44:32.340

And we appreciate that the scoping process represents an early stage in the life of this project proposal, and that there will be more opportunities for the public to submit comments in the future.

338 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:44:32.340 --> 00:44:47.040

But we will expect the core to proceed with future stages in a more organized manner than what we've seen. Thus far in this renewed scoping stage. I'll offer just a couple examples.

339 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:44:47.040 --> 00:44:54.150

To begin, the core announced these public meetings for the 1st time to a limited audience on May 15th.

340 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:44:54.150 --> 00:44:57.780

And only announced the meetings in the Federal register on the 18.

341 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:44:57.780 --> 00:45:06.060

Public had at most, only 8 days notice of the 1st of the few in person public meetings on May 23rd.

342 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:45:06.060 --> 00:45:17.730

And that's simply not sufficient NEPA regulations for other federal agencies. Hold that public scoping meetings should be held at least 15 days after public notification.

343 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:45:17.730 --> 00:45:30.840

And in many circumstances, even 15 days will not be enough to ensure that affected members of the public, have notice of an access to public meetings. So moving forward the public should have at least.

344 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:45:30.840 --> 00:45:34.860

30 days notice of public meetings on 1, like.

345 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:45:34.860 --> 00:45:45.690

2nd, the court may clear until May 18th. That's a current process. Was meant to satisfy the agencies scoping obligations underneath.

346 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:45:45.690 --> 00:45:52.770

And even then information about the project has trickled down to the website and that's what piecemeal fashion.

347 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:45:52.770 --> 00:45:58.560

All we basically have so far are a few high level PowerPoint presentations, and a couple of maps.

348 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:45:58.560 --> 00:46:07.530

Per the cores own NEPA regulations. The scoping process is the key to preparing a concise.

349 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:07.530 --> 00:46:11.370

And clarifying the significant issues to be analyzed in depth.

350 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:11.370 --> 00:46:19.890

The regulations further, hold that public concerns on issues studies, needed alternatives to be examined. All these things will be addressed in scoping.

351 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:19.890 --> 00:46:24.120

The core has not provided enough details about this project proposal.

352 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:24.120 --> 00:46:28.680

For the public to have a meaningful opportunity to comment on it and this.

353 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:28.680 --> 00:46:31.920

Someone undermines the purpose of the scoping process.

354 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:31.920 --> 00:46:39.150

Finally, the core has been fairly unclear about the deadline to submit online public comments in the scoping period.

355 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:39.150 --> 00:46:44.670

I'm a 17th email from miss Walker, listed the comment deadline as June 31st.

356 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:44.670 --> 00:46:48.270

The Federal Register notice listed the deadline in June 20th.

357 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:46:48.270 --> 00:47:01.140

Find me a PowerPoint on the course website listed the deadline is June 30th and that's of course what we see here, but a member of the public had to affirmatively contact the core to seek clarification on that deadline.

358 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:47:01.140 --> 00:47:10.710

And that lack of attention to details just makes it hard for the public to engage with the proposal and diminishes confidence that the public input will be taken seriously.

359 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:47:10.710 --> 00:47:22.110

So, in closing, even appreciating that the scoping process is an early stage in the life of a need for proposal and that there will be more opportunities to comment.

360 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:47:22.110 --> 00:47:34.650

The course, still has to follow, pick up a lot at every stage of the project proposal and again meaningful public involvement is essential to an informed decision about 1 leg, especially in light of the project significant.

361 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:47:34.650 --> 00:47:37.650

Potential impacts Thank you.

362 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:47:37.650 --> 00:47:48.060

Thank you miss Morrison, appreciate the those points and we'll continue to make improvements moving forward to provide.

363 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:47:48.060 --> 00:47:51.450

More notification for more meaningful.

364 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:47:51.450 --> 00:47:55.170

Discussion with the public, thank you.

365 "Sharmeen Morrison" (2492189696)

00:47:55.170 --> 00:48:00.180

Thank you.

366 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:48:00.180 --> 00:48:04.830

Anybody else by the way.

367 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:48:04.830 --> 00:48:12.540

Richard Nicholas. Okay, Richard. Nicholas. Did you have your hand up?

368 "Richard Nicholas" (113785600)

00:48:12.540 --> 00:48:23.185

Uh, yes, thank you. Can, can you hear me? Yes, sir. Yeah, thank you had asked a question, just clarification based on some earlier comments on her, because I do access to the river or something.

369 "Richard Nicholas" (113785600)

00:48:23.185 --> 00:48:35.215

That's important question of clarification on just impact to trails in the boat ramp up lake the forest lakes plan have kind of major impact to the Mae's lake area.

370 "Richard Nicholas" (113785600)

00:48:35.545 --> 00:48:43.915

But my understanding is that the C minimize impacts to that may's lake, and it does not impact walking trails in the boat ramp. Amazingly itself. Is that correct?

371 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:48:45.690 --> 00:48:49.560

Um.

372 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:48:49.560 --> 00:48:56.550

Sorry Leslie, go ahead. I was saying that that's currently being assessed right now.

373 "Richard Nicholas" (113785600)

00:48:58.170 --> 00:49:04.140

Okay, thank you. And will will that assessment be public.

374 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

00:49:04.140 --> 00:49:08.910

Yes, That'll be documented in the report that the core prepares.

375 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:49:08.910 --> 00:49:17.400

Thank you. Okay, Jennifer. W, did you hit your your hand up?

376 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:49:18.480 --> 00:49:22.890

Yes, I did. Okay.

377 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:49:24.115 --> 00:49:37.735

I have a question or statement kind of piggy backing off from miss Morris earlier in the presentation. You all talked about that you all had conversations with the with a different communities.

378 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:49:37.975 --> 00:49:51.715

Um, I do hear a lot of different organizations being on this call. I do understand that there are people that have somewhat of a privilege that is on this call. But how many comments have you had from the underserved communities?

379 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:49:51.955 --> 00:50:03.895

Because ultimately they are the ones that are affected every single day. Those are the ones that may not be able to afford to move, may not be able to get those resources to to themselves in regards to.

380 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:50:04.380 --> 00:50:09.900

The different flooding issues that come with this whole, uh.

381 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:50:09.900 --> 00:50:18.175

A development and so, what feedback have you I'm sorry? From adult? What what feedback have you received from the public?

382 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:50:18.175 --> 00:50:31.795

Because I have been to I personally have been to the Berkeley presentation that was given, and I was there in having conversation with a lot of people in the community that had those concerns. And so from a.

383 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:50:32.070 --> 00:50:36.210

Citizens 1st, and foremost that lives in Jackson.

384 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:50:36.210 --> 00:50:39.390

What have you heard from those people?

385 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:50:39.390 --> 00:50:43.830

Our people my people in regards to this.

386 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:50:43.830 --> 00:50:48.270

This, uh, this proposal, or any proposal.

387 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:50:51.330 --> 00:51:01.680

And Dragon, I can take that on if you want. So we had a lot of folks from there were folks from a community communities and longtown creek.

388 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:51:01.680 --> 00:51:05.550

That provided some very specific.

389 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:51:05.550 --> 00:51:19.885

And vivid feedback on the, uh, the backwater that happens up on town Creek, 11, specific story about moccasins, coming up to the front door. That that just stands out.

390 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:51:19.885 --> 00:51:30.325

And then we had a handful of pastors from the South Jackson area. Who who presented a public comment as well?

391 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:51:30.325 --> 00:51:37.315

Uh, another, another lady impacted by, uh, by the flooding uh, the gentlemen.

392 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:51:37.315 --> 00:51:51.505

Uh, so there was probably about a dozen specifically of families who were directly impacted by flooding in that either had to move a loved 1, moved themselves. Couldn't afford the flood insurance. insurance

393 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:51:51.720 --> 00:52:04.140

Um, 11 particular, uh, individual who said, I'm all in, on on a buy out. Can I do it right now? Because I can for the flood insurance anymore uh, so.

394 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:52:04.140 --> 00:52:13.140

I, I, I, it was, uh, half a dozen of 15 to 15 to 20 in the, uh, at the, at the Jackson specific, uh, sessions.

395 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:52:13.140 --> 00:52:16.350

Hello.

396 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:52:16.350 --> 00:52:22.170

Okay, thank you. And I have 1 more question. If you don't mind with us having the 3rd minute.

397 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:52:22.170 --> 00:52:27.630

3rd party administrator in this role now, because he is a part.

398 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:52:27.630 --> 00:52:40.290

Or we'll be a part of this conversation. What conversations have you all had with him going forward with the water treatment plants that will be affected by this development?

399 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:52:43.225 --> 00:52:49.765

Yeah, so, uh, Mr Anthony's, he's new new online and I'll take this 1 on is this is completely separate.

400 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:52:49.765 --> 00:52:59.545

It's separate, but tangential to this project and, you know, we are doing parts of that water water facility upgrade in the sewage.

401 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:52:59.790 --> 00:53:12.355

So, Mr Harrington's new I got a I, I do specifically have to reach out to him and I just develop that relationship to see whether what they're going to because currently 2 of our projects are are delayed.

402 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:53:13.195 --> 00:53:16.225

So, uh, yeah, I need some movement on that, too.

403 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:53:16.375 --> 00:53:24.985

So, nothing yet, however, I will talk to him to get his feedback on options and how,

404 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:53:24.985 --> 00:53:38.155

that will either create opportunity or impact his ability to provide a clean drinking water to the citizens of Jackson as we mentioned during the the public meetings.

405 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:53:38.185 --> 00:53:40.825

Uh, there was a comment that about.

406 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:53:41.100 --> 00:53:49.170

How this would shut down the fuel plant any, any project would shut down the fuel plant for 3 years.
And that is, uh.

407 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:53:49.170 --> 00:53:51.655

Sorry, Andrew, I'm gonna speak on behalf of the secretary here.

408 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:53:51.655 --> 00:54:02.935

That's that's a non starter on behalf of the Secretary's office and, uh, the, you know, and the core would
be directed at that point by the secretary to have, uh, no,

409 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:54:02.995 --> 00:54:06.835

no impact and the ability to deliver a clean water to the city of Jackson.

410 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:54:07.230 --> 00:54:11.730

Okay, thank you.

411 "Jennifer W" (1229454336)

00:54:11.730 --> 00:54:15.870

Hmm.

412 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:54:17.070 --> 00:54:22.860

Hello.

413 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:54:24.000 --> 00:54:28.890

At this time, we don't have anybody else that has raised their hand or.

414 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:54:28.890 --> 00:54:35.070

Expressed an interest in that chat to speak.

415 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:54:36.600 --> 00:54:40.050

Hello.

416 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:54:40.050 --> 00:54:46.140

Adrian, okay, Adrian do you have a statement you like tonight?

417 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:54:46.140 --> 00:54:52.170

Yeah, I just I'm Adrian dot. I'm a PhD student at U. C. Berkeley.

418 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:54:52.170 --> 00:54:56.400

And, um, thank you so much for having this. I'm really excited to be here and learn more about.

419 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:54:56.400 --> 00:55:01.620

And I have a question about the process for assessing the different plans.

420 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:55:01.620 --> 00:55:08.040

And I think in a different plans may have different impacts on different parts of the water.

421 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:55:08.040 --> 00:55:11.820

And have impacts on different parts of the communities in different ways.

422 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:55:11.820 --> 00:55:16.350

And so then I was wondering when y'all are comparing the different plans.

423 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:55:16.350 --> 00:55:19.380

How will flood mitigation be prioritized?

424 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:55:19.380 --> 00:55:23.940

Across the watershed, or how will it be prioritized in different areas?

425 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:55:23.940 --> 00:55:29.700

And will like the number of housing units exposed, or the number of people exposed be considered.

426 "Adrienne" (3572220672)

00:55:29.700 --> 00:55:32.850

Or how is that done?

427 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:55:32.850 --> 00:55:41.790

Okay, do you want to take 1st shot? Yeah, sure. Um.

428 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:55:41.790 --> 00:55:49.530

So 1st, with identifying the that's the National economic development plan.

429 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:55:49.530 --> 00:56:01.410

So, that one's going to be identified that as 1 of the things that we've been charged with when we identify that when all the plans are going to be assessed to make sure they are providing a least.

430 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:56:01.410 --> 00:56:10.140

The same equal amount of level of flood protection as far as prioritizing the areas.

431 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:56:10.140 --> 00:56:15.150

Um, some of the social vulnerable areas.

432 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:56:15.150 --> 00:56:19.770

Will be discussed in the comprehensive benefits.

433 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:56:20.425 --> 00:56:35.395

So, while, that isn't necessarily used to identify what the National economic development plan is, that's where those comprehensive benefits areas of interest will be used to discuss and form for the secretary to make a decision.

434 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:56:35.730 --> 00:56:39.000

So, that that will be how it's kind of.

435 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

00:56:39.000 --> 00:56:42.690

Prioritized and compare with that extra.

436 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:56:42.690 --> 00:56:48.390

Comprehensive benefits. Okay. So this is Robin can I add to this?

437 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:56:50.515 --> 00:57:05.155

Um, so sorry, I'm not on camera folks I'm out of town on leave and my camera's not working, but Robin colleagues CMO army civil works. I'm the deputy assistant secretary of the army for civil works for project, planning and review. So just want to take this up a big level.

438 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:57:05.755 --> 00:57:16.735

So, appreciate your question here. But big picture is the only reason the core has this authority is because risk management is part of our main mission set.

439 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:57:16.735 --> 00:57:27.055

So, we were directed under a series of pieces of legislation, around a project in pearl and so flooding, flood, risk management is the focus here.

440 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:57:27.475 --> 00:57:33.175

And then everything else has happened as a consequence of how much of flooding problem can we solve now?

441 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:57:33.595 --> 00:57:46.195

The reason it's kind of in a different space than we normally start a study is there's been decades worth of work being done here is being reinvigorated with the bipartisan infrastructure law money. So it's allowing us to fill the gaps.

442 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:57:46.500 --> 00:57:51.450

Again, it's an early engagement and start to dive into where those areas are consistent with.

443 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:57:51.450 --> 00:58:00.300

Was section 3104 from where to 2007 I get the numbers confused when I'm on leave particularly. Um, so I hope that's help helpful.

444 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

00:58:00.300 --> 00:58:06.150

Thank you thank you.

445 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:58:07.590 --> 00:58:13.200

And then I'll jump in there with a quick 1 on. Yeah, we do assess structures impacted.

446 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:58:13.405 --> 00:58:19.345

All right, so to answer that 1, just directly numbers, a number of structures impacted must be minimized.

447 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:58:19.675 --> 00:58:32.905

And what we've heard from the, you know, through these multiple sessions is specifically how water backs up into the tributaries and impacts those communities along the tributaries for 4 major ones.

448 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:58:32.935 --> 00:58:46.945

And they are in traditionally underserved EJ communities if you will. And so I sent out a message after those 1st, public sessions to the team saying, hey, reinvigorate focus on the tributaries.

449 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

00:58:46.945 --> 00:58:52.465

And how any, any proposal relieves flooding in the tributaries over.

450 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:58:58.560 --> 00:59:06.630

Do not see any more hands raised.

451 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:59:06.630 --> 00:59:10.440

Or statements, and for keeper again.

452 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:59:10.440 --> 00:59:13.650

Okay, riverkeeper.

453 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

00:59:14.850 --> 00:59:17.910

Would you please identify yourself and make your statement.

454 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:59:17.910 --> 00:59:28.135

Yes, if you'd indulge me, um, have another question, I have a lot of questions about this project so, um, if I'm able I am going to take advantage so, um, another question that I have is, um,

455 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:59:28.165 --> 00:59:42.715

the net reservoir is currently operated independently by per Valley water supply district for recreation and water supply, it has a minimum low flow required by law and has also operated lately to provide some flood management services for Jackson.

456 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:59:42.985 --> 00:59:56.875

So, I'm interested to know if the core has engaged with per Valley staff to discuss how another lake 10 miles south of their reservoir could complicate their operations. Um, this was not addressed at all in the 2018.

457 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

00:59:56.875 --> 01:00:02.485

so, for example, during low flow, summer months, if minimum low flow. minimum low flow

458 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

01:00:02.730 --> 01:00:08.790

Like, required for Savannah street, waste, water, treatment, plant, permit if that's not flowing from the new lake would.

459 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

01:00:08.790 --> 01:00:13.410

For verbally be legally required to release more water from the reservoir.

460 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

01:00:13.410 --> 01:00:21.120

Or conversely, how would pro Valley be required to operate under flood conditions? And which.

461 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

01:00:21.120 --> 01:00:31.320

Would take priority so, have you, um, consulted with our valley on how these 2 links would operate concurrently? Thank you.

462 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:00:32.550 --> 01:00:42.240

Let's see, I'll say that I would say no, and the technical team is current. No is the immediate answer on that and it's because the technical team is still in the middle of doing their work.

463 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:00:42.240 --> 01:00:55.380

However, yes, the opera, the water control manual of the Pearl river of the roseburn net reservoir is being included in the analysis.

464 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:00:55.380 --> 01:00:58.650

Of how it would impact the lake.

465 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:00:58.650 --> 01:01:02.940

Or or that, that particular proposed project.

466 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:01:02.940 --> 01:01:15.060

The operation of Ross BARNET will be included in the analysis of any proposed project and any of the alternatives that go forward to the secretary.

467 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:01:16.375 --> 01:01:30.055

Hey, this is Robin again I just want to add to that, um, a couple things 1st, and foremost when we model we model based on their current operations manual. Um, we know that they have deviated on occasion. That doesn't mean we expect it to be deviated.

468 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:01:30.055 --> 01:01:40.615

They're required to operate by their manual, so that's what we're going to look at but last 2 sessions that we had on the landscape, there were a lot of questions about how folks.

469 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:01:41.065 --> 01:01:53.425

Operate that reservoir in certain conditions. So we want to provide transparency as well about any areas where people have seen, um, or perceived anomalies around that and whether we need to look at that. But no, we're not required to.

470 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:01:55.855 --> 01:02:07.855

We're not going to go and tell them how to operate the reservoir. We're gonna take it as it is that said we did become aware. They've done a master plan update here recently don't know where they are in that and they actually say flood mitigations 1 of their goals and objectives.

471 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:02:07.855 --> 01:02:20.455

So that's 1 of the things that colonel and I talked about, making sure we engage them on is what was that objective about and what did they look at so, is there are there things we can glean from that in addition to understanding, if they're about to change operations.

472 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

01:02:26.280 --> 01:02:38.250

Yes, thank you. I just think there may be a need for maybe some legislation to go through the legislature on how, um, the Levy board and per rally would have to, uh.

473 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

01:02:38.250 --> 01:02:45.060

Operate concurrently and what, um, you know, the, the requirements to each other would have to be but, uh, thank you for this information.

474 "Pearl Riverkeeper" (1839995392)

01:02:48.570 --> 01:02:52.860

Right.

475 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:02:52.860 --> 01:02:56.040

Hello.

476 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:02:56.040 --> 01:03:02.580

Okay, well, so, you know, more hands, right? And no more questions in the chat.

477 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:03:02.580 --> 01:03:09.420

Boss, excuse me. I'm sorry. I'm calling in. I'm not on the.

478 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:03:09.420 --> 01:03:18.990

Video conference, I'm on a audio access through my phone and I would like to ask the question if possible.

479 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:03:18.990 --> 01:03:26.700

If you don't mind, do you mind giving us maybe your name so I kind of who we're talking to as part of the public record.

480 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:03:26.700 --> 01:03:40.560

My name is Jennifer, I'm calling as a citizen of Louisiana, and I am a former citizen of the Honeywell in swamp area of the Pearl river. The lower Pearl river.

481 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:03:40.560 --> 01:03:47.605

And I'm, I'm calling just well listening in and I came into the call late. So you have to forgive me.

482 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:03:48.565 --> 01:04:03.325

So, I don't know if you've already answered this question, but I'm wondering about what studies have been done on how these alterations to the natural hydrology and flow of the Pearl river.

483 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:04:03.355 --> 01:04:12.835

Especially in the summer months, when the Gulf surgeon comes into the river to spawn how that will impact that.

484 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:04:13.380 --> 01:04:17.010

Threatened and endangered species, um.

485 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:04:17.010 --> 01:04:21.720

And then also knowing, you know.

486 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:04:21.720 --> 01:04:32.160

Being a resident of that area and and seeing how these changes in the hydrology affect the flow of the river.

487 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:04:32.160 --> 01:04:42.330

Either what considerations are made for the residents along the lower parts of the Pro river in Louisiana.

488 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:04:42.330 --> 01:04:56.880

And Southern Mississippi as far as, you know, flooding frequency, or or, you know, the loss of water because I know for a fact, you know, there have been periods of time when there's high.

489 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:04:56.880 --> 01:05:03.870

Rain and Mississippi, and the reservoirs open, which causes flooding downstream and then also times when.

490 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:05:03.870 --> 01:05:08.640

Water is held back because of low.

491 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:05:08.640 --> 01:05:13.140

Water levels up north and it causes for lower.

492 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:05:13.140 --> 01:05:17.220

And more anoxic environments down.

493 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:05:17.220 --> 01:05:21.870

In the lower part of the Pro river and then also that would also.

494 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:05:21.870 --> 01:05:27.720

Have some impacts and and contribute to further salt water intrusion.

495 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:05:27.745 --> 01:05:42.355

As well, so not releasing the waters. So there's a couple of things going on that. I'm curious about that. Start with the impact to the Gulf sturgeon and who's going to be able to assess that impact.

496 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:05:44.190 --> 01:05:48.390

So, what why don't I take this 1 on.

497 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:05:48.390 --> 01:05:55.980

So, uh, 1, part of the part of any of the study we do is, it's a requirement to.

498 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:05:55.980 --> 01:05:59.580

To investigate what the downstream impacts will be.

499 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:05:59.580 --> 01:06:09.690

What we've learned from the previous 2 sessions that we did down slide and other previous sessions, is that yeah, you're seeing these impacts now.

500 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:06:09.690 --> 01:06:16.410

Just just like you describe and so the goal is surgeon is probably struggling today.

501 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:06:16.410 --> 01:06:28.195

Because of the unpredictable water flows be, they flash flows or low flows and so now, let's expand on surgeon into the citizens of the lower Pearl.

502 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:06:28.585 --> 01:06:38.455

Right now you're seeing low flow situations and you're seeing flash flood situations and flash floods situations that are taken on for an extended period of time.

503 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:06:38.790 --> 01:06:49.950

Right. And so this, what, the study we're doing, any project that we put in or that, is that the secretary approves.

504 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:06:49.950 --> 01:06:52.980

Will not exacerbate.

505 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:06:52.980 --> 01:06:56.460

Any problems that are ongoing.

506 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:06:56.460 --> 01:07:02.700

Okay, and so I'm gonna pause right there to go to go onto what the benefit of these public sessions.

507 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:07:02.700 --> 01:07:12.120

And statements like this that we're getting is, you are informing and these public sessions are informing things that might not be under this specific authority.

508 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:07:12.120 --> 01:07:17.485

But things that we can take forward and say, hey, this also needs to look at, you know, be looked into.

509 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:07:17.935 --> 01:07:32.365

And so we're going to take these low flow and flash flood issues, and look for other authorities that we can use either, you know, start a new stuff. You know, go into a study.

510 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:07:32.455 --> 01:07:40.765

What can we do to alleviate flash flooding? What can we do to? So we're going to be we're receiving all of this.

511 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:07:40.980 --> 01:07:51.715

And insuring 1 that anything that happens to reduce flood risk impacts in the city of Jackson doesn't exacerbate anything downstream.

512 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:07:52.105 --> 01:07:56.485

And then the 2nd, part of that is going to be, uh, a.

513 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:07:57.385 --> 01:08:11.245

Policy recommendations or things that are senior leadership in government some of our, you know, and things we can take to our congressional delegations that I can share with our congressional leaders that, hey,

514 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:08:11.485 --> 01:08:18.145

this is what we've heard and these are other issues we have and these are authorities that we have that we can potentially use to address that.

515 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:08:18.450 --> 01:08:21.570

And I was long winded and I hope I articulated it well enough.

516 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:08:23.305 --> 01:08:34.075

Yes, I just would like to state also just to reiterate that the Gulf surgeon only spawns in 2 rivers and that is the Pascagoula and the Pearl river.

517 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:08:34.405 --> 01:08:48.715

So, any impact to the natural hydrology of either of those systems is going to have an effect on the spawning the, some responding of that Diageo that comes up their bounce of the river to spawn and reproduce each year.

518 "5047****91" (1768413696)

01:08:48.895 --> 01:08:53.275

And mostly during the summer months, thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

519 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:08:53.550 --> 01:08:57.480

Sure, thank you.

520 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:08:58.710 --> 01:09:08.490

So, we don't, we're not seeing any other hands raised. Someone did ask a question in the.

521 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:09:08.490 --> 01:09:13.860

Chat is there any plans to fix the weird near? Welcome.

522 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:09:15.180 --> 01:09:23.190

And I'll just say that is a capacity that we continue to express to our congressional delegations.

523 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:09:23.190 --> 01:09:27.270

Uh, we, we have expressed to our congressional delegations.

524 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:09:27.270 --> 01:09:36.270

Downstream that 1, there is a recognized issue associated with not only the weird walk on blah, but all the weird.

525 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:09:36.270 --> 01:09:51.055

Along the lower Pearl, we also reiterate to them the current status of core projects on the lower pro river and express to them our capacity capability to address those.

526 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:09:51.270 --> 01:09:58.110

And so when we are authorized and funded, we will, we will execute those fixes.

527 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

01:10:03.870 --> 01:10:12.090

Okay, there are no lower hands, right? Um.

528 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:10:12.090 --> 01:10:17.010

So any closing remarks.

529 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:10:17.010 --> 01:10:20.430

This Walker this call CMO or the commander.

530 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

01:10:20.430 --> 01:10:29.640

Well, certainly, I'll let this call CMO speak with any closing remarks she may have unless you had to drop off.

531 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:10:30.475 --> 01:10:31.225

I'm still here.

532 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:10:31.225 --> 01:10:45.865

Sorry sorry again, folks that my camera's not working um, hey, I appreciate everybody taking the time today and some of you taking more than 1 session of time to continue to share with us your thoughts, your experiences, your views and ask questions.

533 "Robyn Colosimo, Army Civil Works" (669813504)

01:10:45.865 --> 01:11:00.415

This is really important collaboration and we're going to continue to move through through this process and make sure we're being as transparent as we can while trying to make sure we're putting forward. Good ideas that build on all the good ideas. You all have shared with us. So, thank you very much for that.

534 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

01:11:00.415 --> 01:11:13.765

Andrea please add to that as needed. I just wanted to thank everybody and just a reminder. We can advance the solution, and we can make this happen quickly. We have the authorization, and we have the funding.

535 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

01:11:14.515 --> 01:11:20.365

Now, we just have to make sure we develop the right plan. We provide the secretary with again.

536 "Andrea Walker" (329204992)

01:11:21.630 --> 01:11:30.750

Comparison of alternatives, pros, cons, benefits, impacts so that he can make a decision for the good of the Pro reverberation.

537 "Lesley Prochaska" (1464192768)

01:11:30.750 --> 01:11:34.260

Thank you.

538 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:11:34.260 --> 01:11:38.670

Do you have any closer marks?

539 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:11:39.655 --> 01:11:49.105

Only, because you asked Tom again, thank you. Thanks everybody for your input. And, as I mentioned before, not only, you informing this project, your, you're informed.

540 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:11:49.705 --> 01:11:55.315

All of these sessions have informed opportunities in the future, and things that we need to address in the future.

541 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:11:55.735 --> 01:12:10.435

And so, you know, with with your activism, with our congressional delegations and my expression of capacity and capabilities to our congressional delegations, I think we can, we can solve a lot of issues that are going on in the program for watershed.

542 "COL Chris Klein" (4020622592)

01:12:10.465 --> 01:12:11.455

So, thanks for your time.

543 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:12:14.190 --> 01:12:17.970

Okay with that we will conclude this, uh.

544 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:12:17.970 --> 01:12:21.960

Virtual meeting I, thank you all for your participation.

545 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:12:21.960 --> 01:12:26.880

But the information with respect to the website is still up.

546 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:12:26.880 --> 01:12:32.790

I would ask you to every opportunity, go out and take a look and see what's been updated.

547 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:12:32.790 --> 01:12:37.650

We will continue to take your feedback and input through the 30th of June.

548 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:12:37.650 --> 01:12:41.010

With that we're out here. Bye. Bye.

549 "Thomas Shaw" (171574272)

01:12:42.960 --> 01:12:45.630

Hello.

June 1, 2023 Transcription: Virtual Chat 1800

Pea Riverkeeper 18:04

Pearl Riverkeeper, pearlriverkeeper@gmail.com

Mark Bryant 18:05

Mark Bryant

Pearl River County

Markb4331@gmail.com

Andrew WMehurst 18:05

At the proper time, I have a verbal comment. andrew@healthygulf.org

Thomas Shaw 18:05

thank you sir

Chantel Dominguez she/he, 18:05

I also would like to make public comment, please.

Chantel Dominguez she/her 18:06

Chantel Dominguez, American Rivers, cdominguez@americanrivers.org

Sharmeen Monison 18:06

Sharmeen Morrison, Earthjustice,

smorrison@earthjustice.org

Bob Norton 18:06

Dr Bob Norton. Tornado response work in the south is my current interest.

Rnorton6@hawaii.edu

Leo Garney 18: 18

I would like to make a public comment. adosms2020@gmail.com

Adrienne 18:21

Adrienne Dodd, UC Berkeley Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning - PhD candidate,

adrienne_dodd@berkeley.edu

Berniece Herbert, PhD 18:22

Berniece Herbert, PhD., Chair, Urban & Regional Planning Department, Jackson State University

Berniece Herbert, PhD 18:22

berneece.herbert@jsums.edu

Dr. Robbie Smith 18:26

Robbie Sparkman Smith, PhD, City of Jackson, Department of Planning, Neighborhood Services Manager;
robbies@jacksonms.gov

deserea 18:42

Mark bryant can you raise your hand please

deserea 19:07

I do not want to speak but have a question.

Is there any plans to fix the weir near walkiah bluff

Attachment A5
Comments Received between May 23, 2023
to June 30, 2023

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Madeline Coates

Phone:

601-874-1677

Address: 1328 Cox st

Email:

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility



Health Concerns



Housing or
Property Impact



Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)



Access to
Emergency Services



Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)



Impacts to Wildlife



Hunting or Outdoor Recreation



ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

The One Lake plan is too negatively impactful and does not help Jackson enough to outweigh the destruction that will come with it. We need real and sustainable solutions to the serious issue of flooding in Jackson. Please stop this shameless attempt to further disenfranchise Black residents. Do not carry on with this gentrification project.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Email:

f_esterby70@yahoo.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility



Health Concerns



Housing or
Property Impact



Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)



Access to
Emergency Services



Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)



Impacts to Wildlife



Hunting or Outdoor Recreation



ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Please fix this problem!
Thank you for your service!

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Justin Peterson

Phone:

601-981-4445 x127

Address:

200 N. Congre

Email:

jpeterson@statestreetgroup.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Home Accessibility | ☐ | Health Concerns | ☐ |
| Housing or Property Impact | ☐ | Infrastructure (Electricity or Road Accessibility) | ☐ |
| Access to Emergency Services | ☐ | Agriculture (Flooding of Farmland or Loss of Livestock) | ☐ |
| Impacts to Wildlife | ☐ | Hunting or Outdoor Recreation | ☐ |

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I support the One Lake project!
It is crucial for the vitality of
Jackson - Justin Peterson
President
StateStreet Group, LLC.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Gina Steber

Phone:

985-768-0087

Address:

3004 Whitty Dr
Sealee

Email:

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☒

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

This is a very bad idea
~~to~~ and will hurt our
way of life with concerns
of fishing and etc. We
do not want this. Save our
Pearl &

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Brad Reeves

Phone:

(601) 214-9863

Address:

418 Glenway Drive
Jackson, MS 39216

Email:

bradmreeves@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I believe it is a great
plan, hope it can be
initiated in the near
future.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

RAY BELLANT

Phone:

7134710317

Address:

110 Kendrick Dr
Slidell, LA
70461

Email:

huntbelles@yahoo

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Resident @ this address since
January 2000. Up until 2019, never had
water over my docks/seawall except
for 1 flood (2018 or 17?) and Tropical
Storms/Hurricanes. Now, both under
at least 3 months/yr. Spring water
runs 1-1.5 feet higher than 3-4
years ago.

offer - if you need to measure
water levels on lower Pearl, can do so
at my water front on DuBois Bayou
Thank you, Ray

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Jessica Gawley

Phone:

985-290-0002

Address: 64021 Porters
Cemetery Rd.

Pearl River, La. 70452

Email:

Jessica.gawley@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility



Housing or

Property Impact



Access to

Emergency Services



Impacts to Wildlife



Health Concerns



Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)



Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)



Hunting or Outdoor Recreation



ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I am the owner of Honey Island
Kayak Tours in Pearl River, La.
I am concerned the One Lake
Project will effect the flow of
the river and leave my boisness
unable to operate.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Brandon Mizell

Phone:

Address: 60155 Greentree Dr.
Bogalusa, La. 70427

Email:

Wade_miz@yahoo.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I'm from Washington Parish, have been going to Poole's Bluff for almost 60 yrs. The Pearl River and Canal is basically the only recreation (fishing, boating, Waterskiing) we have in the Parish. Taking out the Sill and lock's would be devastating. I own a camp on the canal above lock 3, I would hate to see it be no more than a frog pond!

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Perry Richardson

Phone:

001-954-7573

Address: 1514 Gail St
Jackson MS 39211

Email:

perryrichardson
@richardson

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

a larger lake and more comprehensive plan
Dane Baynan to Florence.

Super Lake

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Maureen McGuire

Phone:

Address: 1114 Lyncrest Ave
Jackson, MS 39202

Email: mcbatra@comcast.net

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I am concerned that in the name of "flood control" we are planning to destroy thousands of acres of wetlands.

I am concerned that in the name of "economic development" we are destroying the biggest gem of the city which is LeFleur's Bluff State Park

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Tamika Jenkins

Phone:

601.353.6056

Address:

P.O. Box 248
Jackson, MS 39201

Email:

Tamika@selecthinds.com

Economic
Development

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

This project is long overdue. I am in favor of the flood control project for the following reasons ① Attraction and retention of residents and businesses.

② Flooding affects water. Big Industries need water for processes. When it floods - no water causes Industries to lose \$ and think about leaving

③ Quality of life - the river has lots of opportunity to develop. We can do a riverwalk like Memphis or development like Oklahoma City

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Suezen Brown

Phone:

Address:

Madison

Email:

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Access to

Emergency Services

☒

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I'm concerned foremost about flooding impacts to communities.

I ~~want~~ - would love to see the economic boon the One Lake would bring - I want that to not screw everyone else. Do Both.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

TOM CLARK

Phone:

601-942-0323

Address:

303 Tuscan Ct. Ridgeband MS 39157

Email:

~~tom.clark@ms.gov~~
~~tom.clark@ms.gov~~

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility ☐

Housing or
Property Impact ☒

Access to
Emergency Services ☐

Impacts to Wildlife ☒

Health Concerns ☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility) ☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock) ☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation ☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

If the object or purpose is to alleviate flooding in Jackson, it seems that the solution would be to control water NORTH of Jackson arriving in too large quantities too quickly in Jackson. The flood of 1979 was caused not by water falling in Jackson but in Winston County (Louisville, MS) at the headwaters of the Pearl. Control the water north of Jackson and you will make Jackson ~~more~~ safer from flooding. I grew up just south of Louisville MS.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

NORMAN MERCURIO

Phone:

941 704 2004

Address:

4222 ROSEMARY RD
TERRY MS 39170

Email:

NORMANSEA3@AOL.COM

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☒

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☒

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

RIVER EROSION DOWN RIVER
I HAVE ALREADY LOST A LOT
OF LAND & NEXT MY HOUSE
CALL ME ☺

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name: NORMAN
MERSURIO

Phone: 941 704 2004

Address: 4222 ROSIE MARY RD
TEBBY MS 39170

Email: NORMAN9EA3@aol.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Access to
Emergency Services

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

WHAT IS THIS GOING TO DO
FOR BYRAN AND DOWN RIVER
AS OF FLOODING OF ROSIE MARY RD.
IS THIS GOING TO INCREASE FLOODING
SOUTH OF THE OXIE LAKE PROJECT,
IS THIS GOING TO INCREASE BYRAN
FLOODING?

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

CHARLES PFEIFER

Phone:

504-307-0817

Address: 30 NORTH HILL

PKWY., APT. E-8
JACKSON, MS.
39206

Email:

CPTRAGO PAN@AOL.
COM

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☒

Housing or
Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

THERE ARE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY WAYS THAN "ONE LAKE"
TO DEAL WITH THE FLOODING.

THIS IS A REAL ESTATE
DEAL MASQUERADING AS FLOOD CONTROL

IT IS A SHAME AND DISGRACE
THAT USACE IS THE WILLING
THRALL OF THE RICH AND POLITICALLY
CONNECTED —... NAMELY MCBOWAN!

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

R.M. Tipton

Phone:

769-234-1558

Address:

304 Golden Pkwy Dr.
Madison, MS. 39110

Email:

rm.tipton1@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name: Larry McDonald

Phone:

769-233-1141

Address:

305 Foxboro Drive
Jackson, MS 39211

Email:

larryzmcdonald@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility ☒

Housing or
Property Impact ☐

Access to
Emergency Services ☒

Impacts to Wildlife ☐

Health Concerns ☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility) ☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock) ☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation ☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Protecting home

or

☒ buy out coverage to
comfortably relocate

not all residence have
good credit to buy again.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Robert Green

Phone:

(601) 762-3097

Address:

5814 Deer Trail
Jackson, MS 39211

Email:

greenrobert29
@yahoo.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Lea Campbell

Phone:

228-249-1548

Address:

Email:

contactmnsing@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Access to

Emergency Services

☒

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of

Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

One Lake will not alleviate rain-induced flash flooding that already impacts neighborhoods along the Pearl's 8 tributaries that flow through Jackson but will make it worse. These areas are low income & can't afford worse flooding or the health & safety impacts associated with it.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Morris Mock

Phone:

601 9188193

Address:

Email:

4mckmoris@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☒

Access to
Emergency Services

☒

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

STOP ONE LAKE

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Ollie Hutchens

Phone:

601 9781946

Address:

120 Riviera Dr
Jackson MS
39211

Email:

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☒

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Jan Saja

Phone:

601-311-1184

Address:

1335 Williamswood Dr
Daymond 39154

Email:

jsaja@yahoo.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Byron Alquist

Phone:

504 606-2207

Address:

Alquist

Email:

byron@canoeand
trail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility ☐

Housing or ☐

Property Impact ☐

Access to ☐

Emergency Services ☐

Impacts to Wildlife ☒

Health Concerns ☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility) ☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock) ☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation ☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Margie Vicknair-Pray

Phone:

985-373-7097

Address:

27400 John Lane
Lacombe, LA 70445

Email:

margie.vicknair-
pray@sierraclub.org

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☐

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

DO - important for all habitats
& wildlife

CB/liform Bacteria - Yuck!

Low Water is a BIG PROBLEM.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Perry Richardson

Phone:

601-954-7573

Address:

1514 Coon Sl-
Jackson ms 39211

Email:

perry@richardson.net

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility ☐

Housing or ☐

Property Impact ☐

Access to ☐

Emergency Services ☐

Impacts to Wildlife ☐

Health Concerns ☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility) ☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock) ☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation ☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Build a Super Lake e Byram.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

John Horhn

Phone:

6016225707

Address:

Email:

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Malcolm White

Phone:

601 573 0397

Address:

155 Gillespie St.
Jxn MS 39002

Email:

jmalcolmwhite@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of

Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Hope environmental concerns
have been addressed.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Fred Parker

Phone:

985 445 3278

Address:

100 Live Oak Dr

Email:

fparker1@bellsouth.net

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility



Housing or

Property Impact



Access to

Emergency Services



Impacts to Wildlife



Health Concerns



Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)



Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)



Hunting or Outdoor Recreation



ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Eric Crawford

Phone:

Please do not
Email: use earlier
email. for spam

Address:

39327 Sid Crawford
Pearl River, LA 70455

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility



Housing or

Property Impact



Access to

Emergency Services



Impacts to Wildlife



Health Concerns



Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)



Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)



Hunting or Outdoor Recreation



ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

The Pearl River was never
dredged After Hurricane Katrina.
Must Be Cleaned Out!

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Stephanie Berawt

Phone:

(985) 768-8011

Address:

106 Wycliff Ct. Slidell
70461

Email:

Sberawt@aol.net

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☒

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I am very concerned about what looks like a rushed timeline. This could potentially have major impacts on property, employment + wildlife. This should not be rushed.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Hunter Sessions

Phone:

985 285 4949

Address:

65111 Hwy 41 Pearling, LA 70452

Email:

hunt24253@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

I'm only 30 years old any ever
year the river is getting shallower
it getting to the point where
all the trees hang up and it making
it dangers for boaters to enjoy
the Pearl River

To Whom it May Concer

|||
|||

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Thia Walker

Phone:

769 257 8236

Address:

5415 Deer Trl.
Jackson, MS

Email:

thiawalker@yahoo.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility



Housing or

Property Impact



Access to

Emergency Services



Impacts to Wildlife



Health Concerns



Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)



Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)



Hunting or Outdoor Recreation



ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

~~Other~~ Housing Costs,
Interest Rate Costs

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Michael Bograd

Phone:

601-573-6522

Address:

Clinton, MS

Email:

mbebograd@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

- I am concerned about the adverse effects of the One Lake project on the environment and wildlife, especially at LeFleur's Bluff State Park (which is a treasure that should be improved rather than dredged or flooded).
- I challenge the concept that putting a lake in the flood plain could do anything but reduce its flood control capacity.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name: Clayton Eric
Crawford

Phone: 985-285-16375

Address: 39327 Sid Crawford Rd

Email:

Pearl River, La 70452 tanyakyrwilson@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☒

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

One of the most endangered
Rivers in the Country

Need more info today to comment
fully.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

John Kinabrew

Phone:

Address:

Email:

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☒

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Concerned @ impacts of "One half" development and its potential downstream effects

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Stanford Owen

Phone:

2282235776

Address:

Email:

drowenmd@

drdiet.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☒

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Affects on Coastal Marsh
& Endangered Species

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Darrin R. Steber

Phone:

985-768-0060

Address:

3604 Whitty Dr.
70461

Email:

Darrin.Steber@
Consil.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility



Housing or
Property Impact



Access to
Emergency Services



Impacts to Wildlife



Health Concerns



Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)



Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)



Hunting or Outdoor Recreation



ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

This is NOT A good thing.

Professionals that work with
water And Save people from
water do not want this. As
A Paramedic And a Resident
I do not want this.

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

John Clifton Jr

Phone:

785-201-8115

Address:

Email:

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility ☒

Housing or

Property Impact ☒

Access to

Emergency Services ☒

Impacts to Wildlife ☒

Health Concerns ☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility) ☒

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock) ☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation ☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:



COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Mike deBram

Phone:

985-640-8241

Address:

119 Lee St., Slidell, LA 70458

Email:

* 303 Datis Camp LN, MS

mdeBram@yahoo.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☒

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or

Property Impact

☒

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to

Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Will the new lake project have surge capacity and be operated like a retention pond for flood protection or have a static level with no surge capacity "water in/water out". If its just an extension of Ross Barnett Reservoir... then not really flood protection to reduce down stream river swells.

* Down stream impacts - dredge River to alleviate flooding in system. ~~totally~~

Thanks, Mike

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name:

Andy Hilton

Phone:

601 918 5897

Address:

20 Pinehaven 39120

Email:

hiltopa@gmail.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility

☐

Health Concerns

☐

Housing or
Property Impact

☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility)

☐

Access to
Emergency Services

☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock)

☐

Impacts to Wildlife

☒

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation

☒

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Couldn't we just do levee
set backs to solve flooding,
and increase access to
the river for recreation?

COMMENT CARD

* Please note all fields are optional.

Name: Phineas Chapman

Phone: 601.624.8833

Address: 4109 Sand Ridge Dr.
Tucker, MS

Email: Phineas.Chapman@msd.com

AREAS OF CONCERN

* Check all that apply.

Home Accessibility ☐

Health Concerns ☐

Housing or ☐

Infrastructure (Electricity
or Road Accessibility) ☐

Property Impact ☐

Access to
Emergency Services ☐

Agriculture (Flooding of
Farmland or Loss of Livestock) ☐

Impacts to Wildlife ☐

Hunting or Outdoor Recreation ☐

ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Let's get on with it.
It's a great project and
can't do anything but
have a positive impact.

From: [Juan Fernandez](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment: Additional authorization and additional funding
Date: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 3:48:57 PM

Additional authorization for Pearl River FRM and two sources of funding

Alternative C and the Berkeley plan call for a levee setback, because the action eases a choke point created by the existing levee system. The final plan, whether the NED, the LPP, or some combination thereof, will likely involve a levee setback.

An ERDC special report by David Smith et al., aptly titled "Levee Setbacks," lists Engineering Regulations, memorandums, and laws that "support the study and construction of levee setbacks for environmental benefits in addition to flood damage reduction benefits."

The two laws listed are WRDA 1986, Section 1135, and WRDA 1996, Section 206. These laws authorize environmental restoration projects, including reintroducing a river to its natural floodplain.

Question: Can the upcoming federal flood risk management project be carried out under two authorities, WRDA 2007, Section 3104, and WRDA 1986 or 1996? If yes, could this double authorization provide the non-federal sponsor with more funding to execute the project?

Respectfully,
Juan David Fernandez

From: vg-lane@evervactioncustom.com on behalf of [Verne Lane](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Please reject the "One Lake" Project to protect the Pearl River habitats
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 2:04:39 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

As someone who cares deeply about our country's birds, wildlife, and habitats, I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

I urge you to implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Verne Lane
Nesbit MS

Sincerely,
Verne Lane
Nesbit, MS 38651
vg-lane@protonmail.com

From: [Aaron Viles](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Reject Alternative C
Date: Wednesday, June 21, 2023 7:48:37 PM

To whom it may concern,

Please reject alternative "C".

Your agency must select a flood control plan for the Pearl River in Jackson that disturbs less river and floodplain forest habitat, that doesn't threaten LeFleurs Bluff State Park, or threaten downstream towns and industries.

The region also deserves a plan that addresses the flash flooding on Jackson's Pearl River tributaries, in their upper watersheds west of I-55, which provide critical gravity drainage for the city.

Please advance alternatives A, or A1 which would support floodplain property buyouts, floodproofing, elevations and other non-structural methods.

Alternative C - the plan to create a 10 mile long 1500 acre lake on the river's main channel isn't "environmentally acceptable" or "economically justified" - requirements from WRDA 2007 and WRDA 2018, the Congressional laws that govern all of the flood risk reduction proposals and authorize Congress to spend \$221 million to address flooding on the Pearl in Jackson, Mississippi.

Thank you,

Aaron Viles
4789 Willman Way
Lexington, KY 40509



30 June 2023

Delivered by Electronic Mail to: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

Colonel Christopher Klein
Vicksburg District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3425

RE: Scoping comments on Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Hinds and Rankin Counties, MS

Pearl Riverkeeper, a grassroots non-profit and licensed member of Water Alliance, whose mission is to protect the right to clean water, submits these comments during the scoping process for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project. Pearl Riverkeeper has reviewed the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District's 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the USFWS Biological Opinion and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) Report, state and federal agency comments to the 2018 DEIS, the Final Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) and the Final Agency Technical Review (ATR) Summary Report June 2020. **Pearl Riverkeeper and our members and supporters are vehemently opposed to the NFI-preferred project, Alternative C, that involves dredging, widening, and deepening 10 miles of the Pearl River leading to the destruction of 1,860 acres of productive wetlands.**

The USACE Pearl River Flood Risk Management (FRM) website lists the NFI-preferred project, "Channel Improvements" or Alternative C as one of the alternatives to be considered by the USACE during this scoping process. Pearl Riverkeeper has identified numerous open questions with Alternative C that were not addressed in the 2018 DEIS or in the years since, many of which are also listed as "unresolved", "critical" comments at the publication of the USACE's own ATR in June 2020. We ask that the USACE look closely at the following issues when evaluating the various flood risk management alternatives for Jackson.

- **Inequities in flood risk management benefits:** According to Table 3-3 in the 2018 DEIS Appendix C (PDF page 101), the level of flood peak reduction provided by the NFI-preferred Alternative C varies by river mile (RM). The most significant flood peak reduction benefits would be between the J.H. Fewell Water Plant, RM 291, and the area just upstream of Meadowbrook Lake, RM 295. To visualize which communities would receive the greatest levels of flood peak

reduction benefits from Alternative C, Pearl Riverkeeper distributed the 1% annual exceedance flood peak reduction numbers in the 2018 DEIS Table 3-3 into four quantiles. The largest flood peak reduction quantile, represented by the green flags, is 5.3 to 8.3 feet. The second largest, represented by the yellow flags, is 3.3 to 5.3 feet. The third largest, represented by the red flags, is 2.1 to 3.3 feet. The smallest, represented by the white flags, is 0 to 2.1 feet. The map in Figure 1 depicts the level of flood peak reduction by RM predicted by the 2018 DEIS for a 1% annual exceedance flood event.

Pearl River FRM Alternative C



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Headquarters | Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Geospatial Response Office | Esri, HERE, Garmin, NGA, USGS, NPS

Figure 1 Visualizing flood peak reduction for a 100-year flood based on Table 3-3 of 2018 DEIS, App C

According to Table 3-3, communities in Northeast Jackson would receive some of the lowest levels of flood peak reduction, ranging from 0 to 4.5 feet. Even with Alternative C in place, North Canton Club, one of multiple predominantly Black neighborhoods in Northeast Jackson, would continue to flood during 100-year flood events, albeit less severely. Several neighborhoods in Northeast Jackson are implicitly referenced in Appendix E of the 2018 DEIS with the caveat that homes there would “experience benefits” from Alternative C but would “continue [to] be at risk” from 25-year and above events. The 2018 DEIS, Appendix E (PDG pages 18 and 19) proposed a voluntary buy-out for Northeast Jackson communities to compensate for the lack of protection.

The 2018 DEIS, Appendix C (PDF page 217) map in Figure 2 depicts the number of structures impacted by a 100 year flood in bright green and structures impacted by a 500 year flood in red.

The cluster of bright green in Northeast Jackson shows the vulnerability of this community to flooding. Although the FRM project's greatest concentration of structures vulnerable to river flooding might be those in predominantly Black communities in Northeast Jackson, these communities receive some of the lowest amount of flood peak reduction.

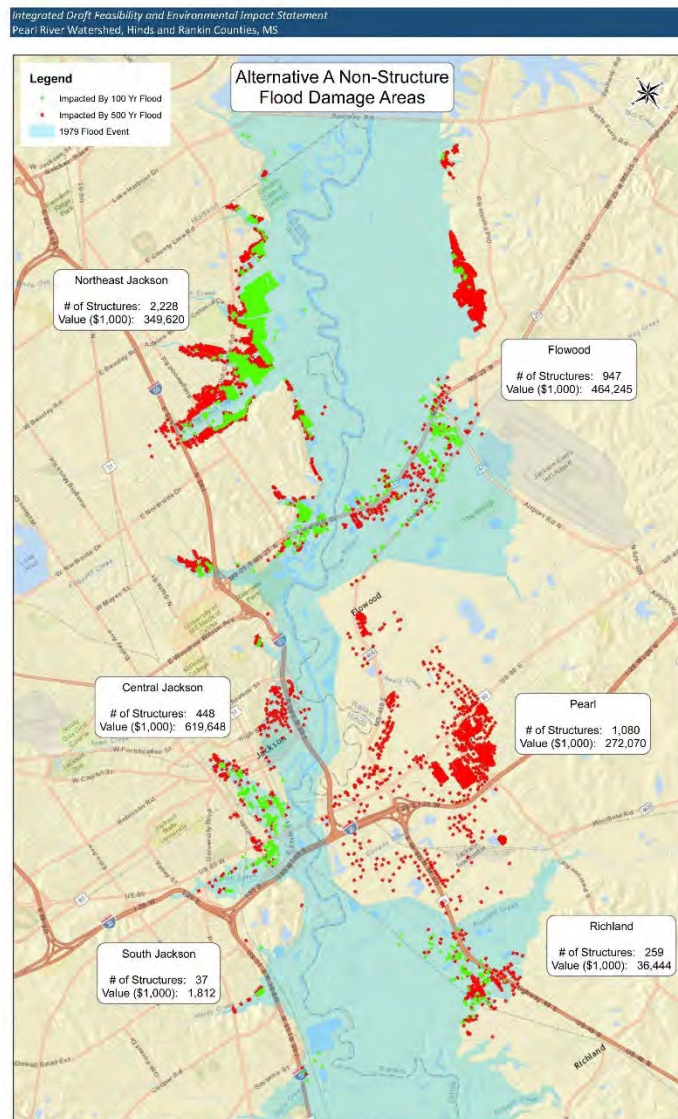


Figure 5.1: Project Area, Alternative A

Figure 2 2018 DEIS, Appendix C: Engineering Real Estate Plan

A report issued by National Weather Service, Jackson after the 2020 flood (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/765d21cb433147fba4a808af2eae53b3>) noted that

changes to Reservoir operations, and changes to the river bed and the land surrounding the river, were making an impact on the amount of water running through the Jackson gauge at certain river stages. They specifically noted that, in 2020, these changes caused water to back up into the neighborhoods in Northeast Jackson at higher than predicted levels

The highest level of flood peak reduction predicted in Table 3-3 would occur in Central Jackson, with levels ranging from 5.3 to 8.3 feet. The 2018 DEIS predicts that the Meadowbrook Lake subdivision, a Central Jackson subdivision that was built in the FEMA floodway in the early 2000s on several acres of drained wetlands, could receive 7-8 feet of flood peak reduction.

Pearl River FRM Alternative C



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Headquarters | Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Geospatial Response Office | Maxar

Figure 3 Meadowbrook Lake subdivision

Pearl River FRM Alternative C



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Headquarters | Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Geospatial Response Office | Maxar

Figure 4 Meadowbrook Lake subdivision with FEMA Flood Hazard Overlay

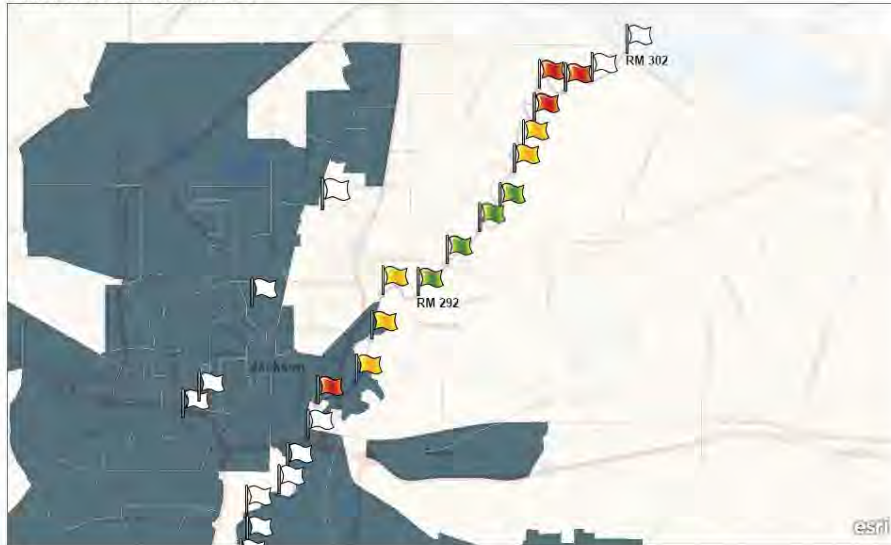
The CEJST is a mapping tool developed under the directive of Presidential Executive Order 14008 to help national decision-makers identify communities vulnerable to problems caused by climate, economic, or climate changes.

The tool uses about 30 metrics from various databases to define eight categories of burdens. The 8 burden categories include: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development. For example, a community has a "workforce development burden" if a large portion of the adult population in its census tract does not have a high school degree and at least one of four social conditions are met. Data for this burden are pulled from the American Community Survey of the United States Census.

A community is "disadvantaged" if it is in a census tract affected by one or more burdens.

Much of south Jackson west of Interstate 55 is "burdened" by four to six categories. The map in Figure 5 visualizes the potential flood peak reduction benefits provided by the 2018 DEIS Alternative C to the "disadvantaged" communities in the project area. CEJST-identified "disadvantaged" communities are shaded dark grey in the map. The white flags to the west of the Pearl River represent, from north to south, Eubanks Creek, Town Creek and Lynch Creek, where "burdened" communities that frequently experience flash flooding events will be provided no Alternative C flood risk management.

Pearl River FRM Alternative C



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Headquarters | Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Geospatial Response Office | Esri, HERE, Garmin, NGA, USGS, NPS

Figure 5 Justice 40 tracts November 2022 overlay

Any analysis of alternatives for the Pearl River FRM project must include an evaluation of impacts on the communities living along the numerous tributaries that run through the City of Jackson. The proposed elevation of the water that would be pooled at the new project weir is 258', 8 feet higher than the water level of the current weir at Jackson Waterworks (250'). The

new impoundment water level of 258' could impact the current tributary flow rates as the storm drain runoff is slowed down by the backed-up tributaries. The 2018 DEIS lacked detailed information regarding Alternative C's impacts on tributary flooding. Considering river flooding alone does not adequately address the Pearl River Basin as a whole and would disenfranchise a large population of Jackson residents currently experiencing annual flooding to their homes, schools, and businesses from overwhelmed tributary channels. Due to the deterioration of century-old sewer infrastructure, this stormwater typically contains raw sewage and other contaminants. Town and Lynch Creek tributaries run through Jackson Wards 3 and 5 which, according to data from the EPA EJScreen tool, are in the nation's 95-100th percentile for a combination of percent low-income and percent minority population. Alternative C would provide no flood risk management for those communities. President Biden's Executive Order 14008, Section 219 states that "Agencies shall make achieving environmental justice part of their missions by developing programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionately high and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts on disadvantaged communities, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts." Executive Order 14008 also created the Justice40 Initiative which states that 40 percent of the benefits from infrastructure investments should "flow to disadvantaged communities". We urge the USACE to consider the multiple social, health, climate, environmental, employment and educational "burdens" currently experienced by communities in the Pearl River FRM project area. Alternative C does nothing to address the "burdened" communities living along the tributaries and at the southern end of the Pearl River FRM project area and disproportionately prioritizes flood risk management to "unburdened" communities.

- **Hazardous waste sites on City of Jackson property:** The 2018 DEIS's cost projections oversimplify and undercut the expense of removing the hazardous waste sites, creosote slough, and landfills along the river. The 2018 DEIS states that the environmental impacts associated with their removal could include, "the temporary addition of large additions of sediment to the Pearl River, the release or exacerbation of current releases of leachate and/or solid and hazardous substances to the groundwater and/or surface water..." (AllenES Environmental Evaluation of Hazardous, Toxic and Radiological Waste (HTRW) Sites, Sept 2014, page 14). The 2018 DEIS does not adequately detail the remediation efforts that will be required at each of the 3 main HTRW locations during removal. The 2018 DEIS also does not provide documentation to validate the \$8 million cost estimate for "landfill removal". A more detailed study of the HTRW sites must be conducted to determine the exact monetary costs for removal. The project proponents should be required to conduct detailed soil, ground, and surface water testing at each HTRW site and to develop a detailed project plan for the removal of the HTRW contaminants in compliance with appropriate regulations. The 2018 Final Independent External Peer Review comment of "High Significance" states that "The three HTRW sites identified in the Draft FS/EIS are not sufficiently characterized to determine the adverse impacts on the Pearl River and on the overall project cost." Alternative C cannot be adequately considered as an alternative until each of the 3 HTRW sites has been evaluated for cost and impacts to downstream and local communities both during construction and afterward.

- **Flood plain development:** The One Lake project would bulldoze riverside forests, dredge, and dig 25 million cubic yards of riverbanks to elevate 1861 acres and prepare them for lakeshore development. These wetlands along the river provide vital ecosystem services such as natural flood protections for our community, groundwater replenishment, water purification and pollutant removal, and natural erosion control. This plan goes against the national trend of dam removal and wetlands protection. The 2018 DEIS, Appendix B, page 25 states, "There will be land available on both Hinds County and Rankin County sides of the expanded Pearl River banks. The elevations of these lands will be greater than the 0.2 percent chance exceedance and therefore, out of the flood plain." The DEIS does not adequately address the potential impacts of climate change on the current FEMA flood maps and discounts the hazards of increased floodplain development.
- **Water quality degradation:** Trapped pollution in a wider, slower lake will cause greater water quality degradation than if the discharges are diluted and flushed through the system by a faster-flowing river. The 2018 DEIS (PDF page 173) states that, "Alternative C is expected to result in indirect moderate long-term beneficial impacts to low water due to changes in hydrology from future development and the resulting increased runoff from developed impervious surfaces." Increased runoff from impervious surfaces should not be listed as a flood control benefit. In addition to the water quantity issues posed by more impervious surfaces, increased urban runoff from new development will also have a negative impact on water quality. For example, the 2018 DEIS Appendix D: Environmental Water Quality, page 133, states, "Water quality data collected from the project reach in July 2014 indicates that a localized storm over the area (i.e., Jackson Metropolitan area) could result in low dissolved oxygen water entering the Pearl River and temporarily depressing dissolved oxygen levels upstream of the existing low-level weir before upstream dilution water returns dissolved oxygen to pre-storm levels. Without improvements to minimize the impacts of urban runoff, similar conditions could occur with the implementation of Alternative C." The 2018 DEIS does not adequately address the water quality impairments that will occur in a slow-moving lake with a larger surface area impacted by increased contaminants from urban runoff.
- **Loss to public lands:** A significant section of LeFleur's Bluff State Park, Jackson's equivalent to NYC's Central Park, would be permanently underwater, according to the Alternative C map published in the 2018 DEIS. The 2018 DEIS fails to account for the socioeconomic losses that would be incurred by the destruction of a portion of LeFleur's Bluff State Park recreational resource. The 2018 DEIS also fails to account for the potential land loss and bank sloughing along the MDOT mitigation bank at the Fannye Cook Natural Area.
- **Ross Barnett Reservoir coordination and low flow compliance:** The discharge permits for the already beleaguered Savannah Street Sewage Treatment Plant rely on stable, freshwater flow from the Pearl. The present low flow "floor" is 227 cubic feet/sec (cfs) which ensures Savannah Street an adequate dilution as required by their NPDES discharge permit. A presentation to the

LA Senate by Dr. deEtte Smythe, Regulatory Manager, St. Tammany Parish, revealed that this critical low flow has been violated 1613 times since 1960 or 7.7% of individual daily observations.[1] Since these low readings take place in the low flow months of June-October, these occurrences are significant. How the Ross Barnett Reservoir releases will coordinate with a new lake impoundment has not been determined. Constructing another lake with no currently defined low-flow requirement would complicate this existing problem. The 2018 DEIS did not stipulate what governing body and regulations will be used to ensure flow coordination between the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the new impoundment created by Alternative C. The USACE must engage with Pearl River Valley Water Supply District regarding how Alternative C could complicate their operations during both high and low-flow scenarios.

- **Loss of critical wetlands and bottomland hardwoods:** Less than 25% of the pre-Columbian bottomland hardwood forests remain in the southeastern United States.[2] The bottomland hardwood forest habitat along the Pearl River in the project area has already been decimated by previous river channelization efforts. The 2018 DEIS, Appendix D: Site Description of the Project Area, page 20: "This former bottomland hardwood forest ecosystem was once a functioning and sustainable habitat. However, increasing human encroachment and disturbances have degraded the area to its current condition." "These habitats are believed to perform functions vital to the prominent streams, including water control and purification, groundwater recharge, soil enrichment, and erosion control." 2018 DEIS, Appendix D: Wetland Delineation and Determination, page 11: Alternative C habitat loss would total 2,848 acres to include 1,017.221 acres of forested wetlands, 266.120 acres of scrub-shrub wetlands, 65.128 acres of emergent wetlands and 150.125 acres cypress/tupelo slough. This is an unacceptable level of vital habitat loss. Restoration of this section of the Pearl River should be prioritized over more destruction.
- **Deficiency in endangered and threatened species studies:** The DEIS does not sufficiently address the project impact to several rare, threatened and endangered species:
 - Pearl darter (*Percina aurora*) is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act due to its extirpation in the Pearl River drainage. In May 2023, USFWS designated a section of the Strong River in the Pearl River watershed as critical habitat for the Pearl darter. In June 2023, USFWS published a Recovery Plan that includes the reintroduction of the Pearl darter to the Pearl River watershed. The plan also includes monitoring, surveying, and researching of the species with the goal of long-term survival in both the Pascagoula and Pearl River system.
 - Frecklebelly madtom (*Noturus munitus*) is a candidate species for federal protection.¹ This species requires a riverine habitat with gravel shoals free of sedimentation. DEIS,

¹ Bennett, Micah G., et al. "Status of the Imperiled Frecklebelly Madtom, *Noturus Munitus* (Siluriformes: Ictaluridae): A Review of Data from Field Surveys, Museum Records, and the Literature." *Southeastern Naturalist*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2008, pp. 459–474. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20204015.

Appendix D, page 3 states, "Though it is thought that the Frecklebelly madtom occurred throughout the Pearl River Basin historically, more recent survey information indicates that the population no longer exists in the main channel of the Pearl." Current studies being conducted by Matt Wagner, Conservation Resource Biologist, State Ichthyologist/Curator of Fishes, MS Museum of Natural Science indicate that this species is prevalent in the main stem of the Pearl River. Further evaluation should be taken to determine impact to this species.

- Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) is listed on both the federal and state threatened species lists. This species conducts anadromous migrations that will be impacted by further impoundments on the Pearl River. Current USFWS project discussions underway to remove the sills at Poole's Bluff will allow for increased Gulf sturgeon migration upriver to the project area. Recent research by the University of Southern Mississippi showed that radio tagged sturgeon have been recorded since 2018 swimming past monitoring receivers in LeFleur's Bluff State Park, upstream of the weir at the JH Fewell drinking water treatment plant.
- Ringed map turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*) is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. According to FWS, "if the proposed reservoir is completed, it would likely result in the extirpation of the known ringed map turtle population (south of the current reservoir)"². Recent survey data from Dr. Will Selman indicates that "ringed sawbacks can occur in great abundance along the One Lake Project Area and recruitment/reproduction are better in this stretch than what has been observed in other ringed sawback populations."³ The 2018 IEPR states that "The Draft FS/EIS does not fully describe the direct impacts of the TSP on the ringed sawback (map) turtle, a Federally listed species."
- **Riverine habitat loss:** The Pearl River Watershed Feasibility Study, Two Lakes Flood Control Plan, Aquatic Evaluation 2006 completed by the ERDC Environmental Laboratory staff was utilized as a part of the updated Habitat Evaluation Procedures analysis for the 2018 DEIS. Page 513, Abstract of the Aquatic Evaluation 2006 states that "the lake Habitat Suitability Index for facultative riverine species was more than 50% lower than for existing conditions". The 2006 report also "indicates that obligate riverine species will become rare or extirpated from the project area after construction is completed. Habitat Units for the Facultative Riverine guild actually increased post-project but this was due to the increased water surface area of the lake, not increased habitat value. Major biological tradeoffs are evident with riverine species declining and lacustrine species increasing" by converting a river into a lake. The 2006 report

² FWS, Ringed Map Turtle, 5-year review : Summary and evaluation 4 (2010), https://ecos.fws.gov/docs/five_year_review/doc3270.pdf

³ Selman, Will, "Diamonds in the Rough: Status of Two Imperiled *Graptemys* species (*Graptemys oculifera* and *G. pearlensis* in the Pearl River of Jackson, MS", 31 July 2018

also discusses several Mitigation requirements (reconnecting secondary channels, reconnecting or managing water levels of backwaters, protection/creation of gravel bars, and construction of in-lake wires to constrict flow and increase velocity).

Despite referencing the 2006 report, the 2018 DEIS determines that a compensation analysis would be required for terrestrial habitats only. The riverine mitigation requirements mentioned in the 2006 report are not discussed at all in the 2018 DEIS. Since the project would destroy approximately 250 acres of riverine habitat, the 2018 DEIS compensation analysis must be expanded to include aquatic habitat losses. Further analysis of Alternative C must differentiate between riverine and lacustrine aquatic habitats and must account for the net loss of riverine species.

- **Vague mitigation plans:** The 2018 DEIS, Appendix D: Habitat Evaluation Procedure Report, page 27 delineates 3 different Management Plan scenarios for Alternative C: Acquisition: acquiring existing forestland which can be somewhat related to the preservation of existing habitats (estimates 17,190 acres of existing forestland purchased), Restorative: every existing habitat type within the project area would be restored at some other location in the Pearl River Basin ("would include the restoration of existing agricultural land through conversion to forestland"..."a total of approximately 9,076 acres of restoration of existing agricultural lands") and, Regenerative: only predominant bottomland hardwood forestland would be replaced (5,850 acres of reforestation of existing agricultural lands). The 2018 Independent External Peer Review states that "The Draft FS/EIS does not clearly state whether the mitigation techniques presented are consistent with the current TSP or explain how mitigation would be implemented." Detailed plans for proposed Alternative C mitigation area location and designs and discussion of which Management Plan scenario has been chosen must be provided to inform the cost/benefit analysis for each flood control management alternative. The FCAR states that "Since six of the seven at-risk species are not found north of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, mitigation efforts should be first focused south of the Reservoir if they are to help ensure the conservation of those species."
- **Downstream Impacts:** The DEIS inadequately addresses downstream impacts.
 - The MS Governor's Oyster Council Final Report in June 2015 stated that challenges facing the oyster industry and threats to success include insufficient water quantity and "alterations in the amount and natural fluctuation of freshwater flow". The report Recommendations for Action or Research includes: "discourage freshwater depleting projects and educate decision-makers on impacts of major freshwater depleting projects."⁴
 - Feb. 2018, "Effects of Annual Droughts on Fish Communities in Mississippi Sound Estuaries" states that, "With an increasing human population in central and south

⁴ The Governor's Oyster Council Restoration & Resiliency, Final Report, June 2015

Mississippi, pressure on freshwater resources is likely to increase, resulting in possible changes in the fish community dynamics of the Mississippi Sound.” In addition, (p. 1483) “Anthropogenic impacts such as water withdrawal from surface waters and aquifers as well as impoundments can have a profound effect on coastal regions by disturbing fundamental qualities of estuaries or even exacerbating already naturally occurring processes (Dynesius and Nilsson 1994; Hopkinson and Vallino 1995). In order to manage an estuarine system appropriately, it is important to understand how these systems are affected by natural fluctuations as well as anthropogenic stressors.”⁵

- Over 100 discharge permit holders in Mississippi and Louisiana rely on stable, freshwater flow from the Pearl for adequate dilution and compliance.
- The DEIS does not adequately address the changes to sediment transport that will impact the health of our Gulf Coast estuaries.

Complete modeling of the Pearl River should be conducted before any further modifications to the system. Without concrete data on current flow rates and downstream water quantity and quality requirements, any large-scale impoundment project would be an experiment.

- **Inadequate evaluation of the alternatives:**

- General Accounting Office after-action report from the 1979 flood stated that the main issues were a lack of early planning, Reservoir actions, and an improperly maintained West Bank Levee.⁶ The Drainage District should evaluate enhanced management of the Ross Barnett Reservoir for increased flood control. Improvements to current deteriorating Jackson-area stormwater systems should also be considered.
- The 2018 DEIS Alt B proposes 8 levee systems (NE, LeFleur, I20, South Jackson, Belhaven, Flowood, Fairgrounds, E Jackson) and \$311,609,907 worth of pumping plants. The Aug 2018 USFWS Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act Report questions the need for these expensive pumps. The FWCA Report is critical of Alternative C and suggests that a levee alternative is re-evaluated. The 2020 USACE ATR stated: “the setback levee most likely will be the feature with the greatest (flood) risk reduction” and “it is unclear how construction of the weir and impoundment of water reduces the flood risk to the adjacent communities. The existence of the 1,500 acre lake does not create any additional flood storage capacity or conveyance capacity.”

⁵ Mickle, P.F., Herbig, J.L., Somerset, C.R. et al. Estuaries and Coasts (2018) 41: 1475.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12237-017-0364-5>

⁶ Report by the Comptroller General of the United States, “Improvements being made in flood fighting capabilities in the Jackson, Mississippi area”, Dec 18, 1979

Pearl Riverkeeper urges the USACE to reject the NFI-preferred project, Alternative C, in favor of a less environmentally destructive alternative that doesn't threaten the integrity of the Pearl River and the local and downstream communities that rely on it. The USACE should develop a hybrid flood risk management alternative that combines river and floodplain restoration, levee setbacks, elevations, and voluntary relocations. During project development, the USACE should view the Pearl River Basin holistically and strive to provide flood risk management that is targeted to the most threatened communities while also protecting the people and wildlife along the entire length of the river.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abby Braman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Abby Braman

Executive Director, Pearl Riverkeeper

From: [Alexandra Melnick](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on One Lake Plan
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 10:00:55 AM

To whom it may concern:

My public comment regarding the proposed One Lake project is that this project would have negative impacts on my community and my community's quality of life. The One Lake project would eradicate the Belhaven Beach area and the surrounding trails, which is a significant community asset and gathering place in addition to providing green spaces and safe exercise areas--- which are very limited in Jackson. Belhaven Beach and the surrounding trails are culturally important and adds value to my home and neighborhood both in quality of life and actual real estate value. I am strongly against the One Lake plan and believe it will disproportionately impact poor people and people of color by removing free and safe green spaces.

Alexandra Melnick

From: librasleap@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [D Alford](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 4:38:44 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

The Pearl River is one of the most biodiverse rivers in the U.S., connecting nearly 500 miles of ecology, communities, and economies across Mississippi and Louisiana. This natural treasure is threatened by a devastating private real estate development scheme masquerading as flood control known as the One Lake project.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
D Alford
Pompano Beach, FL 33062
librasleap@yahoo.com

From: [Amelia Johnson](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] RE: Maximize ROI at HYDROVISION 2023
Date: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 9:34:34 AM

I wanted to check if you had a chance to review my below email.

Just respond with a single letter, and I'll take it from there.

- A) You're interested and would like to set up a call next week.
- B) You're interested but too busy to schedule a call right now.
- C) You're all set.

Regards,
Amelia Johnson |Lead Generation Specialist
Alfabet Events

Disclaimer: If you do not wish to receive emails from us, please reply to this email with 'OPT OUT'

From: Amelia Johnson
Sent: Thursday, June 8, 2023 10:44 AM
To: pearlriverfrm@usace.army.mil
Subject: RE: Maximize ROI at HYDROVISION 2023

I was wondering if you had a chance to review my below email.

Please let us know if you are interested so that I'll get back to you with the number of contacts and pricing details accordingly.

Regards,
Amelia Johnson |Lead Generation Specialist
Alfabet Events

Disclaimer: If you do not wish to receive emails from us, please reply to this email with 'OPT OUT'

From: Amelia Johnson
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 5:23 PM
To: pearlriverfrm@usace.army.mil
Subject: Maximize ROI at HYDROVISION 2023

Would you be interested in Attendees Database at **HYDROVISION International 2023 ?**

Attendee list includes **Global Hydro, Marine Energy, Dams/Civil Market Professionals, Power Producers, Utilities, Consultants, Large-scale Hydro Energy Users, Engineering, Procurement & Construction firms, and Many More.**

Could you please let me know your thoughts ?

In turn, I'll get back with precise Counts and Pricing for your consideration.

Regards,
Amelia Johnson |Lead Generation Specialist

Alfabet Events

Disclaimer: If you do not wish to receive emails from us, please reply to this email with 'OPT OUT'

From: Andrea Walker
To: paul@usf.edu
Subject: [UPL] New Orleans (New-Old) Second One Line Project
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 1:08:29 AM

11

Andrea Walker <awalkerbigsky@gmail.com>

1:04 AM (0 minutes ago)

I am writing with my concerns regarding the proposed One Lake Project by the Hinds Rankin County Levee Board. I listened to the meeting via WEBox on May 24 1-3pm. I also studied the engineer's proposal that was done for the Levee Board. I am opposed to this project primarily because it doesn't appear that it will actually do what is needed for these counties; alleviate flooding!!! Secondly, it will decrease water quality for drinking with the hazardous waste sites that will be dredged. Thirdly, it also will have negative impacts on the downstream residents and businesses with decreased water flow, including the Gulf for our seafood industries. Finally, it will negatively impact wildlife habitat from the One Lake area of the Pearl all the way to the Gulf.

Please take the time to consider all of the negative impacts that this project will bring without delivering the absolutely necessary flood relief for the citizens impacted. With the warming Gulf waters, the flooding will most definitely continue with more regularity. Surely there is a better plan than this cockamamie proposal.

Andrea Walker
awalkerbigsky@gmail.com

From: andrew@evervationcustom.com on behalf of [Andrew Whitehurst](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Friday, June 2, 2023 11:39:42 AM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Dear Corps of Engineers:

Senator Roger Wicker pulled a fast one on all of us in 2022, and on his Republican brothers and sisters in Louisiana when he quietly arranged for \$221 million dollars, the entire federal share for Alternative "C", the One Lake project, to be placed in the Army Corps budget for flood management on the Pearl River in Mississippi- contingent upon approval by the Army Secretary. Senator Wicker's action stabbed his fellow Republicans in the back across the state line, and I hope they remember this when he needs their help. He sold out long ago to the the developers, real estate companies, road builders and public utilities who will all benefit from turning Pearl River swamp and batture floodplains into a riverfront development for Jackson - to try and arrest and reverse the city's downward trajectory. Building an amenity lake on a river that is classified as eutrophic (nutrient over enriched) by the MDEQ and EPA and has ongoing uncontrolled sewage overflows entering it on every significant rainfall event is no solution to flood control or to Jackson economic re-development. The \$355 million for this project could be used for better purposes: street repair, hiring more police to combat murders and carjackings, and updating the city's sewage and drinking water system.

Executive Order 11988 (1977) contains a presumption against developing floodplains unless there are less destructive ways to stop flooding. There are better options that don't do as much environmental and economic damage downstream as Alternative "C". The Army Corps needs to follow E.O. 11988 and follow its own Engineering Planning regulations ER 1105-2-100 that cite and support E.O. 11988 - rules that proscribe floodplain development unless certain exemptions exist. Such exemptions do not exist for Alternative "C" and if it is approved, this project will be an exercise in keeping a straight face when they know better - embarrassment on a national stage - for Army Secretary Connor, for Vicksburg Commander Klein and for all who sign off on a project that takes us back to the 1950's in environmental and public health protection.

As someone who calls political and agency sellouts as he sees them, and cares deeply about our country's birds, wildlife, and habitats, I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

The Pearl River is one of the most biodiverse rivers in the U.S., connecting nearly 500 miles of ecology, communities, and economies across Mississippi and Louisiana. This natural treasure is threatened by a devastating private real estate development scheme masquerading as flood control known as the One Lake project. I ask you to listen to the long-standing opposition that One Lake has drawn from hundreds of concerned citizens, elected officials, community and business leaders, conservation groups and others and abandon this destructive project once and for all.

One Lake will only put more people and property in harm's way while exposing communities to toxic pollution, worsen Jackson's flooding and drinking water problems, reduce downstream freshwater flows critical to the region's seafood and tourism economies, and destroy wildlife habitat that provides natural flood protection for communities.

Instead, I urge you to implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoring river habitats.

It is the intent of Congress that a flood reduction plan for Jackson be technically feasible, environmentally acceptable, and economically justified. Alternative "C" misses the mark on the second two points of analysis.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
Andrew Whitehurst
Madison, MS 39110

From: [Andrew Whitehurst](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] Healthy Gulf Comments Pearl River FRM project Rankin Hinds Counties Ms
Date: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 12:56:41 PM
Attachments: [Healthy Gulf Comments on NOI for Pearl River FRM project June 27, 2023 Final PDFVersion.pdf](#)

Dear Colonel Klein:

We met and spoke in Slidell after the second meeting. I prepared comments on scoping for the Pearl River FRM project that the Army Secretary has taken over from the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District. I tried to cover the scoping factors that the Corps suggested in its powerpoint.

My comments are attached as a PDF, but I printed them out and mailed them to you at the Clay Street address for the Corps in Vicksburg as well.

Would someone please give me a response to say the letter has been received? Thank you.

Andrew Whitehurst

--



Andrew Whitehurst

He/Him
Water Program Director

601 954 7236
PO Box 2245
New Orleans, LA 70176

healthygulf.org

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Via email comment portal: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

June 27th, 2023

RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS

Dear Colonel Klein:

I am writing to you to provide scoping comments for the Pearl River FRM project on behalf of Healthy Gulf, an environmental advocacy non-profit group active in the five Gulf States and founded in 1996 as Gulf Restoration Network.

Healthy Gulf submits comment letters in the hope that we will be responsive to the needs of the communities we serve, respecting the interests of marginalized and oppressed people in them. We acknowledge that many Gulf South residents are confronted every day with the legacy of historical injustices as well as current environmental issues that threaten their health and well-being. We believe that the experiences, perspectives, and leadership of low-income communities and communities of color must inform our collaborative service.

Representing Healthy Gulf, I attended the May 23rd Slidell and Jackson, MS May 24th public engagement meetings for scoping of the new 2023 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) being prepared for the Pearl River Basin federal Flood Risk Management project in Hinds and Rankin Counties, MS. I spoke to the Army Corps and ASACW staff hosting the meeting and gave verbal comments for the record along with others from Mississippi and Louisiana who represent the interests of communities along the Pearl River. I have raised objections about Alternative "C" advanced by the non-federal sponsors for Pearl River flood management since 2018 when the Rankin Hinds Drainage District published the first draft of the EIS. I personally visited the Pentagon in February of 2020 and 2023 along with elected officials from Louisiana and Mississippi to voice my concerns about Alt. "C" to Deputy Secretary Leach, Ms. Andrea Walker, Deputy Secretary Pinkham and others.

A concern we voiced in 2018 that remains is the extent of the statutorily prescribed study area for the project. It is limited to Rankin and Hinds Counties in Mississippi. The study area does not include lower sections of the river as it must to fulfill the WRDA points of analysis on "environmental acceptability" (WRDA 2007 Sec 3104) and "economic justification" (WRDA 2018 Sec 1176).

We understand that the historic flooding problems in the Jackson Metro area are the focus of the 2023 DEIS and array of alternatives shared at the Slidell and Jackson meetings. We empathize with the plight of the residents of Rankin and Hinds Counties who have endured serious floods in 1979, 1983, 2020 and 2022. We understand that they need a project that provides relief. However, as the "Pearl River Basin" appears in the title of the current project and in the project's name in the 2018 DEIS, we expect that the

needs and concerns of the whole of the Pearl River Basin will be taken into consideration in any alternatives that are formulated, published, and supported by the Army Secretary. The last study under section 211 WRDA 1986 was authorized by Congress, with the expectation that the entire basin be taken into consideration. Louisiana's Congressional delegation left no doubt about this Congressional intent when Senator Bill Cassidy and Representative Steve Scalise inserted Section 1176 in WRDA 2018, requiring the Army Corps to take a hard look at downstream impacts from an additional dam and lake on the Pearl River in Mississippi.

The Army Corps of Engineers is in a difficult position as it has taken over authorship of the Draft EIS for this flood management project from the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District. The entire federal cost share, \$221 million, has been appropriated in the bipartisan infrastructure act (IIJA) and placed in the budget of the Corps for Pearl River flood risk reduction. The Corps leadership and the Assistant Secretary both know that the United States Senators from Mississippi and the elected officials, religious community leaders, chambers of commerce, state legislators representing the Metro Jackson area, and even the Mississippi Children's Museum director support Alternative "C", yet this project is the most destructive to the environment, has the most potential to impact the physical and biological health of the Pearl River and is opposed by downstream towns, industries, commercial fishermen, swamp tour businesses, and by resolutions against Alt. "C" by the Louisiana Legislature (2018) and the Louisiana Senate (2023).

Scoping Elements:

Flood Risk Reduction

Hinds and Rankin County Issues

There were three alternatives provided at the Army's public engagement meetings of May 23-24, 2023: C, A, and A1 and a combination of the three, and the Corps welcomed other alternatives. One alternative from 2018 was left out, a levees only comprehensive plan. This 2023 reformulation by the Army included the lake plan that downstream counties and parishes objected to in 2018. We at Healthy Gulf would like to see flood risk reduced for Jackson but prefer a plan that carries no risk of altering river flow or temperature from more water impoundment, especially in the months of July-October when historic low flows on the Pearl River occur. We prefer setting levees back on one or both sides of the river to widen the Pearl River's floodplain through Rankin and Hinds Counties, combined with non-structural elements from alternative A or A1.

The flood risk reduction outlined in Alternative "C" is tied to location benefits derived from developing land that is now unoccupied floodplain on the unprotected (batture) side of the Pearl River which seems to be in clear violation of Executive Order 11988 (1977). This EO is cited in the Engineering Notebook that guides the economic benefit (NED) analysis for this project. This Army Corps notebook ER-1105-2-100 (2000) cites E.O. 11988 and its presumption against developing floodplains that are currently undeveloped batture land- the exact type of wetland filling contemplated by Alternative C. Building structures on top of federal levees as Alternative "C" contemplates is something the Corps and Army Secretary should not encourage. I grew up along the federal levees that protect New Orleans and have never seen buildings deliberately constructed on top of levees. Such a practice flaunts the intent of E.O.

11988 and actually places more development in harm's way adjacent to a river. In Jackson development on the riverside levees would be less than 10 miles downstream of a 38,000-acre reservoir with a dam that has three feet of "freeboard" over which to raise water levels before the dam's design capabilities are exceeded – on an unruly river with a history of four major floods in the past 40 years. Adding more development to the floodplain in Rankin and Hinds Counties in the form of bed and bank dredging and wetland filling contemplated in Alternative "C" doesn't solve flooding problems that have been created by the cumulative impact of 60 years of post-reservoir floodplain development in both counties. Solving flooding in the developed floodplain of the Pearl River in Hinds and Rankin Counties by approving a project that will encourage more development on raised lands (that are now batture) is regressive thinking that looks back to the time before the Clean Water Act.

Lower Pearl River flood risk reduction issues

As the Army Secretary and the Vicksburg Corps staff heard in Slidell on May 23rd, the lower Pearl River has flooding issues too. Water releases from the Ross Barnett Reservoir happen throughout the year when the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District, in consultation with the National Weather Service, foresee modeled precipitation events in conjunction with winter and spring cold front passage or summer and autumn low pressure systems, including tropical storms and hurricanes or other heavy rainfall during the year. Typically, water releases happen 3-5 days before a large rain event – cold front or storm- is predicted for the upper Pearl River watershed. Downstream cities and towns see quick and steep increases in river stages in these pre-storm periods and by the time the water releases reach St. Tammany Parish and Hancock County there can be coastal flooding happening in addition to a headwater flood. Many speakers at the Slidell meeting led the Army Corps through the scenario of a coastal storm surge happening when the Pearl River is already flooding due to a water release from the Ross Barnett Reservoir.

In the past two Pearl River floods for Rankin and Hinds Counties, 2020 and 2022, the Ross Barnett floodgates were used to raise the level of the Ross Barnett Reservoir as much as safely possible- to nearly 300 feet above sea level - and prevent the maximum amount of water from being released to the tailwater section of the Pearl River to prevent some tributary flooding in the dam's tailwater. This operation method slightly moderated the effects of both recent floods for Rankin and Hinds Counties, so the use of the dam and floodgates (not designed or legally authorized for the flood control purpose) to nevertheless control the timing and volume of water releases has been a successful strategy.

Water Supply

Hinds and Rankin Counties

There were comments at the public engagement meetings of May 23-24 proposing that Alternative "C", lake dredging would somehow solve Jackson's water drinking water treatment deficiencies. This is not true. Jackson's August 2022 drinking water crisis began when the O.B. Curtis treatment plant in Ridgeland, Mississippi adjacent to the Ross Barnett Reservoir was unable to treat the reservoir water due to turbidity and water chemistry changes cause by heavy rains and a heavier than usual sediment load in the reservoir. The Curtis facility is **ten miles upriver** from the "study area" that Alternative "C" would occupy and where Alternative "C" would dredge, widen and further dam the Pearl River. Having the One

Lake plan (Alt. "C") in place would not have prevented Jackson's water crisis. Jackson also had a drinking water crisis during the cold weather that caused the "Texas freeze" and power outages of 2021, totally unrelated to flooding when the intake structures at the O.B. Curtis plant froze and the entire water system collapsed after water towers were drained and the system could not prime its water towers or keep up with demand.

Jackson's river/creek flooding and drinking water supply problems are related only in the sense that when it rains heavily in Jackson and its sewer mains overflow into the stormwater system, the city's urban tributaries send sewage to the Pearl River. Under these conditions, Jackson's other drinking water treatment plant (J.H. Fewell) has heavier bacteria loads to disinfect during water treatment. The entire urban section of the Pearl River has been under a Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality water contact advisory for fecal coliform bacteria for five years. The City is also under a federal court consent decree due to years of sewage permit limit violations. Until Jackson's sewage collection system is repaired the advisory and consent decree won't be lifted. The estimated cost of repairing Jackson's broken sewers and outdated Savanna Street sewage treatment plant is more than twice the \$355 million price tag of Alternative "C".



The only alternative among C, A, and A1 that has the capability and likelihood of harmful reductions in river flow (water quantity) downstream of Jackson is the lake dredging plan, Alternative "C". Evaporation from a wider, slower moving and warmer 10-mile section of the Pearl River especially in the seasonal low flow months of July-October will mean that river surface and tailwater conditions below the new weir will be warmer than current surface and tailwater conditions. A wider and warmer river will have a higher evaporative loss than the narrower, more shaded present condition of the Pearl River through Jackson. The square 15'x15' gate in the center of the Alt. C's new weir can release water during low flow conditions but will require cooperation from the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District (PRVWSD) that manages the Ross Barnett Reservoir floodgates upstream.

Eubanks Creek near Lakeland Drive became eutrophic and supported an algae bloom in September of 2021 after a large sewage pipe spilled into it. All of Jackson's Pearl River tributaries are sewage impaired and will contribute polluted water to the lake contemplated by Alternative "C".

The primary uses for the Ross Barnett Reservoir, built in 1960-1963, are water supply and recreation. If the PRVWSD is asked to increase reservoir discharge to accommodate Alternative "C" and its associated

increased evaporation and water temperature, or for any other reason, reservoir operational procedures will need alteration and statutory purposes of the PRVWSD will be more difficult to meet. The Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District has not prioritized communication with the PRVWSD about how the Ross Barnett Reservoir operations would be combined with the Rankin Hinds District's locally preferred plan, Alternative "C". Conversations about this have been inexplicably delayed. The Army Secretary and Army Corps of Engineers should engage the PRVWSD about these subjects as it writes the next Draft Environmental Impact Statement. A discussion of how climate change would affect flood control on the Pearl River was left out of the 2018 DEIS as well, and the Army Corps of Engineers should address this deficiency.

Lower Pearl River water supply issues

Downstream scoping issues on water supply include water withdrawal from the Pearl River for agricultural and industrial users. Fresh water from rivers is sometimes needed to irrigate crops in Mississippi, and riparian landowners may pump water out of rivers for agriculture without extensive regulation by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. Permitted water use also needs to be summed up for all holders of industrial and municipal NPDES permits. The importance of developing a water budget for the whole Pearl River Basin is clear if Alternative "C" moves closer to being approved by the Army Secretary. There wasn't a water budget for the river in the 2018 Draft EIS published by the Rankin Hinds Drainage District. The Corps and Army Secretary need to correct this deficiency. Wells for drinking water in the coastal areas of Hancock County and St. Tammany Parish are vulnerable to saltwater intrusion and low flows on the Pearl River allow the salt wedge to migrate up the Pearl and West Pearl channels. St. Tammany Parish listed this threat for residential drinking water wells near the Pearl River, and several speakers at the May scoping meeting cited landward migration of the salt wedge killing freshwater marsh plants and trees as saltwater moves higher up the lower Pearl River from estuaries near its mouth. Changing plant ecology along with the northward migration of the boundary between freshwater swamp and brackish marsh are already apparent from the dead cypress trees on the lower river and anything the Army Corps or local non-federal sponsor do that reduces river discharge can accelerate this process.

The St. Tammany Parish Engineering Department wrote extensive and critical comments on the 2018 DEIS that included Alternative "C" in much the same form as now. Those comments were responsive to the issues cited above.

Water and Wastewater Treatment

There are two minimum flow targets to consider on the Pearl River with respect to Alternative "C" or any structural alternative to address flooding. The "contract minimum" that must be released from the Ross Barnett Reservoir is 170 cubic feet per second (cfs). However, the practical minimum flow target is 227 cfs to meet the needs of the Savannah Street sewage treatment plant about 15 miles downriver from the Ross Barnett Reservoir on the Pearl River's west bank. The plant's Clean Water Act National Polluted Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permit requires this discharge as a bare minimum for adequate dilution of the effluent discharged into the Pearl River. The J.H. Fewell drinking water treatment plant withdraws 48 cfs from the river between the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the Savannah Street sewage treatment plant.

The St. Tammany Parish Engineering Department used United States Geological Survey (USGS) river gage statistics and daily readings over the period of record for river gages and analyzed minimum flow target (7Q10) measurements pre-reservoir and post-reservoir at several sites on the river: Jackson, Ms., Monticello Ms., the Strong River confluence and Bogalusa, La. The analysis focused on the number of days and percentages of occurrences below the minimum flow at a site, and the number of times and percentages that a minimum flow failed to meet the 10th percentile for flows over the daily flow readings. These analyses were made using USGS stream discharge records post-Ross Barnett Reservoir construction. Savannah Street had a minimum flow permit requirement of 290 cfs before 2017. From 1965 to 2017, flow at Jackson's Savannah Street was below the 290 cfs minimum there 3917 times or for 18% of readings. The Savannah Street plant's NPDES permit was changed to a lower minimum flow requirement of 227 cfs in 2017. For the post-Ross Barnett period, the river has fallen below 227 cfs on 1613 days or for 7.7% of daily readings. The St. Tammany report concluded "During the critically low-flow months of July-August, flows from the Ross Barnett are lower than pre-Ross Barnett construction (1965)" and further concluded on the basis of the 10% percentile analysis of Jackson's Savannah Street plant, "It is apparent that flow control at the Ross Barnett Reservoir is making the stream baseflow lower at least during July-August, summer critical months for NPDES dischargers, water quality, habitat, recreation, navigation and coastal interests."

Having a river discharge fail to meet minimum requirements on 7.7% of daily readings at the location where a sewage plant's effluent meets the receiving stream is something that the Army Corps should be concerned about because of anti-degradation rules and because of the 2015 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report for nutrients. The heated surface waters of a dredged lake (Alternative C) will generate more evaporation in the warm months of the year than the Pearl River currently experiences in the 10 mile "study area" reach. Warmed, nutrient-rich surface water from the lake will flow over the weir and meet the Savannah Street POTW plant's nutrient-laden effluent in what will likely be a very impaired location on the Pearl River. Mississippi already reports the water in the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the urban section of the Pearl as eutrophic (nutrient over-enriched) in the 303(d) and 305(b) water quality reports it sends to EPA and Congress.

Low flow problems on the regulated Pearl River begin with the amount of water discharged from the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Adding a second lake (Alternative "C") to the Pearl in Jackson causing further evaporative loss, particularly in July-October, will increase water quantity problems. A second lake on the river will compound existing compliance challenges with the Savannah Street NPDES permit and cause problems for downriver dischargers with permits subject to the limits governed by the 2015 nutrient TMDL. That document needs to be revisited to see if the location of the modeled "critical cell" for biological oxygen demand, dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll moves up or down the river because of the creation of a new lake that imposes new challenges for the river's physical and biological health. Downstream stakeholders, NPDES permit holders, agricultural and recreational users don't need any of these additional problems that lake construction brings with it.

Counties and Parishes downstream don't need the Pearl River's low flow problems to be any more complicated than they are now. A water budget has not been offered for the entire river so far in a DEIS. Downstream stakeholders need to see a water budget written with and without Alternative "C" developed and shared as part of the 2023 DEIS by the Army Corps. This must account for existing impairments, climate change, warmer water temperatures from a lake plan, evaporation and the 2015

MDEQ TMDL report's non-point source pollution Best Management Practices that were enumerated but have never been implemented.

Ecosystem/Environmental Impacts

Rankin and Hinds Counties

The habitat damage that would happen in the Jackson reach of the Pearl River in Rankin and Hinds Counties includes a footprint of disturbance of 2500 acres. Up to 25 million cubic yards of riverbank and bed soils and alluvium along 10 miles of river will be dredged and moved to fill what are now all floodplain and batture – lands on the river side of existing levees. Wetlands make up 1860 acres of this total. Critical habitat for the Ringed sawback turtle would be destroyed in Jackson as basking logs and snags would be removed and sandbars used for nesting areas would be dredged or submerged in the project footprint as the river's bed and banks are cleared and excavated to widen and deepen the river.



Adult Ringed sawback turtles, with a juvenile on a Pearl River basking log in LeFleur's Bluff S.P. Credit: Wesley Shoop, Ph.D.

Also, we know the Gulf sturgeon migrates through the urban reach of the Pearl River described as the "study area" in Rankin and Hinds Counties – radio tagged sturgeon have been recorded since 2018 swimming past monitoring receivers in LeFleur's Bluff State Park, upstream of the weir at the JH Fewell drinking water treatment plant. Mitigation for the sturgeon in the form of a fish ladder or fish passage device has been proposed, but the environmental conditions in the lake itself may be unacceptable for the sturgeon.

Ten miles of the river will be changed from lotic habitat to lentic habitat which will affect the sturgeon and a suite of other river-dependent fish species – those that need flowing water for either their feeding or reproductive or life-cycle requirements. Because all the riparian vegetation that currently shades the Pearl River for parts of the day will be removed, the surface water temperature in the dredged section of the river can be expected to rise, compared to pre-project conditions. Lining the shores of the lake with limestone rock or concrete bulkhead will likely be required for soil stability during high flow events. Engineered shorelines like these absorb solar energy and radiate it into water, which will also make the temperature of lake water warmer than the river's current conditions.



The fish above were an incidental catch (released after photo) by commercial fishermen in 2018 near Monticello, MS. Gulf sturgeon navigate over sills, and have reached Jackson, Ms. in the past 3 years.

The 1860 acres of wetlands that would be removed along the riparian areas in Jackson contain mature hardwood bottomland forest, which is very good habitat for wildlife, particularly for birds. LeFleur's Bluff State Park has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and its birdwatching checklist has 211 species with 75 that breed in the park. Beyond the 392-acre state park, the floodplain forests on both sides of the Pearl River on private and public land make a corridor through which birds and wildlife can move, feed, migrate and use for nesting.

This habitat corridor has remained largely intact in the years since the building of the Ross Barnett Reservoir because it is a floodway. There is a lot to be said for cities that have mature forests with good wildlife habitat within them. Evapotranspiration by trees processes stormwater, and carbon is stored in tree trunks. Wetland soils allow percolation of water into shallow groundwater which provides a source of flow to streams - these are ecological services provided in an urban space and their value can be quantified. Trees moderate climate and cycle moisture from the ground into the atmosphere during the growing season. Trading a portion of this green corridor through Jackson for a developed urban riverfront landscape with many acres of impervious concrete would mean the loss of well used habitat and environmental services for both wildlife and people.



Prothonotary warbler, LeFleur's Bluff State Park. Credit: Wesley Shoop Ph.D. The Jackson Audubon Society has maintained nest boxes for these birds in the park for 23 years and has monitored nesting success for the last 5 years.

Downstream environmental/ecological issues

On river systems with decades-long reductions in flow, the health of floodplain forests has declined. This has happened in the Flint/Chattahoochee/Apalachicola system, and it can happen on the Pearl River system too. Dr. Helen Light, a USGS research scientist, documented [a long-term decline in forest health](#) correlated with declines in river discharge in that river system in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Since Dr. Light's work was first published, a decline in the number of Tupelo gum trees in floodplain forests and a corresponding decrease in "Tupelo honey" production based on this tree species were reported as being

tied to long term reductions in the amount of fresh water. Apalachicola Bay's oyster population is so unhealthy now that this fishery was closed to commercial harvest. Mississippi's ambitions to create more dams and lakes on the Pearl River can lead it down this same path. The oyster harvest in both Louisiana and Mississippi is tied to the freshwater discharge of the Pearl River. The health of the hardwood forests of the Honey Island Swamp and Pearl River National Wildlife Refuge along the Lower Pearl River in Louisiana are also vulnerable to changing flow conditions.

The following landings and values of oysters predate the 2019-2020 extended opening of the Bonnet Carre Spillway that lowered salinities, created harmful algae blooms and low dissolved oxygen conditions that caused almost complete mortality to oyster reefs in affected areas of southeast Louisiana and the western Mississippi Sound. Oysters have been slowly recovering since 2020, but harvests could be reduced if the Pearl River's freshwater flow to coastal estuaries decreases causing unseasonably high salinities. Unstable salinities and high salinities cause oyster reef mortality.

12,481,594 (meat pounds) of oysters were landed during 2012-2017 in fishing areas of Southeast Louisiana influenced by the freshwater inflow from the Pearl River. An average of 2,080,594 meat lbs. per year were harvested over 6 years. The weight (meat pound) trend was stable and above 2,000,000 lbs. annually 2015-2017.

\$92,701,373 (dollar value) of oyster harvest 2012-2017 in fishing areas of Southeast Louisiana influenced by the freshwater inflow from the Pearl River. Average value of \$15,450,229 per year over 6 yrs. Harvest dollar value trend was above \$12,000,000 annually 2014-2017.¹

Existing Waste Sites

There are three toxic waste sites that will be disturbed if Alternative "C" is chosen: The Gulf States Creosote Plant site in Flowood, Rankin County would become part of the eastern bank/shore of the lake; The former LeFleur's Landing or Jefferson Street landfill is on the west bank, and the former Gallatin Street Dump site is on the west bank of the lake dredging and widening project. (Fig. 1 Alt. C and HTRW Site, from 2018 DEIS) Five more known toxic waste sites are close to the footprint of the lake but would be outside of the dredged floodplain wetlands.

Eight million dollars were allocated in the 2018 DEIS for remediation or cleanup of these toxic waste sites and listed as a budgeted item used in the calculation of project total cost and Benefit: Cost ratios. On March 20, 2023, a staff member from Environmental Management Services Inc., a Mississippi-based engineering consultant, met with Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Army Jaime Pinkham and expressed his professional opinion that this cost estimate was too low by an "order of magnitude." It is hard to understand why the cost estimate for toxic site remediation and cleanup was ten times too low in the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's 2018 DEIS report and appendices. Perhaps the writers of that document used low toxic site cleanup costs to maximize the benefit to cost ratio for Alternative "C". Secretary Pinkham remarked to us at our Pentagon visit that he wanted to know the "true costs" involved in the project and provide public engagement.

¹ Source: Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries Trip Ticket Program. 2012-2017 statewide public and private oyster landings by area fished codes, 902,420-1,420-2,420,419,416,417,422. This area corresponds to Lake Borgne, Mississippi Sound, Lake Catherine and Breton Sound.

Choosing an alternative such as A, A1 or a combination that does not disturb toxic waste sites should be a priority for the Army Corps of Engineers. Disturbance of toxic sites like the old creosote plant upstream of the J.H. Fewell water treatment plant's intake pipe would put Jackson's drinking water at risk. The writers of the 2018 DEIS have already stated that lake construction will make the Pearl River so turbid that the J.H. Fewell plant would need to stop withdrawing water to protect its filtration and water purification equipment. In this situation the Drainage District stated that Jackson would need to find a temporary alternative source of water during construction - to replace the 30% of Jackson's drinking water provided by the Fewell facility. The representative of the Army Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, Ms. Robyn Colissimo, stated two different times at the Jackson meeting on May 24th that the Army Secretary would not support a project that interrupted Jackson's drinking water supply for any reason.

Downstream effects of toxic waste site disturbance

The toxic chemicals and compounds suspended by dredging and disturbing three sites – a brownfield creosote plant and two city landfills - will also send polluted water downstream to the lower Pearl River counties and parishes. The massive sewage discharges, in the billions of gallons per year, from Jackson's failing Savannah Street POTW and its tributary creeks are bad enough, but downstream stakeholders would all like to avoid the addition of legacy toxic waste being mixed into the Pearl River's discharge. Letting toxic soil and sediments remain in place is a better choice than disturbing them.

Cultural Resources

Because of the need for confidentiality of site locations, the cultural resources appendix created by the Rankin Hinds Drainage District has not been made public. However, using a Mississippi public records request, a redacted version was released by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History directly to Pearl Riverkeeper (PRK). When PRK published the redacted cultural resources report on its website, the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's board attorney sent a "cease and desist" letter the next day to PRK with threat of legal action if the report was not taken down immediately from the website. Pearl Riverkeeper complied.

There are many Native American sites listed in the Drainage District's cultural resources appendix and dredging and disturbing between 1800 -2400 acres of floodplain forest, including low ridges scattered in the floodplain, which could be Native American middens or mounds, will certainly disturb or destroy some of them. This seems to be a "sore spot" with the non-federal project sponsor – one that it would like to keep out of the public eye and public discussion. Healthy Gulf does not support any flood management plan that disturbs Native American cultural sites in the Pearl River floodplain.

Transportation

The only flood control option that would cause disruptions to transportation during construction and implementation is Alternative "C", a plan to dredge the Pearl River deeper and wider over 10 miles. There are nine (9) road and rail bridges that cross the study area of Alternative "C". A letter from Director Melinda McGrath of the Mississippi Department of Transportation dated 9/5/2018 cited bridge failures on the nine bridges if sediments were dredged away from bridge support footings during project construction for Alternative "C". The cost of replacing or repairing bridges was omitted from the Drainage District's 2018 Draft EIS. Replacing just the prestressed concrete decks of nine bridges would

cost at least \$100 million dollars. It is hard to explain why such a major cost was left out of the budget for Alternative "C". Neither alternative A nor A1 contemplate de-stabilizing bridge infrastructure this way.

Downstream Impacts

Downstream impacts are directly related to two of key points of analysis that the Army Secretary is statutorily required to perform by Congress, as discussed above: **environmental acceptability**, and **economic justification**.

The downstream impacts of this flood risk management project must be environmentally acceptable and must not negatively impact the economies of downstream towns, counties, and parishes. The first town downstream of Jackson directly on the Pearl River is Monticello, Mississippi. Columbia, Mississippi, and Bogalusa, Louisiana are the other two cities directly on the Pearl River in its middle section. These three towns have sewage plants that discharge to the Pearl River, and Monticello and Bogalusa have paper mills that discharge to the Pearl River. Employment in them and their surrounding counties/parishes is largely tied to the paper mills and the industrial support services for the mills. The community of Varnado, Louisiana, is also on the river. Picayune, Mississippi is not on the Pearl River, but its sewage treatment plants discharge to the Pearl, so adequate effluent dilution in the Pearl River is an economic and public health matter to these cities.

There are many environmental and economic impacts to towns in the lower Pearl River Basin from a river dredging and lake construction project in Jackson. Recreational and commercial fishing are still important downstream of Jackson, and in all the counties and parishes downstream, people fish with hoop nets and slat traps for subsistence, sharing catches with family and community, and selling catch in local markets. The ability to navigate the river in small outboard powered skiffs is important to these users. Shoaling and extreme low water events in July-October make using the river very difficult. Land loss due to collapsing, sloughing banks and the associated sedimentation in the Pearl River's channel are effects on the local economy that come from the current operation of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Landowners are losing land to the river, yet often are still paying property taxes when their land becomes part of a public navigable waterway. Different counties handle this taxation problem in different ways.

When an industrial accident happened on August 9th, 2011, during a typical summer low flow period on the Pearl River at the Temple Inland Corporation paper mill, there was a release of "black liquor" from treatment ponds into the Pearl River near Bogalusa, Louisiana. The resulting impact was catastrophic. There was a total fish kill and loss of invertebrate aquatic life in the river in Washington Parish and for dozens of miles downstream. Turtles were sickened by swimming in caustic water, and the small population of the ESA threatened Gulf sturgeon in the Pearl was significantly reduced in the space of two days. All vertebrate and invertebrate life was affected including mussels and aquatic insects. A project such as Alternative "C" that impounds water during critical low flow periods will only make ambient water quality conditions in the Pearl River worse in the face of an industrial accident or discharge of effluent in excess of NPDES permit limits for pH temperature, dissolved oxygen, biological oxygen demand, total solids, ammonia, and other permit limit parameters.

The Army Corps needs to be deliberate and clearly explain its work in responding to WRDA 2018 Section 1176 which requires that the agency take a hard look at likely adverse impacts downstream. Alternative "C" was named in the September 2018 comments of the US Fish and Wildlife Service as the

“most environmentally damaging” alternative of the four that were presented. It is still the most environmentally damaging of Alternatives A, A1 and C; the current NEPA alternatives array.

As Dr. Stanford Owen, a Levee Board commissioner from St. Tammany Parish related in his comments at the Slidell, La May 23rd, 2023, scoping meeting, the health of the estuaries, bays and marshes of both Mississippi and Louisiana need to be considered at the mouth of the Pearl and in the coastal waters that receive the Pearl river’s freshwater discharge. St. Bernard Parish and Hancock County Mississippi have at least \$100 million dollars-worth of funded, completed, or ongoing BP Restore Act projects focused on oysters, marsh restoration, beneficial use of spoil to build land and shoreline protection. Any harmful changes in freshwater discharge volume or seasonality from an upstream freshwater depleting project like Alternative “C” need to be fully investigated and explained as required by Section 1176 of WRDA 2018. Decreasing the discharge of fresh water or changing its timing can undo the restoration efforts undertaken by both states if salinities increase in the estuary and marshes at the mouth of the Pearl River.

A Coastal Zone Consistency Review must be performed by Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, focused on the modeling and sampling done so far in the writing of the 2018 DEIS and subsequent work that has elevated Alternative “C” as the locally preferred alternative. The region that finds this alternative attractive only includes Hinds and Rankin Counties. Downstream counties and parishes would name it the least preferred alternative. Because the Pearl’s flow affects salinities and the productivity of marshes and bays, a consistency review by the Coastal Zone Management Program in Louisiana is necessary.

During the 2023 Louisiana Legislative session, [Senate Resolution 189](#) was adopted by the Senate and was enrolled as an expression of the will of the Senate.

The State of Louisiana clearly has many concerns about the creation of another lake on the Pearl River and about the adequate flow of water downstream to the Honey Island Swamp and to the estuaries of St. Tammany and St. Bernard Parishes including important oyster growing areas in Lake Borgne and the Biloxi marsh complex. Senate Resolution 189 asks the Army Corps to perform a Coastal Zone Consistency Review.

[Recreation Access and Opportunities](#)

Speakers at the May 24th public engagement meeting in Jackson complained about the lack of public access to the Pearl River in urban Jackson. There is public access to the river in Jackson for canoes, kayaks and small boats. There is access on public land to trails along oxbow lakes and riverbanks in Lefleur’s Bluff State Park on the Pearl River just downstream of the Hwy. 25/Lakeland Bridge over the river. A boat ramp at the Ross Barnett Reservoir spillway and a boat ramp at Lefleur’s Bluff State Park have provided a launch and take-out point for 15 years.

Lefleur’s Bluff State Park has the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science on its grounds, and the park and museum share a 2-mile trail system including the Museum’s “purple” trail along the Pearl River that ends at the park’s public boat ramp and parking lot at the river. Boy Scout canoe trips have used the section of the Pearl River between the reservoir and the park for 15 years. Sport and trot-line fishermen have launched in this section for the same amount of time. The Pearl Riverkeeper has planned and

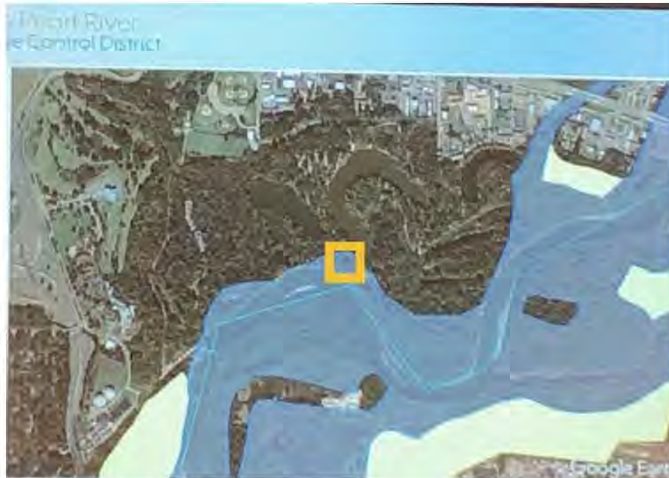
hosted annual river cleanups since September 2017 on the urban section of the river, using the LeFleur's Bluff State Park boat ramp on the river as a starting point for river clean-up days.

There is public access to the Pearl River and there is demonstrated use of the river by the public. The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science focuses its science education program on the state park, using wetlands and floodplain forests along the Pearl River to teach thousands of students and to train hundreds of teachers at Project WET and Project Wild workshops. The Museum reached its first million visitor mark by 2010 and is one of Jackson's award-winning tourism and educational attractions. It moved from Jefferson Street downtown to LeFleur's Bluff State Park in 1999 specifically to be able to use the Pearl River's wetlands, floodplain forests and river habitats in its educational programs which serve a statewide audience. The Museum's indoor exhibits interpret the Pearl River swamp, including its largest freshwater exhibit – the Pearl River tank, and its swamp terrarium, built in a greenhouse, showcases animals and plants native to the Pearl River and its floodplain.

The Alternative "C" project will dredge away many acres of LeFleur's Bluff State Park along the Pearl River trail and would reduce the quality of the park experience. A riverbank lined with mature 90-year-old hardwood trees and a network of floodplain sloughs and oxbow lakes with mature cypress and tupelo gum trees in the park would be removed by dredging and replaced with banks devoid of trees and a shoreline stabilized by sheet piling, concrete or limestone rock.



This video was made at Museum of Natural Science Trail Stop 16, in LeFleur's Bluff State Park with a viewing deck built by an Eagle Scout. This location is also shown in center of the yellow square in the photograph below as a section of the park slated for dredging and submersion in the Alternative "C" (One Lake Project). YouTube title: "Protect LeFleur's Bluff"



Cypress Pond at Trail Stop 16 (yellow square) in lake dredging (blue) overlay from 2021 MDWFP presentation by the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District (non-federal sponsor of FRM project)

The dredging footprint of Alternative “C” was [presented](#) to the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife Fisheries and Parks in 2021 in a map which showed parts of LeFleur’s Bluff State Park that would be dredged away and submerged by lake construction. The non-federal sponsors of the 2018 Pearl River DEIS told the Wildlife Commissioners that the park would lose some land and gain some land in the dredging operation.

Lower Pearl River recreational issues

The impact of Alternative “C” to recreational opportunities in downstream counties and parishes has been described above in the “downstream impacts” scoping section. Small boat access to the river is already a problem downstream of Jackson when the river is at low flow July-October. Landowners are losing riverbank to erosion. The swamp tour business in St. Tammany Parish and in Hancock County Mississippi also needs to be considered. Low water reduces access to swamp areas from the river’s main channel and causes tour boats to hit bottom with their outboard motor propellers. Even kayak tours in the Honey Island Swamp along the Pearl River are hampered by seasonal low water events. No tour guide on the lower Pearl has any confidence that low flow problems will improve if Alternative “C” is built.



Dr. Wagner’s Honey Island Swamp Tour. In St. Tammany Parish, 122,400 people take boat tours annually on the lower Pearl River creating a \$5 million impact to the local Credit: Bob Warren, The New Orleans Advocate NOLA.com (2017.)

Before the COVID pandemic, the annual economic impact of Pearl River swamp tours was over five million dollars. This robust and popular nature-based tourism industry, featuring the Pearl River’s Honey Island Swamp, exists in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana generating approximately \$3.1 million

per year in tour fees alone. A total of 122,400 tourists per year at \$25 per person is a conservative estimate of the annual activity of the three largest swamp tour companies. The \$3.1 million does not include canoe and kayak tour company fees. Also, the Honey Island Swamp has many other recreational users: campers, hunters, fishermen and canoers whose activities aren't captured by this revenue estimate. The 2015-2019 Louisiana Tourism Forecast prepared by U.N.O. for the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism reported 2015 induced tourism spending as 68% of direct tourism spending. This means that the 122,400 people who travel to St. Tammany Parish, paying \$3.1 million in tour fees to see the Honey Island Swamp would spend an additional \$2.1 million dollars a year in the local economy on fuel, food, lodging, and other travel related needs.

Recreation access and opportunities on the Pearl River are not limited to the 10 miles of the urban section of the river in Jackson, Mississippi. Any objective study of recreational uses of the Pearl River must contemplate recreation in the entire basin and include the swamp tour business in Louisiana.

Community Impacts

Community cohesion, general happiness, and freedom from fear of flooding are as important along the Lower Pearl River as they are in any other community. Having a river with caving banks, and a channel that cannot move its sediment load in low flow conditions doesn't make riverside landowners and residents happy or support community cohesion. Landowners downstream of Jackson in several counties and parishes are being charged property tax on more land than they possess due to streambank failure and land loss because of reservoir operations upstream. Riparian landowners are accustomed to the loss of land and timber in the lower Pearl Basin. And when Jackson is releasing water from the Ross Barnett dam in anticipation of heavy rains from tropical storms and hurricanes two or three days away from a storm's impact in central Mississippi, Washington and St. Tammany Parish and Hancock County face storm surges from the Gulf combined with a rising Pearl River. The anxiety caused by a rising river and back-flooding along urban tributaries in Hinds and Rankin Counties is real, but residents along the lower Pearl River must face a storm surge on top of a river flooded by pre-storm water releases from the Ross Barnett 180 miles upstream – a situation out of their control and about which their parish and the State of Louisiana have no voice. This creates short term anxiety and long-term resentment as community impacts.

The decreases in flood elevation at different river mile points in the project area in Jackson were mapped using the data provided by the non-federal sponsor in the 2018 Draft EIS to give a visual depiction of the modeled flood height reductions. The most disadvantaged communities won't receive a meaningful benefit from this project. For instance, the modeled flood height reductions from the 2018 DEIS give an eight-foot flood height reduction to an area along the river that had three feet of flood water in the 1979 flood of record, while an area that received 8 feet of water in 1979 will receive a three-foot flood reduction from Alternative "C" according to the 2018 modeling.



If the Army Corps and Army Assistant Secretary for Civil Works are appending their recent work onto the DEIS work already done by the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District, then the 2023 document's authors inherit these inequities. Overall, the major benefits in flood height reduction go to higher income communities, while lower income communities may receive lower flood elevations, but their houses will still flood. This is a distinction that makes no difference to the people whose homes take on water when the river rises and backs water into creeks and neighborhoods – they still get wet, only with fewer feet of water in their houses.

Quantile map showing a graphic depiction of Alternative "C" modeled flood height reductions for a 100- year flood from Table 3-3 from 2018 DEIS for Federal Flood Risk Management Project Pearl River Basin, Rankin, Hinds Counties, MS. The greatest reductions in flood elevation occur in the highest income neighborhood. Affluent neighborhoods benefit more, and poor neighborhoods benefit less which should not be the result of a federally funded public works project in 2023. Credit: Mapping flood height reductions and CEJST burdens, Juan D. Fernandez.

Alternative "C" doesn't solve all the flooding, nor does it remedy inequities among the flooded communities. And Alternative "C" does next to nothing for the low-income communities along Eubanks Creek, Town Creek, Lynch Creek and others west of Interstate 55. Low income, majority black communities along most of Jackson's Pearl River tributaries (Eubanks Creek, Town Creek, Lynch Creek for instance) are considered burdened by multiple social, health, employment and educational problems according to the [Climate, Social and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) developed by the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The Alternative "C" channel dredging on the main stem of the Pearl River is too far downstream from most of these burdened communities to make any difference at



Choctaw Road, Jackson MS: Dr. Scott Crawford's street, yard and neighbors' houses are inundated by flash flooding several times a year. The wheelchair ramp is under water.

all when flash floods happen in the upper and middle sections of creeks that function as drainage ditches. Flash floods due to inadequate gravity drainage in upstream areas of the tributary creek watersheds happen more frequently during most years than Pearl River headwater flooding caused by reservoir water releases. Both ends of the creeks have flooding problems, and Alternative "C" addresses only one end.

In 2017, the Mississippi Legislature passed and the Governor enacted [House Bill 1585](#) which broadened the taxing authority for a flood control district operating anywhere in Mississippi. The law applies to all districts, but it will support the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District's taxing power and its ambitions to create a lake on the Pearl River. It allows a flood control district to tax a property owner who benefits "directly or indirectly" from a project. The passage of HB 1585 has the effect of widening the potential pool of property owners within a flood control district's jurisdiction or service area who can be taxed to service bond debt or to pay for construction, operation, and maintenance for a flood control project. There are issues of equity and fairness in letting a flood control district decide who the indirect beneficiaries might be for a flood control project. As described above on the quantile map, the affluent neighborhoods of northeast Jackson gain more flood protection than the less affluent neighborhoods downriver and upriver from them. There may be property owners paying for Alternative "C" who gain no flood protection at all from its construction but are deemed to be indirect beneficiaries. The effect of this expanded taxing authority turns equity on its head.

[Economic Opportunities](#)

It was clear that economic opportunities were on the minds of many of the speakers at the Army Corps' May 24th, 2023, public engagement meeting at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum auditorium. Socrates Garrett, a businessman, contractor, and Hinds County political veteran explained the need for an economic boost to Jackson's economy and was frank in his assessment that Jackson has nowhere to grow to the North, South or West, so the only place to grow is to the East **into** the Pearl River Flood Plain:

Garrett said: "The only potential for growth is in that footprint of the river - the only chance for Jackson to grow and get a new tax base - Develop this river - it's underutilized." This comment could not have

been clearer about what business interests in Jackson are seeking: economic opportunity through development in the footprint of the river - its floodplain.

Garrett reported that it took years to convince Hinds and Rankin Counties to work together on this lake project, and cited many trips to Washington D.C. to persuade Senator Cochran, Senator Wicker, Leland Speed (Miss Devel. Authority) and other elected officials to support the lake. He cited the time and money contributions of many people who supported the effort.

It was a strange juxtaposition between speaker and listener considering that the Army Corps of Engineers, a federal agency that is acutely aware of the function of floodplains - was being lectured about growth by someone who has supported Alternative "C" for years with the message that the only hope for growth in Jackson is to put more development in the floodplain.

This message is squarely in conflict with Executive Order 11988 which contains a presumption against floodplain development.

Executive Order 11988 of 1977 is cited in the Engineer Notebook from 2000 that governs NED analysis for this project: "This floodplain management order, made during the Carter Presidency, has the intent of avoiding flood plain development, reducing hazards and risk associated with floods, and restoring and preserving natural flood plain values. In the event there is no alternative to construction in the flood plain, as is the case with (some) flood control projects, the Corps is required to minimize the adverse impacts induced by the construction of the project. In considering adverse impacts, the following should be addressed:

- (1) Induced new development in the flood plain or induced improvements to existing development in the floodplain that would increase potential flood damages; and,
- (2) The detrimental effect of induced activities on natural flood plain values."

Army Corps of Engineers notebook ER 1105-2-100 Section III paragraph (I) on Location Benefits outlines rules to follow that consider E.O. 11988.

Alternative "C" of this project finds a significant amount of its economic justification, in "location benefits" and "intensification benefits", both of which are derived from developing land that is currently in the flood plain on the river side (unprotected side or batture) of existing levees in both Hinds and Rankin Counties. These lands flood at least once each year. Table B-16 of the 2018 DEIS report's Appendix B lists \$10.2 million in benefits that are described as Location Benefits (Land New Use) for alternative C, lake dredging. The Drainage District, in fact, relies heavily in its calculation of project benefits upon the \$10.2 million derived from developing land that is currently active floodplain when it chooses Alternative "C" over Alternative "B" (levees only) based on benefit to cost ratio comparison.

The Executive Order above is meant to steer development out of floodplains, but if there is no alternative, the development's induced impacts to flood plain lands must be minimized.

The areas to be developed are downstream of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, and under current operating plans, the floodgate managers must have the ability to raise the Pearl River 10-12 feet in the urban reach of the river in 24 hours at any time to protect the structural integrity of the reservoir dam. The discharge of the Reservoir travels 7 miles and then goes through the project area of the lake dredging plan, so any development placed along the banks of the river in the ten miles of project area should be expected to

accommodate the river rising quickly by up to 10 feet. It is important to note that the Draft EIS predicts future development including the construction of an urban landscape along the raised, filled riverbanks in the project area.

Not allowing the construction of the lake alternative and thereby keeping people and property improvements out of the floodplain would be one way of “minimizing induced impacts”. Setting levees back on the east side of the Pearl River could be a better approach and, in fact, Army Corps staff commenting in the “Plan Formulation” section of the 2020 Agency Technical Review (ATR) pointed out that the first incremental benefit to test was the levee setback component, as it held the greatest benefit. Other commenters pointed out that the lake design adds no floodwater storage to the 10-mile section of the Pearl River, unless the lake excavation is kept dry except during large flows.

The non-federal sponsors have so far claimed that deepening and widening the river in the ten-mile dredged area would reduce the 10-foot rise caused during reservoir water releases. To what degree this may occur has been modeled, but these models don’t remove the basic problem of the large upstream reservoir water releases sent directly through the project area both during construction and afterwards. Allowing this project to be permitted by the Corps seems to be a predictable way to increase potential flood damage and to violate EO 11988. There isn’t a more blatant way to contradict the intent of EO 11988 than the development contemplated by Alternative “C” for the Pearl River floodplain in Hinds and Rankin Counties.

The areas along the Pearl River under consideration for filling and development by the Drainage District are mostly now riparian wetland forest areas and are subject to annual flooding. They currently have natural flood plain values: attenuation of floods, interception of rainfall, soil storage of water, shallow groundwater contribution to river flow, settlement of suspended sediments, and evapotranspiration of water. These functions would all be lost if the wetlands were dredged and removed under Alternative “C”.

Regarding the relationship between the Rankin Hinds District and the authority in charge of the floodgates at the Ross Barnett Reservoir; as recently as February of 2020, the Drainage District had not met with the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District that operates the dam flood gates to discuss how water releases would be cooperatively managed if a second lake was built on the Pearl River downstream of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. The scoping process began in 2013, ten years ago, and no dialogue has been publicly offered by the non-federal sponsors on how the two waterbodies would cooperate in releasing water through Metro Jackson. To allow the violation of this Executive Order in the absence of a clear understanding of lake operations (such as high and low flow plans) between the two agencies would seem to overlook concern about economic intensification from post-project floodplain development and openly mock the intent of EO 11988.

It is not economically justified to permit a project that violates EO 11988 by deliberately inviting induced development in a floodplain when there is no attempt to minimize obvious impacts or avoid hazards and risks associated with floods. Those hazards, risks and impacts to downstream communities have been explained in this comment letter.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which has taken over authorship of this DEIS, doesn’t lack alternatives to floodplain development in solving the urban Jackson and Rankin and Hinds Counties flood management problems. Alternatives A, A1 and a combination have been offered in the current scoping period as

possible alternatives in addition to Alternative “C”, lake dredging. The destruction, risk and impact of Alternative “C” should dictate that it is the **least preferred choice** on the list of alternatives for the Army Corps. Inducing development (as in (1) above) in the flood plain is clearly a motivation behind Alternative “C” according to Mr. Garrett above who has helped promote the One Lake plan. Other speakers on May 24th alluded to Alternative “C” as a spark for economic progress in Jackson but no speaker explained it as frankly as Mr. Garrett.

The Army Corps should follow its own rules and directives regarding E.O. 11988 and the language in WRDA 2007 and WRDA 2018 and find a flood management solution in 2023 that is economically justified, less environmentally disruptive and that is acceptable to all downstream interests.

The 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement written by the non-federal sponsor was an unabashed argument for Alternative “C” that lacked objectivity. As a document responsive to the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) it was an embarrassing failure and infuriating to read and examine. The taxpayers of Mississippi, including people living in the counties downstream of Jackson saw the state contribute a million dollars toward the writing of the 2018 DEIS. Environmental groups were not the only ones who noted the document’s poor quality. Commenters from Battelle Institute (IEPR) and from the Army Corps of Engineers Agency Technical Review (ATR) teams in 2017 and 2020 were frank and incredulous about the poor quality of the Draft EIS and harshly critical of some of the basic features of Alternative “C” including the fact that it offers no additional flood water storage. One Army Corps employee -a manager of review teams – told me over the phone that the 2018 DEIS was “not a very well wrapped-up document”. This was an understatement.

As described in the introductory paragraphs of this comment letter, the Army Corps of Engineers is in a difficult position, no doubt faced with pressure from Mississippi’s Congressional delegation and others to approve the flood risk reduction alternative that does the most environmental and ecological damage to the river and its aquatic and riparian habitats and wildlife, and is the most objectionable plan according to downstream stakeholders who have made their displeasure about it known on multiple occasions. The pressure to approve Alternative “C” will also test the Army’s allegiance to its own regulations, to E.O. 11988, to the Clean Water Act, and to the plain language of the WRDA statutes that authorize expenditures of public money for a flood risk reduction project for Jackson, MS. The next Draft EIS must be objective and do justice to the intent of NEPA and WRDA. We expect an honest and well considered analysis of environmental acceptability, economic justification, and technical feasibility. The Army Corps and the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works have much room for improvement as they review and write the 2023 Draft EIS for this WRDA Section 211 project.

Conclusion

Coastal plain rivers in the Southeastern United States like the Pearl River have been losing bottomland forests and swamps to development since the late 1800s. The rivers bisecting these floodplains have been used as highways of commerce; the cypress trees from their swamps have been turned into lumber. Cities have grown up along rivers because of the natural resources present: fur, timber, fish, mussels, or because the rivers themselves were trade routes.

These rivers have been channelized, de-snagged, dammed, used for transportation, drinking water and recreation, and some cities like Jackson find them hard to live with because they flood. They will always

flood. Cities don't want to adapt to rivers, they want to tame them and bend them to society's purposes – which was historically the Army Corps of Engineers' mission.



There are not many animals as well adapted to life on a floodplain as a gar. Whether a river inundates its backwater wetlands or remains in its channel, gar find a way to feed, reproduce, and survive - persisting for 240 million years. Since the writing of E.O. 11988 in 1977, our society has learned more about floodplain functions, living with rivers, and about the values and ecological services floodplains provide. This knowledge informs Army Corps policy and projects.

Spotted gar. Pearl River, LeFleur's Bluff State Park. Credit: Wesley Shoop Ph.D.

Floodplains have their place and their functions. Scientists and engineers at the Army Corps understand rivers and floodplains. They know that there are better, less destructive ways to live with rivers and their floodplains than building projects like Alternative "C".

This is a complex DEIS process that began in 2013 with the non-federal sponsor fumbling the NEPA process, doing its best to suppress open speaking at public meetings, and providing the bare minimum of public information. With the Army Corps' assumption of the NEPA process, a promised 45-day comment period, in our opinion, doesn't allow enough time for USFWS to prepare a Biological Opinion and a Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report with new information available on the Gulf sturgeon and Pearl River map turtle. Since the Environmental Protection Agency could not comment on the 2018 Draft EIS, (The DEIS wasn't "federalized" by publication in the Federal Register) that agency is at a disadvantage and likely needs more than 45 days to prepare its comments. Accordingly, Healthy Gulf would like to ask for more than 45 days to prepare comments when a new DEIS is published in August or September of 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Whitehurst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Andrew Whitehurst, M.S, J.D.
Water Program Director, Healthy Gulf
3141 W. Tidewater Ln. Madison, MS
andrew@healthygulf.org

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 22, 2023 10:11:41 AM

CAUTION: Your email client may display clickable links. The data in this email is provided without modification, as the user entered it. Before you click or use any link provided in this email, please confirm the authenticity of the link.

**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

The Army Corps of Engineers is in a difficult position as it has taken over authorship of the Draft EIS for this flood management project. The entire federal cost share, \$221 million, has been appropriated in the bipartisan infrastructure act (IIJA) and placed in the budget of the Corps for Pearl River flood risk reduction. The Corps leadership and the Assistant Secretary both know that the United States Senators from Mississippi and the elected officials, religious community leaders, chambers of commerce, state legislators representing the Metro Jackson area, and even the Mississippi Children's Museum director support Alternative "C", yet this project is the most destructive to the environment, has the most potential to impact the physical and biological health of the Pearl River and is opposed by downstream towns, industries and even by a joint resolution of the Louisiana Legislature. No speaker at the Slidell meeting was in favor of Alternative C. It is inconceivable that the one alternative that does the most environmental damage (read the USFWS comment letter from 2018) disturbs the greatest acreage, and destroys habitat for three ESA protected species can be environmentally acceptable. And due to unproven cost estimates, and costs left out in the 2018 DEIS it is very unlikely to be economically justified. Forget Alternative C and go back to the drawing board. We are not in the 1950s, the Corps knows better.
Andrew Whitehurst, Madison, MS

Ref Id: HgNBAY4xPEyCelARntvuzg

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Via email comment portal: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

June 27th, 2023

RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS

Dear Colonel Klein:

I am writing to you to provide scoping comments for the Pearl River FRM project on behalf of Healthy Gulf, an environmental advocacy non-profit group active in the five Gulf States and founded in 1996 as Gulf Restoration Network.

Healthy Gulf submits comment letters in the hope that we will be responsive to the needs of the communities we serve, respecting the interests of marginalized and oppressed people in them. We acknowledge that many Gulf South residents are confronted every day with the legacy of historical injustices as well as current environmental issues that threaten their health and well-being. We believe that the experiences, perspectives, and leadership of low-income communities and communities of color must inform our collaborative service.

Representing Healthy Gulf, I attended the May 23rd Slidell and Jackson, MS May 24th public engagement meetings for scoping of the new 2023 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) being prepared for the Pearl River Basin federal Flood Risk Management project in Hinds and Rankin Counties, MS. I spoke to the Army Corps and ASACW staff hosting the meeting and gave verbal comments for the record along with others from Mississippi and Louisiana who represent the interests of communities along the Pearl River. I have raised objections about Alternative "C" advanced by the non-federal sponsors for Pearl River flood management since 2018 when the Rankin Hinds Drainage District published the first draft of the EIS. I personally visited the Pentagon in February of 2020 and 2023 along with elected officials from Louisiana and Mississippi to voice my concerns about Alt. "C" to Deputy Secretary Leach, Ms. Andrea Walker, Deputy Secretary Pinkham and others.

A concern we voiced in 2018 that remains is the extent of the statutorily prescribed study area for the project. It is limited to Rankin and Hinds Counties in Mississippi. The study area does not include lower sections of the river as it must to fulfill the WRDA points of analysis on "environmental acceptability" (WRDA 2007 Sec 3104) and "economic justification" (WRDA 2018 Sec 1176).

We understand that the historic flooding problems in the Jackson Metro area are the focus of the 2023 DEIS and array of alternatives shared at the Slidell and Jackson meetings. We empathize with the plight of the residents of Rankin and Hinds Counties who have endured serious floods in 1979, 1983, 2020 and 2022. We understand that they need a project that provides relief. However, as the "Pearl River Basin" appears in the title of the current project and in the project's name in the 2018 DEIS, we expect that the

needs and concerns of the whole of the Pearl River Basin will be taken into consideration in any alternatives that are formulated, published, and supported by the Army Secretary. The last study under section 211 WRDA 1986 was authorized by Congress, with the expectation that the entire basin be taken into consideration. Louisiana's Congressional delegation left no doubt about this Congressional intent when Senator Bill Cassidy and Representative Steve Scalise inserted Section 1176 in WRDA 2018, requiring the Army Corps to take a hard look at downstream impacts from an additional dam and lake on the Pearl River in Mississippi.

The Army Corps of Engineers is in a difficult position as it has taken over authorship of the Draft EIS for this flood management project from the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District. The entire federal cost share, \$221 million, has been appropriated in the bipartisan infrastructure act (IIJA) and placed in the budget of the Corps for Pearl River flood risk reduction. The Corps leadership and the Assistant Secretary both know that the United States Senators from Mississippi and the elected officials, religious community leaders, chambers of commerce, state legislators representing the Metro Jackson area, and even the Mississippi Children's Museum director support Alternative "C", yet this project is the most destructive to the environment, has the most potential to impact the physical and biological health of the Pearl River and is opposed by downstream towns, industries, commercial fishermen, swamp tour businesses, and by resolutions against Alt. "C" by the Louisiana Legislature (2018) and the Louisiana Senate (2023).

Scoping Elements:

Flood Risk Reduction

Hinds and Rankin County Issues

There were three alternatives provided at the Army's public engagement meetings of May 23-24, 2023: C, A, and A1 and a combination of the three, and the Corps welcomed other alternatives. One alternative from 2018 was left out, a levees only comprehensive plan. This 2023 reformulation by the Army included the lake plan that downstream counties and parishes objected to in 2018. We at Healthy Gulf would like to see flood risk reduced for Jackson but prefer a plan that carries no risk of altering river flow or temperature from more water impoundment, especially in the months of July-October when historic low flows on the Pearl River occur. We prefer setting levees back on one or both sides of the river to widen the Pearl River's floodplain through Rankin and Hinds Counties, combined with non-structural elements from alternative A or A1.

The flood risk reduction outlined in Alternative "C" is tied to location benefits derived from developing land that is now unoccupied floodplain on the unprotected (batture) side of the Pearl River which seems to be in clear violation of Executive Order 11988 (1977). This EO is cited in the Engineering Notebook that guides the economic benefit (NED) analysis for this project. This Army Corps notebook ER-1105-2-100 (2000) cites E.O. 11988 and its presumption against developing floodplains that are currently undeveloped batture land- the exact type of wetland filling contemplated by Alternative C. Building structures on top of federal levees as Alternative "C" contemplates is something the Corps and Army Secretary should not encourage. I grew up along the federal levees that protect New Orleans and have never seen buildings deliberately constructed on top of levees. Such a practice flaunts the intent of E.O.

11988 and actually places more development in harm's way adjacent to a river. In Jackson development on the riverside levees would be less than 10 miles downstream of a 38,000-acre reservoir with a dam that has three feet of "freeboard" over which to raise water levels before the dam's design capabilities are exceeded – on an unruly river with a history of four major floods in the past 40 years. Adding more development to the floodplain in Rankin and Hinds Counties in the form of bed and bank dredging and wetland filling contemplated in Alternative "C" doesn't solve flooding problems that have been created by the cumulative impact of 60 years of post-reservoir floodplain development in both counties. Solving flooding in the developed floodplain of the Pearl River in Hinds and Rankin Counties by approving a project that will encourage more development on raised lands (that are now batture) is regressive thinking that looks back to the time before the Clean Water Act.

Lower Pearl River flood risk reduction issues

As the Army Secretary and the Vicksburg Corps staff heard in Slidell on May 23rd, the lower Pearl River has flooding issues too. Water releases from the Ross Barnett Reservoir happen throughout the year when the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District, in consultation with the National Weather Service, foresee modeled precipitation events in conjunction with winter and spring cold front passage or summer and autumn low pressure systems, including tropical storms and hurricanes or other heavy rainfall during the year. Typically, water releases happen 3-5 days before a large rain event – cold front or storm- is predicted for the upper Pearl River watershed. Downstream cities and towns see quick and steep increases in river stages in these pre-storm periods and by the time the water releases reach St. Tammany Parish and Hancock County there can be coastal flooding happening in addition to a headwater flood. Many speakers at the Slidell meeting led the Army Corps through the scenario of a coastal storm surge happening when the Pearl River is already flooding due to a water release from the Ross Barnett Reservoir.

In the past two Pearl River floods for Rankin and Hinds Counties, 2020 and 2022, the Ross Barnett floodgates were used to raise the level of the Ross Barnett Reservoir as much as safely possible- to nearly 300 feet above sea level - and prevent the maximum amount of water from being released to the tailwater section of the Pearl River to prevent some tributary flooding in the dam's tailwater. This operation method slightly moderated the effects of both recent floods for Rankin and Hinds Counties, so the use of the dam and floodgates (not designed or legally authorized for the flood control purpose) to nevertheless control the timing and volume of water releases has been a successful strategy.

Water Supply

Hinds and Rankin Counties

There were comments at the public engagement meetings of May 23-24 proposing that Alternative "C", lake dredging would somehow solve Jackson's water drinking water treatment deficiencies. This is not true. Jackson's August 2022 drinking water crisis began when the O.B. Curtis treatment plant in Ridgeland, Mississippi adjacent to the Ross Barnett Reservoir was unable to treat the reservoir water due to turbidity and water chemistry changes cause by heavy rains and a heavier than usual sediment load in the reservoir. The Curtis facility is **ten miles upriver** from the "study area" that Alternative "C" would occupy and where Alternative "C" would dredge, widen and further dam the Pearl River. Having the One

Lake plan (Alt. "C") in place would not have prevented Jackson's water crisis. Jackson also had a drinking water crisis during the cold weather that caused the "Texas freeze" and power outages of 2021, totally unrelated to flooding when the intake structures at the O.B. Curtis plant froze and the entire water system collapsed after water towers were drained and the system could not prime its water towers or keep up with demand.

Jackson's river/creek flooding and drinking water supply problems are related only in the sense that when it rains heavily in Jackson and its sewer mains overflow into the stormwater system, the city's urban tributaries send sewage to the Pearl River. Under these conditions, Jackson's other drinking water treatment plant (J.H. Fewell) has heavier bacteria loads to disinfect during water treatment. The entire urban section of the Pearl River has been under a Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality water contact advisory for fecal coliform bacteria for five years. The City is also under a federal court consent decree due to years of sewage permit limit violations. Until Jackson's sewage collection system is repaired the advisory and consent decree won't be lifted. The estimated cost of repairing Jackson's broken sewers and outdated Savanna Street sewage treatment plant is more than twice the \$355 million price tag of Alternative "C".



The only alternative among C, A, and A1 that has the capability and likelihood of harmful reductions in river flow (water quantity) downstream of Jackson is the lake dredging plan, Alternative "C". Evaporation from a wider, slower moving and warmer 10-mile section of the Pearl River especially in the seasonal low flow months of July-October will mean that river surface and tailwater conditions below the new weir will be warmer than current surface and tailwater conditions. A wider and warmer river will have a higher evaporative loss than the narrower, more shaded present condition of the Pearl River through Jackson. The square 15'x15' gate in the center of the Alt. C's new weir can release water during low flow conditions but will require cooperation from the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District (PRVWSD) that manages the Ross Barnett Reservoir floodgates upstream.

Eubanks Creek near Lakeland Drive became eutrophic and supported an algae bloom in September of 2021 after a large sewage pipe spilled into it. All of Jackson's Pearl River tributaries are sewage impaired and will contribute polluted water to the lake contemplated by Alternative "C".

The primary uses for the Ross Barnett Reservoir, built in 1960-1963, are water supply and recreation. If the PRVWSD is asked to increase reservoir discharge to accommodate Alternative "C" and its associated

increased evaporation and water temperature, or for any other reason, reservoir operational procedures will need alteration and statutory purposes of the PRVWSD will be more difficult to meet. The Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District has not prioritized communication with the PRVWSD about how the Ross Barnett Reservoir operations would be combined with the Rankin Hinds District's locally preferred plan, Alternative "C". Conversations about this have been inexplicably delayed. The Army Secretary and Army Corps of Engineers should engage the PRVWSD about these subjects as it writes the next Draft Environmental Impact Statement. A discussion of how climate change would affect flood control on the Pearl River was left out of the 2018 DEIS as well, and the Army Corps of Engineers should address this deficiency.

Lower Pearl River water supply issues

Downstream scoping issues on water supply include water withdrawal from the Pearl River for agricultural and industrial users. Fresh water from rivers is sometimes needed to irrigate crops in Mississippi, and riparian landowners may pump water out of rivers for agriculture without extensive regulation by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. Permitted water use also needs to be summed up for all holders of industrial and municipal NPDES permits. The importance of developing a water budget for the whole Pearl River Basin is clear if Alternative "C" moves closer to being approved by the Army Secretary. There wasn't a water budget for the river in the 2018 Draft EIS published by the Rankin Hinds Drainage District. The Corps and Army Secretary need to correct this deficiency. Wells for drinking water in the coastal areas of Hancock County and St. Tammany Parish are vulnerable to saltwater intrusion and low flows on the Pearl River allow the salt wedge to migrate up the Pearl and West Pearl channels. St. Tammany Parish listed this threat for residential drinking water wells near the Pearl River, and several speakers at the May scoping meeting cited landward migration of the salt wedge killing freshwater marsh plants and trees as saltwater moves higher up the lower Pearl River from estuaries near its mouth. Changing plant ecology along with the northward migration of the boundary between freshwater swamp and brackish marsh are already apparent from the dead cypress trees on the lower river and anything the Army Corps or local non-federal sponsor do that reduces river discharge can accelerate this process.

The St. Tammany Parish Engineering Department wrote extensive and critical comments on the 2018 DEIS that included Alternative "C" in much the same form as now. Those comments were responsive to the issues cited above.

Water and Wastewater Treatment

There are two minimum flow targets to consider on the Pearl River with respect to Alternative "C" or any structural alternative to address flooding. The "contract minimum" that must be released from the Ross Barnett Reservoir is 170 cubic feet per second (cfs). However, the practical minimum flow target is 227 cfs to meet the needs of the Savannah Street sewage treatment plant about 15 miles downriver from the Ross Barnett Reservoir on the Pearl River's west bank. The plant's Clean Water Act National Polluted Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permit requires this discharge as a bare minimum for adequate dilution of the effluent discharged into the Pearl River. The J.H. Fewell drinking water treatment plant withdraws 48 cfs from the river between the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the Savannah Street sewage treatment plant.

The St. Tammany Parish Engineering Department used United States Geological Survey (USGS) river gage statistics and daily readings over the period of record for river gages and analyzed minimum flow target (7Q10) measurements pre-reservoir and post-reservoir at several sites on the river: Jackson, Ms., Monticello Ms., the Strong River confluence and Bogalusa, La. The analysis focused on the number of days and percentages of occurrences below the minimum flow at a site, and the number of times and percentages that a minimum flow failed to meet the 10th percentile for flows over the daily flow readings. These analyses were made using USGS stream discharge records post-Ross Barnett Reservoir construction. Savannah Street had a minimum flow permit requirement of 290 cfs before 2017. From 1965 to 2017, flow at Jackson's Savannah Street was below the 290 cfs minimum there 3917 times or for 18% of readings. The Savannah Street plant's NPDES permit was changed to a lower minimum flow requirement of 227 cfs in 2017. For the post-Ross Barnett period, the river has fallen below 227 cfs on 1613 days or for 7.7% of daily readings. The St. Tammany report concluded "During the critically low-flow months of July-August, flows from the Ross Barnett are lower than pre-Ross Barnett construction (1965)" and further concluded on the basis of the 10% percentile analysis of Jackson's Savannah Street plant, "It is apparent that flow control at the Ross Barnett Reservoir is making the stream baseflow lower at least during July-August, summer critical months for NPDES dischargers, water quality, habitat, recreation, navigation and coastal interests."

Having a river discharge fail to meet minimum requirements on 7.7% of daily readings at the location where a sewage plant's effluent meets the receiving stream is something that the Army Corps should be concerned about because of anti-degradation rules and because of the 2015 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report for nutrients. The heated surface waters of a dredged lake (Alternative C) will generate more evaporation in the warm months of the year than the Pearl River currently experiences in the 10 mile "study area" reach. Warmed, nutrient-rich surface water from the lake will flow over the weir and meet the Savannah Street POTW plant's nutrient-laden effluent in what will likely be a very impaired location on the Pearl River. Mississippi already reports the water in the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the urban section of the Pearl as eutrophic (nutrient over-enriched) in the 303(d) and 305(b) water quality reports it sends to EPA and Congress.

Low flow problems on the regulated Pearl River begin with the amount of water discharged from the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Adding a second lake (Alternative "C") to the Pearl in Jackson causing further evaporative loss, particularly in July-October, will increase water quantity problems. A second lake on the river will compound existing compliance challenges with the Savannah Street NPDES permit and cause problems for downriver dischargers with permits subject to the limits governed by the 2015 nutrient TMDL. That document needs to be revisited to see if the location of the modeled "critical cell" for biological oxygen demand, dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll moves up or down the river because of the creation of a new lake that imposes new challenges for the river's physical and biological health. Downstream stakeholders, NPDES permit holders, agricultural and recreational users don't need any of these additional problems that lake construction brings with it.

Counties and Parishes downstream don't need the Pearl River's low flow problems to be any more complicated than they are now. A water budget has not been offered for the entire river so far in a DEIS. Downstream stakeholders need to see a water budget written with and without Alternative "C" developed and shared as part of the 2023 DEIS by the Army Corps. This must account for existing impairments, climate change, warmer water temperatures from a lake plan, evaporation and the 2015

MDEQ TMDL report's non-point source pollution Best Management Practices that were enumerated but have never been implemented.

Ecosystem/Environmental Impacts

Rankin and Hinds Counties

The habitat damage that would happen in the Jackson reach of the Pearl River in Rankin and Hinds Counties includes a footprint of disturbance of 2500 acres. Up to 25 million cubic yards of riverbank and bed soils and alluvium along 10 miles of river will be dredged and moved to fill what are now all floodplain and batture – lands on the river side of existing levees. Wetlands make up 1860 acres of this total. Critical habitat for the Ringed sawback turtle would be destroyed in Jackson as basking logs and snags would be removed and sandbars used for nesting areas would be dredged or submerged in the project footprint as the river's bed and banks are cleared and excavated to widen and deepen the river.



Adult Ringed sawback turtles, with a juvenile on a Pearl River basking log in LeFleur's Bluff S.P. Credit: Wesley Shoop, Ph.D.

Also, we know the Gulf sturgeon migrates through the urban reach of the Pearl River described as the "study area" in Rankin and Hinds Counties – radio tagged sturgeon have been recorded since 2018 swimming past monitoring receivers in LeFleur's Bluff State Park, upstream of the weir at the JH Fewell drinking water treatment plant. Mitigation for the sturgeon in the form of a fish ladder or fish passage device has been proposed, but the environmental conditions in the lake itself may be unacceptable for the sturgeon.

Ten miles of the river will be changed from lotic habitat to lentic habitat which will affect the sturgeon and a suite of other river-dependent fish species – those that need flowing water for either their feeding or reproductive or life-cycle requirements. Because all the riparian vegetation that currently shades the Pearl River for parts of the day will be removed, the surface water temperature in the dredged section of the river can be expected to rise, compared to pre-project conditions. Lining the shores of the lake with limestone rock or concrete bulkhead will likely be required for soil stability during high flow events. Engineered shorelines like these absorb solar energy and radiate it into water, which will also make the temperature of lake water warmer than the river's current conditions.



The fish above were an incidental catch (released after photo) by commercial fishermen in 2018 near Monticello, MS. Gulf sturgeon navigate over sills, and have reached Jackson, Ms. in the past 3 years.

The 1860 acres of wetlands that would be removed along the riparian areas in Jackson contain mature hardwood bottomland forest, which is very good habitat for wildlife, particularly for birds. LeFleur's Bluff State Park has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and its birdwatching checklist has 211 species with 75 that breed in the park. Beyond the 392-acre state park, the floodplain forests on both sides of the Pearl River on private and public land make a corridor through which birds and wildlife can move, feed, migrate and use for nesting.

This habitat corridor has remained largely intact in the years since the building of the Ross Barnett Reservoir because it is a floodway. There is a lot to be said for cities that have mature forests with good wildlife habitat within them. Evapotranspiration by trees processes stormwater, and carbon is stored in tree trunks. Wetland soils allow percolation of water into shallow groundwater which provides a source of flow to streams - these are ecological services provided in an urban space and their value can be quantified. Trees moderate climate and cycle moisture from the ground into the atmosphere during the growing season. Trading a portion of this green corridor through Jackson for a developed urban riverfront landscape with many acres of impervious concrete would mean the loss of well used habitat and environmental services for both wildlife and people.



Prothonotary warbler, LeFleur's Bluff State Park. Credit: Wesley Shoop Ph.D. The Jackson Audubon Society has maintained nest boxes for these birds in the park for 23 years and has monitored nesting success for the last 5 years.

Downstream environmental/ecological issues

On river systems with decades-long reductions in flow, the health of floodplain forests has declined. This has happened in the Flint/Chattahoochee/Apalachicola system, and it can happen on the Pearl River system too. Dr. Helen Light, a USGS research scientist, documented [a long-term decline in forest health](#) correlated with declines in river discharge in that river system in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Since Dr. Light's work was first published, a decline in the number of Tupelo gum trees in floodplain forests and a corresponding decrease in "Tupelo honey" production based on this tree species were reported as being

tied to long term reductions in the amount of fresh water. Apalachicola Bay's oyster population is so unhealthy now that this fishery was closed to commercial harvest. Mississippi's ambitions to create more dams and lakes on the Pearl River can lead it down this same path. The oyster harvest in both Louisiana and Mississippi is tied to the freshwater discharge of the Pearl River. The health of the hardwood forests of the Honey Island Swamp and Pearl River National Wildlife Refuge along the Lower Pearl River in Louisiana are also vulnerable to changing flow conditions.

The following landings and values of oysters predate the 2019-2020 extended opening of the Bonnet Carre Spillway that lowered salinities, created harmful algae blooms and low dissolved oxygen conditions that caused almost complete mortality to oyster reefs in affected areas of southeast Louisiana and the western Mississippi Sound. Oysters have been slowly recovering since 2020, but harvests could be reduced if the Pearl River's freshwater flow to coastal estuaries decreases causing unseasonably high salinities. Unstable salinities and high salinities cause oyster reef mortality.

12,481,594 (meat pounds) of oysters were landed during 2012-2017 in fishing areas of Southeast Louisiana influenced by the freshwater inflow from the Pearl River. An average of 2,080,594 meat lbs. per year were harvested over 6 years. The weight (meat pound) trend was stable and above 2,000,000 lbs. annually 2015-2017.

\$92,701,373 (dollar value) of oyster harvest 2012-2017 in fishing areas of Southeast Louisiana influenced by the freshwater inflow from the Pearl River. Average value of \$15,450,229 per year over 6 yrs. Harvest dollar value trend was above \$12,000,000 annually 2014-2017.¹

Existing Waste Sites

There are three toxic waste sites that will be disturbed if Alternative "C" is chosen: The Gulf States Creosote Plant site in Flowood, Rankin County would become part of the eastern bank/shore of the lake; The former LeFleur's Landing or Jefferson Street landfill is on the west bank, and the former Gallatin Street Dump site is on the west bank of the lake dredging and widening project. (Fig. 1 Alt. C and HTRW Site, from 2018 DEIS) Five more known toxic waste sites are close to the footprint of the lake but would be outside of the dredged floodplain wetlands.

Eight million dollars were allocated in the 2018 DEIS for remediation or cleanup of these toxic waste sites and listed as a budgeted item used in the calculation of project total cost and Benefit: Cost ratios. On March 20, 2023, a staff member from Environmental Management Services Inc., a Mississippi-based engineering consultant, met with Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Army Jaime Pinkham and expressed his professional opinion that this cost estimate was too low by an "order of magnitude." It is hard to understand why the cost estimate for toxic site remediation and cleanup was ten times too low in the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's 2018 DEIS report and appendices. Perhaps the writers of that document used low toxic site cleanup costs to maximize the benefit to cost ratio for Alternative "C". Secretary Pinkham remarked to us at our Pentagon visit that he wanted to know the "true costs" involved in the project and provide public engagement.

¹ Source: Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries Trip Ticket Program. 2012-2017 statewide public and private oyster landings by area fished codes, 902,420-1,420-2,420,419,416,417,422. This area corresponds to Lake Borgne, Mississippi Sound, Lake Catherine and Breton Sound.

Choosing an alternative such as A, A1 or a combination that does not disturb toxic waste sites should be a priority for the Army Corps of Engineers. Disturbance of toxic sites like the old creosote plant upstream of the J.H. Fewell water treatment plant's intake pipe would put Jackson's drinking water at risk. The writers of the 2018 DEIS have already stated that lake construction will make the Pearl River so turbid that the J.H. Fewell plant would need to stop withdrawing water to protect its filtration and water purification equipment. In this situation the Drainage District stated that Jackson would need to find a temporary alternative source of water during construction - to replace the 30% of Jackson's drinking water provided by the Fewell facility. The representative of the Army Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, Ms. Robyn Colissimo, stated two different times at the Jackson meeting on May 24th that the Army Secretary would not support a project that interrupted Jackson's drinking water supply for any reason.

Downstream effects of toxic waste site disturbance

The toxic chemicals and compounds suspended by dredging and disturbing three sites – a brownfield creosote plant and two city landfills - will also send polluted water downstream to the lower Pearl River counties and parishes. The massive sewage discharges, in the billions of gallons per year, from Jackson's failing Savannah Street POTW and its tributary creeks are bad enough, but downstream stakeholders would all like to avoid the addition of legacy toxic waste being mixed into the Pearl River's discharge. Letting toxic soil and sediments remain in place is a better choice than disturbing them.

Cultural Resources

Because of the need for confidentiality of site locations, the cultural resources appendix created by the Rankin Hinds Drainage District has not been made public. However, using a Mississippi public records request, a redacted version was released by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History directly to Pearl Riverkeeper (PRK). When PRK published the redacted cultural resources report on its website, the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's board attorney sent a "cease and desist" letter the next day to PRK with threat of legal action if the report was not taken down immediately from the website. Pearl Riverkeeper complied.

There are many Native American sites listed in the Drainage District's cultural resources appendix and dredging and disturbing between 1800 -2400 acres of floodplain forest, including low ridges scattered in the floodplain, which could be Native American middens or mounds, will certainly disturb or destroy some of them. This seems to be a "sore spot" with the non-federal project sponsor – one that it would like to keep out of the public eye and public discussion. Healthy Gulf does not support any flood management plan that disturbs Native American cultural sites in the Pearl River floodplain.

Transportation

The only flood control option that would cause disruptions to transportation during construction and implementation is Alternative "C", a plan to dredge the Pearl River deeper and wider over 10 miles. There are nine (9) road and rail bridges that cross the study area of Alternative "C". A letter from Director Melinda McGrath of the Mississippi Department of Transportation dated 9/5/2018 cited bridge failures on the nine bridges if sediments were dredged away from bridge support footings during project construction for Alternative "C". The cost of replacing or repairing bridges was omitted from the Drainage District's 2018 Draft EIS. Replacing just the prestressed concrete decks of nine bridges would

cost at least \$100 million dollars. It is hard to explain why such a major cost was left out of the budget for Alternative "C". Neither alternative A nor A1 contemplate de-stabilizing bridge infrastructure this way.

Downstream Impacts

Downstream impacts are directly related to two of key points of analysis that the Army Secretary is statutorily required to perform by Congress, as discussed above: **environmental acceptability**, and **economic justification**.

The downstream impacts of this flood risk management project must be environmentally acceptable and must not negatively impact the economies of downstream towns, counties, and parishes. The first town downstream of Jackson directly on the Pearl River is Monticello, Mississippi. Columbia, Mississippi, and Bogalusa, Louisiana are the other two cities directly on the Pearl River in its middle section. These three towns have sewage plants that discharge to the Pearl River, and Monticello and Bogalusa have paper mills that discharge to the Pearl River. Employment in them and their surrounding counties/parishes is largely tied to the paper mills and the industrial support services for the mills. The community of Varnado, Louisiana, is also on the river. Picayune, Mississippi is not on the Pearl River, but its sewage treatment plants discharge to the Pearl, so adequate effluent dilution in the Pearl River is an economic and public health matter to these cities.

There are many environmental and economic impacts to towns in the lower Pearl River Basin from a river dredging and lake construction project in Jackson. Recreational and commercial fishing are still important downstream of Jackson, and in all the counties and parishes downstream, people fish with hoop nets and slat traps for subsistence, sharing catches with family and community, and selling catch in local markets. The ability to navigate the river in small outboard powered skiffs is important to these users. Shoaling and extreme low water events in July-October make using the river very difficult. Land loss due to collapsing, sloughing banks and the associated sedimentation in the Pearl River's channel are effects on the local economy that come from the current operation of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Landowners are losing land to the river, yet often are still paying property taxes when their land becomes part of a public navigable waterway. Different counties handle this taxation problem in different ways.

When an industrial accident happened on August 9th, 2011, during a typical summer low flow period on the Pearl River at the Temple Inland Corporation paper mill, there was a release of "black liquor" from treatment ponds into the Pearl River near Bogalusa, Louisiana. The resulting impact was catastrophic. There was a total fish kill and loss of invertebrate aquatic life in the river in Washington Parish and for dozens of miles downstream. Turtles were sickened by swimming in caustic water, and the small population of the ESA threatened Gulf sturgeon in the Pearl was significantly reduced in the space of two days. All vertebrate and invertebrate life was affected including mussels and aquatic insects. A project such as Alternative "C" that impounds water during critical low flow periods will only make ambient water quality conditions in the Pearl River worse in the face of an industrial accident or discharge of effluent in excess of NPDES permit limits for pH temperature, dissolved oxygen, biological oxygen demand, total solids, ammonia, and other permit limit parameters.

The Army Corps needs to be deliberate and clearly explain its work in responding to WRDA 2018 Section 1176 which requires that the agency take a hard look at likely adverse impacts downstream. Alternative "C" was named in the September 2018 comments of the US Fish and Wildlife Service as the

“most environmentally damaging” alternative of the four that were presented. It is still the most environmentally damaging of Alternatives A, A1 and C; the current NEPA alternatives array.

As Dr. Stanford Owen, a Levee Board commissioner from St. Tammany Parish related in his comments at the Slidell, La May 23rd, 2023, scoping meeting, the health of the estuaries, bays and marshes of both Mississippi and Louisiana need to be considered at the mouth of the Pearl and in the coastal waters that receive the Pearl river’s freshwater discharge. St. Bernard Parish and Hancock County Mississippi have at least \$100 million dollars-worth of funded, completed, or ongoing BP Restore Act projects focused on oysters, marsh restoration, beneficial use of spoil to build land and shoreline protection. Any harmful changes in freshwater discharge volume or seasonality from an upstream freshwater depleting project like Alternative “C” need to be fully investigated and explained as required by Section 1176 of WRDA 2018. Decreasing the discharge of fresh water or changing its timing can undo the restoration efforts undertaken by both states if salinities increase in the estuary and marshes at the mouth of the Pearl River.

A Coastal Zone Consistency Review must be performed by Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, focused on the modeling and sampling done so far in the writing of the 2018 DEIS and subsequent work that has elevated Alternative “C” as the locally preferred alternative. The region that finds this alternative attractive only includes Hinds and Rankin Counties. Downstream counties and parishes would name it the least preferred alternative. Because the Pearl’s flow affects salinities and the productivity of marshes and bays, a consistency review by the Coastal Zone Management Program in Louisiana is necessary.

During the 2023 Louisiana Legislative session, [Senate Resolution 189](#) was adopted by the Senate and was enrolled as an expression of the will of the Senate.

The State of Louisiana clearly has many concerns about the creation of another lake on the Pearl River and about the adequate flow of water downstream to the Honey Island Swamp and to the estuaries of St. Tammany and St. Bernard Parishes including important oyster growing areas in Lake Borgne and the Biloxi marsh complex. Senate Resolution 189 asks the Army Corps to perform a Coastal Zone Consistency Review.

[Recreation Access and Opportunities](#)

Speakers at the May 24th public engagement meeting in Jackson complained about the lack of public access to the Pearl River in urban Jackson. There is public access to the river in Jackson for canoes, kayaks and small boats. There is access on public land to trails along oxbow lakes and riverbanks in Lefleur’s Bluff State Park on the Pearl River just downstream of the Hwy. 25/Lakeland Bridge over the river. A boat ramp at the Ross Barnett Reservoir spillway and a boat ramp at Lefleur’s Bluff State Park have provided a launch and take-out point for 15 years.

Lefleur’s Bluff State Park has the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science on its grounds, and the park and museum share a 2-mile trail system including the Museum’s “purple” trail along the Pearl River that ends at the park’s public boat ramp and parking lot at the river. Boy Scout canoe trips have used the section of the Pearl River between the reservoir and the park for 15 years. Sport and trot-line fishermen have launched in this section for the same amount of time. The Pearl Riverkeeper has planned and

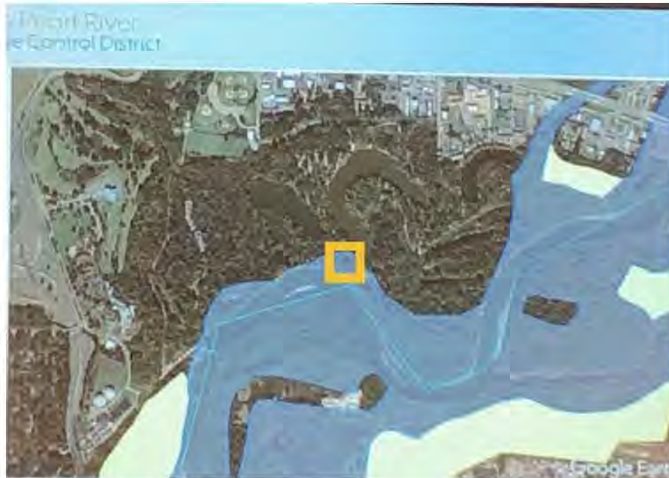
hosted annual river cleanups since September 2017 on the urban section of the river, using the LeFleur's Bluff State Park boat ramp on the river as a starting point for river clean-up days.

There is public access to the Pearl River and there is demonstrated use of the river by the public. The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science focuses its science education program on the state park, using wetlands and floodplain forests along the Pearl River to teach thousands of students and to train hundreds of teachers at Project WET and Project Wild workshops. The Museum reached its first million visitor mark by 2010 and is one of Jackson's award-winning tourism and educational attractions. It moved from Jefferson Street downtown to LeFleur's Bluff State Park in 1999 specifically to be able to use the Pearl River's wetlands, floodplain forests and river habitats in its educational programs which serve a statewide audience. The Museum's indoor exhibits interpret the Pearl River swamp, including its largest freshwater exhibit – the Pearl River tank, and its swamp terrarium, built in a greenhouse, showcases animals and plants native to the Pearl River and its floodplain.

The Alternative "C" project will dredge away many acres of LeFleur's Bluff State Park along the Pearl River trail and would reduce the quality of the park experience. A riverbank lined with mature 90-year-old hardwood trees and a network of floodplain sloughs and oxbow lakes with mature cypress and tupelo gum trees in the park would be removed by dredging and replaced with banks devoid of trees and a shoreline stabilized by sheet piling, concrete or limestone rock.



This video was made at Museum of Natural Science Trail Stop 16, in LeFleur's Bluff State Park with a viewing deck built by an Eagle Scout. This location is also shown in center of the yellow square in the photograph below as a section of the park slated for dredging and submersion in the Alternative "C" (One Lake Project). YouTube title: "Protect LeFleur's Bluff"



Cypress Pond at Trail Stop 16 (yellow square) in lake dredging (blue) overlay from 2021 MDWFP presentation by the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District (non-federal sponsor of FRM project)

The dredging footprint of Alternative “C” was [presented](#) to the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife Fisheries and Parks in 2021 in a map which showed parts of LeFleur’s Bluff State Park that would be dredged away and submerged by lake construction. The non-federal sponsors of the 2018 Pearl River DEIS told the Wildlife Commissioners that the park would lose some land and gain some land in the dredging operation.

Lower Pearl River recreational issues

The impact of Alternative “C” to recreational opportunities in downstream counties and parishes has been described above in the “downstream impacts” scoping section. Small boat access to the river is already a problem downstream of Jackson when the river is at low flow July-October. Landowners are losing riverbank to erosion. The swamp tour business in St. Tammany Parish and in Hancock County Mississippi also needs to be considered. Low water reduces access to swamp areas from the river’s main channel and causes tour boats to hit bottom with their outboard motor propellers. Even kayak tours in the Honey Island Swamp along the Pearl River are hampered by seasonal low water events. No tour guide on the lower Pearl has any confidence that low flow problems will improve if Alternative “C” is built.



Dr. Wagner’s Honey Island Swamp Tour. In St. Tammany Parish, 122,400 people take boat tours annually on the lower Pearl River creating a \$5 million impact to the local Credit: Bob Warren, The New Orleans Advocate NOLA.com (2017.)

Before the COVID pandemic, the annual economic impact of Pearl River swamp tours was over five million dollars. This robust and popular nature-based tourism industry, featuring the Pearl River’s Honey Island Swamp, exists in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana generating approximately \$3.1 million

per year in tour fees alone. A total of 122,400 tourists per year at \$25 per person is a conservative estimate of the annual activity of the three largest swamp tour companies. The \$3.1 million does not include canoe and kayak tour company fees. Also, the Honey Island Swamp has many other recreational users: campers, hunters, fishermen and canoers whose activities aren't captured by this revenue estimate. The 2015-2019 Louisiana Tourism Forecast prepared by U.N.O. for the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism reported 2015 induced tourism spending as 68% of direct tourism spending. This means that the 122,400 people who travel to St. Tammany Parish, paying \$3.1 million in tour fees to see the Honey Island Swamp would spend an additional \$2.1 million dollars a year in the local economy on fuel, food, lodging, and other travel related needs.

Recreation access and opportunities on the Pearl River are not limited to the 10 miles of the urban section of the river in Jackson, Mississippi. Any objective study of recreational uses of the Pearl River must contemplate recreation in the entire basin and include the swamp tour business in Louisiana.

Community Impacts

Community cohesion, general happiness, and freedom from fear of flooding are as important along the Lower Pearl River as they are in any other community. Having a river with caving banks, and a channel that cannot move its sediment load in low flow conditions doesn't make riverside landowners and residents happy or support community cohesion. Landowners downstream of Jackson in several counties and parishes are being charged property tax on more land than they possess due to streambank failure and land loss because of reservoir operations upstream. Riparian landowners are accustomed to the loss of land and timber in the lower Pearl Basin. And when Jackson is releasing water from the Ross Barnett dam in anticipation of heavy rains from tropical storms and hurricanes two or three days away from a storm's impact in central Mississippi, Washington and St. Tammany Parish and Hancock County face storm surges from the Gulf combined with a rising Pearl River. The anxiety caused by a rising river and back-flooding along urban tributaries in Hinds and Rankin Counties is real, but residents along the lower Pearl River must face a storm surge on top of a river flooded by pre-storm water releases from the Ross Barnett 180 miles upstream – a situation out of their control and about which their parish and the State of Louisiana have no voice. This creates short term anxiety and long-term resentment as community impacts.

The decreases in flood elevation at different river mile points in the project area in Jackson were mapped using the data provided by the non-federal sponsor in the 2018 Draft EIS to give a visual depiction of the modeled flood height reductions. The most disadvantaged communities won't receive a meaningful benefit from this project. For instance, the modeled flood height reductions from the 2018 DEIS give an eight-foot flood height reduction to an area along the river that had three feet of flood water in the 1979 flood of record, while an area that received 8 feet of water in 1979 will receive a three-foot flood reduction from Alternative "C" according to the 2018 modeling.



If the Army Corps and Army Assistant Secretary for Civil Works are appending their recent work onto the DEIS work already done by the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District, then the 2023 document's authors inherit these inequities. Overall, the major benefits in flood height reduction go to higher income communities, while lower income communities may receive lower flood elevations, but their houses will still flood. This is a distinction that makes no difference to the people whose homes take on water when the river rises and backs water into creeks and neighborhoods – they still get wet, only with fewer feet of water in their houses.

Quantile map showing a graphic depiction of Alternative "C" modeled flood height reductions for a 100- year flood from Table 3-3 from 2018 DEIS for Federal Flood Risk Management Project Pearl River Basin, Rankin, Hinds Counties, MS. The greatest reductions in flood elevation occur in the highest income neighborhood. Affluent neighborhoods benefit more, and poor neighborhoods benefit less which should not be the result of a federally funded public works project in 2023. Credit: Mapping flood height reductions and CEJST burdens, Juan D. Fernandez.

Alternative "C" doesn't solve all the flooding, nor does it remedy inequities among the flooded communities. And Alternative "C" does next to nothing for the low-income communities along Eubanks Creek, Town Creek, Lynch Creek and others west of Interstate 55. Low income, majority black communities along most of Jackson's Pearl River tributaries (Eubanks Creek, Town Creek, Lynch Creek for instance) are considered burdened by multiple social, health, employment and educational problems according to the [Climate, Social and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) developed by the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The Alternative "C" channel dredging on the main stem of the Pearl River is too far downstream from most of these burdened communities to make any difference at



Choctaw Road, Jackson MS: Dr. Scott Crawford's street, yard and neighbors' houses are inundated by flash flooding several times a year. The wheelchair ramp is under water.

all when flash floods happen in the upper and middle sections of creeks that function as drainage ditches. Flash floods due to inadequate gravity drainage in upstream areas of the tributary creek watersheds happen more frequently during most years than Pearl River headwater flooding caused by reservoir water releases. Both ends of the creeks have flooding problems, and Alternative "C" addresses only one end.

In 2017, the Mississippi Legislature passed and the Governor enacted [House Bill 1585](#) which broadened the taxing authority for a flood control district operating anywhere in Mississippi. The law applies to all districts, but it will support the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District's taxing power and its ambitions to create a lake on the Pearl River. It allows a flood control district to tax a property owner who benefits "directly or indirectly" from a project. The passage of HB 1585 has the effect of widening the potential pool of property owners within a flood control district's jurisdiction or service area who can be taxed to service bond debt or to pay for construction, operation, and maintenance for a flood control project. There are issues of equity and fairness in letting a flood control district decide who the indirect beneficiaries might be for a flood control project. As described above on the quantile map, the affluent neighborhoods of northeast Jackson gain more flood protection than the less affluent neighborhoods downriver and upriver from them. There may be property owners paying for Alternative "C" who gain no flood protection at all from its construction but are deemed to be indirect beneficiaries. The effect of this expanded taxing authority turns equity on its head.

[Economic Opportunities](#)

It was clear that economic opportunities were on the minds of many of the speakers at the Army Corps' May 24th, 2023, public engagement meeting at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum auditorium. Socrates Garrett, a businessman, contractor, and Hinds County political veteran explained the need for an economic boost to Jackson's economy and was frank in his assessment that Jackson has nowhere to grow to the North, South or West, so the only place to grow is to the East **into** the Pearl River Flood Plain:

Garrett said: "The only potential for growth is in that footprint of the river - the only chance for Jackson to grow and get a new tax base - Develop this river - it's underutilized." This comment could not have

been clearer about what business interests in Jackson are seeking: economic opportunity through development in the footprint of the river - its floodplain.

Garrett reported that it took years to convince Hinds and Rankin Counties to work together on this lake project, and cited many trips to Washington D.C. to persuade Senator Cochran, Senator Wicker, Leland Speed (Miss Devel. Authority) and other elected officials to support the lake. He cited the time and money contributions of many people who supported the effort.

It was a strange juxtaposition between speaker and listener considering that the Army Corps of Engineers, a federal agency that is acutely aware of the function of floodplains - was being lectured about growth by someone who has supported Alternative "C" for years with the message that the only hope for growth in Jackson is to put more development in the floodplain.

This message is squarely in conflict with Executive Order 11988 which contains a presumption against floodplain development.

Executive Order 11988 of 1977 is cited in the Engineer Notebook from 2000 that governs NED analysis for this project: "This floodplain management order, made during the Carter Presidency, has the intent of avoiding flood plain development, reducing hazards and risk associated with floods, and restoring and preserving natural flood plain values. In the event there is no alternative to construction in the flood plain, as is the case with (some) flood control projects, the Corps is required to minimize the adverse impacts induced by the construction of the project. In considering adverse impacts, the following should be addressed:

- (1) Induced new development in the flood plain or induced improvements to existing development in the floodplain that would increase potential flood damages; and,
- (2) The detrimental effect of induced activities on natural flood plain values."

Army Corps of Engineers notebook ER 1105-2-100 Section III paragraph (I) on Location Benefits outlines rules to follow that consider E.O. 11988.

Alternative "C" of this project finds a significant amount of its economic justification, in "location benefits" and "intensification benefits", both of which are derived from developing land that is currently in the flood plain on the river side (unprotected side or batture) of existing levees in both Hinds and Rankin Counties. These lands flood at least once each year. Table B-16 of the 2018 DEIS report's Appendix B lists \$10.2 million in benefits that are described as Location Benefits (Land New Use) for alternative C, lake dredging. The Drainage District, in fact, relies heavily in its calculation of project benefits upon the \$10.2 million derived from developing land that is currently active floodplain when it chooses Alternative "C" over Alternative "B" (levees only) based on benefit to cost ratio comparison.

The Executive Order above is meant to steer development out of floodplains, but if there is no alternative, the development's induced impacts to flood plain lands must be minimized.

The areas to be developed are downstream of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, and under current operating plans, the floodgate managers must have the ability to raise the Pearl River 10-12 feet in the urban reach of the river in 24 hours at any time to protect the structural integrity of the reservoir dam. The discharge of the Reservoir travels 7 miles and then goes through the project area of the lake dredging plan, so any development placed along the banks of the river in the ten miles of project area should be expected to

accommodate the river rising quickly by up to 10 feet. It is important to note that the Draft EIS predicts future development including the construction of an urban landscape along the raised, filled riverbanks in the project area.

Not allowing the construction of the lake alternative and thereby keeping people and property improvements out of the floodplain would be one way of “minimizing induced impacts”. Setting levees back on the east side of the Pearl River could be a better approach and, in fact, Army Corps staff commenting in the “Plan Formulation” section of the 2020 Agency Technical Review (ATR) pointed out that the first incremental benefit to test was the levee setback component, as it held the greatest benefit. Other commenters pointed out that the lake design adds no floodwater storage to the 10-mile section of the Pearl River, unless the lake excavation is kept dry except during large flows.

The non-federal sponsors have so far claimed that deepening and widening the river in the ten-mile dredged area would reduce the 10-foot rise caused during reservoir water releases. To what degree this may occur has been modeled, but these models don’t remove the basic problem of the large upstream reservoir water releases sent directly through the project area both during construction and afterwards. Allowing this project to be permitted by the Corps seems to be a predictable way to increase potential flood damage and to violate EO 11988. There isn’t a more blatant way to contradict the intent of EO 11988 than the development contemplated by Alternative “C” for the Pearl River floodplain in Hinds and Rankin Counties.

The areas along the Pearl River under consideration for filling and development by the Drainage District are mostly now riparian wetland forest areas and are subject to annual flooding. They currently have natural flood plain values: attenuation of floods, interception of rainfall, soil storage of water, shallow groundwater contribution to river flow, settlement of suspended sediments, and evapotranspiration of water. These functions would all be lost if the wetlands were dredged and removed under Alternative “C”.

Regarding the relationship between the Rankin Hinds District and the authority in charge of the floodgates at the Ross Barnett Reservoir; as recently as February of 2020, the Drainage District had not met with the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District that operates the dam flood gates to discuss how water releases would be cooperatively managed if a second lake was built on the Pearl River downstream of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. The scoping process began in 2013, ten years ago, and no dialogue has been publicly offered by the non-federal sponsors on how the two waterbodies would cooperate in releasing water through Metro Jackson. To allow the violation of this Executive Order in the absence of a clear understanding of lake operations (such as high and low flow plans) between the two agencies would seem to overlook concern about economic intensification from post-project floodplain development and openly mock the intent of EO 11988.

It is not economically justified to permit a project that violates EO 11988 by deliberately inviting induced development in a floodplain when there is no attempt to minimize obvious impacts or avoid hazards and risks associated with floods. Those hazards, risks and impacts to downstream communities have been explained in this comment letter.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which has taken over authorship of this DEIS, doesn’t lack alternatives to floodplain development in solving the urban Jackson and Rankin and Hinds Counties flood management problems. Alternatives A, A1 and a combination have been offered in the current scoping period as

possible alternatives in addition to Alternative “C”, lake dredging. The destruction, risk and impact of Alternative “C” should dictate that it is the **least preferred choice** on the list of alternatives for the Army Corps. Inducing development (as in (1) above) in the flood plain is clearly a motivation behind Alternative “C” according to Mr. Garrett above who has helped promote the One Lake plan. Other speakers on May 24th alluded to Alternative “C” as a spark for economic progress in Jackson but no speaker explained it as frankly as Mr. Garrett.

The Army Corps should follow its own rules and directives regarding E.O. 11988 and the language in WRDA 2007 and WRDA 2018 and find a flood management solution in 2023 that is economically justified, less environmentally disruptive and that is acceptable to all downstream interests.

The 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement written by the non-federal sponsor was an unabashed argument for Alternative “C” that lacked objectivity. As a document responsive to the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) it was an embarrassing failure and infuriating to read and examine. The taxpayers of Mississippi, including people living in the counties downstream of Jackson saw the state contribute a million dollars toward the writing of the 2018 DEIS. Environmental groups were not the only ones who noted the document’s poor quality. Commenters from Battelle Institute (IEPR) and from the Army Corps of Engineers Agency Technical Review (ATR) teams in 2017 and 2020 were frank and incredulous about the poor quality of the Draft EIS and harshly critical of some of the basic features of Alternative “C” including the fact that it offers no additional flood water storage. One Army Corps employee -a manager of review teams – told me over the phone that the 2018 DEIS was “not a very well wrapped-up document”. This was an understatement.

As described in the introductory paragraphs of this comment letter, the Army Corps of Engineers is in a difficult position, no doubt faced with pressure from Mississippi’s Congressional delegation and others to approve the flood risk reduction alternative that does the most environmental and ecological damage to the river and its aquatic and riparian habitats and wildlife, and is the most objectionable plan according to downstream stakeholders who have made their displeasure about it known on multiple occasions. The pressure to approve Alternative “C” will also test the Army’s allegiance to its own regulations, to E.O. 11988, to the Clean Water Act, and to the plain language of the WRDA statutes that authorize expenditures of public money for a flood risk reduction project for Jackson, MS. The next Draft EIS must be objective and do justice to the intent of NEPA and WRDA. We expect an honest and well considered analysis of environmental acceptability, economic justification, and technical feasibility. The Army Corps and the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works have much room for improvement as they review and write the 2023 Draft EIS for this WRDA Section 211 project.

Conclusion

Coastal plain rivers in the Southeastern United States like the Pearl River have been losing bottomland forests and swamps to development since the late 1800s. The rivers bisecting these floodplains have been used as highways of commerce; the cypress trees from their swamps have been turned into lumber. Cities have grown up along rivers because of the natural resources present: fur, timber, fish, mussels, or because the rivers themselves were trade routes.

These rivers have been channelized, de-snagged, dammed, used for transportation, drinking water and recreation, and some cities like Jackson find them hard to live with because they flood. They will always

flood. Cities don't want to adapt to rivers, they want to tame them and bend them to society's purposes – which was historically the Army Corps of Engineers' mission.



There are not many animals as well adapted to life on a floodplain as a gar. Whether a river inundates its backwater wetlands or remains in its channel, gar find a way to feed, reproduce, and survive - persisting for 240 million years. Since the writing of E.O. 11988 in 1977, our society has learned more about floodplain functions, living with rivers, and about the values and ecological services floodplains provide. This knowledge informs Army Corps policy and projects.

Spotted gar. Pearl River, LeFleur's Bluff State Park. Credit: Wesley Shoop Ph.D.

Floodplains have their place and their functions. Scientists and engineers at the Army Corps understand rivers and floodplains. They know that there are better, less destructive ways to live with rivers and their floodplains than building projects like Alternative "C".

This is a complex DEIS process that began in 2013 with the non-federal sponsor fumbling the NEPA process, doing its best to suppress open speaking at public meetings, and providing the bare minimum of public information. With the Army Corps' assumption of the NEPA process, a promised 45-day comment period, in our opinion, doesn't allow enough time for USFWS to prepare a Biological Opinion and a Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report with new information available on the Gulf sturgeon and Pearl River map turtle. Since the Environmental Protection Agency could not comment on the 2018 Draft EIS, (The DEIS wasn't "federalized" by publication in the Federal Register) that agency is at a disadvantage and likely needs more than 45 days to prepare its comments. Accordingly, Healthy Gulf would like to ask for more than 45 days to prepare comments when a new DEIS is published in August or September of 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Whitehurst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Andrew Whitehurst, M.S, J.D.
Water Program Director, Healthy Gulf
3141 W. Tidewater Ln. Madison, MS
andrew@healthygulf.org

From: [Andy Hilton](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on Flood Control Alternatives
Date: Saturday, June 10, 2023 8:02:50 AM

Dear sir or madam,

While Alternative C may offer some flood control and economic benefits to Jackson, this plan defies common sense. It is the most expensive and environmentally damaging of any alternative, and a more sensible combination of tools is at our disposal.

Hydraulically speaking, the best feature of Alternative C is removing the constriction in the levee system. You don't have to dredge a river to do that. Levee setbacks would restore the natural floodplain and offer more effective area for flow.

As far as recreation and development, an artificial lake isn't needed, as a beautiful, natural river is already there. The community only needs access. The City of Jackson owns more than 2500 acres of property on the Pearl River, and all they've ever given us is "No Trespassing" signs. Many of these signs are found along property near John Macgowen's developments, who is the godfather of the One Lake Plan.

Having previewed the One River vision of the Berkeley/JSU planning departments, I believe that something along those lines could provide flood control and economic development in an environmentally and fiscally responsible way.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Andy Hilton
PE, CFM

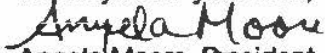
Canton Club Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 12093
Jackson, MS 39236
cantonclubneighborhood@gmail.com
Website: cantonclub.communitysite.com

Hi,

My name is Angela Moore, President for Canton Club Neighborhood Association and have concerns regarding the One Lake Project. Our boundaries are North-Colonial Club, South-Purple Creek, East-Pearl River, West- Old Canton Road. We have 370 residents in our neighborhood that's being affected by the flooding. Our comments are as follows:

1. **We would like to request that USACE reconsider a levee option for Northeast Jackson.** We believe that this option would provide our neighborhoods with more thorough protection compared to Alternatives A1 (flood proofing), C ("One Lake"), or D ("Berkeley Plan").
2. **We would like to request a copy of the predictive flood maps under Alternatives B, C, and D.** These maps will verify our belief from request #1 and help our local leaders on the Levee Board make the decision that best serves their constituents.
3. **We would like to request that USACE facilitate coordination between the Pearl River Valley Water Supply (PRVWS), the Levee Board, and other downstream stakeholders.** The Ross Barnett Reservoir has negatively affected us and numerous other downstream residents. The reservoir was completed in 1965 to provide a drinking water resource, but because of economic development and lakefront home construction, the reservoir must maintain water for boats, watercraft, etc. If the PRVWS could keep the reservoir lower during hurricane season, the additional storage capacity could reduce flooding for those downstream.
4. **We would like to request a meaningful engagement.** We, who are most affected by the ongoing flooding, believe there should have been a more meaningful engagement consistent with NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act). There should have been a proactive engagement process, including door-to-door announcements to notify residents of upcoming meetings. Many voices were not heard regarding these upcoming One Lake project plans. Many want the opportunity to voice their concerns and stay informed.

Thank you for your time,


Angela Moore, President

Vanessa Weatherspoon, Vice President

Velma Warner, Secretary

Felecia Day, Treasurer

[illegible]

From: [Ann Fairly Pandelides](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] My input on the One Lake Project
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 1:58:29 PM

Dear Colonel Christopher Klein,

I am a native of Jackson, MS - I grew up going to LeFleur's State Park and the Museum of Natural Science, and later was lucky enough to work with the fisheries biologists there later in my career. These areas are very dear to me and many others in the state - public spaces to recharge in nature, commune with friends and family, and enjoy the undisturbed wildlife in the midst of the city. Each time I am able to visit home, we gather in these park areas - which are now under threat of the One Lake Project.

I am reaching out to ask that, if possible, you please not go with Alternative C, which the US Fish & Wildlife Service deemed to be the MOST environmentally damaging option in the One Lake Project. I ask that you heavily consider using alternatives A or A1 in order to avoid destroying precious state park land and crucial swamp and cypress habitat in LeFleur's Bluff State Park. These alternatives are the only option to save this area while also avoiding problems downstream in other communities. Any combination of alternatives A or A1 will avoid creating this lake - a man-made lake that will feel unnatural, destroy precious native wildlife habitat, take people out of their homes, and create much larger problems downstream of the river.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my comments,

Ann Fairly Pandelides
Biologist at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette

From: annpeytonherrington@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Ann Peyton Herrington](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] On Considering Other Options
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 2:38:04 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Good afternoon!

To start things off on a positive note, I am very grateful to be able to send this message today. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was generous in allowing the citizens of Jackson the time to support or oppose this plan in consideration, commonly known as the One Lake plan. This organization hosted multiple meetings that informed citizens and offered us chances to speak our minds, voicing concerns and asking for help. I believe that Army Corps of Engineers do want what is best for Jackson and its citizens. However, I had several issues

Sincerely,
Ann Peyton Herrington
Flowood, MS 39232
annpeytonherrington@gmail.com

From: annpeytonherrington@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Ann Peyton Herrington](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] On Considering Other Options: Please Reject One Lake!
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 4:58:43 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Good afternoon!

First of all, I want to start this letter off on a positive note. I am very gracious to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for giving citizens the opportunity for public comment. The Corps have hosted several meetings that both informed the citizens of Jackson, and allowed us a chance to speak our minds, both the voices supporting and opposing the project commonly known as One Lake. They offered me, a youth, the chance to be active in my community, and possibly to make this city better, no matter my age. I do believe that the Corps genuinely wants Jackson and its citizens to be happy, healthy, and safe. In fact, I have the same goal. I want the best for the community and its citizens. So we are on the same team, correct?

Absolutely! However, I do have a problem concerning how we should go about making the city a better place. The option in top consideration, One Lake, is rated by several scientific and governmental organizations as the most environmentally destructive option. Dredging the river to create a lake would completely alter the ecosystem of the area. Many rare and wonderful species of plants and animals that have a home here would cease to thrive, as dozens cannot survive without this area of the river. The Prothonotary Warbler is a good example. It's a beautiful little bird, a cheerful spot of bright yellow sunshine against the solemn stands of Cypress in which it makes its dwelling for the summer. "Sweet, sweet, sweet," it utters, letting every creature under the sky know that this stretch of river is home. This tiny yet delightful warbler spends every summer down in South America, but each spring, the birds fly across the Gulf of Mexico until reaching a place to breed, in the Eastern US. Lefleur's Bluff, much of which would be destroyed due to the project, provides the warblers a safe place to settle down for the summer. The Prothonotary Warblers and other wildlife along the Pearl River would be put at risk by this project, seeing as it would turn their lives completely upside down. Dredging the river would destroy the progress that researchers have built up for years. For example, a federally threatened fish, the Gulf Sturgeon, was spotted in the Jackson area of the Pearl River for the first time in over twenty-five years just a year ago. Creating a lake would demolish this botanical and zoological haven. From the charming little Eastern Sawback Turtle to the peaceful stands of Watergum and Bald Cypress that grow along the banks of the Pearl, this ecosystem is worth saving. Each unique being that lives in this community is like a tiny candle in the darkness. If we go around snuffing candles, we'll soon be left in the gloom. Choosing One Lake could also pose problems to citizens, not just flora and fauna. A flood-control lake would differ from waterfront property-oriented lakes like the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Due to the flood controlling aspect, the water level would be quite low for much of the year. This means that large stretches of rock and mudflats that lie under the lake could often be exposed, which isn't very attractive waterfront property. Losing the river would also take out an important part of the community. Although many have often found themselves at odds with its flooding, they also cherish its presence. Lefleur's Bluff, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and other areas along the river provide many citizens entertainment, fitness, and wonder that they would be sorry to trade for a new lake. About a month ago, the Corps hosted a meeting concerning this project and its future. Many came forth with happy memories of fishing at the bluff or taking refreshing breaks off work by the riverbank. There would be much sadness at replacing our beloved river and the joys it provides.

There were many at that meeting with terrifying stories of flooding and of the economic damage that the Pearl creates. We heard of fears and anguish rising higher than the waters that swallowed rooftops an

Sincerely,
Ann Peyton Herrington
Flowood, MS 39232
annpeytonherrington@gmail.com

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 8:34:40 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Leland Speed died, but his real estate scheme lives on. The Pearl River is one of the most maligned rivers in the U.S. This will put the final kill on it. The people who will never see Honey Island Swamp again (and all its fabulous diversity) should sue you. There are multiple locations under the river with massive dumps of poisons. These will all be disturbed when you make another ridiculous dam (other places are tearing them down--MS is always the one behind the curve). There will be another muddy shallow hot dish of "water" mixed with pollutants. And finally it will fill in and the water will go where it wishes, likely to flood whole new areas.

Please don't do this, even though Wicker got the \$ for it.

Ref Id: --A34fU2XUaESoBFNUZbGg

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Saturday, May 27, 2023 3:26:08 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

I live in Hinds County and fully support John McGowan's One Lake plan. But why is it taking the Corp 10 years to figure out a plan. I understand that Mr. McGowan developed his plan without any government money.

Ref Id: A00rCy2DukSeKBdSD8PD9g

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 12:10:41 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Please use any money to remove weirs and locks in lower Pearl river to help flooding. Wildlife and river health will be negatively affected by the One lake project.

Ref Id: _Z0kBfmfEUmBCLfLl2yKkQ

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Saturday, June 3, 2023 4:47:15 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

The One Lake project is an ecological disaster in the making. Please do not do this. The people here are already hurting. Many who fled New Orleans after Katrina. Let's ensure that federal funds for the water systems are effectively implemented, and let's consider other means of flood management.

Ref Id: k2S6WBAZlkejUYP7U9KLqw

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 7:45:27 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

"A new dam on the river would change the hydrology of the whole system. This could result in an alteration of the freshwater and sediment flows to resources downstream, endangering fisheries, threatening oyster production, potentially jeopardizing the success of millions of dollars of coastal restoration efforts that are underway or planned in the area, and endangering thousands of acres of important bottomland hardwood and swamp."

Issues like low water flow can increase toxin concentration in the river, which, in turn, will negatively affect drinking water quality and endangering myriad animal species that both live and pass through (migratory birds). This project also risk disturbing highly toxic sites, which would further contaminate the river.

Destroying this already endangered river would have both immediate and long term catastrophic effects on fish/wildlife, the water crisis, and tourism.

Ref Id: EDoQqXziYEyghFECfvzR9g

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 8:04:39 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Please use alternatives A or A1. Do not use Alternative C!! Let
use keep our park!

Ref Id: ltCz_Ug6uU2xh1XCgSasbA

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 1:29:01 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below** Save the wetlands and trails!!!

Ref Id: hxLDZYBJPEyK0EvsbIvGSA

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 4:36:57 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

The One Lake project is not a legitimate flood control project. It will harm local wetlands. The real estate developers pressing this project are self-serving crooks who don't care about the adverse ecological impacts of this development.

Ref Id: kBZ61oSksE-S7Vzw-9sSLg

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 7:28:19 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Please choose Alternative A or Alternative A1 or a combination of the two for the Pearl River FRM project. I kindly ask that you forgo the lake project and Alternative C, which would be devastating to the environment and the community that cherishes LeFleur's Bluff State Park. We can protect our communities from flooding while also protecting our treasured parklands. Thank you.

Ref Id: GralTF2sMk6nl7TRCstlSg

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 10:16:55 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

While this project may help with reducing flood risk at won't totally prevent it. It's unfair to the public that you are selling it to the public. It is also not worth causing a species of turtles to go extinct which many experts have concluded will happen. This is realistically being built to turn jackson into the same economic model as jackson. It is super cool to have a lake right next to downtown. Jackson is not Austin. Especially when this lake will not prevent flooding and also destroy habitat for many endangered plants and animals. Please choose any of the other plans.

Ref Id: fB6vVSGbekyQWw6BIgCd0w

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 1:53:50 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

I'm concerned what will happen to our Pearl River here in the Slidell, Louisiana area. We live very close to the Pearl River. We grew up going to our river camp on weekends that is located along the river bank on the West Pearl River. Many of my family members are fishermen and hunters who have enjoyed life on the Pearl River. So, we would not want the river to become polluted more than it is or dry up. So, I hope that whatever they are trying to do upriver will not destroy downriver.

Ref Id: pg8FjeSwbEawAYGmCTnHmg

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 5:25:57 PM

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Please leave your comment concerning the project below Please choose A or A1 for the Leflore Park project

Ref Id: GLjWO_QVt0KeCOeI3h9tLA

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 8:04:24 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

The amount of wildlife that would be affected by continuing with this project is astounding. This area is such a place of peace and calm, amidst the chaos of the city life. Please consider another way to navigate this project that does not include dredging this area. Thank you.

Ref Id: YoXzxO4gFkS16Mz7n8-JxQ

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 11:34:58 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Creating the one lake project to preserve structures on one portion of a state while destroying an ecosystem in another is not right. Hundreds of residents call the lower peel river home and support their way of life daily with food, housing, jobs and recreation along this stretch of the river. The one lake project would detrimentally impact this area and it thousands of residents. Do not fix one problem while creating hundreds more. That's not fixing the problem it's moving the mess.

Ref Id: 8axXkR2GV0OSSL_s18EFrA

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 8, 2023 7:25:28 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Maybe let's explore other options before doing this bright and shiny thing that would cause more trouble
In the long run. What other options are available for our city that preserves its natural habitat.

Ref Id: OnAtEgkhOkOCyLJvzvRexg

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 8, 2023 8:39:23 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

No Lake, No Dump C

Please use Alternative A or A1 to avoid causing massive environmental damage, and removal of several of central Mississippi's previous natural habitats. or feel free to use a combination of A and A1's elements to best solve the flooding problem.

Thank you

Ref Id: ZpbjkC7YjkSpjQKBvGdI3g

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 8, 2023 9:28:49 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Please don't demolish one of our unique and beautiful natural wonders!!!! Pick a different path!!!!

Ref Id: lDOhQbXK2UypCV6HOJeWaw

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 8, 2023 10:43:24 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Why would you rob Peter to pay Paul, so what this will do is flood everyone South of Jackson, I may not be an engineer, but I do know that the same volume of water will flow South now or after this terrible idea, if you want to be helpful, try to repair the ecological damage that Jackson has caused by dumping billions of gallons of sewage into the Pearl River, that would make common sense.

Thank you

Ref Id: z83eqwZuCkaI1YhZ77Fz3g

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 8:43:54 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

I am a resident of Jackson, MS. I and my family do not want a lake or for LeFleur's Bluff State Park to be damaged or destroyed to provide for a lake under Alternative C. Please for the residents and families that love LeFleur's Bluff Park, choose Alternatives A or A1 or another alternative that does not create a lake.

Ref Id: qo1JM-lIBEyCYBfjiICC8w

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Saturday, June 10, 2023 7:28:00 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Absolutely NO!!

Ref Id: cCm09P2-KU-TFv-Sds6i7g

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Saturday, June 10, 2023 7:28:25 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below** Absolutely NO!!

Ref Id: 9MFub6q6l0GufH69LON7sQ

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Saturday, June 10, 2023 12:40:49 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

I'm writing in support of the One Lake (option C) project. It's important to me to prioritize quality of life for citizens in a city that, honestly, could use some help in that area. Even if this is a realty scam (as it's been called) that ends up making a rich man even richer, I know that citizens of this city will benefit as well.

Ref Id: EjhDAiK1eEOqZhm2k2Y1SA

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Sunday, June 11, 2023 5:02:37 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

I'm a Mississippian and I'm concerned about the Pearl River FRM. I think the "One Lake Project" would be harmful for ecosystems and people living in and around Jackson.

The One Lake Project that is proposed for Jackson as flood mitigation project is not what it seems. It is a private real estate development scheme disguised as a flood control project that will only put more vulnerable people in Jackson in harm's way.

The One Lake Project will NOT solve flooding everywhere. In fact, it is predicted to make flooding worse for people in the Town, Eubanks and Lynch Creek areas - areas that are low income and already experience flash flooding.

The One Lake Project will expose our water system to more toxic pollutants by disturbing eight toxic waste sites, making Jackson's water crisis worse.

To me, these harms outweigh the potential benefits. I request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reject the One Lake project and instead, support sustainable flood control solutions that are good for everyone in Jackson.

Ref Id: B8-Ummd74EuNA2qlZ2gIzQ

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2023 10:56:37 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below** No lake! Leave the river alone!

Ref Id: eryMHM9Ct02hx54szDhPzg

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Wednesday, June 14, 2023 12:38:45 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

How can the USACE, with a straight face, back this project and start it by Jan 2024? Because St Tammany Parish applied for a permit to clean mouth of Lock 1 canal back in July 2022 and yall can't seem to finish it?

We here in South Louisiana are tired of the way the USACE treats the Lower Pearls. It's so obvious yall are all about helping build the One Lake Project instead of helping to save lives in South Louisiana. I sure wish I could speak to Mr. Michael Conner.

Ref Id: xo0kbwSayEiTD340hOUNAQ

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Thursday, June 15, 2023 11:48:34 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Please do not advance alternative C. Please select and advance alternative A or A1. We have lost far too many of our wild spaces and we don't need a polluted lake in the middle of Jackson. I vote for preservation rather than destruction.

Thanks,
Cy Tandy
Madison, MS.

Ref Id: uitfa72EwE2qywYBN2Ygww

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Friday, June 23, 2023 4:55:12 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Jackson should develop the swamp, as mankind has done for thousands of years. Why must we preserve the precious mosquito factory and stifle economic development? The downstream effects argument makes no sense. The reservoir is already in place. What's the difference where the dam is? One dam, two dams. Dam in Ridgeland, dam in Richland. There is hardly a letter or two difference.

Ref Id: i9OS4GDXIU2tyh85a0ZzfQ

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 12:48:40 PM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Hi there! I am a relatively new resident of Jackson, MS. I moved here in April 2022. A few months later, a devastating rainfall and threat of flooding exacerbated existing issues with the water plant here, starting a major water crisis. Living through that alongside the community in Jackson, was harrowing and scary. It was clear before the crisis that things needed to change when it came to water infrastructure in Jackson, and it became even more clear at that point. Of course, making changes to our water infrastructure and waterways is vital to prevent future disasters from happening. However, the potential of creating a lake that would devastate the surrounding wildlife and park are not the solution. The people of Jackson, as much as we deserve clean safe water and a safe place to live, we deserve a quiet, clean, and safe place to enjoy the beauty and nature of the Pearl River. The "one lake" solution will take away one of the most beautiful parts of Jackson, LaFleur State Park, an area of recreation that should be revitalized and taking care of for our children and generations to come. There are other options that would solve the major issue of flooding of the Pearl River. Choose those instead.

Ref Id: MfnWazoCsEqDkcW_Cp3K5A

From: [Ashley Easterling](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake project
Date: Thursday, May 25, 2023 6:11:56 PM

I am against the One Lake project.

- o Hurts the Mississippi Sound. I live in Bay St. Louis.
- o Hurts the endangered Pearl River ecosystem
- o Benefits private land owners
- o Nominal (at best) flood protection limits for Jackson.

Don't use my tax dollars to my loss. The money could be better spent on providing real flood protection instead of enriching private parties.

--

Sincerely,

Ashley Easterling

From: [Audrey Harrison](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Cc: [Audrey](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Please choose Alternative A or A1
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 6:04:57 PM

To: USACE Vicksburg District

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing as a citizen of Hinds County, Mississippi. Understanding that flood risk prevention is important for my community, I am asking you to choose Alternative A or A1 with regard to the Pearl River at Jackson, MS.

I have many concerns with Alternative C. At the public meeting, it was noted by USACE that there have not been comprehensive baseline floral and faunal surveys done in the Project Area. One cannot understand how habitats and populations will change without understanding which species and populations occur there to begin with. There has not been enough study within this reach of river to understand its ecology. The information we do have about the Pearl River in this reach suggests its importance to many species of concern, including T&E species.

Last year (2022), a 17-year old Gulf Sturgeon was detected below the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Mark and recapture studies have very low detection rates, and this detection provides empirical evidence that this species indeed uses the entirety of the free-flowing Pearl River for completion of life history purposes. The Pearl River was named for its clear waters supporting a diverse freshwater pearly mussel assemblage. To this day, ancient intact mussel beds underlie the waters of the Pearl River in Jackson. These kidneys of our rivers filter our water and indicate stable conditions. In Mississippi, >25% of our freshwater mussels are T&E species and most populations are understudied. Dredging the Pearl River will annihilate the mussel beds. There is no way to mitigate this loss, as mussels are slow to recruit, slow to mature, habitat limited, and co-dependent on particular fishes for reproduction. Within this reach and endemic to this basin are beautiful turtles such as the Pearl River Map Turtle and Ringed Sawback Turtle. Adapted to riverine conditions, these turtles rely on flowing waters to complete essential life history processes like feeding. Fifty years of scientific study recognize the significance of intact wetlands to the nutrient and water cycles we depend on. What little we know about the Pearl River highlights its role in ecological processes and habitat for a diversity of organisms. There are numerous untold species of which we are unaware or do not understand because we lack information. Baseline surveys are essential and cannot be completed in time for an adequate Environmental Impact Assessment to be drafted by the scheduled release date.

Jackson has a less than desirable reputation on the national and international stage. From violence to lack of water infrastructure, Jackson checks just about every box in a list of qualities to avoid, yet no large-scale solutions have been proposed. Cities such as St. Louis, Memphis, Austin, San Antonio, Wilmington, and many more have invested in their rivers as an attraction. A space for enjoying nature and promote healthy living. Our Pearl would be a great space to have a river walk along new and improved levees. One of our cherished green spaces in the City already exists along the Pearl. LeFleur's Bluff State Park is a special place to many and available to everybody. Alternative C will permanently damage this beloved public space and biodiverse urban refugia.

If funding is available for infrastructure, first and foremost Jacksonians should have uninterrupted access to clean water. If Alternative C is chosen, sewage laden waters will be pooled in Jackson. Pooled waters high in nitrogen become eutrophic and putrid as available nutrients are no longer light-limited. I fear this reality has not been conveyed to my community. Further, impoundments raise the elevation of the water surface, which could lead to more flooding in neighborhoods with Pearl River tributaries. Many of these neighborhoods already suffer with broken water infrastructure. Of additional concern is the fate of the water facility at Waterworks Curve.

Many non-profits and government agencies, including the USACE, have taken the bold moves to remove dams from America's rivers. I request that you select an alternative that will make Jackson more secure through flood risk management without compromising its natural resources, and further displacing T&E species. I request that you focus on solving problems with the existing water infrastructure. I request that you make our beautiful Pearl a greenway open to everyone. I request that you raise and repair levees while leaving thousands of acres of wetlands

and miles of river intact.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment

Audrey Harrison

From: [Barbara Lee](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake Project
Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2023 8:28:07 AM

Dear Colonel Christopher Klein,

I would like to express my concern for destroying the park and habitat. Please consider Alternatives A and A1.

Thank you.

Barbara Lee

Sent from my iPhone

1522 Lowerline St.,
New Orleans, LA 70118
September 5, 2018

Major General Richard G. Kaiser
Commander, Mississippi Valley Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1400 Walnut Street
Vicksburg, MS 39180

Re: Integrated Draft Feasibility and Environmental Impact Statement; Pearl River Basin, MS,
Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds and Rankin Counties, MS.

Dear General Kaiser,

I have reviewed Appendix C , "Environmental Evaluation of Hazardous, Toxic, and Radiological Waste (HTRW) Sites". This section addresses the contaminated sites within the project area for the proposed "One Lake" Development (Alternative C). Of concern, are the various sites with contaminated sediments/soils containing known toxic Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) and heavy metals, within and adjacent to the project boundaries (Appendix C, figure 1). Please include these comments in the Public Record for this project.

2.1 Lefleurs Landing Site (Jefferson Street Landfill):

Lefleurs Landing is a 45-acre site located on a point bar on the western (Hinds County) side of the Pearl River in Jackson, Mississippi at river mile 288. The entire landfill is located within the 100-year floodplain of the Pearl River.

- "Some residual contamination may remain as the dissolved benzene concentration in one monitoring well was 3.8 parts per million (ppm), which exceeded the then current regulatory standard of 1.4 ppm. PAHs are typical constituents of creosote used for treating or preserving wood." (Append. C).
- "AllenES believes that groundwater may be interacting with debris and leachate. It should be noted that the landfill does not have any formal engineering controls (i.e. liner, cap, leachate collection system, etc.) to prevent the offsite migration of leachate and compounds of concern." (Append. C).

According to Appendix C (Fig 1), the Jefferson St. Landfill would be located on the western shoreline of the proposed lake shown in Alternative C. It is, therefore, very probable that leachate would contaminate the shoreline of "One Lake." This issue should be addressed in detail in the revised draft EIS.

2.2 Gallatin Street Dump Site:

It is approximately 117 acres in area and was active from 1963 to 1980. The site was operated as a municipal dump by the City of Jackson, within the Pearl River floodplain.

- "It is not a constructed landfill and had no original engineering controls, such as a leachate collection system, cap or liner, to prevent leachate from migrating offsite and interacting with groundwater." (Appendix C).
- "There were no restrictions on the type or quantity of wastes that were accepted."
- "No hazardous waste program was either in place or enforced by the City or the State with

regards to the types of wastes accepted. The landfill was closed and is of no formal use to the City at this time."

- "The Phase II ESA report indicated that groundwater samples collected from borings placed within the landfill found leachate with concentrations of cadmium, lead and nickel which were above regulatory standards". (Appendix C).
- "A high pressure, natural gas transmission main also crosses the site. It runs in a line generally west to east. There is a 30 foot permanent easement associated with this line."
- "Due to the landfill's location on a cut-bank with a history of erosion issues and the presence of major utilities, AllenES believes the subject site is a potential threat for release of leachate and debris to the Pearl River."
- "Cadmium, lead, and nickel were detected in concentrations above the Maximum Contaminate Levels (MCLs) established under the Safe Drinking Water Act for these parameters. The Aquaterra report recommended further leachate and groundwater investigations."

Based on the evidence listed in the HTRW Appendix C, and Figure 1, Alternative C would form a lake, which would encroach on the Gallatin St. Dump Site. The proximity to and location in the proposed "One Lake" will require a complete evaluation and removal of all contaminated debris and sediments from the site. Otherwise, the dump will continue to contaminate the water and lake bottom with Chemicals of Concern (COC). A detailed proposal for evaluation of the COCs at this site must be included in a revised Draft EIS.

2.3 Gulf States Creosoting Company Site:

This is a 141-acre site that was operated by Gulf States Creosoting from 1929 to the mid 1950s. American Creosote Co. also operated at the site from 1958-1960. "The property extends from the swampland and oxbow lakes along the Pearl River at river mile 290 to river mile 292." (Appendix C). There is a likelihood that surface waters carried contaminants into the wetlands downslope prior to the property being leveed. There has been insufficient testing for COCs at this site.

There was a preliminary contaminant testing in 2003. No later study is cited in Appendix C. "... sediment samples collected from the oxbow slough located west of the Gulf States Creosoting Company property exhibited elevated levels of constituents used in the wood preserving industry [PAHs]. Creosote was observed on the surface of the waters in the adjacent swamp named "Creosote Slough". . . the sampling program did not identify the nature and the extent of the creosote residuals. Creosote residuals were also found in the limited soil sampling performed in the historical areas of the treatment operations."

This area would be incorporated into the "One Lake" footprint (Fig. 1). Additional surface samples and sediment cores must be taken to quantify the heavy metals and PAHs concentration at the surface and at depth. Any study should extend downslope from the Gulf States Creosoting site into the Pearl River floodplain. It appears that this site has had less study than the Sonford Site but may have similar COC..

2.4 Sonford Products Site:

It is a six-acre site and was operated as a wood treatment facility from 1972 until 1985. It has been designated Sonford Products Superfund Site Operable Unit 2 (OU2) (an EPA Superfund Site). "The site was placed on the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) in 2007". From 1972 to 1985, the Site housed two separate chemical processing plants operated by Sonford International and Sonford Products (EPA, 2010). In 2005, soil samples were taken and had high levels of PAHs, derived from creosote production."

It is unclear whether the wetland area downslope was properly investigated to determine whether PAHs and heavy metals had migrated to the Pearl River. This site should be completely reevaluated with the focus on the levels of COC (including heavy metals and PAHs) and their effect on the environment.

2.4.3 Various Automotive Junkyards:

Apparently no testing of soils at these junkyards has been taken. "However, no specific studies or information regarding environmental conditions at these automotive junkyards are readily available. For this reason, investigation and characterization of these sites would be recommended prior to the initiation of project activities." (Appendix C).

Mercury has been a significant contaminant associated with automotive junkyards with leakage from mercury switches common on older auto models. Each junkyard shown on Figure 1 could have had eroded soils which could move heavy metal contaminants into the Pearl River flood plain. These areas must be tested for mercury in soils within and downslope of the each junkyard. The LA segment of the Pearl River has fish consumption advisory for mercury-contaminated fish. MDEQ has also reported fish with elevated levels of methyl-mercury below the Ross Barnett Reservoir.

Summary of issues of concern:

- 1). All contamination sites shown in Figure 1, should be studied to determine the present concentration levels of contaminants of concern (COC). A study must focus on PAHs and heavy metals. Detailed cleanup plans should be included in a revised Draft EIS.
- 2). The original evaluation of several contaminated sites was to reduce direct impacts to the human population. While this was a primary goal, the investigation must expand to consider the total environmental impact to organisms living in the wetlands and waters surrounding the Pearl River. There are short term (acute) and long term (chronic) impacts on benthic organisms, which now populate the wetlands and will live in the proposed "One Lake." New studies should require a more protective approach when applying toxic chemical impact standards.
- 3). Any contaminated area identified (item1) should be isolated from the ecosystem around and in "One Lake". A remediation plan to remove contaminated soils/ sediments and the containment of toxic leachate should be included.
- 4). Future migration of COCs must be investigated and monitoring wells sited to determine appropriate future action to control groundwater plumes for each contaminated site.
- 5). Cleanup/remediation costs of each contaminated site must be included in the cost of each alternative and included in the revised Draft EIS. This is important when calculating the project benefit/cost ratio. The Draft EIS has no estimates of cleanup costs. Many of the sites have not been evaluated or tested for contaminants.

The Draft EIS is inadequate, since it does not address, in enough detail, the cleanup of the all the contaminated areas within the project area. The revised draft must include a detailed plan for remediation to avoid long-term, adverse environment-impacts to the ecosystem of the Pearl River and its floodplain.

Thank you for opportunity to comment on the above project.



Barry Kohl Ph.D.
Geologist, bkohl40@cs.com

Enclosure: Appendix C, Fig. 1.

cc: Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District
EPA, Region 4

USF&WS, Lafayette, LA

References:

- Rankin-Hinds PRFD Control District, 2018. Integrated Draft Feasibility and Environmental Impact Statement; Pearl River Basin, MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds and Rankin Counties, MS.
- Appendix C, "Environmental Evaluation of Hazardous, Toxic, and Radiological Waste (HTRW) Sites. Prepared by Allen Engineering, 2014. In Rankin-Hinds PRFD Control District, 2018, Draft EIS.
- EPA 2010. Remedial Investigation/Focused Feasibility Study Work Plan. Volume 1 - Technical Approach. SSonford Products Site OU2 Flowood, Rankin County, Mississippi



1522 Lowerline St.
New Orleans, LA 70118
June 29, 2023

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Re: Scoping Meetings, Pearl River Basin Flood Risk Management Project (PRBFRM)

Dear Col. Klein,

As part of the scoping process, I have comments to submit for the Pearl River Basin Flood Risk Management project (PRBFRM) regarding flooding of Jackson Mississippi.

The USFWS submitted comments under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act dated Jan. 2020, and I agree with many of the agency's observations and recommendations. I also agree with the LDWF that riverine impacts should be fully mitigated, and mitigation should occur within the Pearl River Basin. There is additional discussion in our section entitled "mitigation."

1. Building in a known floodplain:

The reason for most of the flood damage in Jackson MS is that private property owners and the municipality were allowed to build in the Pearl River floodplain. Floodplains have naturally formed over hundreds of years or more to absorb infrequent floods. Geologists recognize the morphologic characteristics of floodplains and recommend avoiding building permanent structures there. Evidently, Mississippi geologists did not convince elected officials to avoid permitting structures in the Pearl River floodplain. They are now asking the federal government to subsidize a project to correct their failures of protecting the public.

There are non-structural alternatives proposed as a solution: A: Relocating structures (buy out and relocating); A1: Additional non-structural measures such as elevation and flood proofing. Newspapers state that a private developer plans an additional housing development in the floodplain.

2. Relying on the Ross Barnett Reservoir (RBR) for flood protection:

The earthen dam and reservoir was built for recreation and drinking water supply for Jackson MS. It was not designed for flood prevention of Jackson. During the April 1979 flood event, "the potential for dam failure was very real since the Ross Barnett project was never designed or built for flood control purposes but for water supply and recreation." (USFWS, 2018).

On December 22, 2020 the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District (PRVWSD) issued an RFQ # 20-900-7-99 to seek professional engineering services from consultant firms to inspect the Ross Barnett Dam. "The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Dam Safety Division has identified studies and planning needed to comprehensively address and prioritize repairs and improvements needed to reduce potential consequences to life and property." . . . "The dam, spillways, marina dikes, water intakes and the upper roadway were constructed between 1960 and 1962." . . . The dam/spillway has operated satisfactorily for nearly 60 years, but upgrades, repairs and/or rehabilitation may be necessary to bring the facilities into compliance with current standards and regulations."

Has an engineering firm been selected by the PRVWSD? If so, has a dam inspection been completed? The results of the Ross Barnett safety inspection must be included in the DEIS. The dam is a critical structure that was built more than 60 years ago and its integrity has a significant influence on the proposed project.

3. Low-head Dams (Weirs):

A new weir is planned for the PRBFRM to maintain water levels in the new lake. Weirs have had a very negative impact on the Pearl River. There have been many deaths from drowning at the Bogue Chitto and Pools Bluff sills (low-head dams). Since 2012 there have been eight drownings related to rollovers at the Bogue Chitto and Pools Bluff sills (low-head dams)

A solution is to construct a rock ramp downstream and adjacent to the existing sills. If properly designed, a rock ramp would allow migration of fish (e.g. threatened Gulf sturgeon) and other critical species to migrate upriver to spawn, while eliminating the rollover downstream of the sill. The roll-overs are a hazard to swimmers and fishers. According to NOAA, between 2018 and 2022 there have been 149 drownings nationwide at lowhead dams.

There has been a successful program in Minnesota to provide fish passage by building rock ramps at low-head dams (Aadland, 2010). These newly created rapids allow lake sturgeon to spawn upstream and also eliminates rollovers. In 2003, there was a hydrologic study at Pools Bluff Sill (Kohl, 2003) and a design of a rock ramp at the sill (McCorquodall, Georgiou, and Giron, 2003; Fig. 1, included). This design was specific to Pools Bluff sill. The rock ramp would not effect upstream water levels nor require alteration of the sill. A similar rock ramp could be built at Bogue Chitto sill eliminating drownings from roll overs. It converts the rollovers to downstream rapids.

A rock ramp design should be considered for any new weir built at part of the PRBFRM project. Also, eliminating the roll overs at Bogue Chitto and Pools Bluff sills would be a great mitigation project for the Corps, since the Pearl River Navigation Project has been responsible for so many deaths.

4. Project Impacts to the Lower Pearl River:

The environmental and economic impacts on the Lower Pearl River Basin were not discussed in the previous 2018 study. The lower basin has seven Natural and Scenic Streams most of which are part of critical habitat for the threatened Gulf Sturgeon.

The original DEIS did not address impacts to the Lower Pearl River Basin. Now, because of the WRDA 2018 a study of the downstream impacts of the PRBFRM is required. “. . . consistent with section 1176 of WRDA 2018, the DEIS will assess potential downstream impacts to the Pearl River Basin.” (DoD, Federal Register, May 18, 2023).

Lower Basin impacts include, 1) changes in salinity in the Pearl River Delta and sound impacting oysters, 2) Low water flow during droughts, 3) Toxic contaminants mobilized by dredging for the PRBFRM project, and 4) adverse economic impacts to tour boat companies by lowered river levels.

a. Low water flow:

All the downstream issues should be fully evaluated in the new DEIS. Citizens who attended the Slidell scoping meeting in May expressed their concerns about low-water flow during periods of drought and impacts on tourism, fishing and commercial oyster harvesting. Of particular concern, were economic impacts to the tourism industry of St. Tammany Parish.

b. Toxic metals:

There will be mobilization of toxic compounds downstream by dredging contaminated sites in the project area (e.g. PAHs, creosote, heavy metals). The Clean Water Act requires that no contaminated sediments are dredged and discharged into the Pearl River or tributaries. (see attached letter Kohl (2018). Any sediment tested for contaminants should meet the NOAA screening criteria for the ER-M for fresh water (see Buchman (2008).

“Sediment testing for contaminants is recommended in areas proposed for use as borrow or that would be flooded by the project, especially those around known contaminated areas” USFWS (2020).

c. Mercury fish advisories:

There are also several mercury-in-fish advisories issued by the Louisiana Dept. of Health, for the Pearl River south of the MS/LA state line. Will the dredging and resuspension of mercury contaminated sediments increase the level of methylation in the Pearl River? This should be investigated and the data provided in the DEIS (see Kohl (2018) letter to Vicksburg Corps, attached).

5. Mitigation:

Consider a rock ramp, adjacent and downstream of the new weir. For an example, see the study by Kohl (2003) and McCorquodall et. al (2003). As mitigation for environmental damage by the PRBFRM, the Corps should consider adding rock ramps or removal of Bogue Chitto and Pools Bluff sills. The West Pearl River Navigation Channel has been deauthorized because of lack of use and the sills are no longer an essential part of the waterway.

- 1). The rock ramps would assist the threatened Gulf Sturgeon pass the low-head dam to spawn up river.
- 2). A rock ramp would also prevent the rollover effect below the dam, by adding a rapids downstream. The rollovers at PBS and BCS have killed eight recreational boaters and fishers over the last 10 years at both sills.
- 3). Pooles Bluff sill (PBS) is 350 feet wide and bisected by the LA / MS state boundary so both states are legally responsible for past and future deaths.

According to the latest TV reports, the danger of rollover drowning is not properly conveyed to downstream boaters. Both states know of the danger and are therefore required to post visible warning signs up-stream of the low head dam. The warnings were not clearly posted before the last drowning deaths at the sill. Consequently, a suit was filed in 2022 against the USACE, by the family of a victim drowned at the PBS in 2020.

“The Mitigation Policy also provides explicit guidance regarding formulation of the Service position regarding a given project: “The Service may recommend the ‘no project’ alternative for those projects or other proposals that do not meet all of the [Service] criteria and where there is likely to be a significant fish and wildlife resource loss.” Also, “Mitigation should be implemented concurrent with construction.” USFWS (2020).

Mitigation money should be kept in a separate fund so that money is available during and after construction.

6. Monitoring:

At a minimum, there must be a comprehensive monitoring program to measure any changes to the physical/ chemical parameters of the project including leachate from chemical dumps, landfills and dredged sediment. Changes in hydrology in the Pearl River, as a result of the PRBFRM, needs to be monitored long term. Also, a discussion of the Corps proposed monitoring plan must be included in the Draft EIS for the PRBFRM. A funding source for the life of the project must be discussed.

Conclusion:

The Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) for the PRBFRM project must be opposed because it continues to entice development in a floodplain. The USFWS 2020 recommendations must be included in the new DEIS. Also, issues addressed above should be evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. It is good policy to support non-structural alternatives such as relocating flooded structures or buy outs. The only long-term solution is to move people and structures to higher ground, outside the Pearl River floodplain. Thank you for considering my comments.

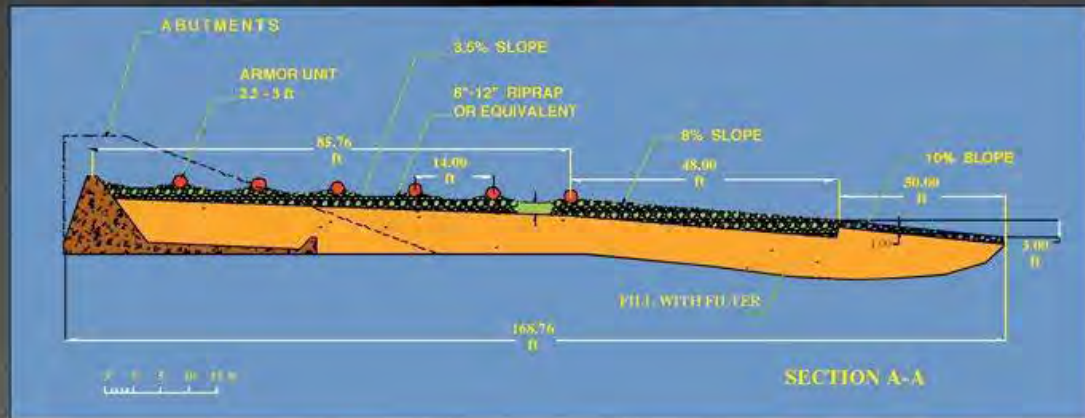
Barry Kohl, Ph.D.
Geologist
Tulane University

cc:
EPA Region 4, Atlanta, GA
USFWS Lafayette, LA
LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA

References:

- Aadland, Luther P., 2010. Reconnecting Rivers: Natural Channel Removal of Dams and Fish Passage.. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Ecological Resources Stream Habitat Program. www.mndnr.gov/eco/streamhab/reconnecting_rivers.html
- Buchman, M. F., 2008. NOAA Screening Quick Reference Tables NOAA OR&R Report 08-1, Seattle WA, Office of Response and Restoration Division, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 34 pages. <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/environmental-restoration/environmental-assessment-tools/squirt-cards.html>
- DoD, 2023. Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi. Federal Register, May 18, 2023.
- Kohl, B., 2018. Letter to Major General Richard G. Kaiser, Commander, Mississippi Valley Division regarding the Integrated Draft Feasibility and Environmental Impact Statement; Pearl River Basin. Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds and Rankin Counties, MS.
- Kohl, B., 2003. Pearl River Fishway: Part 2. Technical Report on the Proposed Fish Bypass at Poole's Bluff Sill, Pearl River, Louisiana-Mississippi. *in* Pearl River Fishway, 17 pp., 24 Figs., 5 Tables, 7 photos.
- McCorquodall, J. A., I. Georgiou, and E. Giron, 2003. Preliminary design and Assessment of a Fish Bypass in the Pearl River at the Poole's Bluff Sill. *in* Pearl River Fishway: Appendix., Report Dec. 24, 2003, 10 pp., 11 Figs.
- USFWS, 2020. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report (FWCA) to the USACE (Vicksburg District) for the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Hinds and Rankin

Rock Ramp Fishway Design: Poole's Bluff Sill



1. The purpose of the proposed fishway (rock ramp) is to provide gulf sturgeon and other fish access to spawning beds upstream of the Poole's Bluff sill during migration seasons, by providing water velocities within their swimming capability.
2. The proposed structure also provides improved safety conditions without sacrificing pleasure and fishing boat navigation.
3. Navigation conditions at the structure will be accommodated by a 100 ft wide navigation lane within a well marked designated segment located in the center of the River. Although armor rocks may protrude slightly above the sill on either side of the navigation lane, armor rocks in this section of the ramp will not protrude above the sill. The navigable width will be designated by markers at the structure and early warning signs located upstream of the structure. Safety of navigation over the designated section of the ramp will be improved by the elimination of the submerged hydraulic jump and the associated eddy.
4. Safety at the structure will also be improved. The rock ramp provides safer conditions and eliminates dangerous circulation patterns downstream of the sill that are generated by a plunging jet at certain flows.

Design by Drs. Alex McCorquodale and Ioannis Georgiou

Fig. 1. Rock ramp design for Pools Bluff Sill (McCorquodal et al., 2003)

From: [Bob Ricks](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pearl River
Date: Friday, May 26, 2023 5:43:49 PM

Please consider the negative effects upon the Pearl River by any considerations of the “one lake Project”. The wants of a few developers and investors should not affect the quality of the river and the property and livelihoods of those downriver.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bonnie](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] OneLake Project objections
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 7:38:35 AM

Colonel Christopher Klein
Army Corps of Engineers
Vicksburg Corps District

Please do NOT proceed on the One Lake Plan in Jackson. One Lake seems likely to damage other places downstream (like Byram was in the most recent floods) and make more problems south of Jackson.

Alternatives A and A1 do not destroy LeFleur Bluff or damage a crucial habitat for many animals. I walk there regularly, and I always enjoy the natural scenery and see beautiful trees, plants and animals on my visits.

I urge you to hear my request for NO LAKE (ELIMINATE Alternative C) and use Alternative A or A1 instead. Thank you for your urgent attention to the matter of saving LeFleur's Bluff.

Bonnie L Cooper
601-270-0488
bonfire@comcast.net
Hinds County resident

From: [Brian Perry](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment from Brian Perry
Date: Thursday, May 25, 2023 1:53:15 PM

Please consider this public comment in support of the Pearl River flood risk management plan commonly referred to as the "One Lake" plan.

I have lived in the Belhaven neighborhood of Jackson for nearly thirty years and for much of that time either worked or attended college in the downtown Jackson area. I am familiar through experience and history with the flooding issues around the Jackson area.

During these three decades I have also utilized the natural areas in the Jackson area Pearl River Basin, as well as both north and south of Hinds County. I specifically enjoy this area by canoe to experience our natural world and engage in fishing. I am aware of the protected species in the area and the familiar bends in the river harbour many wonderful memories. When various plans have been presented over the years, including the initial "Two Lakes" plan, I was skeptical of the plan. But with the adjustments to the "One Lake" plan as well as learning more about the project's impact to the Jackson area and how it mitigates disruption down stream, I have become convinced that this plan is environmentally responsible and necessary for flood mitigation, and it has the additional benefit of contributing to the Jackson economy and improve the community's quality of life.

I am in support of the "One Lake" plan and encourage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to approve this plan and move forward with implementing it as quickly as possible.

Thank you for considering my comment.

Brian Perry
1125 Poplar Blvd
Jackson, MS 39202

From: [Byron Almquist](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] public hearing at Slidell. May 23, 2023
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 2:17:33 PM

Sir: I attended the public hearing at Slidell High School yesterday evening. I thought I was going to learn about alternatives that the Corps was proposing for flooding of portions of Jackson, MS. In past hearings, the sponsoring agency provided considerable information about a proposed project using graphics and perhaps handouts. I expected the same for this project.

Instead opening remarks were of some bureaucratic mumbo jumbo about authorizations, clauses, etc. Then a single graphic of the Pearl River Basin was displayed which was outlined by an oval circle. At some point, there was a list of three alternatives but no details provided. Nor any details about what impact each alternative would have on the lower Pearl River Basin. And then the moderator asked for comments from those in attendance. In contrast to most public hearings, there was no time limit as to how long each could speak. With few exceptions, speakers did not mention the flooding in Jackson. Instead there were complaints and comments about local waterways. And then the "hearing" ended !!!!!!!!!!!

For a decade or more, I have heard of a project to reduce flooding in Jackson but was actually a scheme to create waterfront property. I have heard Andy Whitehurst give a comprehensive presentation which included a considerable number of specifics on how the project would be detrimental on all sorts of flora and fauna and equally as important not solve the flooding problem. I expected an equally comprehensive presentation on how this project would work wonders for the residents of Jackson. Instead there was nothing presented!!!!

Surely the Corps has the resources to be able to make a factual presentation about the project with all of its impacts up and down the Pearl River Basin. It was a waste of time for dozens of residents who attended this weird, really weird one of a kind "public hearing".

.....Byron Almquist

From: candis1@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Candis Harbison](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Sunday, June 11, 2023 3:09:57 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

You're engineers! You're supposed to think long-term! The One Lake project is short-term and won't fix the problem. Implement ideas that benefit everybody, not just the landowners that would make money off new lake-front property. Protect floodplains, buy out vulnerable homes, flood-proof buildings. Use your engineering ingenuity not your political instincts.

I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Candis Harbison
Panama City, FL 32401
candis1@comcast.net

From: [Carol Raborn](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One lake
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 6:03:27 PM

Please reject the Alternative C One Lake project.

I think the risks to downriver communities outweighs the benefits.

Thanks

Carol Raborn
Edwards MS

From: [Caroline McIntosh](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Save those on the Pearl south of Jackson!
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 6:27:37 PM

Dear Colonel Christopher Klein,

I think that email about covers what I have to say. The Pearl River's rapid rise and fall of the water increases shear stresses on the bank and increases erosion. This has caused steep banks with loss of the riparian zone and canopy. The eroded sediment covers shellfish, invertebrate, and fish habitats. Affecting endangered species and the over all biological community. Sediment TMDLs within the Pearl river basin call for continued BMPs and a reduction in non point source loading. The adding of the new lake would make variable flow events more erosive with more dramatic rise and fall of the flood waters. The loss of riparian zone increases light exposure causing a cascade of effects. Lack of canopy increases the temperature with the lack of shade from the loss of slow growth cypress and other vegetative bank protection. Hot waters drive up algal growth creating deil swings in the level of Dissolved Oxygen. Creating oxygen oversaturated water during the day when agal production is high, while at night the algae dies depleting oxygen levels to zero. These impacts have created eutrophic conditions and have had a negative impact to water quality, communities economies, recreation, Mississippi public waterways, and the destroys the biological community in our river. The down stream impacts can be felt as well; the health of the Mississippi Sound is near an all time low. Harmful algal blooms or HABs are happening with more frequency. The sound and river are exceeding state and federal water temperature standards. Those are state guidelines approved by the legislature. Oxygen levels in the sound drop out below the dissolved oxygen standards of 5mg/l frequently contributing to the anoxic dead zones. Standards also approved by the legislature. Beaches are closing with increased frequency from HABs and E. coli concentrations. Costing local communities millions. The Pearl river watershed is not a healthy watershed and is negatively impacting the states economy by the loss of tourism revenue, lack forward thinking Enviornmental justice litigation, reviving the oyster fishery has cost the state millions and will be taking 10 steps backward, and degradation of fisheries and waterways. Biologically this can have detrimental impacts on the spawn grounds of our endangered fish and shellfish.

Please DO NOT allow the One Lake project to be built and help us stop the eroding of banks and destruction of property down stream from Jackson. Lack of attention to The Environmental Justice Criteria, where all but 2 counties of our state qualify for at least 2 conditions, the cost of litigation to fight this One Lake, Will actually hurt the state more by taking away money that could go towards feeding, educating, housing and protections tax payers and Natural Resources.

Sincerely,
Caroline McIntosh
Chmc906@gmail.com

From: ckhurleyg@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Carolyn Griffing](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Kill One Lake!
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 2:14:07 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Our world is at a tipping point and does not need further destruction of the environment.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Griffing
Franklinton, LA 70438
ckhurleyg@cs.com

Carroll Campbell
347 Big Lake Rd.
Biloxi, MS 39531
(229) 697-3026

Dear Sir or Madam:

According to Riverkeeper.org, 'The local Levee Board's preferred plan for City of Jackson flood risk management is the "One Lake" Plan (Alternative C), which would dredge, widen, and deepen 10 miles of the Pearl River, removing 1860 acres of riverside wetlands and swamps, to create a new lake impoundment 9 miles south of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. American Rivers listed the Pearl River as number 3 on [2023 America's Most Endangered Rivers](#) due to the potential destruction that would be caused by the "One Lake" Plan.'

Alternative C must be rejected because of its destructiveness at a time when we should be making greater efforts to conserve and protect the habitat we have left.

THIS PROJECT IS FOR THE PURPOSES OF REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT, AND NOT FOR PURPOSES OF FLOOD PROTECTION.

According to the Louisiana Fish and Wildlife Service, which has long opposed this plan, "This 'One Lake' project would dredge and dam the Pearl River to create new waterfront property. A new dam will be constructed to contain the dredged 1,900-acre impoundment, and the dredged material will be used to build new waterfront property for real estate development putting more people in harm's way. The project will dredge 10-miles of the Pearl River, destroying 2,500 acres of wetland habitat and disturbing eight highly toxic sites with no plan to protect public health."

Using taxpayer dollars to create waterfront property to benefit a tiny number of individuals at the expense of the Pearl River, its habitat, and wild areas and human populations downstream, as well as the [Mississippi](#) Sound, is beyond absurd. As there are alternatives, and if there is a genuine concern about flood protection, the Corps should make every effort to pursue an alternative that will not result in such destruction and endangerment of human health and wellbeing, or harm to our remaining habitat.

THIS PROJECT IS EXPENSIVE, AMOUNTING TO A REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FINANCED BY TAXPAYERS. Riverkeeper.org provides the following figures on its costs:

- \$8 million in taxpayer money already spent on feasibility studies
- Potential \$95 million in state loans and grants to the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District ([HB 1631 failed 2018 Legislative session](#))
- \$133,770,000 federal authorization (not appropriation) to the project (2007 Water Resources Development Act)
- Increased property taxes in and around Jackson ([HB 1585, 2017 MS Legislative session](#), gave the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood Control and Drainage District authority to raise

property taxes for owners they determine are "directly or indirectly benefited by the project.")

- Potential additional costs to taxpayers for the ongoing maintenance of the lake and dam
- Costs to relocate and/or rebuild infrastructure impacted by the project such as roads, bridges, storm/waste water, and landfills
- Questionable flood control benefits and the potential to increase flooding in other areas of the watershed

THIS PROJECT WILL RESULT IN THE DISTURBANCE OF TOXIC WASTE THAT WILL HARM HABITAT AND PEOPLE DOWNSTREAM, AS WELL AS THE MISSISSIPPI SOUND. According to Riverkeeper.org:

- **Hazardous Toxic Waste Sites on City of Jackson property:** 8 dangerous waste sites are located in the proposed project area including 3 identified as major sites of concern. This project will disturb these waste sites and cause contamination of the river as well as downstream of dredging and construction: 1. Gulf States Creosoting Company Site (hatched red in NE corner of map): 141-acre site operated as wood treating facility for 25 years. The DEIS states that the creosote residuals occurring in the sediment cover a broad area and **that the creosote sloughs "present a continuing source of release of creosote chemicals to the environment and to the City of Jackson's drinking water." 2. Jefferson Street Landfill (hatched black on west side of river): 45-acre plot of land where City of Jackson operated an unregulated landfill dating back to early 1900s. Site Assessments have found Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons and benzene concentrations above regulatory limits. 3. Gallatin Street Dump Site (hatched black farther south): 117-acre site operated as unpermitted City of Jackson municipal dump for 20 years. Groundwater samples collected from borings placed within the landfill found leachate with concentrations of cadmium, lead, and nickel which were well above regulatory standards. Visual inspection showed leachate from the landfill seeping out of the soils along the bank of the Pearl River.

Hazards associated with removal of waste sites: According to Riverkeeper.org, "The One Lake's extensive dredging will re-suspend contaminated sediments and expose people, fish and wildlife to high levels of toxins. The DEIS states that the environmental impacts associated with their removal could include, "the temporary addition of large additions of sediment to the Pearl River, the release or exacerbation of current releases of leachate and/or solid and hazardous substances to the groundwater and/or surface water..." The DEIS does not adequately detail the remediation efforts that will be required during removal and does not provide documentation to validate their total cost estimate of \$8 million. \$8 million is an unrealistic estimate of the cost of removing and remediating 8 Hazardous Toxic Waste sites. In striking comparison, one 22-acre EPA Superfund remediation project at Southeastern Wood Preserving site in Canton, MS will alone cost over \$45 million."

Beyond the cost, we have to consider effects on habitat, wildlife, and the MS Sound, where there is already a dead zone, which results in fish kills and other harms, that forms each summer that has been compared in size to the state of Rhode Island and Delaware combined, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/below->

[average-gulf-of-mexico-dead-zone-measured](#)). The Corps has already been sued over openings of the Bonnet Carre Spillway that resulted in devastating losses of marine mammals and the destruction of oyster beds by toxic freshwater effluent flowing from agricultural sites along the Mississippi River into our Sound. With this proposal, the Corps says it will send even more toxins downstream of the Pearl into the Sound, which is preposterous—and again, this is so a tiny number of individuals can benefit financially from the artificial waterfront property that will be created. The Sound, however, belongs to the entire nation.

PLAN C WILL BRING HARMS TO THE PEOPLE OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI.

According to Riverkeeper.org:

- **Increased flash flooding in Jackson neighborhoods:** The proposed elevation of the water that would be pooled at the new One Lake weir is 258' or 8 feet higher than the water level of the current weir at Jackson Waterworks (250'). According to the [DEIS \(Appendix C, pages 32-36\)](#), the new impoundment water level of 258' will **increase the flood profiles along all 8 Jackson tributaries**. The City of Jackson storm drain and tributary channel system is currently not capable of efficiently managing stormwater flash flooding. Heavy rains often cause Lynch Creek to overtop its banks, flooding neighborhood streets, businesses and homes. Due to the deterioration of century-old sewer infrastructure, this stormwater typically contains raw sewage and other contaminants. **The current flash flooding events in these Jackson neighborhoods will not be helped by the One Lake project and will instead be exacerbated as the storm drain runoff is slowed down by the backed-up tributaries.
- **City drinking water supply:** "Other immediate effects that may result from construction of the proposed project could include a temporary loss of the secondary water supply intake for the City of Jackson. Jackson utilizes an existing water treatment plant which is located on the Pearl River at a location scheduled for dredging and development of the "Channel Improvement/Weir/Levee" alternative. The dredging of sediments and subsurface soils in the Pearl River could potentially increase the turbidity of the surface waters to levels unacceptable for human consumption; therefore, the City of Jackson would need to evaluate temporary water supply alternatives during the duration of dredging and construction activities." ([AllenES Environmental Evaluation of Hazardous, Toxic and Radiological Waste \(HTRW\) Sites](#), Sept 2014, p.16)

THE ONE LAKE PROJECT WOULD HAVE DELETERIOUS EFFECTS ON SPECIES UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT. The following information is from the [pearlriverkeeper.org](#) website:

- Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) is listed on both the federal and state threatened species lists. This species conducts anadromous migrations that will be impacted by further impoundments on the Pearl River. Current USFWS project discussions underway to remove the sills at Poole's Bluff will allow for increased Gulf sturgeon migration upriver to the project area. [In spring 2021, a Gulf sturgeon, originally tagged by a USFWS Baton Rouge team in 2017, was detected in the Pearl River One Lake project area near LeFleurs Bluff State Park above the Jackson](#)

[Waterworks weir by a tag reader from a University of Southern Mississippi Gulf sturgeon telemetry study.](#)

- The ringed map turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*) and Pearl River map turtle (*Graptemys pearlensis*) are endemic to the Pearl River system and found nowhere else in the world. They use the Pearl's sandbars for laying eggs, and its logs for basking and feeding areas. The ringed map turtle is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. [According to FWS](#), "if the proposed reservoir is completed, it would likely result in the extirpation of the known ringed map turtle population (south of the current reservoir)". Recent survey data from Dr. Will Selman indicates that "ringed sawbacks can occur in great abundance along the One Lake Project Area and recruitment/reproduction are better in this stretch than what has been observed in other ringed sawback populations." Further, the Pearl map turtle is currently proposed to be listed under the Endangered Species Act (i.e., the final step prior to the species officially being listed), as this species has undergone a dramatic population decline throughout much of its range over the last 50 years. Populations of this species are lower than the currently listed ringed sawback, and they occur in low abundance in the One Lake impact area. Pearl map turtles also appear to be very sensitive to hydrologic changes, and therefore, the species will likely be extirpated (i.e., go locally extinct) from the One Lake impact area.
- Damage to critical endangered species habitat including habitats used by the state endangered crystal darter (*Crystallaria asperella*).

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY ALSO CITES A DANGER TO BIRDS:

- The Pearl River provides resting and feeding areas for migratory birds that cross the Gulf of Mexico. LeFleur's Bluff State Park has been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Audubon Mississippi. "The Pearl River is the stronghold of the swallow-tailed kite, a bird that I've studied for 30 years", said Jennifer Coulson, president of Orleans Audubon Society. "These graceful birds of prey need a healthy river to survive. Swallow-tailed kites bathe and drink on the river. They feed on dragonflies and mayflies...and these aquatic insects can accumulate heavy metals and other toxins that are discharged into the river. Reduced flow caused by One Lake will increase toxin concentrations in the Pearl." (Riverkeeper.org)

THE ONE LAKE PROJECT WILL RESULT IN FOREST AND WETLAND LOSSES THAT WILL FURTHER RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES THESE HABITATS PROVIDE. Again, riverkeeper.org has provided the details:

- **FLOOD PLAIN DEVELOPMENT**
The One Lake project would bulldoze riverside forests, dredge and dig 25 million cubic yards of riverbanks to elevate 1861 acres and get them ready for lakeshore development. These wetlands along the river provide vital ecosystem services such as natural flood protections for our community, groundwater replenishment, water purification and pollutant removal and natural erosion control. The loss of trees has the potential to impact air quality and consequently industry and government compliance with air quality discharge permits. This plan goes against the national trend of dam removal and wetlands protection.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS WILL RESULT AT A TIME WHEN DAMS ARE BEING DISMANTLED, AND THEIR DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT HAVE BECOME WELL-KNOWN. Details from Riverkeeper.org follow:

The environmental costs of river dams are well known, which is why so many are being removed across the US. The One Lake project is a throwback to a time when such impacts took a backseat to development. These impacts include:

- Damage to the existing river channel. Dredging approximately 10 miles of river would disrupt or obliterate currents, pools, sandbars, feeder bayous, streams and riparian and terrestrial habitat that support the river's ecosystem.
- Wetlands losses. The project would destroy hundreds of acres of bottomland hardwood forests and approximately 1900 acres of wetlands. The mature stands of cypress trees in the project area are of particular high value and would be impossible to adequately replace.

Importantly, the Pearl River is already providing the work of flood control; in fact, wetlands and forests are natural flood protection. From Riverkeeper.org:

- The Pearl River currently provides natural flood control, cleanses water before it reaches the Gulf coast and recharges our underground aquifers that supply water for drinking, irrigation, industry and wildlife and fisheries.

FISH, OYSTERS, AND OTHER WILDLIFE THAT LIVE IN THE MISSISSIPPI SOUND, DEEPLY IMPACTING THE ECOSYSTEM OF MY COASTAL HOME.

Riverkeeper.org describes how Mississippi governmental policy is against such projects due to the negative effects on our ecology, which is already severely compromised by the openings of the Bonnet Carre spillway, dead zone formation, overharvesting of seafood, and the BP Oil Spill:

- **Oyster industry:** The [MS Governor's Oyster Council Final Report](#) in June 2015 stated that challenges facing the oyster industry and threats to success include insufficient water quantity and "alterations in the amount and natural fluctuation of freshwater flow". The report Recommendations for Action or Research includes: "discourage freshwater depleting projects and educate decision-makers on impacts of major freshwater depleting projects."

"Approximately 97 percent of the commercially harvested oysters in Mississippi come from the reefs in the western Mississippi Sound, primarily from Pass Marianne, Telegraph and Pass Christian reefs. Mississippi's major oyster reefs are concentrated along the extreme western part of the Mississippi Sound, south of Pass Christian. The fresh water coming into the Sound from the Pearl River keeps the salinity at a favorable level for oysters." --Army Corps of Engineers

- **Potential negative impact to the MS seafood industry:** [\\$891 million yearly economic contributions of the Mississippi seafood industries](#), 9,491 jobs in the Mississippi seafood

industry, \$68.7 million yearly economic contributions of Mississippi oyster and crab industry

- **Gulf restoration projects:** \$50 million marsh, oyster and shoreline restoration project at [Heron Bay in Hancock County, MS](#) relies on freshwater flow from the East Pearl River
- **Sediment Transport:** The DEIS does not adequately address the changes to sediment transport that will impact the health of our Gulf Coast estuaries. As a river widens, its velocity slows and sediment drops out of the water. The sedimentation caused by the slow-moving water not only silts up the impoundment but also removes much of the sediment needed for healthy coastal estuaries.

LEFLEUR'S BLUFF STATE PARK WOULD BE SEVERELY IMPACTED BY THE ONE LAKE PROJECT

One of the most appalling aspects of this proposal is the resulting destruction of much of LeFleur's Bluff State Park. This state park is a beautiful bird sanctuary and wetland. Riverkeeper.org provides the following details:

A significant section of LeFleur's Bluff State Park, Jackson's equivalent to NYC's Central Park, would be permanently under water, according to the map published in the DEIS. One Lake would dramatically alter the hydrology of Mayes Lake and its hardwood forests and cypress brakes. The DEIS fails to account for the socioeconomic losses that would be incurred by the destruction of a portion of the LeFleur's Bluff State Park recreational resource. The DEIS also fails to take into account the potential land loss and bank sloughing along the MDOT mitigation bank at the [Famye Cook Natural Area](#).

According to riverkeeper.org, there has been inadequate public engagement and lack of public support: "The DEIS was released without significant documents that would allow for full public and scientific review including the Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act Report, the Biological Opinion and the Independent External Peer Review Report. The proponents failed to adequately engage and educate the public regarding the tentatively selected plan and the DEIS. Although the Drainage District was urged in writing by multiple organizations, including Pearl Riverkeeper and Gulf Restoration Network, to conduct their public meetings with open mic question and answer periods in order to allow for full discussions of the issues, the District decided to forego that option in favor of format that stifled public discourse."

There has, furthermore, been inadequate evaluation of the alternatives:

[General Accounting Office after-action report from the 1979 flood](#) stated that the main issues were a lack of early planning, Reservoir actions, and an improperly maintained West Bank Levee. The Drainage District should evaluate enhanced management of the Ross Barnett Reservoir for increased flood control. Improvements to current deteriorating Jackson-area stormwater systems should also be considered.

DEIS Alt B proposes 8 levee systems (NE, LeFleur, I20, South Jackson, Belhaven, Flowood, Fairgrounds, E Jackson) and \$311,609,907 worth of pumping plants. The [Aug 2018 USFWS](#)

[Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act Report](#) questions the need for these expensive pumps. The report is critical of the lake alternative and suggests that the sponsors re-evaluate a levee option. This plan would change the position of certain levees to alleviate narrow areas in the flood plain and would concentrate any dredging and removal of bed or bank materials to the already disturbed mowed area below U.S. Hwy 80. These suggestions, along with the USFWS's questioning of the need for expensive pumps, both point to using the existing floodplain as intended, and not removing nearly 3 square miles of forested wetlands to convert present floodplain to open water.

Yours truly,

/s/ Carroll Campbell

From: chcshropshire@evervactioncustom.com on behalf of [Cathy Shropshire](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Re: One Lake Project in Jackson, MS
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 6:11:46 PM

Dear Vicksburg District Commander Colonel Christopher Klein,

Here we go again. This project in one form or another has been around for over 20 years. If all these people are so worried about flooding in the Jackson area, why did they continue to encourage people to move into the flood plain and into harms way? I would have a lot more sympathy for them if they had shown real concern for people in harms way 40 years ago after the 1979 flood.

It baffles me that this project can even be considered when raw sewage continues to be found in the centerpiece of this economic development scheme. Are people really going to want to be that close to a open cesspool? Will workers have to wear Tyvek suits?

If construction moves forward, it terrifies me to think of the potential to make bridges unstable and expose biological waste. With 100s of bridges in the state in need of repair why would we intentionally destabilize more in such a congested area. Jackson has bridges now that are crumbling away.

The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District already plays a tricky roll in trying to "control" drought and flooding and now a new level of bureaucracy will be thrown in as they try to please everyone. Who is responsible for water management and maintenance and who will pay that cost?

Infrastructure money could be much better spent addressing water, sewer, and road issues in the capital city. There are start up businesses now who are struggling to open because they can't get water and sewer problems fixed. This can happen today instead of years from now when this project would be completed.

I am totally opposed to the one lake plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns.

Sincerely,
Cathy Shropshire
1572 Orchard Wood Rd Terry, MS 39170-9371
chcshropshire@bellsouth.net

From: [Charles Sherwood](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] The so called "One Lake Project"
Date: Tuesday, May 30, 2023 10:16:22 PM

This "One Lake" project will be another environmental disaster that the Army Corp of Eng. will participate in because of the political pressure it is under. The Corp of Eng should have the integrity to stand on the facts for its decision. If the NON-NFI alternatives actually provide BETTER flood control (the alleged reason for this project), then the NFI preferred solution (also called "Realty Investors Fantasy") should be rejected.

The Corp of Eng. should not hide behind political interests that plan to ignore known impacts to threatened species the NFI plan will cause. The Corp. should ask US Fish and Wildlife to investigate rumors now rampant that Miss Dept of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks officials are deliberately delaying the status change of some Pearl River species from "threatened" to "endangered" though they have been informed that the criteria have been met to change the designation. Fear of retaliation by the governor by those officials appear to be the operative factor. If these rumors are factual, does the Corp of Eng. care?? Or, does the Corp prefer to engage in willful blindness by not asking some hard questions with answers in writing from the responsible Mississippi officials??

It's an open secret where the interests who stand to make money off the NFI preferred project have drawn their political support. Does the Corp care if there are conflicts of interest among the parties responsible for supplying reliable information to the Corp?? Or, does the Corp just want to go through the process for the sake of appearances, though a decision has already been made?? Will you do what is expedient, make another environmental mess with the knowledge that MONEY and the making of it for a few well connected individuals is at the root of this circus??

CS

From: cpnragopan@aol.com
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] I strongly oppose the One Lake proposal, AKA option C
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 2:20:16 AM

It is hard to know where to start when it comes to the ghastly and appalling proposal that is One Lake, Option C

It is well known in this area that One Lake is a real estate development proposal disguised as flood control being pushed by a wealthy, politically connected individual. This is a chance for the USACE to prove that it is not beholden to individuals like this when selecting what projects to approve or not.

The USFWS calls One Lake the worst possible option for the environment. Other, far less damaging options are available.

I submit into this record the Louisiana Wildlife Federation resolution that I wrote and was passed unanimously by the LWF board in 2019. This resolution is in total opposition to One Lake, Option C.

<https://lawildlifefed.org/resolution/opposition-to-the-one-lake-project/> or go to the LWF website, resolutions page, if you have concerns about clicking on this link. There is plenty to choose from at the buffet of projected environmental damages from the One Lake project and some of it is in this resolution.

From the disturbance of toxic sites during dredging the river to the damage to the Louisiana Scenic Rivers system to the changing of the Pearl's hydrology and more, there is plenty for thoughtful individuals and organizations to be worried about.

For the purposes of this comment, I will laser focus on one aspect of this issue, LeFleur's Bluff State Park and the value of green spaces.

The stakes could not be higher for the Jackson Audubon Society, LeFleur's Bluff State Park (LBSP) and the Pearl River. For many years JAS has had a special relationship with this state park. LBSP has an impressive 211 bird species checklist with 75 documented breeders. First class and easily accessible birding and many other outdoor activities are at our fingertips. Fishing, camping, walking, hiking, birding are included in the outdoor activities. Local colleges use the park as a "living laboratory" for education.

LBSP has been the site of Jackson Audubon's 23-year monthly family bird walks, our 23-year Prothonotary Warbler (PROW) nest box project, and a five year scientific study that is documenting impressive breeding success in these beautiful and special birds of conservation concern. Last year, a national magazine article and a scientific paper were published about our study. JAS is about to begin a collaboration with renowned ornithologist Dr. Erik Johnson, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Delta. Our birds will be networked with other Prothonotary Warbler populations in a comprehensive research project. If this is not impressive enough, the park is a designated as a National Audubon Important Bird Area.

The prothonotary warbler is a species of conservation concern that has undergone a 40% decline since 1970. They are habitat specialists that prefer swampy forest habitat such as can be found in LeFleur's Bluff State Park. It is important to work with these birds now before numbers are low enough to trigger Endangered Species Act listing. At that point, the costs of recovery rise and the legal protections become more restrictive.

In addition, the Ringed Sawback Turtle is a beautiful small turtle that lives only in the Pearl River (nowhere else in the world) and is listed as a Federally threatened species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Ringed Sawbacks prefer fast running clean rivers with sandbars and snags for basking and nesting. Riprap is not their preferred habitat.

Normally, cities treasure and nurture their green spaces as an asset to the community but LBSP is in grave danger by the proposed USACE Option C, better known as One Lake. If this proposal is authorized and implemented, part of the park will literally be dredged away between the purple trail and the river. The whole character of the park would be ruined.

What does this say about a region, state, and city that professes to hold its natural heritage so dear?

The evidence is mounting quickly, immersion in nature has documented, profound benefits for mental and physical health. This is an incredible asset for a stressful, urbanized landscape like Jackson, Ms.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8125471/>

Jackson needs smart flood control such as Options A or A1 and not the crude sledgehammer approach of Option C, One Lake, and its questionable flood control benefits.

I urge you to reject One Lake, Option C and to implement a less damaging solution. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Charles Pfeifer
Jackson, Mississippi

Pea Riverkeeper 18:04

Pearl Riverkeeper, pearlriverkeeper@gmail.com

Mark Bryant 18:05

Mark Bryant

Pearl River County

Markb4331@gmail.com

Andrew WMehurst 18:05

At the proper time, I have a verbal comment. andrew@healthygulf.org

Tllomas Shaw 18:05

thank you sir

Chantel Dominguez she/he, 18:05

I also would like to make public comment, please.

Chantel Dominguez she/her 18:06

Chantel Dominguez, American Rivers, cdominguez@americanrivers.org

Sharmeen Monison 18:06

Sharmeen Morrison, Earthjustice,

smorrison@earthjustice.org

Bob Norton 18:06

Dr Bob Norton. Tornado response work in the south is my current interest.

Rnorton6@hawaii.edu

Leo Garney 18: 18

I would like to make a public comment. adosms2020@gmail.com

Adrienne 18:21

Adrienne Dodd, UC Berkeley Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning - PhD candidate,

adrienne_dodd@berkeley.edu

Bemece Herbert, PhD 18:22

Bernece Herbert, PhD., Chair, Urban & Regional Planning Department, Jackson State University

Bernece Herbert, PhD 18:22

berneece.herbert@jsums.edu

Dr. Robbie Smith 18:26

Robbie Sparkman Smith, PhD, City of Jackson, Department of Planning, Neighborhood Services Manager;
robbies@jacksonms.gov

deserea 18:42

Mark bryant can you raise your hand please

deserea 19:07

I do not want to speak but have a question.

Is there any plans to fix the weir near walkiah bluff

From: mpkcea@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Christina Albers](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] No to the One Lake Project in Jackson, MS
Date: Wednesday, June 21, 2023 8:19:27 PM

Dear Vicksburg District Commander Colonel Christopher Klein,

Please say no to a new dam and lake on the Pearl River in Jackson, Mississippi. It doesn't add water storage capacity and it seems that the main impetus to this choice was economics for Jackson.

A thriving capital is important but not at the expense of the communities down river, the wetlands and the environmental habitat as a whole. The danger this project poses was reflected in the Pearl River's #3 placement on America's Most Endangered Rivers® list in 2023.

There is a way to boost the economy of Jackson and to protect it from flooding without damaging this crucial waterway and surrounding communities, land, and wetlands.

Please re-consider.

Sincerely,
Christina Albers
1414 Lowerline St New Orleans, LA 70118-4030
mpkcea@yahoo.com

From: blueberryabby71@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Clara Mozembek](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 9:16:34 AM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

The Pearl River has over 300 species of wildlife, and is very important to the environment. The One Lake project will expose people to pretty toxic pollution, and worse flooding in Jackson too! Instead of doing One Lake, I highly and urgently recommend you do an enviromently friendly solution that truly addresses flooding, like elevated houses and restoration of river habitats.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
Clara Mozembek
Lehigh Acres, FL 33973
blueberryabby71@gmail.com



PEARL RIVER LUMBER COMPANY, INC.
Post Office Box 468
Crystal Springs, MS 39059



Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

RE: Notice of Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

Dear Colonel Klein:

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard as an individual and business landowner regarding the future of the Pearl River and properties situated miles south of Jackson, Mississippi. My family owns approximately 1,887 acres of land in Simpson and Copiah Counties that touches the Pearl River. I also own Pearl River Lumber Company at 46137 Hwy 28 East in Georgetown, Mississippi that is on the bank of the Pearl River. I have first hand knowledge of the river bank erosion. We have experienced damage and erosion due to the rise and fall of a river that is controlled by the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District, who seem oblivious to the harmful effects of the unnatural 'rise and fall' of a powerful river flow has on properties down river from Ross Barnett Reservoir.

Information led me to the Army Corps of Engineers who possess a study that recommends a 'One Lake' solution with no real evidence of what the result may be for those living down river. In reading the solution taken from Notice found in the Federal Register (vol. 88, No. 96/Thursday, May 18, 2023) the cause and effect of this solution is actually unknown for private landowners, businesses, or the environment in the Lower Pearl River area.

While I am sympathetic to Jackson's flooding problems, they are not the problems that I or other land owners in the area created. Those experiencing flooding in the Jackson area now seek solutions that cause damage and destruction of lower Pearl River properties and threaten our

livelihoods and way of life. This solution seems to trade one flooding problem of a metro area for the same devastating problem for a more rural and less wealthy area. From the information I found, this unproven solution is unfair.

There are also environmental issues and concerns regarding the 'One Lake' solution. The Pearl River appears as number 3 on the American Rivers 2023 Most Endangered Rivers list. The care of this river and those who have chosen to live near it bears serious consideration.

Our request is simple. Give us more time and opportunity for the Army Corps of Engineers to listen to the flooding and land loss problems affecting property owners and businesses down river of Jackson. Please advise us of the mechanisms available to us to voice our concerns.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this request and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Craig Pyron

From: [Val Cruz](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake info please
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 8:52:42 AM

Pearl River project effects in Bogalusa, LA

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Cullen Brown](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Reject One Lake
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 5:46:02 PM

Hello,

My name is Cullen Brown. I currently serve as the Newsletter Editor for the Mississippi Ornithological Society and am employed in Ridgeland, Mississippi. I am writing today to urge you to reject the One Lake proposal and select option A or A1 instead. I am sure that you receive scores of these emails a day, and I don't want to waste any of your time, but I owe it to the Pearl River and LeFleur's Bluff (both of which aided my move to the area last year) to speak a word for them.

Though whoever reads this may find themselves unaligned with my position, I nevertheless hope you are staying cool in the face of this brutal heat and humidity. If you wish to speak further with me on why I urge you to reject this proposal, you may email me at brown2cu@gmail.com or call me at 740-704-2949.

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Cullen

From: [David Buege](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 8:44:36 PM

Flooding in and around Jackson is, no doubt, a serious issue requiring complex, multifaceted solutions. Most of what I have read and heard about One Lake (I attended a session at the AG Museum, as I did about twenty years ago for Two Lakes) appears at best to be ill-conceived, a simplistic response to the desire on the part of a few for development opportunities with substantial monetary rewards (waterfront property!) and for others a bit of hopeful but wishful thinking that there will be rare, tangible benefits for citizens in less favored districts and constituencies in the city of Jackson. This is the context for rich and poor alike: a large pile of money apparently available if it can be spent expeditiously on a low-concept project, a once in a life opportunity that is undoubtedly short-sighted and the "best we can do." No one can really believe that One Lake is to be more than a partial solution with only a small possibility for limited success. The cost will be great, not least the impact on the Pearl River system and, near to my heart, Lafleur's Bluff State Park. Scruffy but magnificent nevertheless, it is one of the greatest public resources in the city and the state. I go there often. Nature there, not to be confused with the settings of waterfront mansions with manicured lawns, is one of God's great gifts. Recently, I had the privilege of meeting Murrah High School students (our son is an alum) scattered throughout the park. An inspiring place. Let's keep it.

David Buege
228 Dunbar Trail
Canton 39046

From: asa1266@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Dianna Smith](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 1:01:08 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Please protect our natural environment by choosing another plan that would be more beneficial for One Lake .
Proposing a dam is Not the answer for the lake , the Pearl River or the surrounding area .
Thank you ,
Dianna Smith

Sincerely,
Dianna Smith
Jacksonville, FL 32257
asa1266@comcast.net

From: [Doris Sanders](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] Project Buy Out
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 7:18:36 PM

Hello, my name is Doris Sanders and I live in the Ole Canton Road Subdivision on Deer Trl. In 2020 my home was one that was hit badly by the flood from the Pearl and Big Black along with the Reservoir. I spent two years away from it trying to get it repaired even though I had flood insurance it did not cover much if you are offering a buy out I feel it should be well over the amount to move in another home give us what we deserve I got railroad bad by my contractor and I am suffering from it this is a beautiful area and if you take it we need to know are we really getting what we deserve a flood is nothing to play with we lost everything and starting over is very hard.

Doris Sanders 5821 Deer Trl .

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Doug Dale](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Cc: [Doug Dale](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] FW: Town Creek River Walk Concepts Through Downtown
Date: Friday, May 26, 2023 10:56:47 AM
Attachments: [Town Creek - River Walk Concepts Through Downtown.pdf](#)

Dear Channel Improvement Plan Team for Rankin-Hinds Pearl River :

I am Doug Dale ,Architect , a Jackson downtown Business owner . Our main office has been located in Downtown Jackson for 29 Years .

I was a participant in the open forum last night at the Ag Museum . I am very much a supporter of the current One Lake plan under study . Many folks have worked diligently to get this project to this point . My focus is on how the One Lake Project might a difference for the downtown community as well as providing economic opportunities to start a revitalization for Work Live Play in our Central Business District .

My question revolves around the improvement of Town Creek. The Town Creek Urban watershed offers a natural green corridor that could be restored , providing improved water quality and storm water quality and storm water control , as well as a recreational corridor and opportunities for economic growth .

In 2010 our Firm lead a master plan effort to design and conceptualize a masterplan vision for what the Downtown Business District could be . A sense of place with a Water elements to create a Live Work Plan environment . I have attached renderings that help support this vision for your review. So my question is , are there components of the One Lake Plan that will address Town Creek ? If so , could these improvements support any of these concepts?

Thanks you all your comments last night , I was excited to hear the details and time schedule to get the Study complete .

Doug Dale , Founding Partner Dale Partners

From: Julie Barry <juliebarry@dalepartners.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 25, 2023 12:07 PM
To: Doug Dale <DougDale2@dalepartners.com>
Cc: Neil Polen <NeilPolen@dalepartners.com>
Subject: Town Creek River Walk Concepts Through Downtown

Julie Turner Barry, Marketing Director

[Dale Partners Architects](#) dalepartners.com

Eley|Barkley|Dale Architects ebdarch.com

Dale|Bailey Architects dalebailevarch.com

T:601 718 2429 | C:601 826 0584

188 East Capitol Street | Suite 250 | Jackson, MS 39201

From: [Janet Delaney](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One River, No Lake! Reject the One Lake Project
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 12:34:16 AM

Dear USACE/USFWS/USEPA,

I call on you to stop the One Lake Project on the Pearl River.

From its headwaters on native Choctaw lands, the Pearl River flows nearly 500-miles through Mississippi and Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico. The Pearl River provides habitat for more than 300 species of birds, fish, and wildlife, including the federally threatened Gulf sturgeon and ringed sawback turtle, and 125,000 acres of wetland and bottomland hardwood conservation lands. The Pearl supplies freshwater flows critical to the health of the Gulf of Mexico; the region's oyster, crab, shrimp and tourism industries; and hundreds of industrial and municipal users.

The Pearl is the only public drinking water source for the city of Jackson, which includes 150,000 residents, 83 percent of whom are Black. The city has struggled for decades to maintain basic water and sewer service and is currently under an Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) consent decree to enforce established rules and regulations due to sewage discharge violations in the billions of gallons annually. In 2022 the city's residents were left without clean drinking water for months when one of the City's two drinking water treatment plants failed.

The Pearl River is threatened by the One Lake Project, which is a private real estate development scheme masquerading as a flood control project that threatens public health and safety, river and coastal ecosystems, and regional economies. The project will dredge 10-miles of the Pearl River, destroying 2,500 acres of mostly wetland habitat and disturbing eight highly contaminated toxic sites with no plan to protect public health. A new dam will be constructed to contain the dredged 1,900-acre impoundment, and the dredged material will be used to build new waterfront property for real estate development putting more people in harm's way. Moreover, the destruction of the riparian forest along the 10-mile dredged area will cause a harmful rise in the river's water temperature.

In addition to the massive loss of floodplain, wetlands, and in-stream habitats, One Lake will worsen Jackson's significant urban flash flooding and stormwater drainage problems. One Lake will permanently elevate water levels in eight tributary creeks that flow through primarily low-income Black neighborhoods in Jackson. During the four years of project construction, Jackson will be forced to somehow find an alternative water source for the one drinking water plant that was able to operate during the city's most recent drinking water crisis. One Lake will then add to the city's drinking water and water quality problems, including the discharge of billions of gallons of untreated and poorly treated sewage that has already closed the Pearl to public contact recreation in the Jackson area. The low-head dam will reduce and alter the delivery of freshwater flows and nutrients vital to a healthy river-Gulf ecosystem and the communities and industries that rely on those flows.

Instead of subsidizing private real estate development, the federal government should invest in already identified flood relief solutions, including setting some levees farther back from the river, investing in floodplain and wetland easements, targeted elevations, and voluntary relocations of structures in flood-prone areas.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,

Janet Delaney
5406 Western Hills Dr
Austin, TX
787314824
jld215@sbcglobal.net

From: [Robert Snow](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] DON'T PROCEED WITH RUINOUS ONE LAKE PROJECT
Date: Thursday, May 25, 2023 9:55:47 AM

Army Corps of Engineers:

One Lake is a private real estate development scheme masquerading as a flood control project that would involve dredging and damming 10 miles of the Pearl River near Jackson, for the well-publicized purpose of creating new waterfront property—One Lake would put more people and property in harm's way.

One Lake will destroy 2,500 acres of river habitats that support hundreds of species of birds and wildlife, including Important Bird Areas such as LeFleur's Bluff State Park, while altered downstream river flows would imperil 125,000 acres of conservation lands. Many of these habitats provide natural flood protection for local communities.

One Lake construction will expose local and downstream communities to toxic contamination by disturbing 8 dangerous waste sites. There is no plan to protect public health with only a paltry \$8 million set aside for cleanup.

One Lake will exacerbate the City of Jackson's water crisis. The J.H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant, which supplies 30% of the City of Jackson's drinking water and operated during the recent water crises, could not operate during construction because of dredging-induced water quality problems—forcing Jackson to somehow find and pay for a "temporary" water supply for 3+ years.

One Lake will not alleviate the rain-induced flash flooding that already impacts neighborhoods along the Pearl's 8 tributaries that flow through Jackson, but instead will make flash flooding worse by permanently elevating parts of these creeks and creating new back-flooding problems in other areas.

The One Lake dam will reduce downstream flows to the Pearl River, the fourth largest source of freshwater into the Gulf, east of the mouth of the Mississippi River. This threatens water quality and quantity, seafood and tourism economies, and hundreds of millions of dollars in coastal restoration projects, such as a \$50 Million marsh-oyster project in Hancock County.

One Lake will likely raise Mississippians' property taxes: Passed in the 2017 state legislative session, House Bill 1585 gives the local Levee Board a blank check to raise property taxes for owners they determine are "directly or indirectly benefited" by the project.

Instead of the destructive One Lake project, Jackson residents and businesses deserve effective, sustainable flood relief solutions that benefit people and wildlife. The Corps should prioritize more effective, less costly options that truly address flooding concerns include improvements to existing levees, elevating homes and buildings, or offering voluntary buy-outs for properties with a history of flooding problems.

Reject One Lake and focus on effective, sustainable flood relief solutions that benefit people and wildlife.

Thank you,

Rob

From: mazaeda1@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Melissa Mazaeda](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 12:14:10 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

As someone who cares deeply about our country's birds, wildlife, and habitats, I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

The Pearl River is one of the most biodiverse rivers in the U.S., connecting nearly 500 miles of ecology, communities, and economies across Mississippi and Louisiana. This natural treasure is threatened by a devastating private real estate development scheme masquerading as flood control known as the One Lake project. I ask you to listen to the long-standing opposition that One Lake has drawn from hundreds of concerned citizens, elected officials, community and business leaders, conservation groups and others and abandon this destructive project once and for all.

One Lake will only put more people and property in harm's way while exposing communities to toxic pollution, worsening Jackson's flooding and drinking water problems, reducing downstream freshwater flows critical to the region's seafood and tourism economies, and destroying wildlife habitat that provides natural flood protection for communities.

Instead, I urge you to implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
Melissa Mazaeda
Sarasota, FL 34241
mazaeda1@verizon.net

From: kaylaesq@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Kay Latona](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 12:05:25 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

Listen to the long-standing opposition that One Lake has drawn from hundreds of concerned citizens, elected officials, community and business leaders, conservation groups and others and abandon this destructive project once and for all.

One Lake will only expose communities to toxic pollution, worsen Jackson's flooding and drinking water problems, reduce downstream freshwater flows critical to the region's seafood and tourism economies, and destroy wildlife habitat that provides natural flood protection for communities.

Implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

Protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
Kay Latona
Mansfield, TX 76063
kaylaesq@gmail.com

From: nahid.ferdous@evervactioncustom.com on behalf of [Nahid Ferdous](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 3:16:05 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Hello!

I'm not sending this letter to come off as a crazy environmental hippie or anything. Rather, I live in Texas and see "entrepreneurial" real estate companies or investors come through and try to destroy wildlife for the sake of profit all the time. These companies do not care for our states' natural habitats, and their bottom line is to sell their property at the highest buck for even more ROI. When we say the Pearl River has around 500 miles of biodiversity, that number means nothing to these real estate companies, because they simply don't care.

Yes, people need places to live. But these luxury estates should not come at the price of important environmental needs, especially from companies who don't actually care about how damming up rivers will truly impact these already at-risk southern areas. One Lake will only put more people and property in harm's way while exposing communities to toxic pollution, worsening Jackson's flooding and drinking water problems, reducing downstream freshwater flows critical to the region's seafood and tourism economies, and destroying wildlife habitat that provides natural flood protection for communities.

As someone who cares deeply about our country's birds, wildlife, and habitats, I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife. I ask you to listen to the long-standing opposition that One Lake has drawn from hundreds of concerned citizens, elected officials, community and business leaders, conservation groups and others and abandon this destructive project once and for all.

Instead, I urge you to implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

I hope you take our concerns into consideration, not just for the environment, but also for the people who will truly be impacted by these ecological changes (i.e. not private homeowners living in luxury waterfront properties).

Sincerely,
Nahid Ferdous
Manor, TX 78653
nahid.ferdous@yahooinc.com

From: jeanne.stangle@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Jeanne Stangle](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Re: One Lake Project in Jackson, MS
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 8:32:33 PM

Dear Vicksburg District Commander Colonel Christopher Klein,

I object to the establishment of a new dam and lake on the Pearl River in Jackson, Mississippi. This project doesn't add any water storage capacity to the river, according to the 2020 Army Corps of Engineers Agency Technical Review notes. The reviewers suggested first using levee setbacks, and then adding other features to them in crafting a flood reduction plan for Jackson. This advice was ignored by the non-federal sponsor of the project, and the Army Secretary for Civil Works could also turn a blind eye to its own experts.

At the Corps' recent public engagement meetings held in Jackson, MS and Slidell, LA in May, it was clear that Jackson's business community wants the flood control project to be an economic and real estate development boost for its sagging economy and tax-base. It was also evident from public comments given at the Slidell meeting that no government, community or industry from the Counties and Parishes along the Lower Pearl River wants Alternative "C". Flood risk management alternatives exist that are less damaging to habitat both in the Jackson section of the Pearl River and downstream. The threat that this project poses to the health of the Pearl River led to its #3 placement on America's Most Endangered Rivers® list in 2023. Resource agencies in both MS and LA have stated their concern that lake creation will worsen the already dire annual seasonal low flow conditions on the river August-October.

Lake dredging would remove 25 million cubic yards of the Pearl's riverbanks and bed and use it to fill 1861 acres of functional batture wetlands in the floodplain. The filled and elevated areas next to the dredged lake will provide a platform of new land for development which Alternative "C" relies upon for much of its economic justification. This discounts the value of a functioning floodplain and contradicts the intent of Executive Order 11988 (1977), stating a presumption against development in floodplains. The Corps' own required economics analysis incorporates this concept. Also, Corps policy on wetland filling requires avoidance first, minimization second, and calls for damage mitigation last. Alternative "C" skips the first two steps and moves directly to mitigating destroyed wetlands.

While local flooding issues in Jackson need attention, building a 1500-acre amenity lake will cause further fragmentation of the Pearl River. Downstream issues such as evaporative water loss, adequate dilution for permitted dischargers, freshwater quantity, and corresponding salinity effects for the estuary and marsh habitats in coastal MS and LA are of concern to people living downstream of Jackson. The Corps must critically examine what a new lake and more environmental and flow disruptions might do to economies downstream. The coast's seafood industry and the swamp tour businesses in the lower Pearl in LA are given very little attention in the 2018 economic impact analysis. A lake is the most environmentally disruptive alternative for the biological and physical health of the lower Pearl River. Even though the 2018 draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) avoided discussing the impacts of another dam and lake on downriver restoration, numerous RESTORE Act-funded coastal restoration projects representing over \$100 million in spending in LA and MS are ongoing and either focus on the Pearl River or depend on its undiminished freshwater flow.

Lastly, before this project moves forward, there must be a full and clear explanation of how the lake project will work in combination with management of the Ross Barnett Reservoir to both control flooding and satisfy adequate minimum flow requirements on the Pearl River. Instead of building on the poor analysis in the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's much criticized 2018 EIS, a full range of new flood management options upstream in the Pearl River watershed should have been considered in a broader study about solving the flooding problem in Jackson. Please stop this project

Sincerely,
Jeanne Stangle
59385 Neslo Rd Slidell, LA 70460-4101
jeanne.stangle@gmail.com

June 31st, 2023

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander U.S.
Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 East Clay St Vicksburg, MS 39183

via: pearlriverfrm@usace.army.mil

RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Co.

Dear Colonel Klein,

My comments pertain to the Pearl River Basin Flood Risk Management Project “Alternative C,” also known as the “One Lake” plan. This alternative would involve channel dredging and damming a significant portion of the Pearl River in Hinds and Rankin Counties, Mississippi. Others will no doubt raise concerns about the ecological impacts of this project on fisheries as well as a range of rare and/or endangered plant and animal species, and the delicate ecosystems in which they live. We share those concerns acutely. However, the focus of our comment is on the social and economic impacts of Alternative C for the residents of the lower Pearl River drainage in southern Mississippi and southeast Louisiana.

The Pearl River and its watershed are unique in the southeastern Gulf Coast region in being relatively untouched by large-scale human structural interventions. Similarly, and perhaps consequently, the lower Pearl River basin and its coastal endpoint, Lake Borgne, are characterized by a long tradition of small, independent communities with both economic and social systems based around resources related to the river—especially subsistence and small-scale commercial fishing.

First of all, to say that the social and economic systems of rural communities in the lower Pearl River basin and Lake Borgne have been understudied is a major understatement. Much of this has previously been carried out in relation to previous proposed projects in the basin and has been an afterthought to cultural resource management assessments having to do mainly with archaeological sites. (As a professional archaeologist with an active research project on the Pearl River Island, that aspect of the impact of Alternative C concerns me, as well.) Though a few ethnographic films and coffee table books have been made about the houseboat communities of places like the Honey Island Swamp and that sort of thing, virtually no systematic ethnographic assessment has been made concerning the organizations of socioeconomic systems among communities in Pearl River basin in relation to the resources and ecosystem services provided by the river and its adjacent coastal regions.

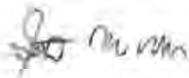
My previous anthropological experience in southeast Louisiana suggests that even minor impacts to the ecosystems and fisheries of the lower Pearl River basin and its adjacent coast could have huge consequences for the social and economic systems of fishing communities—or even communities for whom informal subsistence-level fishing activities are important. Fishing

communities tend to be characterized by close-knit social relations underpinned by the informal exchange of economic commodities of which fish constitute a key resource. Though often not sold in a marketplace or necessarily reported through formal fisheries management channels, small communities on waterways like the Pearl River and its adjacent coastline catch and exchange a great deal of seafood, which directly underpins social systems of reciprocity and broader cultural outlooks of generosity and inclusiveness. Deleterious impacts on fisheries would doubtless negatively impact fishing communities in as-of-yet unforeseen vectors.

My point is that any environmental impact statement for such a project can't be limited to the threats posed for endangered species like the Ringed Sawback Turtle—important though that may be. Fishing communities on the lower Pearl River and its adjacent coastline are themselves an endangered species, and even seemingly minor impacts on waterflow, sediment and nutrient load, pollution, and salinity may pose existential threats.

The lower Pearl River basin of southern Mississippi and southeast Louisiana is one of America's oldest and most distinctive regions in terms of human cultural adaptations, and everything about this priceless heritage is derived from fishing waters fed by the Pearl River watershed. There is a moral imperative here to make a thorough ethnographic exploration of the impacts of Alternative C in the formulation of any subsequent environmental impact statement. The fact that so little is known about the ethnography of this antique and unique region is not necessarily U.S.A.C.E.'s fault. Yet, U.S.A.C.E. holds a legal and moral obligation to learn much more about this set of issues before either publishing an environmental impact statement or proceeding with the Alternative C project itself.

Sincerely,



Prof. Grant S. McCall, Ph.D.
Executive Director and Chief Research Scientist
Center for Human-Environmental Research
Associate Professor
Dept. of Anthropology
Tulane University
mccall@cherscience.org

From: gwennvpy@gmail.com
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] I Reject One Lake
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 8:49:42 PM

To whom it may concern,

Please do not enact the One Lake plan. One Lake will not alleviate the rain-induced flash flooding that already impacts neighborhoods along the Pearl's 8 tributaries that flow through Jackson, **but instead will make flash flooding worse by permanently elevating parts of these creeks and creating new back-flooding problems in other areas.**

I know that the Corps is aware of the already felt effects of climate change, but with the abject failure of governments around the world to keep the worst outcomes in check, it will only get worse. The One Lake plan will increase the damage caused by extreme weather especially for the most impoverished of our state, who always bear the brunt of any disaster. Please, think about the harm you will be placing people in if you continue with a brazen attempt at bending nature to your will for the sake of increasing property values. Any possible benefit from the One Lake plan will be outstripped by the destruction that worsening floods will bring about. Please make the right choice.

- Gwenevier Pevey
MS Resident

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Via email comment portal: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

June 30, 2023

RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS

Dear Colonel Klein,

Please receive this letter as my comments for the project referenced above. I strongly support the non-structural option and I strongly oppose Alternative C-Channel Improvement.

The non-structural option is the plan most certain to provide flood risk reduction and is the option that presents less threat to communities downriver. The non-structural option will buy out, elevate and/or remove buildings and structures that are presently at the greatest risk of flooding. This option should be accompanied with the protection and improvement of existing wetlands and other natural resources of the floodplain. The combination of a retreat, removal and elevation strategy to identify and protect the most at-risk structures while protecting and improving the green infrastructure presently in the flood plain will meet the goal of increasing flood protection while avoiding adding risks to the people who live downstream. The non-structural option is the plan I strongly support.

I oppose Alternative C-Channel Improvement and beseech you to not inflict it on the people who live downstream. Alternative C is touted by those who believe they benefit financially. These persons desire waterfront development with the ruse of this being a flood control plan. The depraved indifference to the health and safety of those who live downstream will be clear if Alternative C is selected. The increased risk of flooding of homes and communities will be certain. This increased risk will be accepted so that politically connected land developers can profit at the expense of thousands who live downriver. This is the definition of depraved indifference.

Alternative C will also cause great economic damage in the areas downriver. Most of these areas are not a part of the study area. Considerations of the harmful impacts by Alternative C to those who live downriver is being done as an afterthought.

Alternative C will at times provide too much water and risk flooding. This will cause economic damage to homes and infrastructure of downriver communities. This will increase the flood risk

of those who live downriver. Alternative will decrease the value of homes downriver and increase the cost of insurance.

The uncertainty of Alternative C adding to the colossal sedimentation problem on the river has not been adequately considered. During the public comments at the meeting in Slidell Louisiana many locals discussed the present problem of sedimentation in the river. The staff of the USACE at the meeting appeared to have no knowledge of this problem. The thousands of people who live downriver are quite aware of the chronic sedimentation problem on river. It did not provide much comfort to locals who attended that meeting that those running the meeting and conducting the studies were actually unaware of this problem. Alternative C increases the possibility of adding to an already chronic problem. I repeat that I oppose Alternative C because of the economic harm it will cause.

Another problem Alternative C presents is a reduction of water in the river. This will cause great economic damage by risking the discharge permits from sewerage and industrial plants. These water treatment plants provide essential public hygiene to communities downriver. The industries provide employment and tax base.

The loss of up to 2,000 acres of high-quality wetlands will reduce the function of the flood plain to which they provide a great service. Flood protection is the stated goal of this project. The non-structural option will meet that goal without threatening those downriver.

The profit to politically connected land developers is not a goal of this study. To select Alternative C will increase, not reduce, total flood risk.

I have many friends and family who live on the Pearl River. I hope you will reject the depraved indifference to the health, safety and economic well-being of those who live downstream while providing a costly gift to those who have worked for Alternative C.

I implore you to reject Alternative C and select the non-structural alternative.

Sincerely,

Howard Page

grenmn1@gmail.com

228-233-4734

From: shelbyja@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [J Shelby Walker](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Save the Pearl River
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 8:17:23 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River people and wildlife.

Listen to the long-standing opposition that One Lake has drawn from hundreds of concerned citizens, elected officials, community and business leaders, conservation groups and others and abandon this destructive project once and for all.

Implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

Protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
J Shelby Walker
Uvalde, TX 78611
shelbyja@gmail.com

From: [JACK PICKERING](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pearl River One Lake Project
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 5:32:27 PM

What a disaster! This project is a terrible idea, damaging habitat, threatening Jackson's already damaged water supply, potentially releasing dangerous chemical wastes, and so much more all to benefit local developers! This is an outrageous land & resource grab that is a disaster to the many benefitting only a few.

Please disallow this project as you already have done once before!

Thank you for allowing public input and for considering that input.

Jack Pickering
Ocean Springs, Ms

From: fellowshipofthewings@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Jack Stewart](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Saturday, June 3, 2023 10:10:27 AM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Please reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

The Pearl River is one of the most biodiverse rivers in the U.S.

I urge you to implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoring river habitats.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations reject One Lake

Sincerely,
Jack Stewart
Marble Falls, AR 72642

From: [Janet Delaney](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One River, No Lake! Reject the One Lake Project
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 12:34:16 AM

Dear USACE/USFWS/USEPA,

I call on you to stop the One Lake Project on the Pearl River.

From its headwaters on native Choctaw lands, the Pearl River flows nearly 500-miles through Mississippi and Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico. The Pearl River provides habitat for more than 300 species of birds, fish, and wildlife, including the federally threatened Gulf sturgeon and ringed sawback turtle, and 125,000 acres of wetland and bottomland hardwood conservation lands. The Pearl supplies freshwater flows critical to the health of the Gulf of Mexico; the region's oyster, crab, shrimp and tourism industries; and hundreds of industrial and municipal users.

The Pearl is the only public drinking water source for the city of Jackson, which includes 150,000 residents, 83 percent of whom are Black. The city has struggled for decades to maintain basic water and sewer service and is currently under an Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) consent decree to enforce established rules and regulations due to sewage discharge violations in the billions of gallons annually. In 2022 the city's residents were left without clean drinking water for months when one of the City's two drinking water treatment plants failed.

The Pearl River is threatened by the One Lake Project, which is a private real estate development scheme masquerading as a flood control project that threatens public health and safety, river and coastal ecosystems, and regional economies. The project will dredge 10-miles of the Pearl River, destroying 2,500 acres of mostly wetland habitat and disturbing eight highly contaminated toxic sites with no plan to protect public health. A new dam will be constructed to contain the dredged 1,900-acre impoundment, and the dredged material will be used to build new waterfront property for real estate development putting more people in harm's way. Moreover, the destruction of the riparian forest along the 10-mile dredged area will cause a harmful rise in the river's water temperature.

In addition to the massive loss of floodplain, wetlands, and in-stream habitats, One Lake will worsen Jackson's significant urban flash flooding and stormwater drainage problems. One Lake will permanently elevate water levels in eight tributary creeks that flow through primarily low-income Black neighborhoods in Jackson. During the four years of project construction, Jackson will be forced to somehow find an alternative water source for the one drinking water plant that was able to operate during the city's most recent drinking water crisis. One Lake will then add to the city's drinking water and water quality problems, including the discharge of billions of gallons of untreated and poorly treated sewage that has already closed the Pearl to public contact recreation in the Jackson area. The low-head dam will reduce and alter the delivery of freshwater flows and nutrients vital to a healthy river-Gulf ecosystem and the communities and industries that rely on those flows.

Instead of subsidizing private real estate development, the federal government should invest in already identified flood relief solutions, including setting some levees farther back from the river, investing in floodplain and wetland easements, targeted elevations, and voluntary relocations of structures in flood-prone areas.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,

Janet Delaney
5406 Western Hills Dr
Austin, TX
787314824
jld215@sbcglobal.net

From: [Will Harlan](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] comments on Pearl River Flood Management Project
Date: Thursday, June 22, 2023 10:24:24 PM
Attachments: [Pearl River Comments Center for Biological Diversity 6-20-23.pdf](#)

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Attached are the Center for Biological Diversity's comments on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project. We apologize for the slight tardiness of the comments: due to a typo in the email address, our comments were kicked back. We hope you will still include these comments in the public record and in your decision-making process. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Jason Totoiu, Senior Attorney

Will Harlan, Southeast Director and Senior Scientist

Center for Biological Diversity

828-230-6818

biologicaldiversity.org



June 20, 2023

Army Corps of Engineers
CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

RE: Comments on the Integrated Draft Feasibility & Environmental Impacts Statement and Biological Assessment for the Pearl River Federal Flood Risk Management Project in Hinds & Rankin Counties, Mississippi

Please accept the following comments on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity in response to the proposed Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Federal Flood Risk Management Project in Hinds & Rankin Counties, Mississippi. We have also attached several documents in support of our comments, and we ask that they be included as part of the administrative record for this project.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to the protection of native species and their habitats through science, policy, and environmental and administrative law. The Center has over 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection and restoration of endangered species and wild places. The Center has worked for more than 30 years to protect imperiled plants and wildlife, open space, air and water quality, and overall quality of life.

For the reasons explained below, the Center encourages the Army Corps of Engineers to prioritize nonstructural alternatives, including alternatives that may be included in Alternatives A and A1. Alternative C poses unacceptable risks and unnecessary costs, and it fails to adequately examine the impacts this project will have on several imperiled species, including the Gulf sturgeon, ringed map turtle, northern long-eared bat, and Pearl River Map turtle.

States throughout the United States are recognizing that the risks and costs of riverine dams far exceed the potential benefits of these structures, and the Army Corps is busy restoring the natural conditions of America's great waters. For example, in Florida the Army Corps has invested nearly a billion dollars to restore the natural conditions of the Kissimmee River, which was channelized in the name of flood control. The project has exceeded the Corps' expectations and is delivering significant wildlife benefits.¹ The Corps is also working hard to restore America's Everglades, which has been crippled by thousands of miles of levees, channels, canals, and other structures. It is considered the largest and most ambitious ecological restoration project in the world.² America's rivers, including the Pearl River, are national treasures and if anything, they need to be restored, not further altered and impounded by more dams, levees, channels, and other structures.

The Center urges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reject Alternative C and consider nonstructural alternatives, including Alternatives A and A1, and the Green Heart of the Pearl proposal provided by the University of California at Berkeley engineering team.

I. BACKGROUND

The Pearl River basin is home to several imperiled species including the Gulf sturgeon, ringed map turtle, and northern long eared bat. In the case of the ringed map turtle and the Pearl River map turtle, these species are found nowhere else on Earth. We provide important information about the biology, distribution, and threats facing each of these species below.

A. Gulf Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*)

The Gulf Sturgeon traces its ancestry back 200 million years.³ A subspecies of the Atlantic sturgeon, the Gulf Sturgeon is a large, nearly cylindrical fish with an extended snout, vertical mouth, chin barbels, and with the upper lobe of the tail longer than the lower.⁴ Adult fish are bottom feeders and mostly eat invertebrates, including brachiopods, insect larvae, mollusks, worms, and crustaceans.⁵ Reaching lengths up to nine feet and weighing as much as 300 pounds, it can be found in the Northern Gulf of Mexico, bays, estuaries, and in major rivers in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.⁶ The species is anadromous-it spends most of the year in freshwater, where

¹ United States Army Corps of Engineers, Kissimmee River Restoration Project, at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Ecosystem-Restoration/Kissimmee-River-Restoration/>

² John Zarella, "Ambitious Everglades Restoration Project Unrivaled in Scale, Cost, CNN.com (December 25, 2000) at <http://www.cnn.com/2000/NATURE/12/25/everglades.restoration/index.html>.

³ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Panama City Field Office, Gulf Sturgeon, at <https://www.fws.gov/panamacity/gulfsturgeon.html>.

⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Threatened Status for the Gulf Sturgeon, 56 Fed. Reg. 49653-49658, 49653 (Sep. 30, 1991).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ USFWS, *supra* note 3.

it reproduces and migrates to marine waters in the fall.⁷ In early spring, gulf sturgeon return to breed in the river system in which they were born.⁸

In listing the species as threatened under the ESA in 1991, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service found that sturgeon stocks have been greatly reduced or extirpated throughout much of the historic range by overfishing, dam construction, and habitat degradation.⁹ Once ranging from the Mississippi River eastward to Florida's Tampa Bay area, the Service observed in its 1991 listing decision that three major rivers including the Pearl River in Mississippi, have been dammed, preventing use of upstream areas for spawning.¹⁰ Dam systems such as the Ross Barnett Dam have prevented sturgeon from moving further upstream, as sturgeon are unable to pass through dam systems.¹¹ Sturgeon, however, still access the lower 150 miles of the Pearl River and its tributaries and substantial spawning habitat remains in the Pearl River.¹²

In addition to structures such as dams preventing Gulf sturgeon from reaching spawning areas, dredging and soil deposition carried out in connection with channel improvement and maintenance pose a threat to the species.¹³ As the Services explained in their listing decision, deep holes and rock surfaces are important for spawning and modification of these features, particularly in rivers in which upstream migration is already limited by dams, "could further jeopardize the already reduced stocks of the Gulf sturgeon."¹⁴ In determining that the species continues to warrant protection as threatened under the ESA, the Services found in 2009 that:

Access to historic Gulf sturgeon spawning habitat continues to be blocked by existing dams and the ongoing operations of these dams also effect downstream habitat. Several new dams are being proposed that would increase these threats to the Gulf sturgeon and its habitat. Dams continue to impede access to upstream spawning areas and continue to adversely affect downstream habitat including both spawning and foraging areas.¹⁵

In view of these threats, the Recovery Plan for the Gulf sturgeon calls for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to operate and/or modify existing dams to restore the benefits of historical flow patterns and sedimentation patterns as well as identify ways to restore and protect natural river habitat diversity.¹⁶

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Threatened Status for the Gulf Sturgeon, *supra* note 4, at 49653.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 46955.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ National Marine Fisheries Service & U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Gulf Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), 5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation, 15-16 (Sep. 2009).

¹⁶ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service, Gulf Sturgeon Recovery/Management Plan, at 52-53 (1995).

Dredging operations may also destroy benthic feeding areas, disrupt spawning migrations, and re-suspend fine sediments causing siltation over substrate in spawning habitat.¹⁷ The modification of the benthic areas affects the quality, quantity, and availability of prey.¹⁸ Poor water quality caused by pesticides, heavy metals, and industrial contaminants may also threaten the species.¹⁹ Pollution from industrial, agricultural, and municipal activities is believed to be responsible for a host of physical, behavioral, and physiological impacts to sturgeon throughout the world.²⁰

In 2003 the Services designated critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon.²¹ This critical habitat designation identifies areas that are essential to the conservation of the species and may require special management considerations or protections.²² The entire project area includes critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon (Unit 1).²³

B. Ringed Map Turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*)

The ringed map is a small turtle with a yellow ring bordered inside and outside with dark olive-brown on each shield of the upper shell or carapace and a yellow plastron.²⁴ This basking turtle is only found in the Pearl River system of Mississippi and Louisiana.²⁵

The species has specific habitat needs. It prefers wide sand beaches and a narrow channel with at least a moderate current, and it spends many hours basking in the sun on logs and debris over deep water. The river must be wide enough to allow sun penetration for several hours. Nesting habitat consists of large, high sand and gravel bars adjacent to the river.

The ringed map turtle was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1986 due to a number of threats facing this species, primarily the loss of habitat due to reservoir construction and flood control.²⁹ In fact, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service cited numerous flood control projects, very similar to the One Lake project, as a primary reason for listing the species under the ESA.³⁰ The species is also threatened by habitat degradation caused by deterioration in water quality and a corresponding loss of mollusks on which the turtle feeds.³¹ Water quality is degraded when floodplain clearing and channelization contributes to sedimentation, and the increased turbidity

¹⁷ *Id.* at 17.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.* at 46956.

²⁰ Gulf Sturgeon Five Year Review, *supra* note 15 at 18.

²¹ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for the Gulf Sturgeon, 68 Fed. Reg. 13370-13495 (Mar. 19, 2003) .

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.* at 13391;13456.

²⁴ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination of Threatened Status for the Ringed Map Turtle (*Graptemys Oculifera*), 51 Fed. Reg. 45907-45910 (Dec. 23, 1986).

²⁵ *Id.* at 45907.

²⁹ See generally, *supra* note 24.

³⁰ 51 Fed. Reg. at 45908-09.

³¹ *Id.* at 45907.

and siltation impacts the snails and other mollusks on which the turtle feeds.³² As the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service stated in its decision to list the species under the ESA, the basking turtle is not able to inhabit large lake areas or polluted waters.³³

C. Pearl River Map Turtle (*Graptemys pearlensis*)

The Pearl River Map turtle is a moderate-sized, freshwater turtle with a high-domed shell, with a median keel, which has salient spines on the posterior portions of the anterior vertebral scutes.³⁴ These spines are much smaller than those of the ringed map.³⁵ The Pearl River Map turtle is endemic to medium sized creeks and large rivers in the Pearl River drainage of Mississippi and Louisiana.³⁶ They use sand bars as nesting sites and their diets largely consist of mollusks and snails.³⁷

The Pearl River map turtle is proposed for threatened status under the Endangered Species Act. Species proposed for listing by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service receive protections under the Act.

The state of Mississippi has listed the species as a Species in Need of Management,⁴⁴ and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) considers the Pearl River Map Turtle endangered and possibly critically endangered, noting that the population has declined by 80-98% since 1950.⁴⁵

The Pearl River Map turtle was once more abundant in the Pearl River, but the population has declined significantly and beginning the 1990s, basking densities were lower than those of the ringed map.³⁹ As with many turtle species, habitat loss and degradation appears to be a leading cause for the decline in the Pearl River Map turtle population.⁴⁰

Threats include contaminants from urban and industrial sources, gravel mining, the modification of the downstream natural flow regime and its associated habitat changes caused by construction of the Ross Barnett Reservoir near Jackson.⁴¹ Ennen, et. al. (2016) observed that additional impoundment downstream of the reservoir would further impact downstream flow regimes and the species within the project area.⁴²

Sedimentation and other anthropogenic alterations within the Pearl River drainage basin may have also caused a decline in native mussel and gastropod populations, thus decreasing a significant prey source for female Pearl River map turtles.⁴³

³² *Id.* at 45908.

³³ *Id.* at 45907.

³⁴⁻³⁷ Ennen, J.R., Lovich, J.E., and Jones, R.L. 2016. *Graptemys pearlensis* Ennen, Lovich, Kreiser, Selman, and Qualls 2010-Pearl River Map Turtle. In: Rhodin, A.G.J., Pritchard, P.C.H., et al. Eds. *Conservation Biology of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises: A Compilation Project of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group*. Chelonian Research Monographs 5(9):094.1-8, doi: 10.3854/crm.5.094.pearlensis.v1.2016.

³⁸ The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, *Graptemys pearlensis*, at icunredlist.org/details/184437/0 (citing Ennen, J.R., et. al. Genetic and morphological variation between populations of the Pascagoula Map turtle (*Graptemys gibbonsi*) in the Pearl River and Pascagoula Rivers with description of a new species. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* 9(1):98-113).

³⁹⁻⁴³ Ennen, et. al. 2016, *supra* note 34.

D. Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)

The northern long-eared bat is a medium sized bat, which is distinguished from other *Myotis* species by its relatively long ears.⁴⁶ The species ranges across much of the eastern and north central United States. They feed nocturnally by catching insects in flight and picking insects from surfaces.⁴⁷ Most foraging occurs above the understory but under the forest canopy.⁴⁸

Northern long-eared bats predominately overwinter in hibernacula that include caves and abandoned mines.⁴⁹ During the summer they roost singly or in colonies underneath bark or in cavities or crevices of both live trees and snags.⁵⁰ The species appears to be flexible in tree roost selection, selecting various tree species and types of roosts throughout its range, such as black oak, northern red oak, silver maple, black locust, American beech, sugar maple, sourwood, and shortleaf pine.⁵¹ Canopy coverage at northern long-eared bat roosts varies greatly as well as the diameters of roost trees.⁵²

The species actively forms colonies in the summer and exhibit fission-fusion behavior, where members frequently coalesce to form a group (fusion), but composition of the group is in flux, with individuals frequently departing to be solitary or to form small groups (fission) before returning to the main unit.⁵³ The species also engages in short, spring staging, a period between winter hibernation and spring migration to summer habitat.⁵⁴ During this time bats emerge from hibernation, exit the hibernacula to feed, then re-enter hibernacula to resume torpor.⁵⁵ Between the summer and winter season seasons, northern long-eared bats engage in the swarming season.⁵⁶ During this time behavior may include: introduction of juveniles to potential hibernacula, copulation, and stopping over sites on migratory pathways between summer and winter regions.⁵⁷

During the winter, the species hibernates to conserve energy from increased thermoregulatory demands and reduced food sources. The species often

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, *Graptemys pearlensis*, at <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/184437/0> (last visited August 30, 2018).

⁴⁶ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Threatened Species Status for the Northern Long-Eared Bat With 4(d) Rule, 80 Fed. Reg. 17974-18033 (April 2, 2014).

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 17988.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 17984.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.* at 17985.

⁵³ *Id.* at 17985-17986.

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 17986.

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *Id.*

returns to the same location for a hibernaculum.⁵⁸ Seasonal migrations between seasonal habitats have also been documented.⁵⁹ Mating occurs from late July to early October.⁶⁰ The species has small maternal colonies (typically 30-60 individuals) and females give birth to a single pup.⁶¹ Northern long-eared bats exhibit site fidelity to their summer home range and roost and forage in forests.⁶² Home ranges may vary by sex.⁶³

In listing the northern long-eared bat as threatened under the ESA, the Service identified several threats to the species including, among many others, the loss of summer habitat resulting from forest conversion.⁶⁴ Forest conversion is the loss of forest to another land cover type, which may result in the loss of suitable roosting or foraging habitat; fragmentation of remaining forest patches, leading to longer flights between suitable roosting and foraging habitat; removal of travel corridors; and direct injury or mortality during active season clearing. Impacts often occur at a local scale by affecting individuals and colonies.⁶⁵

II. DISCUSSION

A. Alternative C Will Result in Adverse Impacts to Several Imperiled Wildlife Species.

Federal agencies must take a “hard look” at the environmental consequences of their actions and consider all foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts.⁷⁹ Alternative C will result in adverse impacts to four federally listed species.

1. Impacts to the Gulf Sturgeon.

Gulf sturgeon have been observed in the One Lake project area. At least two tagged sturgeon have been confirmed within the proposed boundaries of the project.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has also noted the river passage of Gulf sturgeon in the 2018 study. The service also reports sturgeon in the general area of Interstate 55 and another 2 miles below the Ross Barnett spillway.⁸⁵

Dredging operations associated with channelization can destroy benthic feeding areas, disrupt spawning migrations, and re-suspend fine sediments causing siltation over substrate in spawning habitat.⁹⁰ The modification of the benthic areas affects the quality, quantity, and availability of prey.⁹¹ Impoundments and dams can adversely affect water quality by transporting sediments, organic matter, and nutrients.⁹²

⁵⁸⁻⁶⁵ *Id.* at 17987.

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ *Id.*

⁸⁵ Letter from Joseph A. Ranson, Field Supervisor, Louisiana Ecological Services, to Michael Goff, August 16, 2018, Appendix A.

⁸⁶ See 40 C.F.R. § 1502.22.

⁸⁷ *National Parks Conservation Ass’n v. Babbitt*, 241 F.3d 722 (9th Cir. 2001).

⁸⁸ *Center for Biological Diversity v. Rumsfeld*, 198 F. Supp. 2d 1139, 1152 (D. Ariz. 2002).

⁸⁹ See DEIS at 200-01.

Poor water quality caused by pesticides, heavy metals, and industrial contaminants threaten the species and pollution has been documented to have a host of physical, behavioral, and physiological impacts to sturgeon throughout the world.⁹⁴

Alternative C would result in significant adverse impacts and the take of federally listed Gulf sturgeon.

2. Impacts to the Ringed Map Turtle.

Alternative C will also result in take of the ringed map turtle, a federally listed and protected species. The ringed map turtle continues to decline across much of its range, including in the Pearl River.⁹⁶ Flood control projects pose a significant threat to the species and the turtle is not able to inhabit large lake areas or polluted waters.

Research by Dr. Will Selman from 2017-2018 identifies significant impacts to the ringed map turtle that will result from the proposed One Lake project as outlined in Alternative C.⁹⁹ The objective of Dr. Selman's study was to determine the abundance of both the ringed map and Pearl River map turtle in the Pearl River and local oxbow lakes throughout Hinds and Rankin counties.¹⁰⁰ Three of the Pearl River stretches surveyed are inclusive of the proposed One Lake Project.¹⁰¹

In all river surveys during 2017 and 2018, Selman observed 5,643 turtles with ringed maps comprising 85.8% (4,843 individuals).¹⁰² Using a 20-30% visual correction factor for undetected individuals, the mean number of ringed maps that would be directly impacted by the One Lake project would be 1,690 individuals.¹⁰³ Further, Dr. Selman estimated an additional 2,138 individuals would be indirectly impacted in two other stretches of the river.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁰ *Id.* at 17.

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group. 1998. Stream corridor restoration-principles, processes, and practices.

⁹³ *Id.* at 46956.

⁹⁴ Gulf Sturgeon Five Year Review, *supra* note 15 at 18.

⁹⁵ In fact, there is very little baseline water quality data for this section of the Pearl River. See DEIS at 61.

⁹⁶ Jones, R.L. 2017. Long-Term Trends in Ringed Map (*Gratemys oculifera*) Growth, Survivorship, Sex Ratios, and Population Sizes in the Pearl River, Mississippi. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* 16(2):215-228.

⁹⁷ DEIS at 202.

⁹⁸ *Id.* at 203.

⁹⁹ Selman, W. 2018. Diamonds in the Rough: Status of Two Imperiled *Gratemys* Species (*Gratemys oculifera* and *G. pearlensis*) in the Pearl River of Jackson, MS. Year 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.* at 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

As Dr. Selman explains, the One Lake Project will dramatically alter the hydrologic regime of the stretch of the Pearl River, transforming the existing lotic, riverine habitat to a lentic, lake setting.¹⁰⁵ Reduced river velocities will result in a lack of snag inputs along banks and minimize the annual scouring of sandbars that the ringed map depends on.¹⁰⁶ Generalist turtles would benefit at the expense of specialist riverine turtles (including the ringed map and Pearl Map turtle). Over time these generalist species would colonize the project area and the ringed map population would disappear over time.¹⁰⁷ Dr. Selman concludes that the project's impacts would be significant and long-lasting and negatively impact the recovery of the species.¹⁰⁸

In addition, the species is threatened by habitat degradation caused by a change in flow regimes, deterioration in water quality, and a corresponding loss of mollusks on which the turtle feeds.¹¹⁰ Water quality is degraded when floodplain clearing and channelization contributes to sedimentation, and the increased turbidity and siltation impacts the snails and other mollusks on which the turtle feeds.¹¹¹ As the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service stated in its decision to list the species under the ESA, the basking turtle is not able to inhabit large lakes or polluted waters.¹¹²

The species could also be threatened by increased development resulting from the change in riverine conditions to a lake environment. Not only could an increased human presence result in greater exploitation (i.e., collection) of the species, but also an increase in recreational boating on the river and extended human presence on nesting sandbars (including the very islands the DEIS states would be created to mitigate impacts) could result in behavioral changes (limited basking), physiological changes (increased long-term stress) and direct mortalities from faster and larger boats.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* at 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.*

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

¹⁰⁸ *Id.* at 19.

¹⁰⁹ The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service also noted the absence of this information in its recent letter to the District. *See supra*, note 85.

¹¹⁰ 51 Fed. Reg. at 45907; Selman, W. and Jones, R.L. 2017. Population Structure, Status, and Conservation of Two Graptemys Species from the Pearl River, Mississippi. *Journal of Herpetology* 51(1):27-36.

¹¹¹ 51 Fed. Reg. at 45908.

¹¹² *Id.* at 45907.

¹¹³ Selman, W. and Jones, R.L. 2017. Population Structure, Status, and Conservation of Two Graptemys Species from the Pearl River, Mississippi. *Journal of Herpetology* 51(1):27-36.

The Fish and Wildlife concluded in its Five-Year Review of the Species:

An impoundment for flood control of the Pearl River within ringed map turtle habitat at Jackson, Mississippi, south of the existing Ross Barnett Reservoir, has been considered. A feasibility study was conducted by the Corps of Engineers on the formation of this impoundment; however, the future of the project is unclear. *If the proposed reservoir is completed, it would likely result in the extirpation of the known ringed map turtle at this location.* The population at this location represents the best-known population on the Pearl River south of the Ross Barnett Reservoir.¹¹⁶

Alternative C would result in take of the federally listed ringed map turtle and would adversely modify the habitat on which it depends.

3. Impacts to the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

The federally endangered Northern long-eared bat would be jeopardized by Alternative C and its habitat would be adversely modified by the One Lake Project.

According to the previous DEIS and draft feasibility study, the One Lake project:

would include the clearing of a *substantial amount* of existing forestland habitat within the project area that could be potential summertime habitat for the NLEB. Though the significance of the available habitat utilization by the NLEB is not known at this time, the *potential available habitat does exist* within the Project Area. In addition, *the availability of suitable NLEB habitat within close proximity to the Project Area is also substantial.* As a result, the potential direct, adverse impacts to the available NLEB habitat within the Project Area would be minor in intensity and long-term in duration.¹²⁴

A substantial amount of potential NLEB summertime habitat is within and in close proximity to the project area. Forest conversion may not only result in the loss of suitable roosting or foraging habitat, but it also results in fragmentation of remaining forest patches, leading to longer flights between suitable roosting and foraging habitat as well as the removal of travel corridors, affecting both individuals and colonies.¹²⁶ Depending on a number of factors including the extent of the NLEB population in the project area and the distance from other roost sites, the impacts could be significant and long-term.

¹¹⁶ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ringed map turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*), 5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation (2010) (emphasis added).

¹²⁶ *Id.*

The project area is within the buffer zone for the summer hibernation area for the NLEB¹²⁸ and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service identified forest conversion the loss of summer habitat resulting from forest conversion as a threat to the species when it listed the NLEB as a threatened species in 2014 and again when it was uplisted to endangered in 2022.¹²⁹ Alternative C would cause take of the NLEB and adversely modify critical roosting habitat.

4. Impacts to the Pearl River Map Turtle.

The Pearl River map turtle is a federally listed species protected under the Endangered Species Act. The population has declined significantly since the 1980s and Dr. Selman's research in 2017- 2018 found densities lower during all surveys and in all stretches of the Pearl River in comparison to the ringed map.¹³⁹ Water quality and riverine regulation at the reservoir have likely impacted prey species.¹⁴⁰ Ultimately, as Dr. Selman explains, the chances of localized extinctions are higher in small populations like the Pearl River map turtle due to environmental and demographic stochastic events.¹⁴¹ Further, their absence in surveyed oxbows suggests that they may depend exclusively on riverine conditions for their survival.¹⁴²

As Dr. Selman estimates, 87 individuals would be directly impacted by the project with another 110 individuals indirectly affected upstream and downstream of the project area.¹⁴³ Impacts would be similar as those to the ringed map. As previously discussed, the One Lake Project will dramatically alter the hydrologic regime of the stretch of the Pearl River, transforming the existing lotic, riverine habitat to a lentic, lake setting.¹⁴⁴

Reduced river velocities will result in a lack of snag inputs along banks and minimize the annual scouring of sandbars that the ringed map depends on.¹⁴⁵ Generalist turtles would benefit at the expense of specialist riverine turtles (including the Ringed map and Pearl River Map turtle). Over time these generalist species would colonize the project area and the ringed map and Pearl River map turtle population would disappear over time.¹⁴⁶

¹²⁸ *Id.* at 199.

¹²⁹ *Id.* at 199. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Environmental Conservation Online System, Northern long-eared bat.

¹³⁹ Selman (2018), *supra* note 99 at 17.

¹⁴⁰ *Id.*

¹⁴¹ *Id.*

¹⁴² *Id.*

¹⁴³ *Id.* at 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Id.* at 18.

¹⁴⁵ *Id.*

¹⁴⁶ *Id.*

As Selman and Jones (2017) explain both species are already experiencing a decline both upstream and downstream of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, likely as a result of impaired water quality from industrial and/or municipal effluents, associated impacts of reservoir flow regulation, collection by the pet trade, or a combination of these factors.¹⁴⁷ Dr. Selman concluded the project's impacts would be significant and long-lasting and negatively impact the recovery of the species.¹⁴⁸

In light of the project's likely impacts to the ringed map, Pearl River map turtle, and other imperiled species, the IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (a global network of over 300 leading scientists and conservationists focused on tortoises and freshwater turtles) have urged decision makers to cancel its plans for the project.¹⁴⁹

I. CONCLUSION

Alternative C will result in take of four federally listed species and adversely modify the habitats that these species need for survival. The impacts of Alternative C will be both significant and long-term. In the case of species such as the ringed map and Pearl River map turtle, Alternative C will result in local extirpation, thereby putting these species at grave risk of extinction. We urge the Corps to reject Alternative C.

Instead, non-structural alternatives, which include portions of Alternative A and A1—and the Green Heart of the Pearl proposal provided by the University of California at Berkeley engineering team—will provide the safest, most widely supported, and most effective long-term flood control benefits.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We look forward to further engagement on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Totoiu", with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

Jason Totoiu

¹⁴⁷ Selman, W. and Jones, R.L. 2017. Population Structure, Status, and Conservation of Two Graptemys Species from the Pearl River, Mississippi. *Journal of Herpetology* 51(1):27-36.

¹⁴⁸ Selman (2018), *supra* note 99 at 19.

¹⁴⁹ Letter from IUCN SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (July 31, 2018).

June 29, 2023

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39183-3435

Via email comment portal: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

**RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project,
Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS – Opposition to Proposed Project**

Dear Colonel Klein:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed “One Lake” project, referenced above, and to ask the United States Corps of Engineers to **reject Option C of this project and finally prevent this project from moving forward.** After nearly 30 years of proponents’ touting their plan to redesign and further develop the Pearl River’s floodplain, it is time to bring their latest iteration, and any other iterations, to a halt, once and for all. Taxpayers have spent enough money on hand-holding for a project that should have been shut down decades ago.

Opposition

Organizations like Healthy Gulf, American Rivers, Pearl Riverkeepers, and National Wildlife Federation, and other organizations and entities dedicated to protecting the environment and the public health, have, over and over, presented ample and credible scientific, biologic, hydrologic, environmental, economic and engineering evidence that give the COE sound reasons to reject this proposed project.

Downstream communities, industry and Coastal interests in Mississippi and Louisiana oppose this project and have very real and valid stakes in preventing this land development experiment. It is confounding that new development in the floodplain seems to be more favored by some political forces than existing development.

No fewer than 11 counties in Mississippi and 4 parishes in Louisiana will be negatively impacted by the proposed alteration of the Pearl River. Still, the project proponents and others have given short shrift to the interests of and impacts to the City of Jackson as a whole and to some Hinds and Rankin areas, and to the downstream communities that rely on the Pearl River for economic, recreational and aesthetic benefits, and who have an equal interest in the health and future of the Pearl River. This project cannot be built in a vacuum and Hinds and Rankin counties do not own this river.

The NGOs and individual opponents to this project have nothing personal to gain from opposing this project. Our opposition is about good stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and about public health and the environment. The communities and industries opposing this project have nothing to gain from their opposition but have much to lose if this project moves forward. Their existing interests should not be subordinated to a highly speculative and costly experiment.

Negative Impacts

The underlying impetus of this project is new development, and not flood control. This project in one iteration or another has been pushed for nearly 30 years and has always had as its core the development of new, man-made real estate; not protecting already existing development. This project will bring more development in the floodplain and inevitably create new risks of flooding in Jackson and Flowood. Landfills, wastewater systems, bridges, roads and other infrastructure are all in the cross-hairs of this project but have consistently been given short shrift by the proponents.

Juxtaposed to feigned hand wringing about what were truly devastating floods in 1979 and 1983, has been rampant, unapologetic and basically continued development in the floodplain, from corner to corner. Little has been done in 30 years other than begging for a lake at taxpayer expense. Taxpayers should not have to pay for the effects of shortsighted frenzied development of the floodplain, while hurting ourselves and our neighbors downstream.

Risks to the Taxpayer

Financial, environmental and public health costs, known and unknown, will be dumped on the Mississippi and American taxpayers. And who will bear the financial burdens of undoing the environmental damage caused by the project. Good science, good government, good citizenship mandate honest analysis. Here are just a few obvious negative consequences and risks of this proposed project:

- higher water levels in Metro-Area streams from high water events that will cause flooding in areas that have never before flooded;

- flooding at Lefleur's State Park which was funded through state and federal tax dollars;

- creation of ongoing maintenance demands for the low-water dam and levee that be built, and costs of trash removal and water quality monitoring (At a public meeting in 2018, a representative of the proponents said the weir would not hold water; when asked how, then, would it help with flooding, he simply laughed);

- potential for a dam break that would overwhelm downstream property owners;

- starving downstream communities of water during the dry season, swamping them during wet season, negatively impacting the environment, fisheries, industry and POTWs;

- inherent conflict between the Ross Barnett Reservoir's management and the proponents' management on how to handle the Pearl River's water before it gets to Jackson;

costs to taxpayers for the construction of the project, including buy-outs of land to develop (not to store floodwaters), and costs to taxpayers for ongoing maintenance;

added high-end properties in the taxpayer-funded Federal Flood Insurance Program.

Costs

There are less costly and less devastating alternatives to this proposal (Option C), alternatives that have been favored by the COE and ignored by proponents.

The proponents have declared that the project will not hurt anyone. Oyster growers, shrimpers, fishermen depend on the Pearl to nourish estuaries and marshes that support their industries and in turn support other existing businesses. Taxpayers downstream should not have to pay for a project that adversely affects their access to water, jeopardizes their permits, their livelihoods, and the overall health and environment of their communities.

There is no undoing the damage that will likely follow this experiment. Hundreds of acres of productive wetlands and uplands that work quietly, consistently and efficiently for people and nature cannot be outdone by man-made designs. Since 1990, approximately 1,000 dams have been removed in the U.S. Engineers and scientists know more than they did 100 years ago when dams were the latest approach for managing water. Aren't we smarter than that now? Why must Mississippi resort to outdated paradigms? And why must American taxpayers pay for them?

Environmental Justice

Hundreds of millions of dollars are being proposed to create a real estate for high-end development, in a city that has many needs and that already has impacted (cleared and paved) lands ready for renewal and redevelopment. Environmental justice must include looking at allocation of public financial resources. Environmental justice is more than concern about the placement of dirty and toxic industries; it must be about how we spend tax dollars and what we do to help improve the environment and public health in underserved communities.

In Conclusion

If the project is built and the experiment fails, it will be the City of Jackson and neighbors downstream in Mississippi and Louisiana who will be struggling to find money and to find the political-will to try to repair the damage done to their communities and to our natural heritage. It will be taxpayers alone who will be looking at impossible challenges to clean up and restore what should have never been destroyed.

Those of us opposing this project are motivated by what is right for environmental protection, for public health, for taxpayers, for communities and neighbors, and for future generations to come; not by a silly notion of sipping coffee on the Pearl, at a ridiculous financial and environmental cost to taxpayers.

Citizens of the United States depend on our professional governmental agencies to be moved by the greater good, the public interest, and not moved by politics or political operatives, lobbyists, or self-promoters. We must be able to count on the USACOE and other federal and state entities to guide us towards the least costly, least destructive and most informed solutions. We

know that when the USACOE conducts its review and takes into consideration the concerns and input from opponents, it will conclude that this project as proposed is simply a real estate development project, a risky project, an environmentally destructive project, a costly project, and a project that should be rejected.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service in protecting our nation's natural heritage.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jayne Buttross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jayne Buttross

From: [Jennifer Buchanan](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] I am in opposition of the One Lake Project on the Pearl River
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 2:40:04 PM

There are many reasons that the One Lake Project should be denied: This project is an environmental disaster in the making that will impact the entire length of the Pearl River. All around the country, dams are being removed and river flows are being restored because of the damages that they have caused.

Imperiled endangered species such as the Gulf Sturgeon must travel upstream in coastal streams, including the Pearl River, to reproduce. Both NOAA and the USFWS are so concerned about the importance of the Pearl River that they have designated the Pearl River as Critical Habitat for the Gulf Sturgeon: "NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. FWS collectively "the Services," designate critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), a threatened species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). We designate 14 geographic areas among the Gulf of Mexico rivers and tributaries as critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon. These 14 geographic areas (units) encompass approximately 2,783 river kilometers (rkm) (1,730 river miles (rmi)) and 6,042 square kilometers (sq km) (2,333 square miles (sq mi)) of estuarine and marine habitat. Critical habitat identifies specific areas that are essential to the conservation of a listed species, and that may require special management considerations or protection. Section 7(a)(2) of the Act requires that each Federal agency shall, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Services, insure that any action authorized, funded or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Section 4 of the Act requires us to consider economic and other relevant impacts of specifying any particular area as critical habitat. We solicited data and comments from the public on all aspects of the proposal, including data on economic and other impacts of the designation. (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/critical-habitat-gulf-sturgeon>).

This project would drastically impact the habitat necessary to support the Gulf Sturgeon as well as other aquatic species of concern such as the Ringed Sawback, the Pearl River Map and Alligator Snapping Turtles and the coastal Diamondback Terrapin and species of economic concern such as the Oyster. Flows in the lower Pearl River are already restricted. Further restriction of this flow will lead to saltwater intrusion to move farther up the river. This increase in salinity will kill the freshwater vegetation which will lead to critical habitat loss for many marsh animals and increased bank erosion which will cause an increase in siltation downstream.

The actual lake that has supposedly been designed to prevent flooding problems in and around Jackson has actually been designed to promote a private land development project that will line the developers' pockets with profits generated from the public money used to build the lake. This proposal sounds a lot like a recent project where public welfare money dedicated to help the poorest people in Mississippi was used to construct a volleyball facility at the University of Southern Mississippi. It is just as wrong to use this public money to benefit a few rich developers who have the ears of a few politicians.

This project is wrong on so many levels! Please do not approve this project.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Buchanan

Coastal Ecologist, retired

228-860-5763

From: muthdp@gmail.com
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Cc: ["Jennifer Coulson"](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 8:28:05 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[OAS - One Lake comment dpm.pdf](#)



64340 Fogg Lane
Pearl River, LA 70452-5206
(504) 717-3544
OrleansAudubon@aol.com

June 29, 2023

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Via email comment portal: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS

Dear Colonel Klein:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments. Orleans Audubon Society, a Chapter of the National Audubon Society, represents nearly one thousand members in Southeast Louisiana, many of them residents of the Pearl River Basin, and many more of them use the basin for recreation and education.

We had hoped that this ill-disguised development project, another case of the

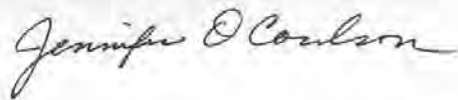
taxpayer and the environment being sacrificed to profit the few, had finally been killed. But, of course, these projects are like a game of "whack-a-mole." We understand that this mole has popped up again. You (and we) have to go on dealing with it, not because of any intrinsic merit, but for purely political reasons. We understand that the Corps has inherited this problem. Congress has directed you to re-analyze the mole, but the law requires you to analyze the facts. In that light, we trust you will not try to put lipstick on this mole (if you will forgive the mixed metaphor).

We consider the Pearl River and its swamps, bottomland forests, and marshes to be a jewel. As one of the last largely free-flowing river systems in the southeastern United States, at least below the Ross Barnett Reservoir, it preserves much of the rich biodiversity and productivity once characteristic of river systems in the Gulf Coastal Plain.

As you seek solutions to issues of flood risk management in Rankin and Hinds counties, our message is simple: please leave the Pearl River alone. Don't dam it, don't dredge it, don't divert it, and don't constrict its vital floodplain. Instead, seek to move people and infrastructure out of harm's way or protect them in place with proven non-structural, or, at the last, structural measures. To the maximum extent possible, rely on natural infrastructure solutions to deal with water quantity and water quality issues, not unsustainable gray infrastructure of the type which has proven time and again to spawn more problems than it solves.

Let the Pearl River run free.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer O. Coulson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Jennifer O. Coulson, President
Orleans Audubon Society

From: djen@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Jennifer Whitney](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl, its people, & the ecosystems!
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 10:21:20 PM

Dear Vicksburg District Commander Colonel Christopher Klein,

Destroying wetlands destroys habitat. This proposed dredging will expose downriver residents and river users to toxic pollution from the contaminated sites. Jackson's drinking water is precious and precarious, and the people of Jackson cannot afford to have it put at risk for such commercial development. Nor can or should this region tolerate any engineering projects that do not include flood mitigation.

It's no wonder that the US F&WS called this boondoggle, dba Alternative C or the One Lake Project "the most environmentally damaging alternative."

Protect the Pearl and its people and ecosystems!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Whitney
New Orleans, LA 70117
djen@riseup.net

From: [jill boteler](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake Project
Date: Saturday, June 10, 2023 9:40:57 AM

Good morning, Colonel Klein;

I have been a resident of Jackson, MS since 1970. Born and reared in the Delta, I know the impact of water management on the environment and appreciate the very hard work conceived and completed by the Army Corps of Engineers. I do, however, have grave concerns for a Corps project that will ultimately affect the quality of life for the children, and ultimately, the citizens of Jackson and beyond.

Concerning the One Lake Project, I will be brief:

- (1) I DO NOT agree with Alternative C, the most damaging alternative for LeFleur's Bluff Park
- (2) Alternatives A or A1 will not wreck the Lefleur's Bluff State Park, destroy habitat, or cause problems downstream
- (3) NO LAKE. Strike Alternative C. Use Alternative A or A1 to AVOID creating a lake.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my concerns,
Jill Boteler
Jackson, MS 39216



June 29, 2023

Delivered by Electronic Mail to: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

Colonel Christopher Klein
Vicksburg District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Re: **Scoping Comments on Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS, 88 Fed. Reg. 31738, May 18, 2023**

Dear Colonel Klein,

On behalf of the National Audubon Society and our more than 1.6 million members, including nearly 38,000 members in our Audubon Delta region (AR, LA, MS), we urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) to reject the ecologically destructive, economic development proposal locally known as the "One Lake" project, and instead prioritize the development of an alternative that purposefully incorporates natural, nature-based, and nonstructural flood measures that can deliver effective, environmentally sensitive relief to those who need it in the Greater Jackson area while protecting the Pearl River Basin's ecology and wildlife, downstream communities, and regional economy.

For more than a century, Audubon has worked to protect birds and their habitats through the belief that where birds thrive people prosper. Our decades-long presence in the Mississippi River Flyway and Gulf of Mexico reflects their significance as rich ecosystems that annually support over 100 million migratory, nesting, and wintering birds. The Pearl River with its diversity of birds, wildlife, and their habitats, is a key environmental linchpin, and is recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as one of the most intact river systems in the southeast U.S. The Pearl also connects nearly 500 miles of communities across Mississippi and Louisiana, supporting the region's rich outdoors culture and serving as a major economic engine.

The One Lake project will be devastating to this exceptional resource through massive dredging and damming of almost 10 river miles to create a nearly 2,000-acre lake near Jackson, Mississippi. For many years, proponents have claimed One Lake is a flood control project, but this widely publicized real estate development scheme would only put more people and property in harm's way.

As discussed in detail below, the One Lake plan will destroy vital habitat for hundreds of species of birds and wildlife, exacerbate already significant water quality problems, alter freshwater flows all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, and damage the region's vital seafood and nature-based tourism economy.

Critically, construction of One Lake will expose vulnerable communities in Jackson, as well as those located downstream, to extensive toxic contamination. At least three highly contaminated Hazardous-Toxic-Radiological Waste sites, two Superfund sites, and three Hazardous Waste sites are located directly within or adjacent to One Lake's dredging footprint.

Audubon's strong opposition to the One Lake project has been well documented in our letters submitted during the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District's (Levee Board) 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process, as well as through subsequent briefings and letters we have provided to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works' (ASACW) office. Despite the serious environmental, public health and safety, and economic concerns that have been expressed for many years by Audubon—as well as hundreds of environmental/social justice/faith groups, business/industry sectors, elected and community leaders, and members of the public—we are deeply disappointed that the Corps is now considering One Lake as a top alternative (i.e., the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS preferred Alternative C). This decision is even more stunning given your agency's past rejection of the Levee Board's various lake plans, and concerning findings by the Corps' own technical reviewers and independent external peer reviews that identify major problems with One Lake.

One Lake was originally proposed by a local businessman and touted by economic development interests, so it is unsurprising that the Levee Board has refused to consider any other flood risk management alternatives that would provide environmentally sound flood damage reduction benefits.

However, the Corps is now responsible for this flood planning process. Thus, your agency must consider more effective, environmentally sustainable flood approaches that can be deployed to aid the local community as well as benefit the Pearl River watershed and downstream communities. As discussed below, these commonsense flood measures are used across the country as a way to holistically support communities, nature, and climate resilience. Additionally, due to the Corps' poorly coordinated, confusing manner in which this next phase of flood planning was initiated, moving forward we call on your agency to meet the spirit and letter of the law by using best practices for public engagement that are detailed below.

The Corps Should Reject One Lake, Initiate a New Flood Planning Process focused on Nature-Based and Nonstructural Solutions

Audubon urges the Corps to reject the current set of alternatives being considered, including the One Lake project. In its place, the Corps should immediately initiate a new process in order to develop a flood plan that emphasizes natural, nature-based, and nonstructural solutions to provide sustainable, environmentally sound flood mitigation for those who need it in the Greater Jackson area. Appendix A presents examples of how these approaches are being used across the country.

The good news is that there are significant opportunities to help Jackson metro residents and businesses get flood relief through a suite of already-existing federal programs, many of which are well funded. Some examples of these programs are:

- ♦ Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program, Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- ♦ Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grants for Mitigation and Disaster Recovery
- ♦ U.S. Department of Agriculture's Emergency Watershed Protection Program
- ♦ Department of Transportation's Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative,

Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program and Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants

- ♦ Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Justice Small Grants Program and Sewer Overflow & Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program

The Corps' new flood plan should include elements that prioritize:

- Restoring wetlands and green spaces in the Pearl River's floodplain, with particular emphasis given to all 12 of the Pearl's tributaries that flow through the Greater Jackson area where much of the documented flooding occurs
- Selectively elevating and/or flood-proofing existing homes and buildings with historical flooding problems.
 - Notably, the Corps' new proposed Alternative A1 appears to include non-structural measures such as elevations and flood-proofing but for "both residential and nonresidential structures receiving residual damages in the base year with the project in place". This proposal is significantly different from what Audubon is endorsing; instead, the Corps' objective should be to focus elevations, flood-proofing, and related measures on primary residences and structures that have a demonstrated history of flood issues.
- Carrying out targeted voluntary relocations or buy-outs of properties with historical flooding problems.
 - Importantly, Audubon denounces Alternative A that proposes outright purchase of more than 3,000 structures, including homes, businesses, government and public buildings, schools, and hospitals. This recommendation appears to be made on baseless, unrealistic assumptions (as in all 3,000 structures flood), which reflects faulty, biased information presented in the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS; A1 as currently presented is unacceptable and unrealistic.
 - The Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) panel's final assessment of the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS asserted, "Alternative A, the Buyout Plan, is impractical, and its inclusion in the final array of alternative plans precludes an efficient evaluation of the alternatives that best meet the planning objectives"; this was one of five "High Significance" comments in a report that identified 23 comments. ([Rankin-Hinds IEPR – Final Evaluator Responses and BackChecks](#), p. 7)
- Improving the existing levee system, with a critical goal of setting levees back farther from the Pearl River in order to allow the river more room to naturally move.
- Improving management of existing infrastructure, specifically the Ross Barnett Reservoir and Spillway.
 - Since the last major flood of the Greater Jackson area in 1983 (a 100-year flood event), management of the Ross Barnett Reservoir and Spillway has become an increasingly important flood risk reduction tool. During 2018, Mississippi's second wettest year on record, which included several flood stage events on the Pearl, the reservoir was effectively managed to minimize flood threats and help protect structures. These

benefits also were evident during the winter of 2020, which included the wettest January on record. As noted below, a Government Accounting Office (GAO) report on Jackson's 1979 Flood of Record, which was a 200-year event, found that although the reservoir was not built for flood control, it could be responsibly managed to help mitigate flooding for the Greater Jackson area.

One Lake is an Unacceptable, Environmentally Destructive Plan

Audubon reiterates that One Lake is a dangerous and environmentally unacceptable plan that is based on a fundamentally flawed planning process as demonstrated by the following:

- **One Lake will encourage new development in the floodway and floodplain of the Pearl River, resulting in placing more people and property in harm's way.**
 - The project involves digging up 25 million cubic yards of mostly floodplain and river habitat from nearly 10 miles of the Pearl River, installing a dam at the southern end to create a 1,900-acre impoundment, and disposing of the dredged material to fill along the "lake", which will create new developable waterfront property for homes, businesses, and other economic development.
 - The Corps' Agency Technical Review (ATR) team made it clear that One Lake will not reduce flood risks, "[The] lake does not create any additional flood storage capacity or conveyance capacity". ([ATR Report June 2020](#), p. 93)
 - Notably, a 1982 study by the FWS attributed much of the City of Jackson's damage from the 1979 Flood of Record to development within the floodplain.
 - The GAO's post-1979 Flood assessment, "Improvements Being Made In Flood Fighting Capabilities In The Jackson, Mississippi, Area", dated December 19, 1979, found that, "(e)fforts in fighting the April 1979 flood in Jackson, Mississippi, were hampered by a lack of coordination among Federal, State, and local agencies and inadequate flood preparation" (p. 1). Other observations the report highlighted include:
 - Not enough data was being collected from the Pearl River gages and from rainfall reports;
 - No attempts were made to fortify the lowest levee areas (i.e., sandbagging), so water moved around them;
 - Much of the floodwater that invaded the city came through the City of Jackson's own sewer system. In 1975, the city built a new, unpermitted 66-inch sewer pipe that passed through the Jackson levee. The city did not get a permit from the Levee Board ahead of installing the pipe; and
 - Although the Ross Barnett Reservoir was not built for flood control, it could be responsibly managed to help mitigate flooding for the Jackson metro area.
- **A major alternative in the Corps' scoping announcement, One Lake is based on the Levee Board's same flawed analysis.** Importantly, the ATR and IEPR panels' assessments of the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS identified many of the same flagrant concerns that Audubon has shared with the Corps, including that the project would expose communities to extensive toxic contaminations and that the few proposed alternatives did not adequately consider, nor thoroughly or practically evaluate, an array of structural and non-structural measures.

- **In its review of the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that One Lake "is the most environmentally damaging plan"** and that the local Levee Board should be required to produce a second draft environmental impact statement that would provide "greater details regarding plan formulation, design, operation, mitigation, and adaptive management" before the project advances.
- **One Lake will directly destroy at least 2,500 acres of wildlife habitat**, including at least 1,500 acres of vital floodplain and bottomland hardwood wetland habitat, much of which provides natural flood protection for local communities. An additional 1,900 acres of diverse in-stream riverine habitat and ecologically vital small streams will be destroyed and turned into an impoundment. Though not acknowledged by the 2018 DEIS, even more habitat will be lost as the fundamental changes to the form and function of the Pearl River system play out over time, including reduction and elimination of natural floodplain inundation. This includes impacts to basin habitats located below the proposed dam.
- **One Lake will adversely affect hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, due to the habitat losses and fundamental transformation of the Pearl River ecosystem.** Notable species include the Gulf Sturgeon and the Ringed Sawback turtle, both listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as the Pearl Map turtle, proposed as federally-threatened. Both turtles are endemic to the Pearl.
 - As FWS has advised, "[w]ildlife resources within the Pearl River Basin are dependent upon the diverse floral composition of associated forested wetlands" and "a higher percentage" of vertebrate wildlife species in the basin "use bottomland hardwoods as primary habitat (habitat a species depends upon for reproduction and/or feeding during all or a portion of the year) than any other habitat type."¹
 - The following section provides a more substantive discussion into the Pearl River's importance for birds and wildlife.
- **One Lake will reduce vital freshwater flows all the way to the Gulf of Mexico**, reducing water levels in the lower Pearl River and jeopardizing water quality, seafood and tourism sectors, and hundreds of millions of dollars in coastal restoration projects underway—or planned—for Mississippi and Louisiana, such as a \$56 million marsh-oyster project in Hancock County, Mississippi, and several projects identified in Louisiana's \$50 billion Coastal Master Plan. At risk is not only Mississippi and Louisiana's combined \$14 billion-dollar-a year hunting-fishing culture, but vital freshwater that fuels the region's multi-million dollar seafood and tourism industries that support thousands of jobs.
 - These downstream concerns have resulted in over 15 resolutions passed in opposition to One Lake, including one passed unanimously by both chambers of the Louisiana State Legislature.
 - The Levee Board's 2018 DEIS hydrologic modeling was not comprehensive and rigorous enough to shed light on these downstream issues and only focused only on the project's immediate footprint. Rather a destructive project of this magnitude warrants detailed

¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 1 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the 2018 DEIS).

study that would include the Ross Barnett Reservoir south to Mississippi Sound, the Pearl River Delta, and the Gulf of Mexico.

- **One Lake will further degrade the water quality in the Pearl River.** Pearl River water quality in the metro Jackson area suffers from egregious sewerage discharges. In 2012, the City of Jackson entered into a consent decree with the EPA and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regarding sewage overflows from its wastewater collection system. Ultimately in 2019, MDEQ issued a water contact advisory for 20 miles of the Pearl River, closing the reach to swimming, fishing, or wading—from its confluence with Hanging Moss Creek in Jackson to the Swinging Bridge at Byram—and 12 of its Jackson-area tributaries; this area would include the One Lake project. One Lake would only serve to amplify water quality degradation in the Pearl River by slowing and confining the flow of sewage and creating a eutrophic 1,900-acre impoundment that is unsuitable for aquatic life.
 - For years, water quality reports in the Jackson metropolitan area have documented egregious sewerage discharges. In the last five years, the sewage overflow amounts have increased exponentially. For example, the City of Jackson Sewer Consent Decree Quarterly Report for [April-June 2022](#) documented 77 Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) events that released 67.5 million gallons of untreated sewage into Waters of the State. More sewage was released in those three months than the entire amount released in 2021. Fifty-four of the SSOs reported were listed as ongoing/unresolved. Eleven of the 77 SSOs released over one million gallons at a single location.
 - Also, MDEQ's review of the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS raised numerous questions about the project's water quality modeling, and called for more analysis "to consider how [One Lake] would affect water quality downstream of the project area. . ."
- **One Lake project will worsen Jackson's drinking water problems.** The J.H. Fewell drinking water plant draws directly from the area in the Pearl River that would be extensively dredged and ponded to build One Lake. Project construction would increase turbidity in the Pearl River to the point where this 100-year old facility will not be able to operate, as acknowledged in the 2018 Draft EIS. As a result, the City of Jackson would be required to somehow find a "temporary" water supply alternative for 30% of the City's drinking water during project construction, which would take at least "three or four years" according to the local Levee Board.²
 - It is equally clear that the One Lake project would not have prevented Jackson's most recent crisis, which was caused by the collapse of the city's primary water treatment plant, the O.B. Curtis plant, which supplies up to 70% of Jackson's drinking water supply. That collapse was caused by flood-induced high turbidity (and other polluted runoff) in the Ross Barnett Reservoir, which is the water source for the O.B. Curtis plant and is located seven miles upstream of the proposed One Lake project. The One Lake project has no ability to—and will not—alleviate flood-induced high turbidity in the Reservoir.

² Northside Sun, Moving Ahead: Final Public Comment Period For One Lake Coming Soon, 06/14/22 (available at <https://www.northsidesun.com/local-content-top-stories/moving-ahead-final-public-comment-period-one-lakecoming-soon#sthash.bggohcen.dpbs>) ("Keith Turner, attorney for the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood & Drainage Control District said . . . After funding is secured, the project will require three or four years of construction, and then several more years for developers to produce plans for the economic development component.")

- **One Lake will worsen environmental injustices by exacerbating flooding in underserved Jackson neighborhoods.** Many of the flooding woes experienced in the Greater Jackson area in recent years have been significantly attributed to rain-induced flash flooding that impacts urban neighborhoods located along the 12 creeks that flow into the Pearl River. These neighborhoods are predominantly low-income communities of color. The Levee Board's 2018 DEIS acknowledges that One Lake will not protect against local creek flooding, and in fact states that the One Lake impoundment will permanently elevate water levels in all 12 Pearl River tributaries.
 - This will further exacerbate localized flash flooding, increase underserved neighborhoods' vulnerability to backwater flooding from high river events, and magnify flood risk from rain events in the upper reaches of the tributaries that ultimately flow into the now-elevated creek channels. Affected tributaries include those that regularly experience flash flooding, run through environmental justice communities, and pass by public schools, museums, and other important community facilities and resources.
 - The elevated water levels and increased flooding will also add to the city's many stormwater permit violations. Urban stormwater flooding already affects mainly Black neighborhoods located along Town Creek and Lynch Creek, which are Pearl River tributaries that flow through majority Black census tracts in downtown Jackson. These two creeks run through Jackson Wards 3 and 5; according to data from EPA EJScreen tool, these Wards are in the nation's 95-100th percentile for a combination of percent low-income and percent minority population.
- **One Lake will expose vulnerable communities to extensive toxic contamination—thereby adding to the area's environmental injustices.** At least three highly contaminated Hazardous-Toxic-Radiological Waste sites, two Superfund sites, and three Hazardous Waste sites have been identified within or adjacent to One Lake's dredging footprint. Initial site assessments at these locations have found Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), benzene, cadmium, lead, nickel and creosote compounds, which were well above regulatory standards. The One Lake's extensive dredging activities will re-suspend the contaminated sediments at those sites and will expose Greater Jackson and downstream communities, fish, and wildlife to high levels of toxins.
 - During the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS, it was apparent that little additional sampling had been done, no remediation efforts were detailed, and no plan was proposed to protect the health of nearby and downstream communities from exposure to these toxins both during and after project construction. Although the true costs to clean up these sites are likely to be many tens of millions of dollars, the 2018 DEIS estimated only \$8 million for cleanup in the project's \$345 million estimated cost with no justification provided.
- In its 2018 DEIS comment letter, **the Mississippi Department of Transportation determined that One Lake's proposed dredging would result in "catastrophic failure" of critical infrastructure,** thereby requiring the replacement of nine bridges. Although this would add nearly \$110 million to the project's estimated \$345 million construction cost, no bridge repair or replacement costs were identified in the 2018 DEIS project budget.
- **One Lake will increase water treatment costs to nearly 100 downstream users and municipalities.** Reductions in downstream river flows are anticipated to increase costs to nearly 100 downstream Pearl River industrial users and municipalities that rely on stable freshwater flow and adequate

dilution of their discharges, such as International Paper, Georgia-Pacific, and the towns of Bogalusa and Pearl River.

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- **One Lake will install a dam, despite the project sponsors' claims it is just a weir. The Corps' ATR clarifies that the purported weir is in fact a dam due to its size—and dams require much more rigorous design standards and safety protocols to protect the public.** ([ATR Report](#) June 2020, p. 80)
- **The true dollar-costs of One Lake are vastly underestimated.** The Levee Board's 2018 DEIS acknowledges that One Lake's estimated \$345 million dollar construction cost and \$13.9 million annual operations cost are based on multiple assumptions and unknowns. (Levee Board 2018 DEIS, Appendix C at 220) Those budget projections do not include outlays to provide a "temporary" drinking water supply for 3+ years, remediation of eight toxic sites, and replacement nine bridges, nor the extra costs involved in building a dam instead of a weir.

One Lake Poses Serious, Irreparable Damage to the Pearl River's Birds and Wildlife

One Lake poses significant, irreversible damages – directly, indirectly, and cumulatively – to the Pearl River Basin, birds, wildlife, and their habitats. These ecological impacts are not only limited to the immediate project footprint, but also to the downstream resources that lie along the 200-mile stretch of the Pearl below the proposed dam as well as Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf of Mexico.

One Lake will directly destroy over 2,500 acres of habitat that supports Bald Eagles and several species of conservation priority songbirds and waterbirds, as well as a variety of fish and other wildlife such as the Gulf Sturgeon and the Ringed Sawback turtle, both listed as federally threatened, and the Pearl Map turtle, which has been federally proposed as a threatened species. These habitat impacts are unacceptable, and no possible mitigation exists to thoroughly address and compensate for them.

Of particular concern are potential impacts to conservation of priority bird species in the proposed project area and affected downstream areas in the Pearl River Basin, including Golden-winged Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, and Rusty Blackbird. In addition, several State Listed Endangered Species regularly use the project area, including Swallow-tailed Kite and Wood Stork.³ Audubon has conducted an analysis of the central and lower Pearl River Basin's importance to migrating, resident, and overwintering birds, the findings of which are presented in the subsequent section.

³ Mississippi Museum of Natural Science (2014). *Endangered Species of Mississippi*. Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Jackson, MS (available at https://www.mdwfp.com/media/3231/endangered_species_of_mississippi.pdf) (visited June 22, 2023).

Audubon is also concerned about the impacts to Important Bird Areas (IBAs).⁴ For example, the Levee Board has made claims that the proposal has been modified in such a way that it will no longer affect LeFleur's Bluff State Park. LeFleur's Bluff State Park is recognized as an IBA due in large part to the 20-year-long effort by our local chapter, Jackson Audubon Society, to steward and manage the park's habitat as a premier nesting area for Prothonotary Warblers. Notably, the *State of North America's Birds 2022*⁵, a report developed by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, of which Audubon is a partner, found the Prothonotary Warbler to be a species of high conservation concern. According to maps in the 2018 DEIS, however, dredging is still planned on park property. Other IBAs that are directly imperiled by One Lake include Hancock County Marsh Coastal Preserve (MS), East Delta Plain (LA), and Pearl River (LA, nominated). Audubon considers impacts to IBAs unacceptable.

The Pearl River is a key source of freshwater for Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf of Mexico. The preferred alternative poses significant alterations to downstream river flows, sediment transport, water quality, and the fresh-salt water interface critical to a productive estuary. We anticipate these significant changes to upstream flow will permanently alter downstream hydrology, resulting in substantial alterations to—and further loss of—habitats in the lower Pearl River basin, Mississippi Sound, and southeast Louisiana, including Biloxi Marsh. These wetland habitats provide communities crucial buffering protection from flood and storm events; the Corps also must assess this anticipated loss of functioning wetlands and floodplain habitats and the resulting increased storm surge and flooding in the Pearl River Delta and central Gulf Coast.

Other imperiled habitats and wildlife corridors from One Lake include over 125,000 acres of designated conservation lands such as Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, Hancock County Coastal Preserve, Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, Ben's Creek Wildlife Management Area, Marion County Wildlife Management Area, Old River Wildlife Management Area. Additional conservation lands include 2,200 acres protected by The Nature Conservancy and the 87-acre Fischer Wildlife Sanctuary that is owned and managed by Orleans Audubon Society, a local Audubon chapter. Many of these areas are comprised of vast stretches of bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands that require a specific and frequent hydrologic regime to provide the appropriate balance of nutrients, sediments, and freshwater to remain healthy and productive. Importantly, these investments in conservation also provide economic stimulus through consumptive and non-consumptive natural resource use (e.g., hunting, fishing, bird watching, etc.). A Draft EIS must assess the economic consequences to communities that currently benefit from these activities.

Our concerns about the altering or loss of downstream habitats includes consequences to foraging, nesting, and breeding habitats that birds depend on the Pearl River Basin. For example, the lower basin is recognized to provide important stopover habitat for Neotropical migratory birds as well as supporting valuable nesting and foraging habitat for an array of bird species. Along with Mississippi Sound, Breton Sound, and the central Gulf Coast, this region provides vital foraging habitat for birds by

⁴ An IBA is an area that has been identified using an internationally agreed to set of criteria as being globally important for the conservation of bird populations. National Audubon Society administers the program in the U.S.

⁵ See <https://www.stateofthebirds.org/2022/download-pdf-report/>

supporting oysters, fish, shrimp, crabs, insects, small mammals and other aquatic/terrestrial vertebrates and invertebrates as well as plants.

The potential for altered upstream flows to impact bird foraging habitat, as well as the broader food web, is demonstrated by a scientific paper that examined how droughts can alter river and tributary inputs into Mississippi Sound and result in dramatically changing the fish community structure.⁶ Of the eight species studied, researchers found “...the abundance of seven species significantly decreased while the abundance of one species significantly increased.” A Draft EIS must fully assess these consequences.

Audubon has had a long-standing involvement in efforts to restore the Mississippi River Delta and in guiding Gulf recovery efforts from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil disaster. The proposal jeopardizes the multi-billion dollar natural infrastructure investments and restoration projects planned or underway across the central Gulf Coast. Accordingly, a Draft EIS must include an assessment of impacts to these restoration projects.

Notably, the Pearl River has been recognized by the National Park Service for its scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife values, thereby being listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) as a potential candidate for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.⁷ One Lake would impact all designated 151 River Miles (RM), namely RM 161 (above the City of Columbia, MS) to RM 312 (one mile south of Jackson, MS). Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act section 5(d)(1) and related guidance, all federal agencies must seek to avoid or mitigate actions that would adversely affect NRI river segments. Further, the proposal threatens several natural and scenic tributaries designated by the State of Louisiana that are located in the lower Pearl River Basin.

Finally, we are concerned about ecological and public health threats posed by numerous hazardous and/or contaminated sites that have been identified in the project area. Given the massive dredge and fill undertaking of One Lake or any earth movement being considered in the general vicinity, extensive local and downstream water and soil sampling is would be crucial to protect public and ecosystem health.

Importance of the Pearl River to Birds

Audubon completed an analysis that scientifically and unequivocally substantiates the importance of a healthy Pearl River to 220 breeding, wintering, and migrating bird species. Audubon developed this model analysis, which is described in DeLuca et al. (2021), and a summary of this peer-reviewed

⁶ Mickle, Paul F., J.L. Herbig, C.R. Somerset, B.T. Chudzik, K.L. Lucas, and M.E. Fleming. 2018. Effects of annual droughts on fish communities in Mississippi Sound estuaries. *Estuaries and Coasts* 41: 1475-1485.

⁷ According to the NRI (<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/nri/>) the Pearl River is cited for, “Numerous endangered, threatened and rare species; excellent example of large Gulf Coastal Plain river with extensive swamplands; upper reach very scenic.” The National Park Service provides instructions on the process of consulting on projects potentially affecting NRI segments. See <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/rivers/nationwide-rivers-inventory.htm>.

methodology is provided in Figure 1, below.⁸ Audubon's analysis focused on 220 bird species with a reasonable potential to use the selected study area and that were reasonably represented in the eBird database. Our analysis estimated that **a minimum of 32 million birds depend on the central-lower Pearl River Basin for nesting and migration.**

Specifically, our analysis found that over 17 million birds during spring migration and more than 28 million birds during fall migration use this region of the basin annually. Additionally, our analysis found over 4.3 million breeding birds use the area during the summer, and the area supports more than 13.2 million wintering birds. Generally, spring migration is April – May, breeding season is June – July, fall migration August – October, and nonbreeding season (i.e., wintering) is November – March.

The study area selected for this analysis is shown in Figure 2 and includes three HUC-8 watersheds with ID numbers 03180002, 03180003, and 03180004. These HUCs are a combined total of 3,212,612 acres and include the footprint of the proposed One Lake project and the 200-miles of river that would flow below the proposed dam. The total number of birds using this area during different seasons, along with standard errors of the estimates, are provided in Table 1 and depicted in Figure 3.

Audubon's findings substantially reinforce long-standing assessments made by natural resource agencies, scientists, conservation groups, and many others that the Pearl River is a major ecologic lynchpin of the Mississippi Flyway, providing hemispherically significant habitat for many migrating, overwintering, and resident birds.

⁸ DeLuca, W.V., Meehan, T., Seavy, N., Jones, A., Pitt, J., Deppe, J.L. and Wilsey, C.B., 2021. The Colorado River Delta and California's Central Valley are critical regions for many migrating North American landbirds. *Ornithological Applications*, 123(1).

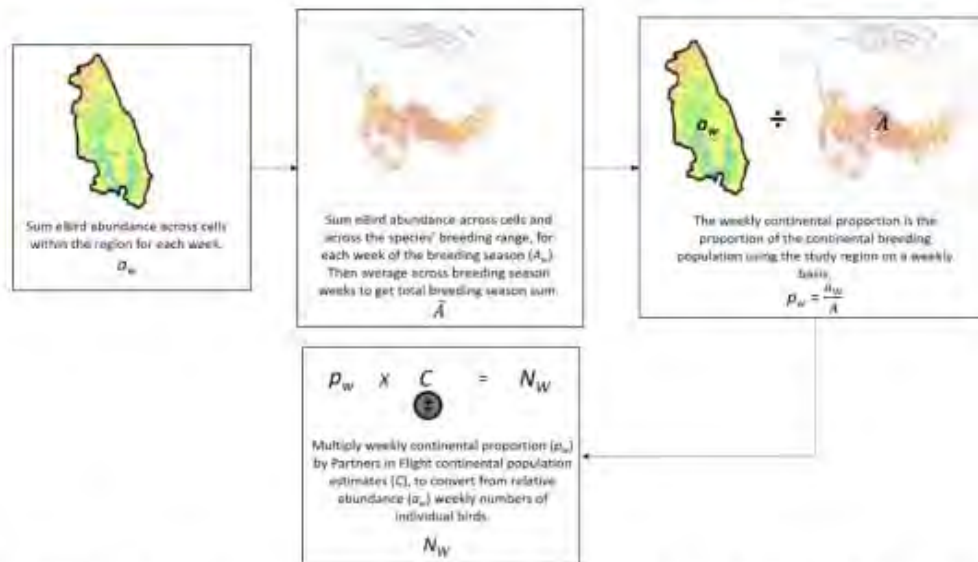


Figure 1. Illustration of the methodology developed by Audubon for its eBird abundance analysis, which was first completed for the Colorado River Delta and California's Central Valley. This serves as a graphical and mathematical description of the process Audubon used to go from the weekly eBird abundance raster surface in the Sacramento study region to an estimate of total number of individual birds using the region for a given week.



Figure 2. The Pearl River Basin study area used in Audubon's analysis (purple) includes three HUC-8 watersheds with ID numbers 03180002, 03180003, and 03180004.

Table 1: The number of individual birds using the Pearl River study area across the four seasons.

Season	Total Type	Estimated Number	Standard Error
Spring	Migrants only	17,030,639	396,597
Fall	Migrants only	28,037,479	774,366
Summer	Breeding birds	4,317,259	62,639
Winter	Wintering birds	13,276,935	202,754

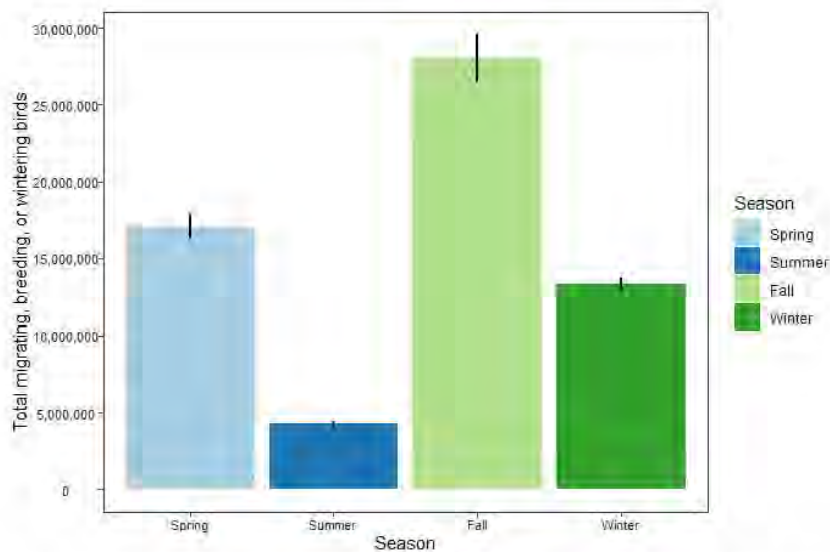


Figure 3. The total number of migrating, breeding, and wintering birds that annually use the Pearl River study area across the four seasons. Generally, spring migration is April – May, breeding season is June – July, fall migration is August – October, and nonbreeding season (i.e., wintering) is November – March.

Audubon evaluated population estimates of birds from the Pearl River Basin analysis in comparison to the United States and Canada (hereafter “North American”, for convenience) population for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) identified in Mississippi’s State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), and noted that the Pearl River Basin supported >1% of the North American population during at least one season for 11 SGCN species (Table 2). Many of these species are sensitive to variations in water levels, such that altering natural hydrological cycles of the Pearl could have direct negative impacts to their populations. These species include Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron, Prothonotary Warbler, and Rusty Blackbird. The other species listed would be indirectly affected, through changes in forest stand composition and density driven by changes to the hydrologic regime of the watershed.

Table 2. Species of Greatest Conservation Need, identified by the 2014 Mississippi State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)⁹, their NatureServe S-Ranking (1 is higher conservation priority than 5), and the proportion of the North American (NA) population supported by the Pearl River Basin during the peak season.

Species	MS SWAP S-Rank	Proportion of NA Population and Season
Little Blue Heron	S2B, S2N	4.1% - Fall
Snowy Egret	S4B, S1N	1.8% - Fall
Tricolored Heron	S2B, S1N	2.3% - Fall
Chuck-will's-widow	S4B	3.4% - Spring
Wood Thrush	S5B	2.6% - Spring
Golden-winged Warbler	ESA Candidate	2.0% - Fall
Kentucky Warbler	S5B	4.1% - Spring
Worm-eating Warbler	S3B	9.7% - Spring
Swainson's Warbler	S3, S4B	2.9% - Summer
Prothonotary Warbler	S5B	1.6% - Summer
Rusty Blackbird	S2	1.3% - Winter

In addition to conservation priority species, our analysis demonstrates a disproportionate importance of the Pearl River Basin for six other native bird species, where at least 5% of their North American population is supported (Table 3).

Table 3. Species in which the Pearl River supports >5% of their North American (NA) population.

Species	Proportion of NA Population and Season
Broad-winged Hawk	15.7% - Fall
Tree Swallow	11.4% - Fall
Fish Crow	8.4% - Spring
Yellow-throated Vireo	6.4% - Spring
Summer Tanager	5.6% - Spring
Northern Parula	5.4% - Spring

In summary, Audubon's findings demonstrate the population-level importance that central-lower Pearl River ecosystem has in supporting the health and survival of tens of millions of birds that annually use the area impacted by the One Lake proposal.

⁹ Mississippi Museum of Natural Science (2014). *Endangered Species of Mississippi*. Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Jackson, MS (available at <https://www.mdwfp.com/media/3231/endangered-species-of-mississippi.pdf>).

Improvements to Public Engagement are Needed

Audubon reiterates our concern about how the Corps' initiated this flood planning phase in a confusing and disjointed manner, including barely a week's advance notice of public meetings. We also are disturbed that the Corps' [project website](#) failed to provide all display boards and materials presented at the public meetings well in advance and that the agency has not been forthcoming to post information from those meetings. For example, transcripts from the public meetings that were held on May 24th in Jackson, Mississippi, and the two virtual meetings held on June 1st still have yet to be posted more than a month later, which we deem unacceptable. Moving forward we recommend the Corps adopt the following best practices as the public deserves more transparency and accountability for engagement opportunities.

1. Advertise public meetings and other engagement opportunities at least 2 weeks in advance;
2. Advertise public meetings and available information via a variety of formats and platforms, including earned and social media, direct mailers, utilizing community-based and neighborhood organizations, newspapers and online media platforms, etc.;
3. Include detailed information on the Corps' project website about the public meetings and post all meeting materials (i.e., handouts, poster boards, presentations) at the time when meetings are announced so that the materials can be reviewed two weeks prior to those events;
4. Post follow up meeting information (i.e., videos, transcripts) on the Corps' website no later than two weeks following each meeting so that the materials can be reviewed in a timely manner;
5. Extend future comment period deadlines to 90 days.

Finally, given the seriousness of this issue, Audubon is deeply concerned about the expedited timeline that the Corps has described for this flood planning process. We do not believe that the Corps' arbitrarily set 8-month window provides enough time for the Corps or other natural resource agencies involved in the regulatory process to thoroughly consider a full suite of environmentally sensitive flood mitigation alternatives nor to adequately comply with other federal laws such as ESA, the Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act, hazardous waste assessment, and coastal consistency review. We also question how the Corps' compressed process provides adequate time to authentically develop and shape a final flood plan that considers and appropriately reflects the input provided by state and federal resource agencies, stakeholders, and the public, including through this scoping process.

In conclusion, Audubon is wholly opposed to One Lake and respectfully asks the Corps to protect the Pearl River, its ecological resources, local and downstream communities, and the regional economy, by rejecting this ill-conceived, destructive proposal. In its place, we urge the Corps to adopt a new planning process that emphasizes natural, nature-based, and nonstructural approaches that can provide targeted, effective, and environmentally sustainable flood relief to those who need it in the Greater Jackson community while protecting downstream resources, communities, and the regional economy.

Please contact Jill Mastrototaro, Audubon Delta's Mississippi Policy Director at jill.mastrototaro@audubon.org or (504) 481-3659 with questions or for more information.

Sincerely,



Dawn O'Neal
Vice President, **National Audubon Society**
Executive Director, **Audubon Delta**



Brian Moore
Vice-President, Coast Policy
National Audubon Society

Attachment

Appendix A:

NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUCCESS STORIES

The projects highlighted below used natural infrastructure solutions—including ecosystem restoration, levee setbacks, and voluntary relocations—to protect communities and the environment.

Notably, wetlands prevented \$625 million in flood damages in the 12 coastal states affected by Hurricane Sandy and reduced damages by 20% to 30% in the four states with the greatest wetland coverage. During Hurricane Katrina, coastal wetlands reduced storm surge in some New Orleans neighborhoods by two to three feet, and levees with wetland buffers had a much greater chance of withstanding Katrina's fury than those levees without wetland buffers.

In the **Gulf Coast regions of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida**, nature-based solutions to reduce coastal flood risks are significantly more cost effective than structural solutions. A 2018 study shows that in this region, the average benefit-cost ratio for nature-based solutions is 3.5 while levees and dikes have a negative benefit-cost ratio of 0.26. Restoring wetlands could *prevent \$18.2 billion in losses* while costing just \$2 billion to carry out. Spending \$1.3 billion to restore oyster reefs could *prevent \$9.7 billion in losses*. Spending \$1.2 billion to restore barrier islands could *prevent \$5.9 billion in losses*.ⁱ

In **southern California**, the Surfers' Point Managed Shoreline Retreat Project will restore is restoring 1,800 feet of shoreline with cobble beach and vegetated sand dunes east of the mouth of the Ventura River to "provide resilience and offset risk from sea level rise and storms for 50 years" while maintaining beach access and other coastal resources. Since the project began, Surfers' Point has become Ventura County's most visited beach. Even with only one of two phases completed, the restored beach and dunes withstood 2015-2016 winter high wave conditions without damage, while other locations such as the Ventura Pier and promenade were damaged and the Pierpont neighborhood east of the project site was inundated.ⁱⁱ

In **northern California**, the Napa Valley Flood Control Project is using a community-developed "living river" plan to reduce flood damages along the flood-prone Napa River. This plan replaces the Corps' originally-proposed floodwalls and levees with terraced marshes, wider wetland barriers, and restored riparian zones. The Project will restore more than 650 acres of high-value tidal wetlands of the San Francisco Bay Estuary while protecting 2,700 homes, 350 businesses, and over 50 public properties from 100-year flood levels, saving \$26 million annually in flood damage costs.ⁱⁱⁱ Though only partially complete, the project was credited for lowering flood levels by about 2 to 3 feet during the 2006 New Year's Day flood.

In **Florida**, the Corps is using wetland restoration in the Upper St. John's River floodplain to provide important flood damage reduction benefits. The backbone of this project is restoration of 200,000 acres of floodplain, which will hold more than 500,000 acre-feet of water—enough to cover 86 square miles with 10 feet of water—and will accommodate surface water runoff from a more than 2,000 square mile area. The Corps predicts that this \$200 million project will reduce flood damages by \$215 million during a 100-year flood event, and provide average annual benefits of \$14 million. This project was authorized by Congress in 1986 to reduce flood damages along the river.

In **Illinois**, a 2014 study conducted for the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision, found that natural systems are the least costly and most efficient way to control flooding. Wetlands in the seven-county Chicago metropolitan area provide an average \$22,000 of benefits per acre each year in water flow regulation. This study also found that watersheds with 30 percent wetland or lake areas saw flood peaks that were 60 to 80 percent lower than watersheds without such coverage, and that preventing building in floodplain areas could save an average of \$900 per acre per year in flood damages.^{iv}

In **Iowa**, the purchase of 12,000 acres in easements along the 45-mile Iowa River corridor saved local communities an estimated \$7.6 million in flood damages as of 2009. The easement purchase effort began after the historic 1993 floods when river communities in east-central Iowa recognized the need for a more effective approach to reducing flood damages.

In **Massachusetts**, a 1972 Corps study showed that upstream wetlands were playing a critical role in reducing flooding in the middle and upper reaches of the Charles River by storing millions of gallons of water and preventing \$17 million each year in flood damages. This led the Corps to preserve 8,000 floodplain acres to ensure future flood storage, at a cost of just one-tenth of the structural project it had previously planned to build. Congress sanctioned this approach in 1974 when it authorized the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area. These floodplain wetlands are credited with reducing major floods, including in 1979, 1982, and 2006. The Corps estimates that this project has prevented \$11.9 million in flood damages while providing recreational benefits valued at between \$3.2 and \$4.6 million.^v

In **New York**, restoration of wetlands and lands adjacent to 19 stream corridors in Staten Island “successfully removed the scourge of regular flooding from southeastern Staten Island, while saving the City \$300 million in costs of constructing storm water sewers.”^{vi} Some 400 acres of freshwater wetland and riparian stream habitat has been restored along 11 miles of stream corridors that collectively drain about one third of Staten Island’s land area. A 2018 study commissioned by the City of New York found that using “hybrid infrastructure” that combines nature, nature-based, and gray infrastructure together could save Howard Beach, Queens \$225 million in damages in a 100-year storm while also generating important ecosystem services.^{vii}

In **Oregon**, the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services restored 63 acres of wetland and floodplain habitat, restored 15 miles of Johnson Creek, and move structures out of high-risk areas to reduce flood damages in the Johnson Creek neighborhood. In January 2012, when heavy rainfall caused Johnson Creek to rise two feet above its historic flood stage, the restored site held the floodwaters, keeping nearby homes dry and local businesses open. An ecosystem services valuation of the restored area found that the project would provide \$30 million in benefits (in 2004 dollars) over 100 years through avoided property and utility damages, avoided traffic delays, improved water and air quality, increased recreational opportunities, and healthy fish and wildlife habitat.^{viii}

In **Texas**, restoration of a 178-acre urban wetland—formerly an abandoned golf course—acted as a sponge to store 100 million gallons of water during Hurricane Harvey, protecting 150 homes in Houston’s Clear Lake community from serious flooding. This project will store up to a half billion gallons of water and protect up to 3,000 homes when it is completed in 2021.^{ix}

In **Vermont**, a vast network of floodplains and wetlands, including those protected by 23 conservation easements protecting 2,148 acres of wetland along Otter Creek, saved Middlebury \$1.8 million in flood damages during Tropical Storm Irene, and between \$126,000 and \$450,000 during each of 10 other flood events. Just 30 miles upstream, in an area without such floodplain and wetland protections, Tropical Storm Irene caused extensive flooding to the city of Rutland. ^{*}

ⁱ Borja G. Reguero et al., "Comparing the Cost Effectiveness of Nature-Based and Coastal Adaptation: A Case Study from the Gulf Coast of the United States," PLoS ONE 13, no. 4 (April 11, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0192132>.

ⁱⁱ Jean Judge et al., "Surfers' Point Managed Shoreline Retreat Project," in *Case Studies of Natural Shoreline Infrastructure in Coastal California: A Component of Identification of Natural Infrastructure Options for Adapting to Sea Level Rise (California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment)*. (The Nature Conservancy, 2017), 9-15, https://scc.ca.gov/files/2017/11/tnc_Natural-Shoreline-Case-Study_hi.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ Napa County California website at <https://www.countyofnapa.org/1096/Creating-Flood-Protection>.

^{iv} Will Allen, Ted Weber, and Jazmin Varela, *Green Infrastructure Vision: Version 2.3: Ecosystem Service Valuation*. (The Conservation Fund: 2014), 13-15, <https://datahub.cmap.illinois.gov/dataset/c303fd2e-beaf-4a75-a9ec-b27c6da49b69/resource/028c9b69-bb19-425e-bb92-3d33656bea4c/download/tcfcmagiv23ecosystemservesfinalreport201412v2.pdf>.

^v American Rivers, *Unnatural Disasters, Natural Solutions: Lessons From The Flooding Of New Orleans* (2006) (Charles River Valley Natural Storage Area case study); and <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=0bf97d033a8642b18c2e8075d4b5ecfe>.

^{vi} Cooper Union, Institute for Sustainable Design, *The Staten Island Bluebelt: A Study In Sustainable Water Management* (<http://cooper.edu/isd/news/waterwatch/statenisland>). This effort began in 1990.

^{vii} The Nature Conservancy, *Urban Coastal Resilience: Valuing Nature's Role*. (2015), <https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/urban-coastal-resilience.pdf>.

^{viii} "Johnson Creek Restoration, Portland, Oregon," Naturally Resilient Communities, accessed November 12, 2019, <http://nrcsolutions.org/johnson-creek-restoration-portland-oregon/>.

^{ix} Exploration Green, 2018, <https://www.explorationgreen.org/>.

^{*} Keri B. Watson, Ricketts T., Galford G., Polasky S., O'Neil-Dunne J., [Quantifying flood mitigation services: The economic value of Otter Creek wetlands and floodplains to Middlebury, VT](#), *Ecological Economics*, Volume 130: 16-24 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2016.05.015>.

From: [Joelle Finley](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Reject One Lake in Jackson, MS
Date: Thursday, June 22, 2023 9:47:50 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

Although I am a resident of SE Louisiana, I visit the Honey Island Swamp several times during the year. It is a pristine paradise for birding. I am aware of many projects that have severely altered the lower Pearl River including the one to make Bogalusa, LA a "port city" by dredging a canal with locks that are no longer maintained. Another boondoggle project of digging a lake to prevent flooding in Jackson while opening up land for developers seems to me to be another one of those projects. No one wants to see homes flooded but a long history of non-regulation on development on floodplains has led to where we are today. Let's do something smart and reject the One Lake Project once and for all. How about options A and 1A?

The Pearl River needs to be assessed as a whole, considering the entire length of the river, considering the effects that a lake and dams would have on the riverine system down to the Gulf of Mexico.

Please reject the One Lake Plan.

Sincerely,
Joelle Finley
New Orleans, Louisiana

From: jandlpeck@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [John and Linda Peck](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Re: One Lake Project in Jackson, MS
Date: Friday, June 23, 2023 9:14:24 AM

Dear Vicksburg District Commander Colonel Christopher Klein,

I oppose the establishment of a new dam and lake on the Pearl River in Jackson, Mississippi. Of course the Jackson business community supports this project because they see real estate development possibilities. More important however is the threat that this project poses to the health of the Pearl River. In 2023 the Pearl River was listed #3 on America's Most Endangered Rivers. Resource agencies in both MS and LA have stated their concern that lake creation will worsen the already dire annual seasonal low flow conditions on the river August-October.

I think that this project should be stopped. But if it moves forward, there must be a full and clear explanation of how the lake project will work in combination with management of the Ross Barnett Reservoir to both control flooding and satisfy adequate minimum flow requirements on the Pearl River. Instead of building on the poor analysis in the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's much criticized 2018 EIS, a full range of new flood management options upstream in the Pearl River watershed should have been considered in a broader study about solving the flooding problem in Jackson.

Sincerely,
John and Linda Peck
12299 Sauk River Rd Saint Cloud, MN 56301-9755
jandlpeck@cloudnet.com

From: griffin.jc@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [John Griffin](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 10:39:34 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
John Griffin
Tallahassee, FL 32312
griffin.jc@icloud.com

From: [Joseph McGee](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake project
Date: Sunday, June 25, 2023 10:38:28 AM

19496 Highway 80

Hickory, MS 39332

June 25, 2023

To the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

I wish to communicate to the US Army Corps of Engineers my serious concerns about the One Lake Project now being proposed for a stretch of the Pearl River in Jackson (affecting Hinds and Rankin Counties), Mississippi.

I urge the US Army Corps of Engineers to reject plans for the One Lake project (Option C) and implement Option A (or Option A1) instead.

At a time when much of the natural world is in tatters and biodiversity is rapidly becoming less and less diverse worldwide, Jackson (and indeed the entire state of Mississippi) has an opportunity to conserve an existing urban green space, namely LeFleur's Bluff State Park, from being destroyed. But LBSP cannot be saved if it becomes the bottom of a lake. Cities ordinarily cherish and want to protect green spaces within their city limits, just one reason the thought of huge swaths of the park being dredged away to create an artificial, urban lake is unthinkable.

LBSP is renowned for its wildlife, especially its birdlife, with over 210 species of birds having been documented within the park boundaries. Seventy-five of these bird species have been documented as actually breeding within the park. Other threatened species occur in the Pearl River itself including the Gulf Sturgeon and the Ringed Sawback, both of which require flowing water for their survival.

In conclusion, I once again urge the US Army Corps of Engineers to reject plans for the environmentally destructive One Lake project on the Pearl River.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. McGee

From: [Juan Fernandez](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment: We need a more proactive Federal involvement in public engagement
Date: Monday, June 26, 2023 2:19:36 PM

The Pearl River Basin FRM Project needs a more proactive Federal involvement in the public engagement process. A local newspaper, the Jackson Free Press (now Mississippi Free Press), published an editorial on August 22, 2018, highlighting transparency problems with the local sponsor.

The short notice of the 2023 public engagement meetings is another example of the District's failure. Colonel Klein, Commander of the Vicksburg District, addressed the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage District Board on 3 April. He noted that public sessions would start at the end of May and specified that the Corps of Engineers were "looking for [the District's] support."

This statement shows that USACE expected the District to inform the public and suggests that the District knew about the meetings well in advance.

Going forward, it might be best if USACE takes the lead.

Respectfully,
Juan David Fernandez

Juan Fernandez
1812 Pine Street
Jackson, MS 39202

USACE Vicksburg District, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435
Jackson, MS 39202

To whom it may concern,

This comment highlights environmental justice concerns regarding the proposed One Lake project, as presented in the 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), *Pearl River Basin, Mississippi, Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds & Rankin Counties*.

Pages 11 through 21 show that the most disadvantaged communities in the study area are along the creek valleys in West Jackson. The distribution of flood reduction benefits suggests that these communities might receive marginal benefits. However, an analysis of gage measurements and predicted stage-curve data raises the prospect that the One Lake could exacerbate flash flooding along these communities.

Pages 23 to 36 show that predominantly Black or African American communities in North East Jackson will receive flood reduction benefits from the project. However, these communities are the most vulnerable to river flooding in the study area, and the flood reduction benefits provided would be insufficient. The benefits would, instead, be focused downstream, along less vulnerable, wealthier, and Whiter communities. Furthermore, the distribution of flood reduction benefits could spur development that may worsen flooding for these predominantly Black or African American communities in Northeast Jackson.

This report is not comprehensive. There are other known environmental justice issues not discussed, such as the One Lake's potential to worsen downstream communities' water resource issues or the local sponsor's criticized public engagement.

Lastly, this report is part of a larger environmental justice campaign sponsored by a grant from Healthy Gulf, formally the Gulf Restoration Network. I am grateful for the organization's investment in the well-being of the Metro's residents. I bear sole responsibility for all statements and typos made in this comment.

Respectfully,

Juan David Fernandez

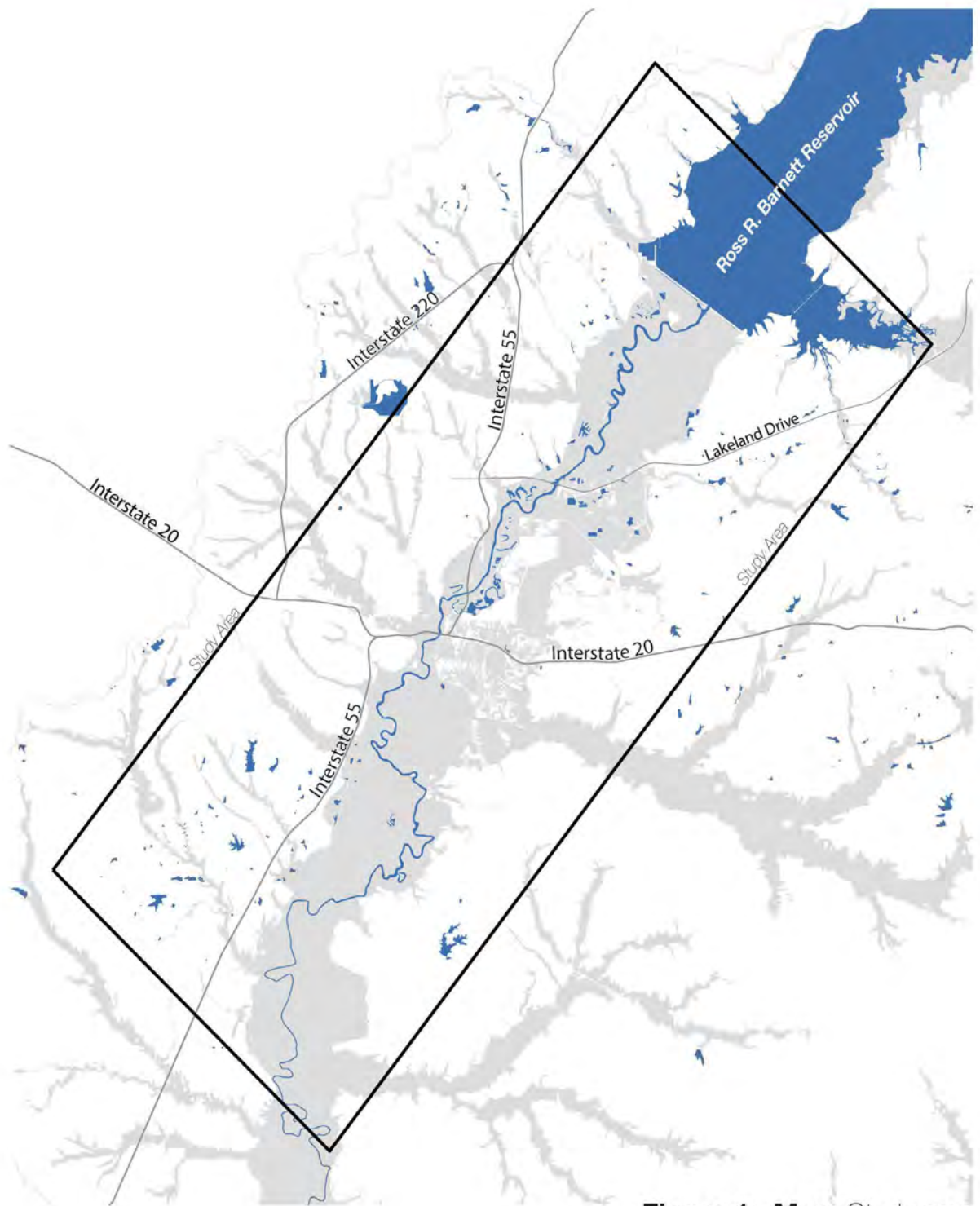


Figure 1: Map. Study area

Mapping the study area (Reference)

Section 4103 of the 2007 Water Resources Development Act authorized the Pearl River Basin Federal Flood Risk Management Project.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army is authorized “to construct the project generally in accordance with the plan described in the ‘Pearl River Watershed, Mississippi, Feasibility Study Main Report, Preliminary Draft’.”

The referenced feasibility study describes a study area as the Pearl River Basin from River Mile 270, just south of Byram, to the Ross Barnett Reservoir Dam at River Mile 372. This area is mapped on the left.

The blue represents the Pearl River, the reservoir, and other water impoundments. The light gray region is the FEMA-defined 1.0% chance exceedance event zone, also known as the 100-year floodplain. It visualizes the flood hazard posed by the river and its tributaries.

The map shows the region’s interstate highways and Lakeland Drive for reference. The rectangle represents the *study area*, which has been loosely defined by ellipses in maps produced by the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District and by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

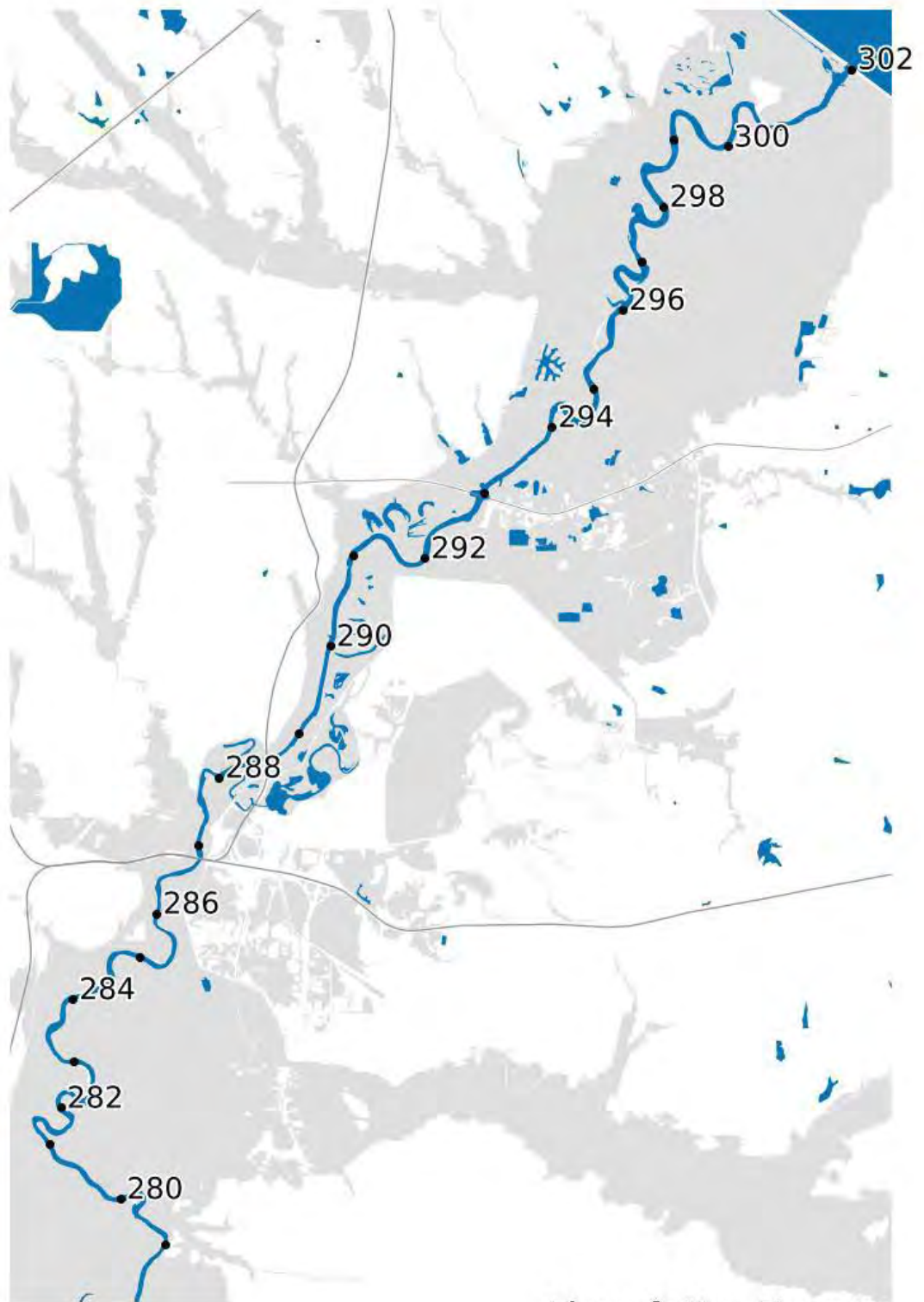


Figure 2: Map. River miles

Flood reduction along the Pearl River (Reference)

The relocation of the Rankin County levee and the large-scale excavation operation included in the One Lake will lower flood peaks along the river during high-flow events. The level of reduction varies by location.

Table 3-3 of the 2018 DEIS, Appendix C, shows the anticipated flood peak reductions. The table on the right shows those reductions for a 1.0% annual chance exceedance event, also called a 100-year flood. The table can be cross-referenced with a map of the Pearl River showing River Miles (RM).

The most significant flood reduction benefits will be between the J.H. Fewell Water Plant, RM 291, and the area just upstream of Meadowbrook Lake, RM 295. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineer's Agency Technical Review of the project considers this 5 to 8 foot drop atypical and "remarkable." (See 2020 ATR, Comment 8284198.)

River Mile	Reduction
302	1.6 feet
301	2.0
300	2.4
299	2.6
298	2.8
297	3.6
296	4.5
295	7.0
294	8.3
293	7.1
292	5.8
291	5.4
290	5.0
289	4.0
288	3.0
287	1.8
286	0.8
285	-0.1



Flood reduction tables digitized:
<https://tinyurl.com/OneLakeReductions>
 or use the QR code.

Table 1: Flood peak reduction for a 100-year flood. Copied from Table 3-3 in the 2018 DEIS, App. C

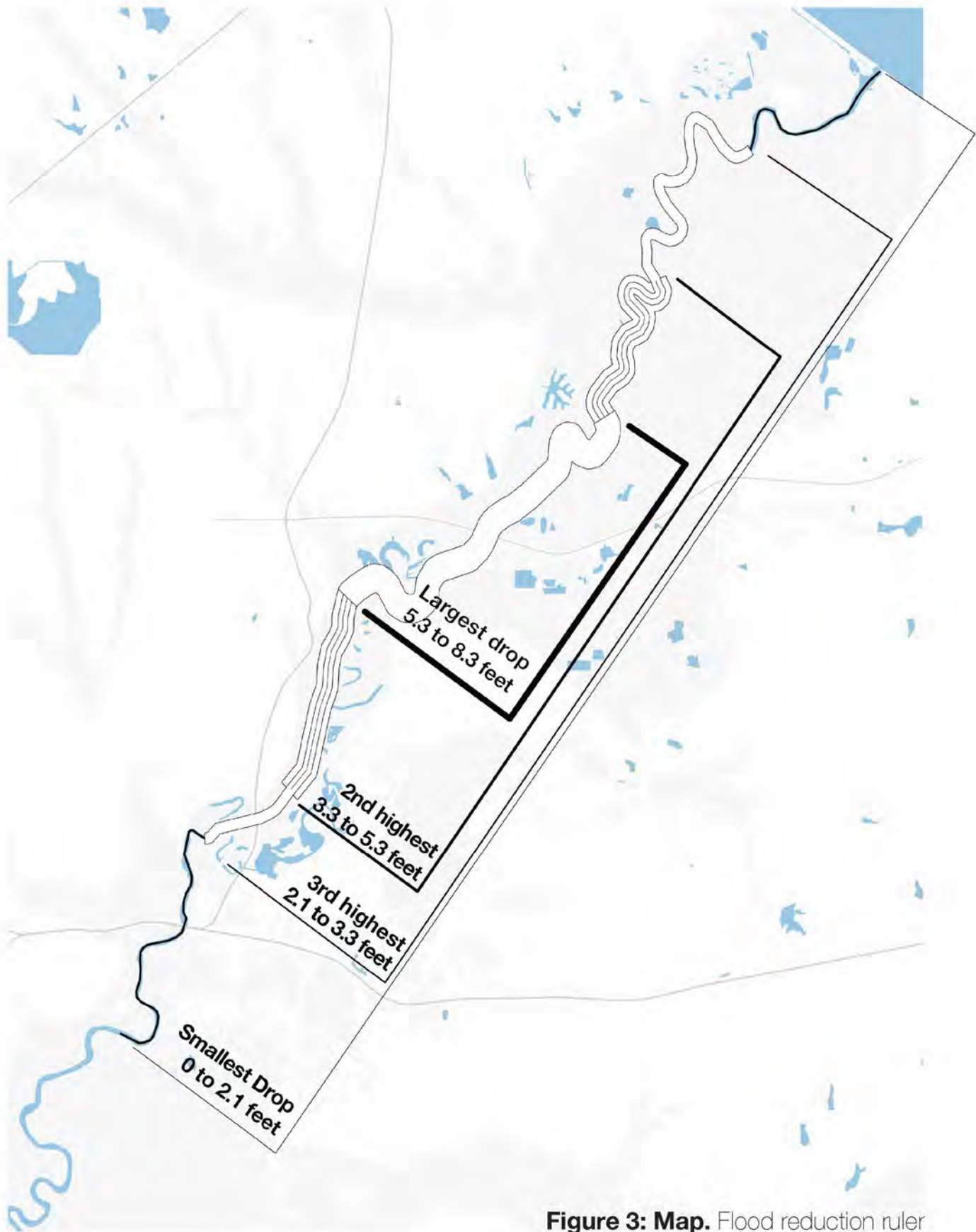
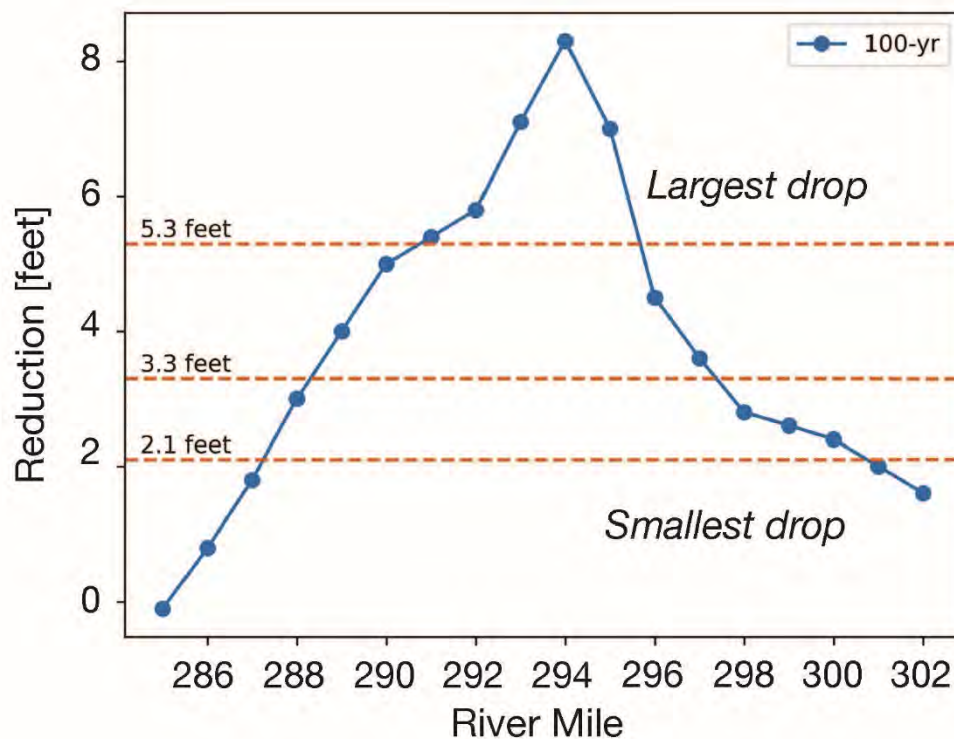


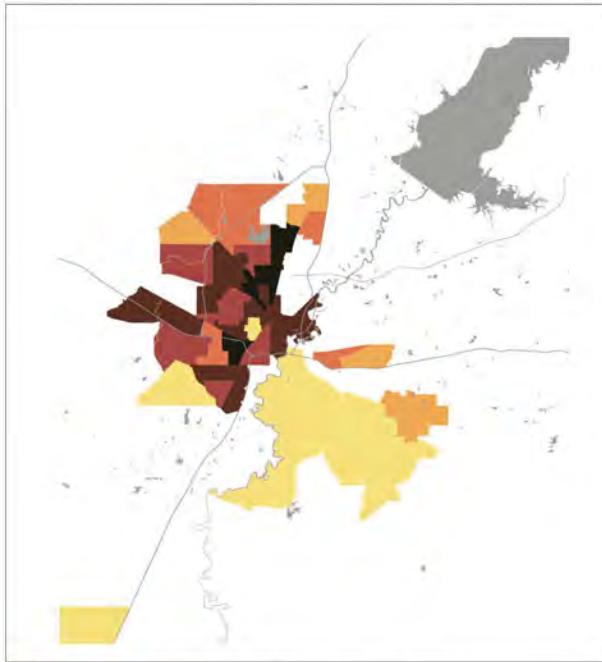
Figure 3: Map. Flood reduction ruler

Visualizing the flood reduction along the Pearl River: The Flood Reduction Ruler

To visualize what communities receive the greatest levels of flood reduction benefits, the data is divided into four quantiles: The “largest drop” quantile, the “smallest drop” quantile, and two intermediary quantiles.

These quantiles can then be mapped along the river, as shown on the map the left. This flood reduction ruler is used in the following demographic maps.

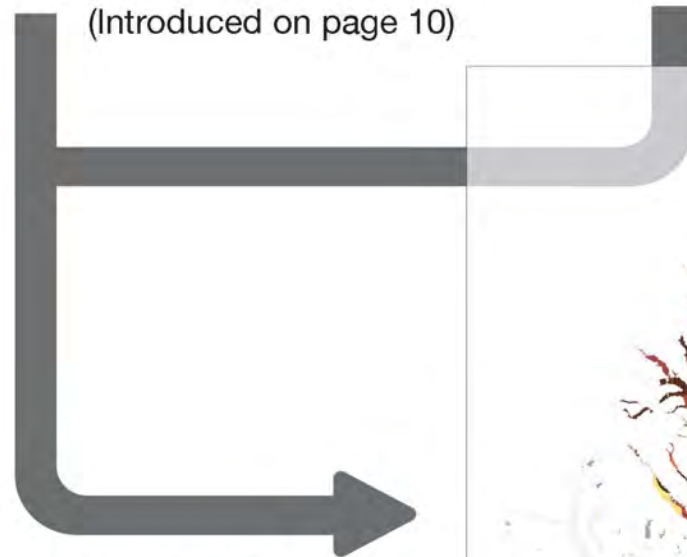




CEJST Burden Map
(Introduced on page 10)



FEMA floodplain map



CEJST Burden Map
clipped with floodplain

(Full size on page 28)



Figure 4: Summary of clipping operation

Geospatial Clipping and Floodplain demographics

The communities most impacted by the flood reduction benefits of any project are likely those already within in the floodplain. The maps in the following pages approximate the demographics of these communities through *geospatial clipping*. Only the parts of a demographic map overlapping the floodplain are shown.

The clipping operation is summarized in Figure 4 on the opposite page.

***Disadvantaged Communities
Cumulative Burdens &
Flood reduction benefits.***

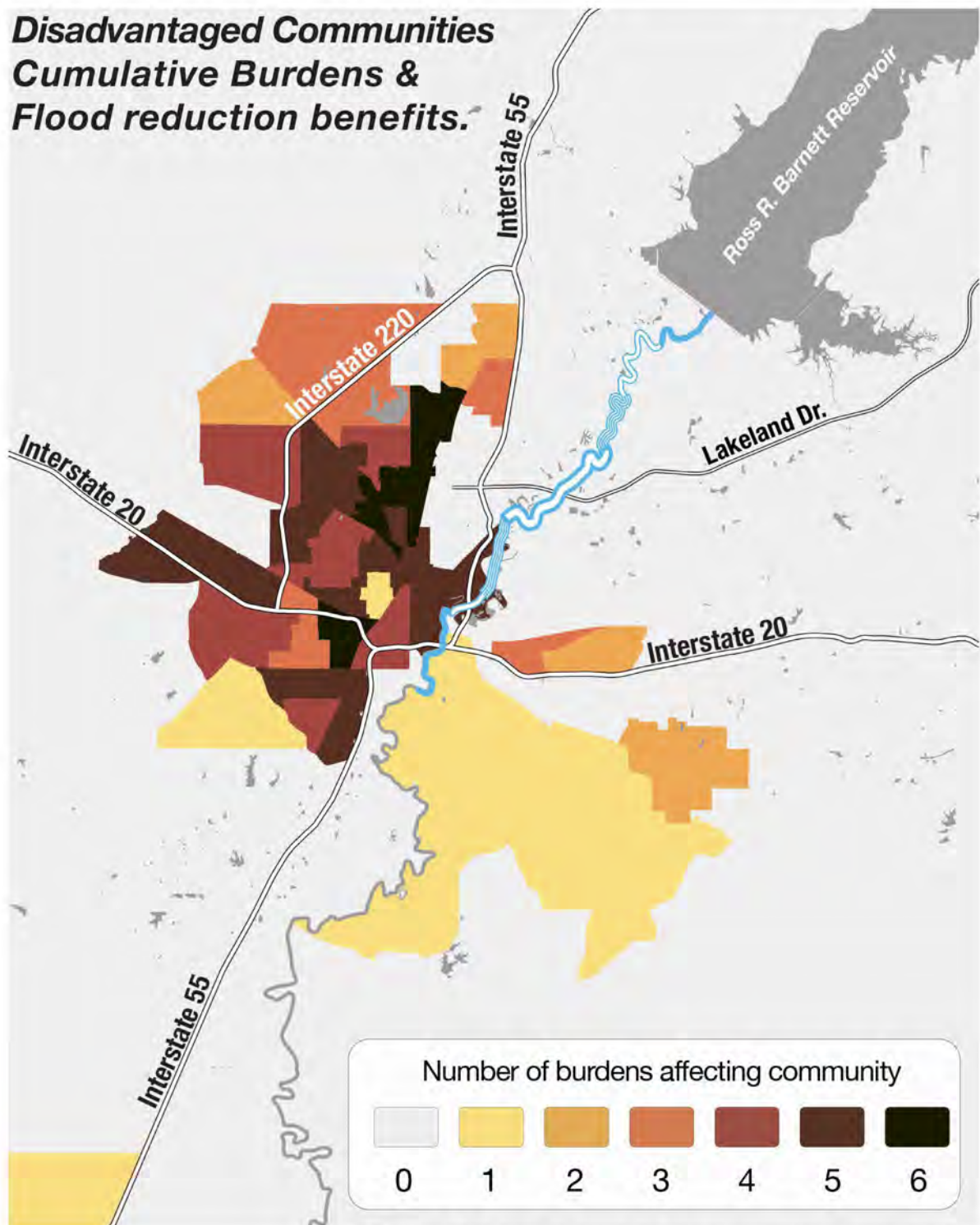


Figure 5: Map. Disadvantaged communities: cumulative burdens and flood reduction benefits

Mapping social, economic, and climate vulnerabilities with the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

The CEJST is a mapping tool developed under the directive of Presidential Executive Order 14008 to help national decision-makers identify communities vulnerable to problems caused by climate, economic, or climate changes.

The tool uses about 30 metrics from various databases to define eight categories of *burdens*. For example, a community has a workforce development burden if a large portion of the adult population in its census tract does not have a high school degree and at least one of four social conditions are met. Data for this burden are pulled from the American Community Survey of the United States Census.

A community is “disadvantaged” if it is in a census tract affected by one or more burdens.

The map on the left shows disadvantaged communities within the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project Area. Beyond what’s shown in the official CEJST, the map also shows the number of burdens affecting each community. Several communities in Hinds and Rankin Counties are disadvantaged, and at least one burden. Much of Jackson west of Interstate 55 is burdened by four to six.

The map also shows the flood reduction ruler.



To see the official CEJST, which is updated periodically, please visit <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/> or use the QR code.

***Disadvantaged Communities
Within the Floodplain.
Cumulative burdens &
Flood reduction benefits***

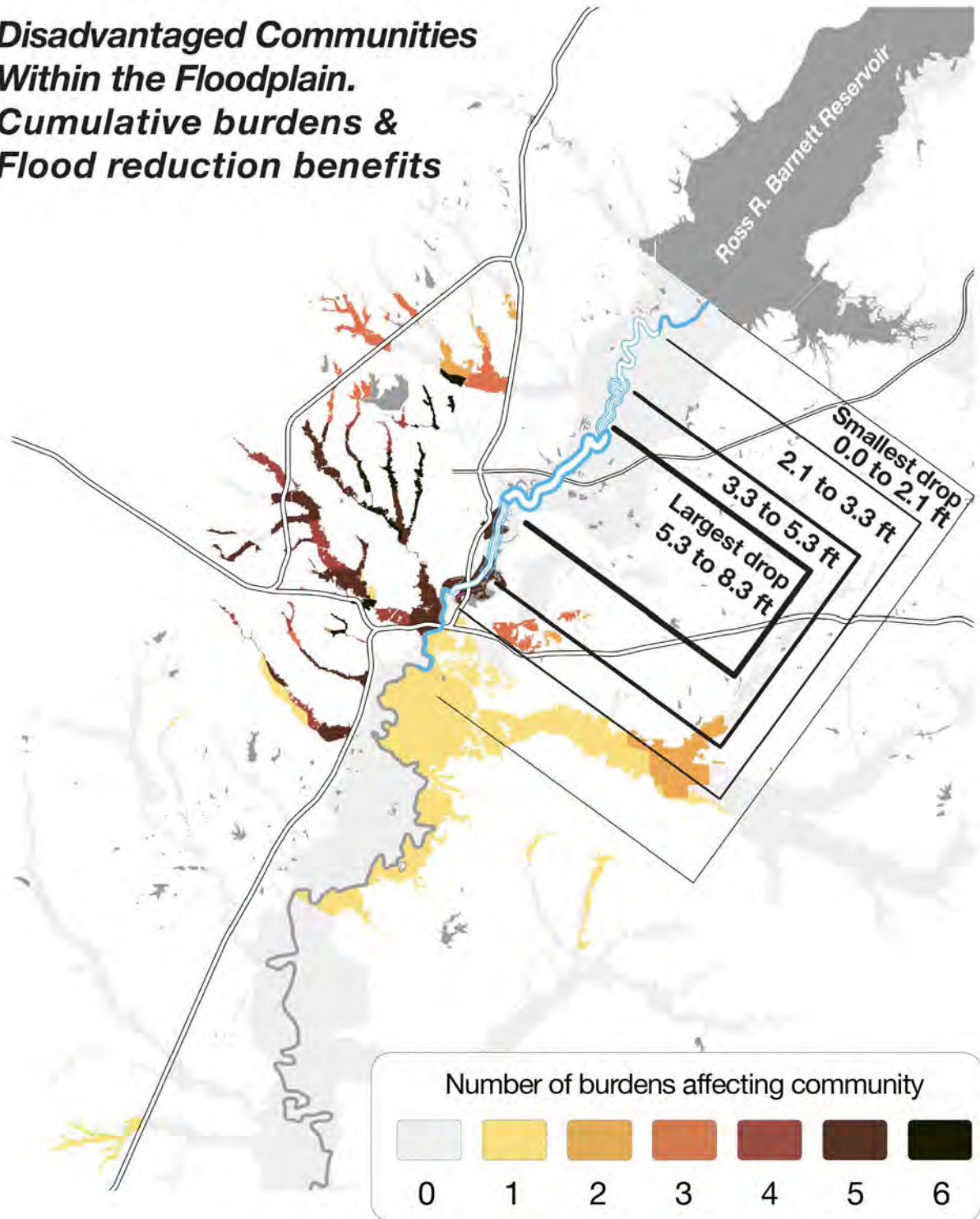


Figure 6: Map. Disadvantaged communities within floodplain: cumulative burdens and flood reduction benefits

The peak flood reduction benefits are within a region that does not meet any disadvantaged metrics. The most-disadvantaged communities in the study area surround the tributaries in West Jackson.

The One Lake could provide some flood reduction benefits to those surrounding Lynch and Town Creeks. Their mouths are between River Mile 286 and 288; the expected level of flood reduction in a 100-year flood within this stretch of the river ranges from 0.0 to 2.1 feet.

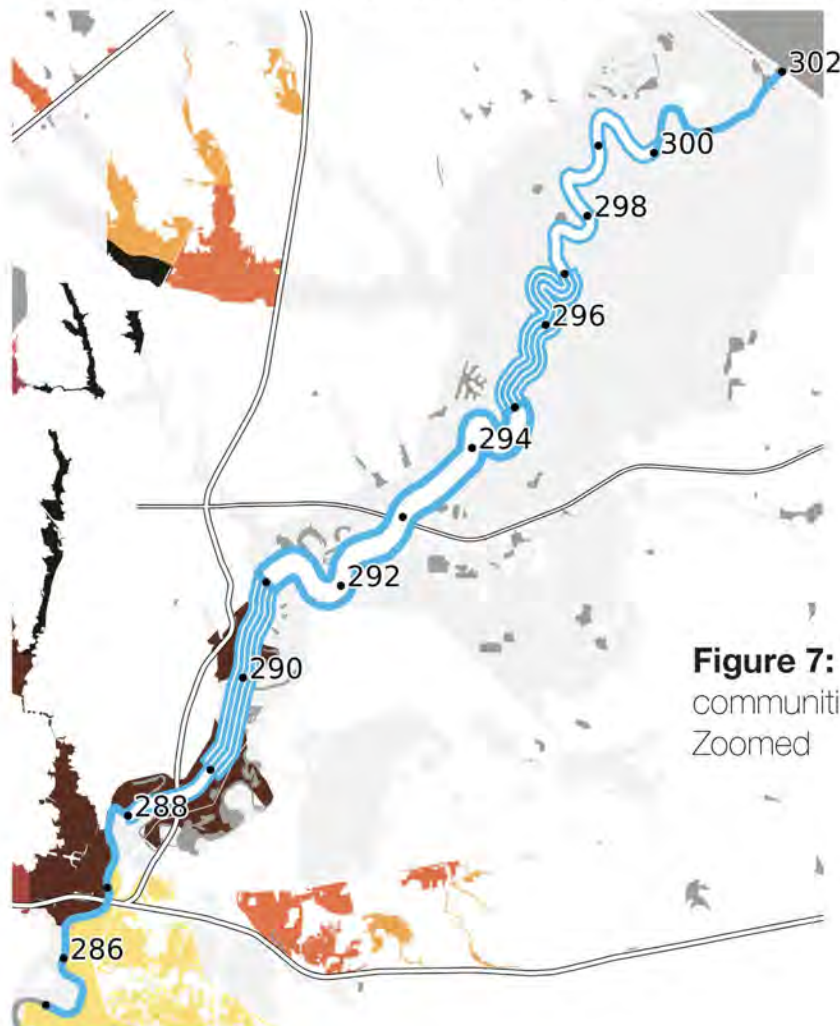


Figure 7: Map. Disadvantaged communities within floodplain. Zoomed

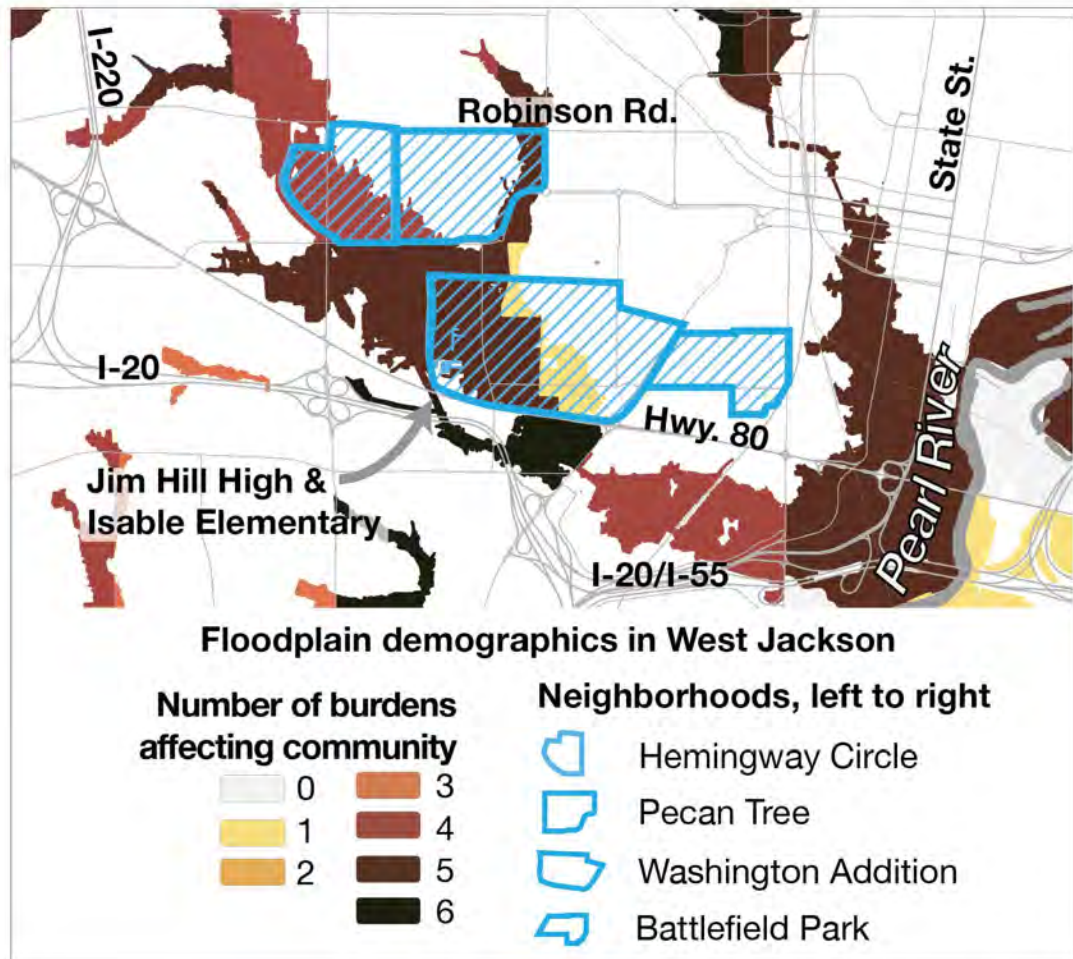
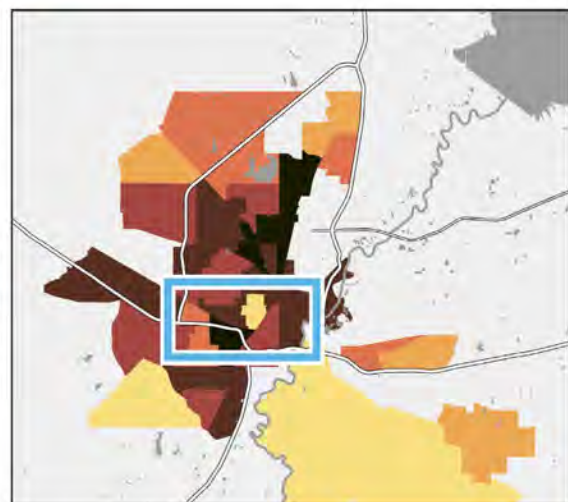


Figure 8: **(Above) Map.** Four of the West Jackson neighborhoods referenced in the public engagement meetings and cumulative burdens within floodplain. Jim Hill and Isable are discussed later in this comment. • **(Right) Map.** Location of above map on the cumulative burdens map,



The One Lake and West Jackson

Summary

West Jackson floods along its creeks. Some elected officials support the One Lake because it might reduce backwater-induced flash flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must assess this presumed flood risk reduction benefit and explicitly communicate the results to decision-makers and the public.

Furthermore, this comment uses USGS data to show that a backwater effect could worsen flood risks in West Jackson. This analysis reinforces the need for a more thorough analysis of backwater impacts on the tributaries.

The One Lake as a solution to West Jackson flooding

West Jackson floods. A State Representative spoke at Jackson's second U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public engagement meeting on May 24, 2023. They said the flood-prone communities in West Jackson face a "glaring environmental justice issue." Residents were harmed by flooding on January 2020, and the existing levee system on the Pearl River may have exacerbated the problem. The representative concluded their statement by endorsing the One Lake as a solution.

West Jackson is affected by creek flooding. The map on the opposite page shows four of the neighborhoods mentioned by the State Representative and the cumulative burdens within the floodplain. The Lynch Creek floodplain dominates this area.

The One Lake as a solution to West Jackson flooding (Cont'd)

The basis of the Representative's conclusion is presumably the One Lake's potential to reduce backwater impacts on the tributaries during extreme events, as suggested in the 2020 USACE Agency Technical Review (ATR), comment 7059420, exchanges 1-0 and 2-0. However, the 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) did not examine the creekside flood reduction benefits provided by the One Lake project. Exchanges 2-1 and 3-0 also show that the project delivery team (i.e., the One Lake planners) dismissed the opportunity to study tandem storm systems akin to those that caused the West Jackson floods.

Despite the lack of validation, other elected officials have “pitched” the One Lake project in response to the January 2020 flooding in West Jackson [1]. **It may be the case that the project is the “Locally Preferred Plan” due to unverified claims. Potential creekside flood reduction benefits, or lack of them, should be explicitly stated in the 2023 DEIS to inform decision-makers and the public.**

Gage analysis of Lynch Creek flooding

The remainder of this comment considers the assumption that the One Lake's backwater can affect the referenced West Jackson communities. Three documented floods at Jim Hill High and Isable Elementary Schools provide reference points. The schools are in the Washington Addition neighborhood, approximately 2 miles upstream from the mouth of Lynch Creek. **Data from these events suggest backwater effects, if present, could have exacerbated the floods.**

Local news networks televised the floods. The three images on the opposite screen are screenshots from the coverage.



**May 9
2019**



**January 14
2020**



**August 24
2022**

Figure 9: Three floods at Jim Hill High and Isable Elementary, as covered by local news networks.

USGS gage data and predicted One Lake water surface elevation during The 3 Floods at Jim Hill High and Isable Elementary Schools

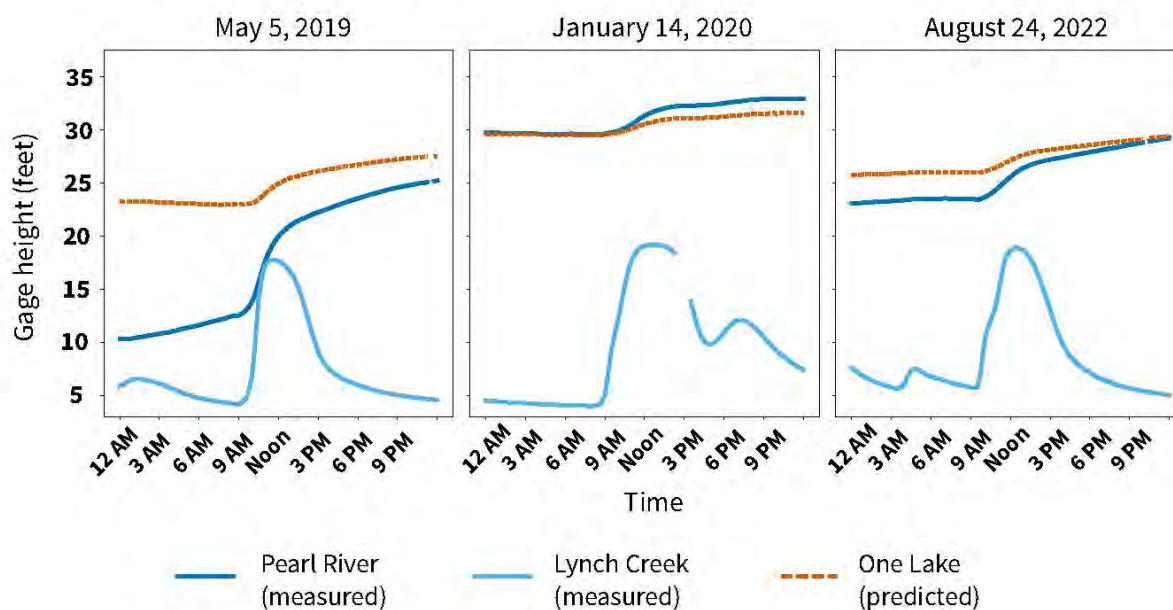


Figure 10: Three floods at Jim Hill High and Isable Elementary, gage data and One Lake predictions

Gage analysis of Lynch Creek flooding (Cont'd)

The graphs above plot creek and river data measured during the school flooding events. The graphs also show predicted river surface elevation levels near the mouth of Lynch Creek (River Mile 287.14) if the One Lake had been in place during the events.

Gage analysis of Lynch Creek flooding (Cont'd)

The light blue line shows creek levels on Lynch Creek during these floods, as measured about a quarter mile downstream of the schools (USGS gage #02486100). The creek data shows why these floods caught the media's attention. The creek rose and peaked during school hours, damaging vehicles [2], causing "chaos and confusion" during early dismissals [3], and forcing students and parents to wade in "dirty" water [4].

The darker blue line shows the river level as measured from Highway 80 (USGS gage #02486000). Appendix C suggests that this gage reading is within 1.5 feet of the river's water surface elevation at the mouth of Lynch Creek. The 2019 data proves that the schools can flood, even when the river is between 10 to 20 feet.

The dashed orange line shows the predicted river surface elevation with the One Lake in place. This prediction was generated using discharge measurements from the Pearl River and the stage-curve data from River Mile 287.14. The latter was found in Appendix K of the 2018 DEIS. (See PDF page 67, table 6).

In two of these floods, 2019 and 2022, the river's surface level at the mouth of Lynch Creek would have been higher with the One Lake in place. On the third event, 2020, the flood reduction benefits of the project would not be registerable until the creek was already reaching its peak. ***If backwater effects impact the school, then the lake could exacerbate the "damage," "chaos", and "confusion."***

Date	Time	Month	Day of the week	Creek stage (feet)	WSE Difference (feet)	School hours
2019-05-09	11:30	May	Thursday	17.76	5.52	TRUE
2020-01-02	19:30	January	Thursday	18.6	2.32	FALSE
2020-01-11	10:00	January	Saturday	17.56	-0.79	FALSE
2020-01-14	12:30	January	Tuesday	19.16	-0.91	TRUE
2020-04-23	3:45	April	Thursday	18.6	0.66	FALSE
2021-04-09	23:45	April	Friday	18.56	5.22	FALSE
2022-04-17	19:45	April	Sunday	17.29	1.01	FALSE
2022-08-24	12:30	August	Wednesday	18.88	1.36	TRUE
2023-03-26	19:15	March	Sunday	17.24	8.72	FALSE

Table 2: Lynch Creek gage peaks above 17-feet since March 2019.

Gage analysis of Lynch Creek flooding (Cont'd)

The creek peaked nine times at similar gage heights in the past four years. Potential backwater impacts of the One Lake could increase them. Three of these peaks occurred during the three documented school floods. The six other peaks may have corresponded with under-documented bank overtopping. Unlike the three televised floods, the other six peaks occurred outside school hours.

The above table shows measured peaks greater than 17 feet since March 2019. It also shows the expected water surface elevation (WSE) difference at the mouth of Lynch Creek due to the construction of the One Lake. It indicates that the WSE difference would have been higher during 7 of the 9 peaks, with ranges from half a foot to nearly 9 feet. It shows that the WSE difference would have been lower during two peaks, and the decrease would be no more than a foot.

Gage analysis of Lynch Creek flooding (Cont'd)

Appendix C in the 2018 DEIS assessed the potential for bank overtopping along this creek, but only for a 10-year storm at normal lake elevations. The floods at Jim Hill and Isable along with the peak study demonstrate the damaging flood risks along Lynch Creek with existing conditions. They also demonstrate the need for a more thorough assessment including a wider range of storms (e.g, 50-yr, 100-yr, etc).

Conclusion (Same as summary on page 15)

West Jackson floods due to creek flooding. Some elected officials support the One Lake because it might reduce backwater-induced flash flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must assess this presumed flood risk and explicitly communicate the results to decision-makers and the public.

Furthermore, this comment uses USGS data to show that a backwater effect could worsen flood risks in West Jackson. This analysis reinforces the need for a more thorough analysis of backwater impacts on the tributaries.

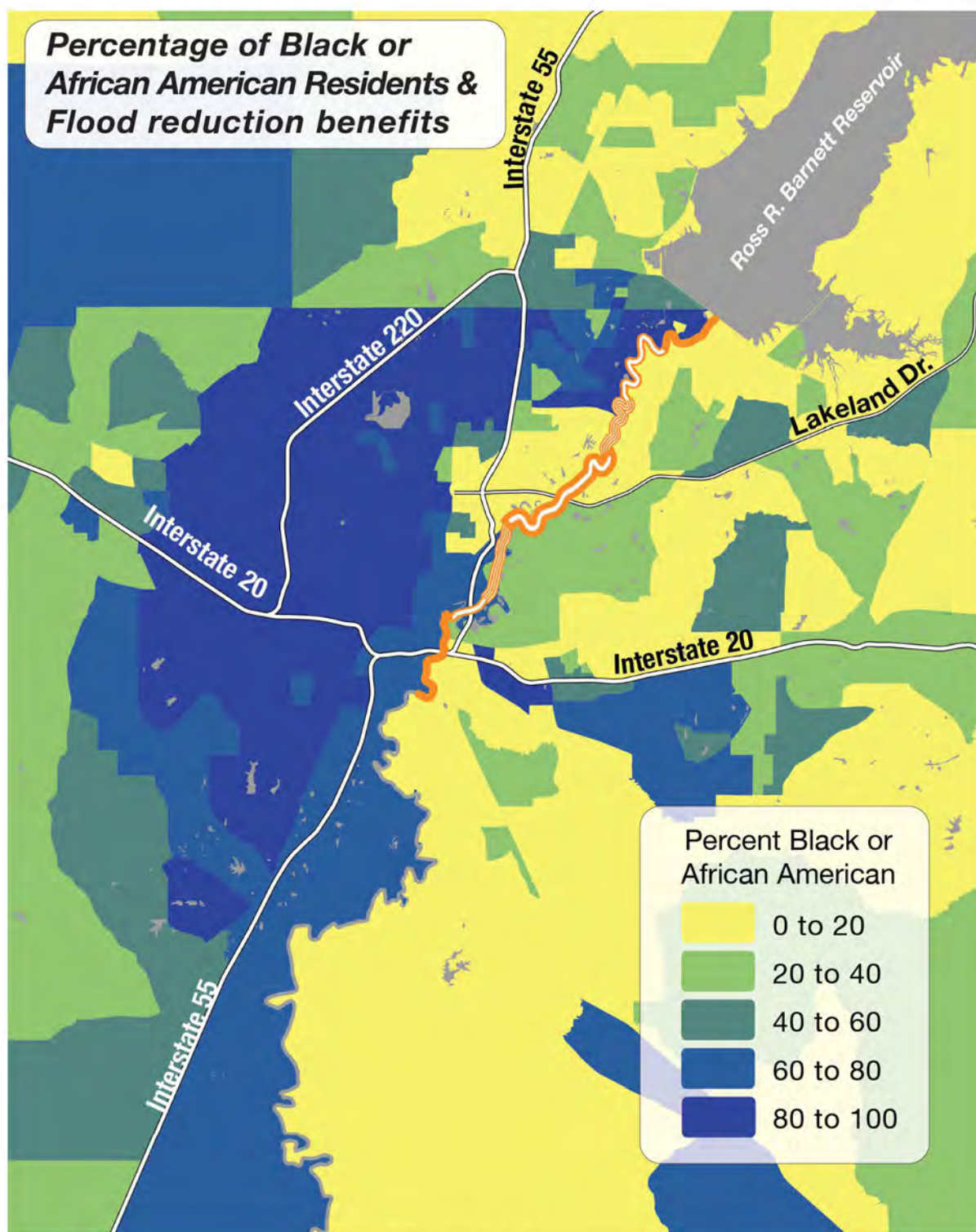


Figure 11: Map. Percent of Black or African American Residents & Flood reduction benefits

Mapping the study area's racial demographics

Race matters. Black, Latine, and other People of Color are exposed to higher levels of environmental hazards compared to their White counterparts. At least one researcher has suggested that this elevated risk is caused by development and consumption patterns of White populations. [5]

At least two Presidential Executive Orders aim to curb this environmental racism. Executive Order 12898 requires that federal agencies identify and address “disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.” Executive Order 13985 asserts “that the Federal Government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color...”

The map on the opposite page shows the percentage of Black or African American residents per census block. It also shows the One Lake flood reduction ruler.

Percentage of Black or African American Residents within the Floodplain & Flood reduction benefits

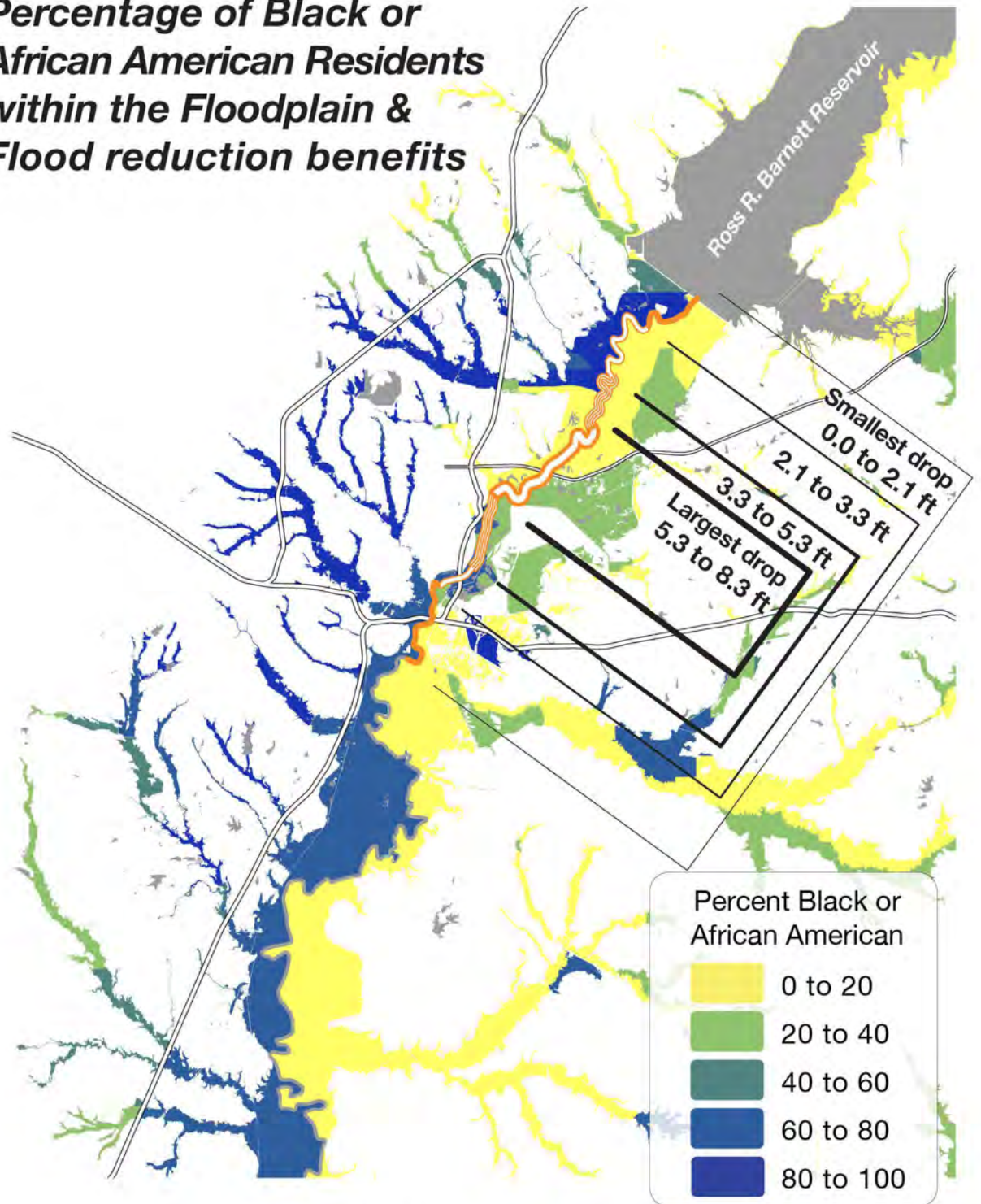


Figure 12: Map. Percent of Black or African American Residents within floodplain & Flood reduction benefits

The flood reduction benefits peak along predominantly White communities. Flood reduction benefits are offered to predominantly Black communities immediately south of Downtown Jackson and in Northeast Jackson.

Flood reduction benefits south of Downtown are questioned in pages 15 through 21. The benefits provided to the predominantly Black communities in Northeast Jackson are also questionable and discussed on pages 31 through 36.

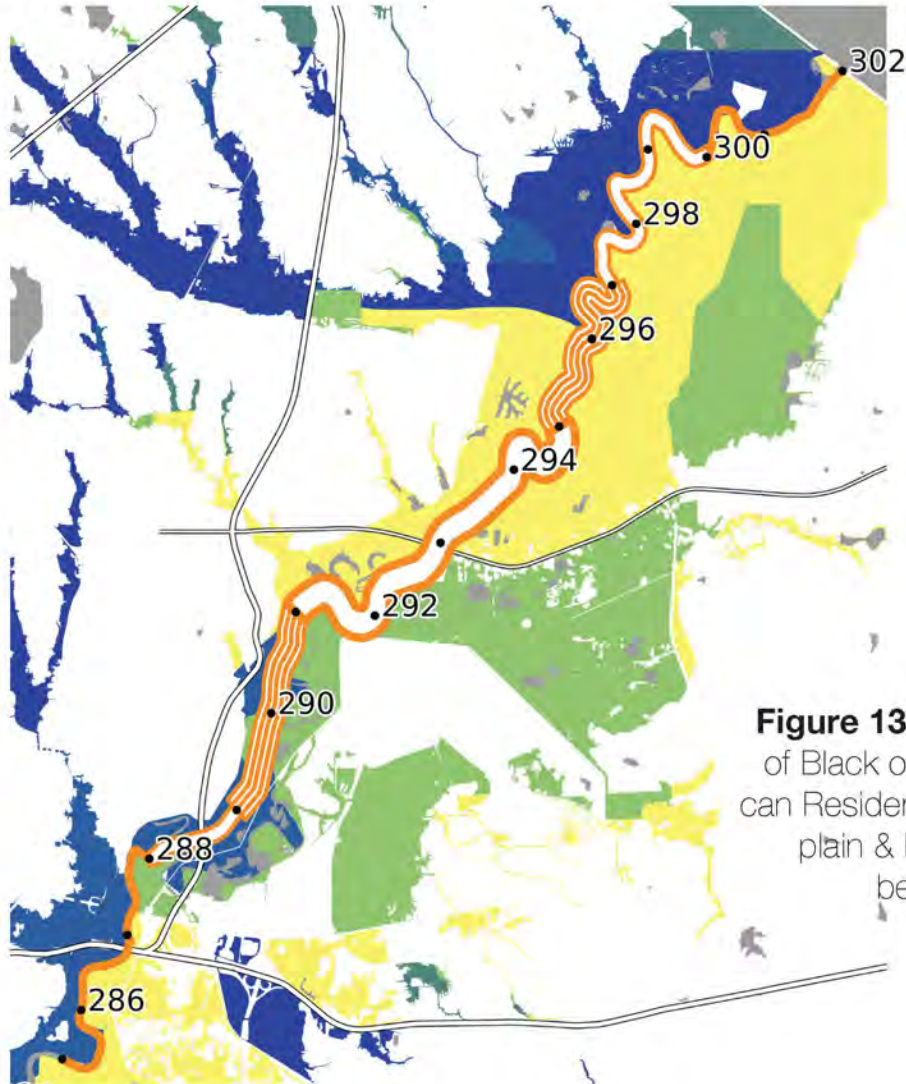


Figure 13: Map. Percent of Black or African American Residents within flood-plain & Flood reduction benefits. Zoomed

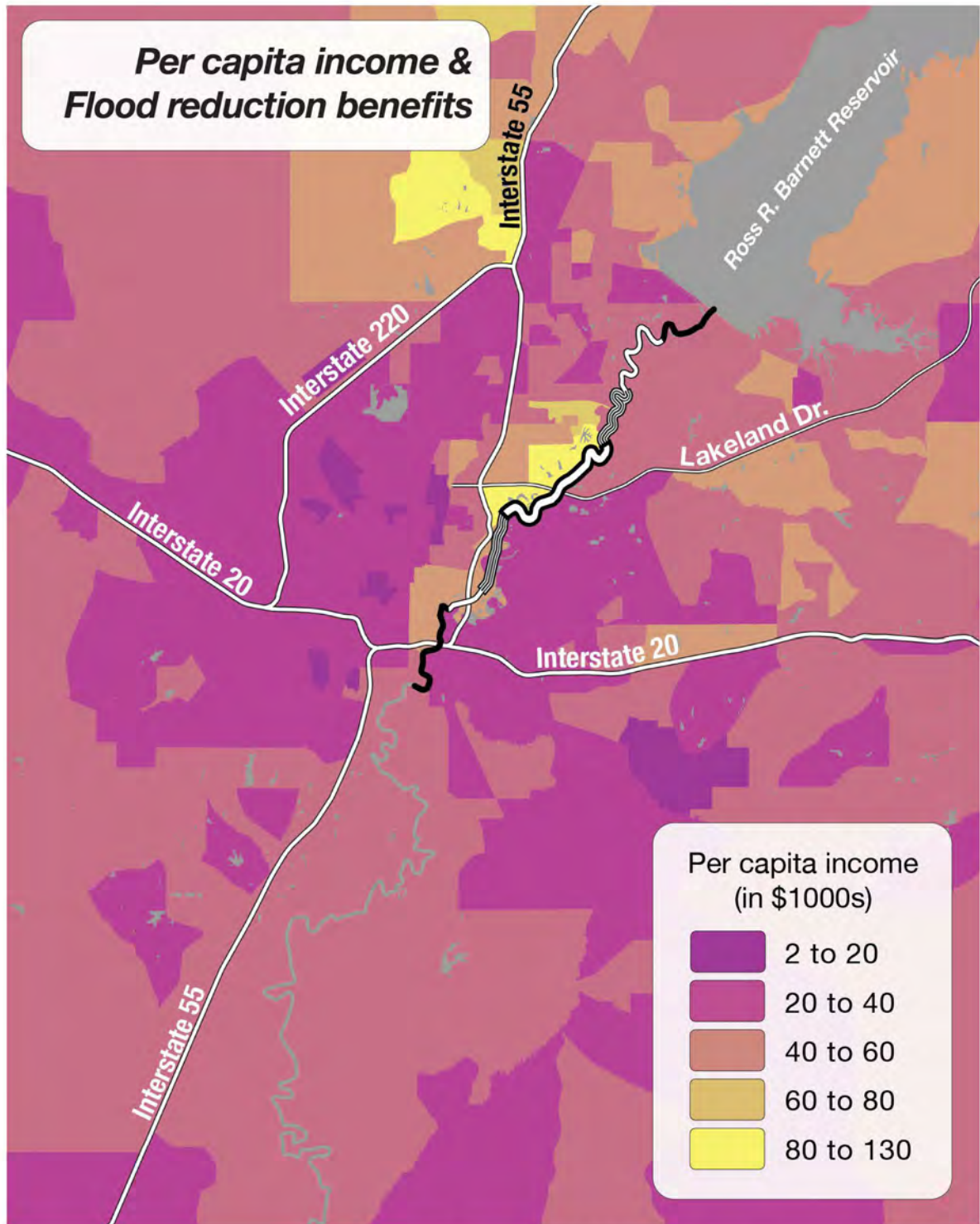


Figure 14: Map. Per capita income & Flood reduction benefits

Mapping the study area's income demographics

Wealth is a metric heavily weighed in the CEJST (see page 11). It is also highlighted in Executive Order 12898. Understandably, wealth can enable a person to purchase homes in less hazardous communities. Hypothetically, the wealthiest can even develop in the river's floodway and convince the Federal Government to reduce flood peaks along their neighborhood.

The map on the opposite page shows the per capita income of the study area. It also shows the One Lake flood reduction ruler.

***Per capita income
within the floodplain &
Flood reduction benefits***

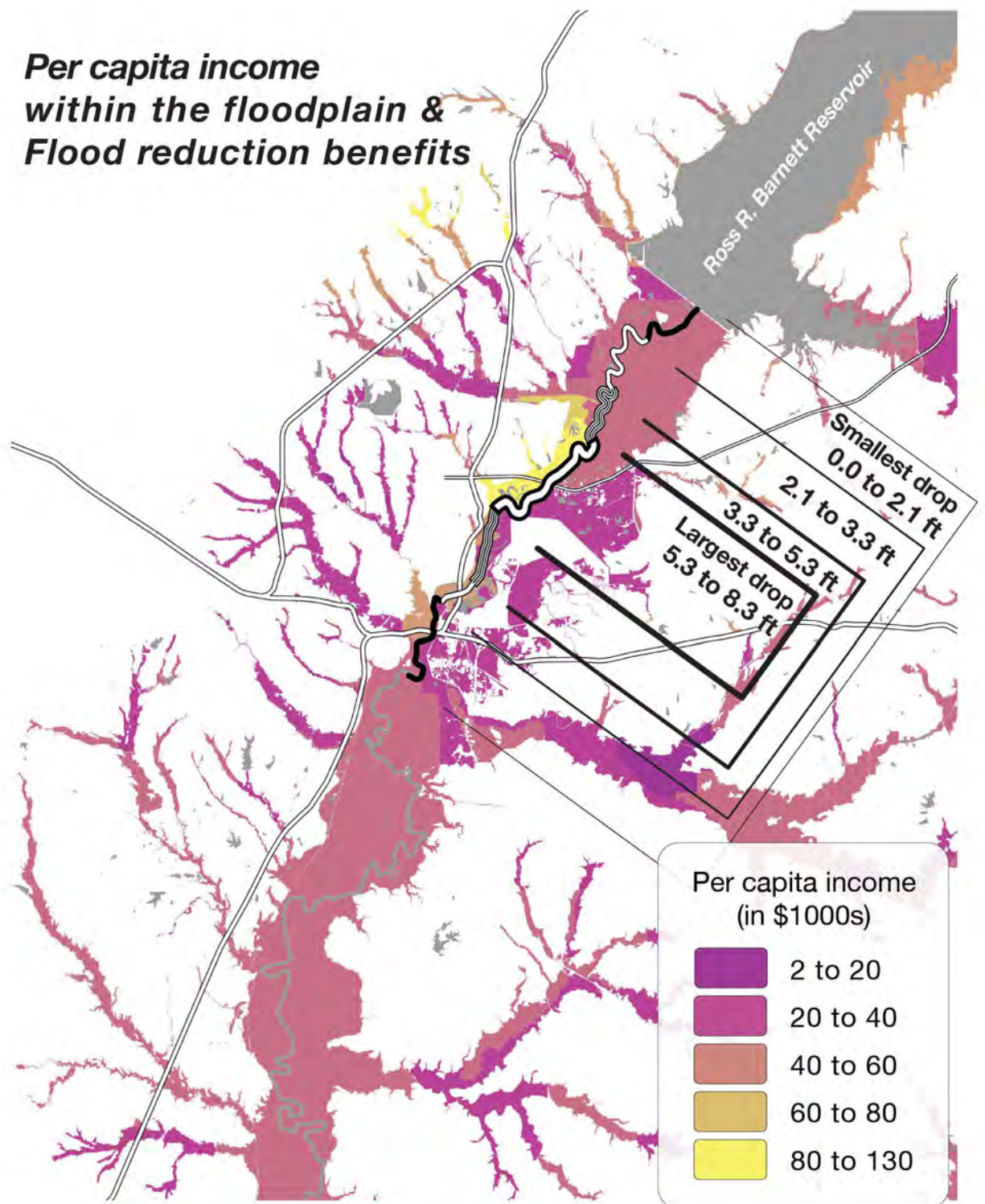


Figure 15: Map. Per capita income within floodplain &
Flood reduction benefits

The flood reduction benefits peak along the wealthiest communities in Jackson. Flood reduction benefits are offered to No direct benefits might be granted to poorer communities with per capita incomes less than \$20,000.

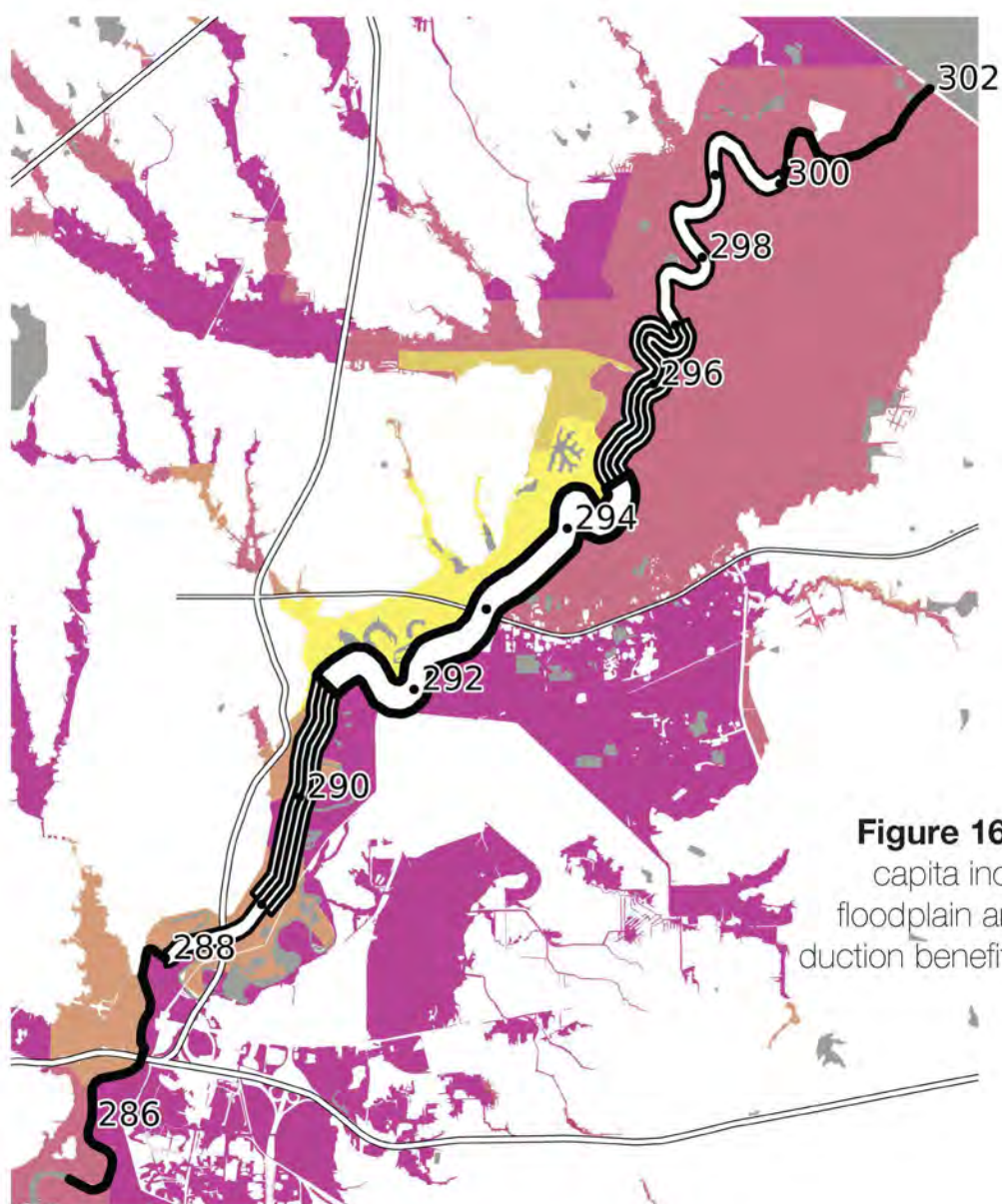


Figure 16: Map. Per capita income within floodplain and flood reduction benefits. Zoomed

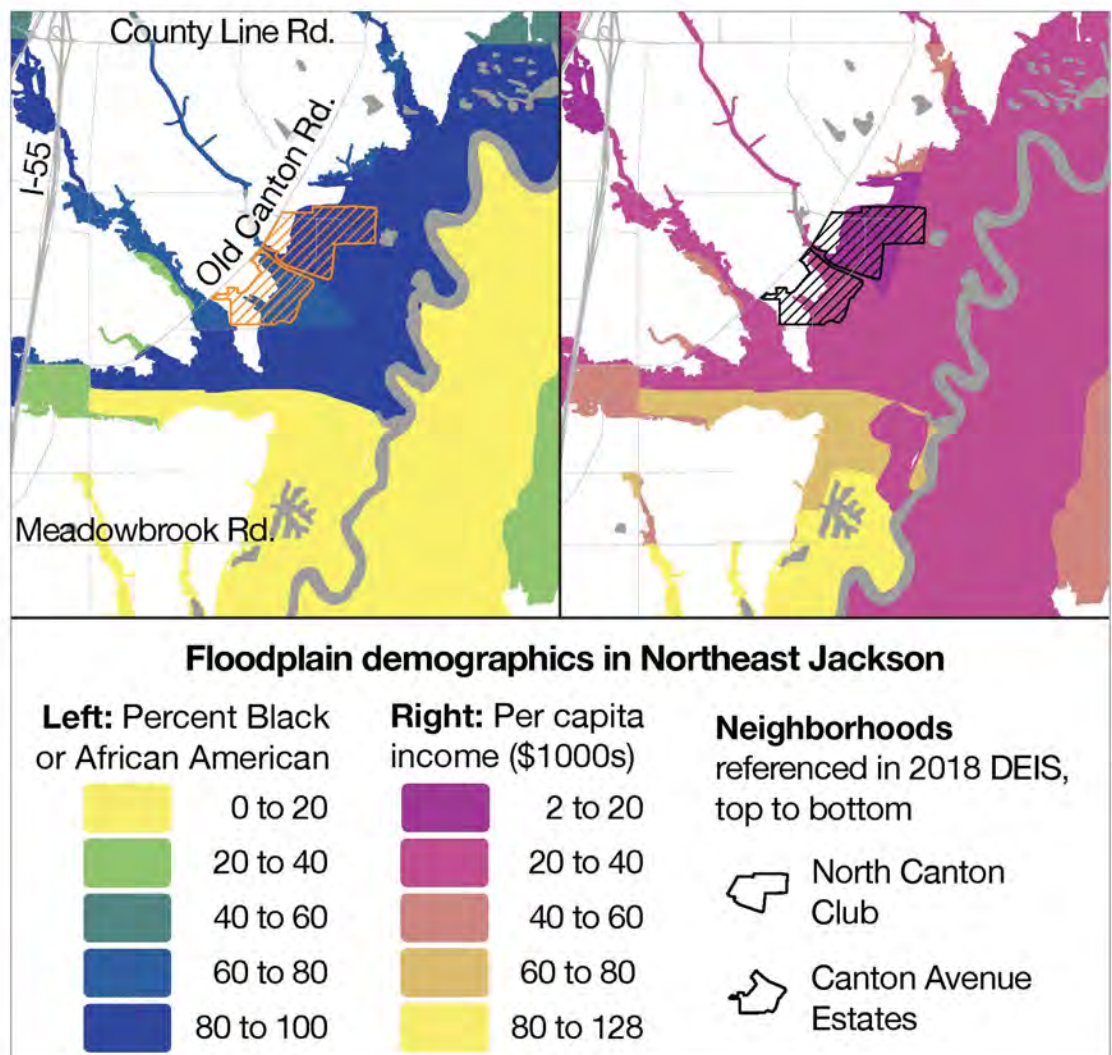
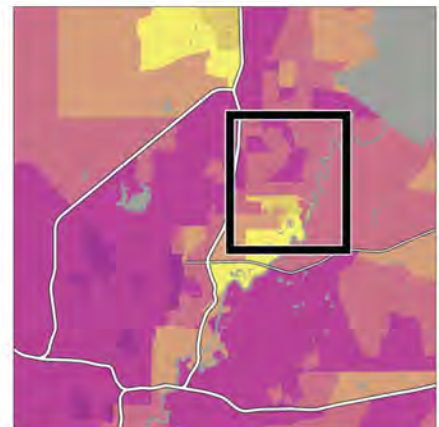


Figure 17: (Above) Map. Floodplain demographics of Northeast Jackson and two neighborhoods referenced in the 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), Appendix E. • **(Right):** Location of above map on the per capita income map



The One Lake and Northeast Jackson

Summary

North Canton Club is a predominantly Black or African American neighborhood in Northeast Jackson that floods. The study area's greatest concentration of structures vulnerable to river flooding might be those in this neighborhood and surrounding Black or African American predominant communities. These neighborhoods would still flood under the One Lake. The project skews flood reduction benefits to the Whiter and wealthier side of town, downstream by four miles.

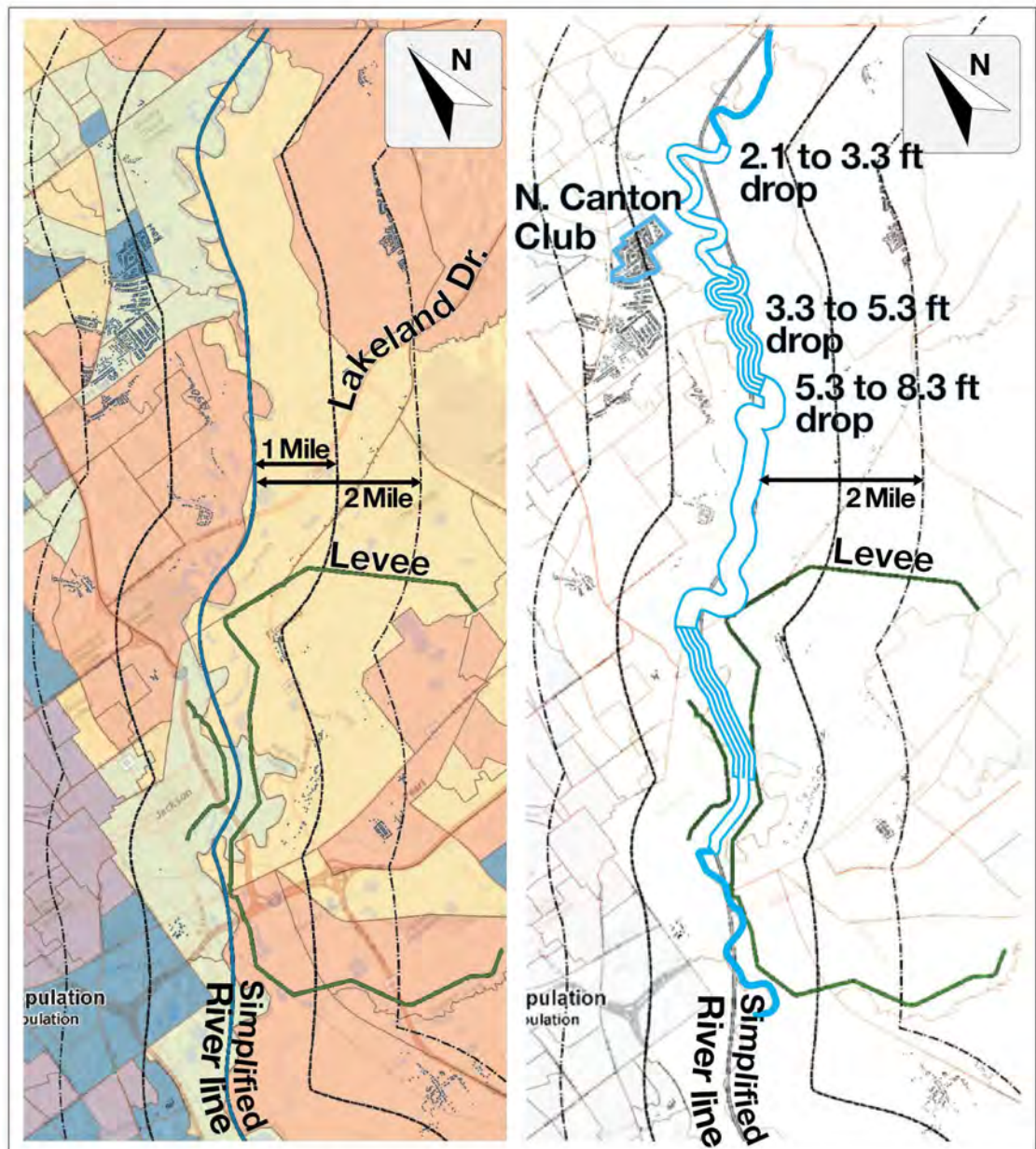
Does the project offer a greater level of protection to predominantly White, wealthier, and less vulnerable communities? Will the project create conditions for worsening of flood risks for Northeast Jackson?

The approved plan should provide a more balanced level of environmental protections and avoid unintended consequences. The One Lake may perpetuate racial and income inequalities.

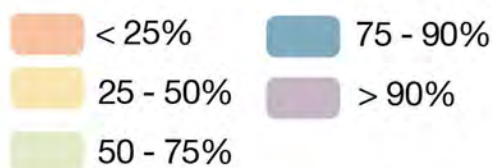
Predominantly Black

North Canton Club is a predominantly Black neighborhood in Northeast Jackson that floods. The 2018 DEIS references it in Appendix E: "Environmental Justice." The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' title slide for public engagement meetings shows the neighborhood's eastern end.

The image on the opposite side shows two neighborhoods mentioned in Appendix E and the floodplain demographics of Northeast Jackson.



Left: Percent minority population. The image is a cutout of Figure 5, in the 2018 DEIS, Appendix E.



Right: Structures vulnerable to flood damages and the flood reduction ruler. Structures are represented by black blotches. North Canton Club (top left) is outlined.

The image is a high-contrast and reduced hue version of the image on the left.

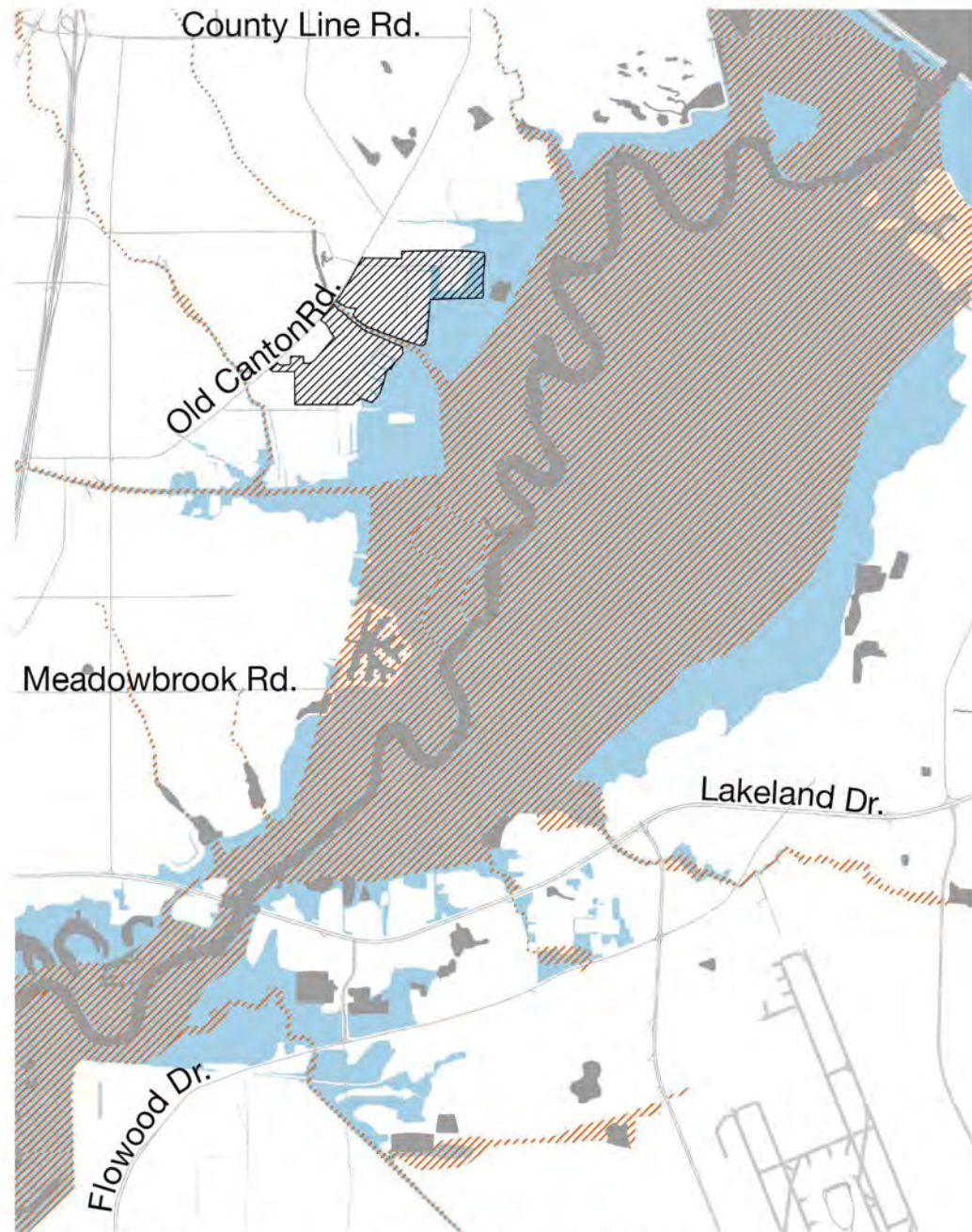
Figure 18: Cutouts of DEIS Appendix E, Fig. 5

Vulnerable to flood damages

The study area's greatest concentration of structures vulnerable to river flooding in the study area might be those in Northeast Jackson's predominantly Black communities. Figure 4 in Appendix E of the 2018 DEIS shows the commercial and residential structures surveyed to determine the finished floor elevations in areas susceptible to flooding. Figure 5 shows a subset of these structures, but the report does not explain how that subset was generated. It might represent the structures with finished floor elevations lower than the 100-year floodplain within 2 miles of the river. Northeast Jackson was developed before the region had adopted floodzone ordinances [6]. Newer construction, like that on Lakeland Drive, has higher first-floor elevations [7]. Figure 5 likely shows the structures most vulnerable to flood damages. This vulnerability may be why, according to Appendix E, Northeast Jackson "currently faces the highest risk of realizing economic damages from flooding." (See PDF page 16.)

The figure on the opposite page shows two cutouts of Appendix E, Fig. 5. The version on the left illustrates the percent minority population along the river. The version to the right is a recreation with reduced color saturation, increased color luminance, and increased contrast. It highlights the distribution of structures vulnerable to flood damages. The densest and largest clusters are mostly in tracts with a 50 to 90% minority population. These are the predominantly Black neighborhoods in Northeast Jackson. The right image outlines North Canton Club for reference.

The second image also includes the flood reduction ruler. The cluster of vulnerable structures in predominantly Black or African American Northeast Jackson would receive the project's 2nd- and 3rd-tier flood reduction benefits, 2.1 to 5.3 feet.



Northeast Jackson, downstream chokepoints, and the extent of a 36-foot flood.


Areas flooded
at 36 feet


FEMA-defined
floodway


N. Canton Club &
Canton Ave. Es-
tates, Flooded

Vulnerable due to floodplain mismanagement

A disregard for floodplain zoning allowed the construction of these neighborhoods in the 1960s and 1970s. A 1970s U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reported that these neighborhoods, “in the northern sector of the city, portions of several subdivisions infringe upon flood lands.” [6]

Residents are aware of this historical context. One resident reports being told by a city engineer that their neighborhood should not be there.

Downstream development may have worsened river flooding. The Hinds County Emergency Manager noted that the river crested higher than expected upstream of Lakeland Drive in the February 2020 Flood [8]. A 1986 Clarion-Ledger article, “Experts: Development could worsen flooding,” predicted this higher crest. The article noted how the increased development along Lakeland Drive alarmed floodplain managers. One of them summarized the problem. Development is “ignoring the fact that there's another group of people being damaged by it, and that is those people that are now going to be subject to increased flood elevations.”

There were also concerns that the development on the floodway off Meadowbrook Road would exacerbate flooding [9]. The impact of these developments have not been verified but could have contributed to the worsened flooding in February 2020.

The map on the opposite page shows the extent of flooding when the Jackson gage is at 36 feet, which approximately corresponds with a 10-year flood. It also shows the FEMA-defined floodway. Predominantly Black neighborhoods flood during this type of event. The map shows that the conveyance channel is choked at Lakeland Drive. It also shows that the floodway off Meadowbrook Road does not convey water at this stage, possibly elevating water surface levels.

Will continue to flood

North Canton Club is one of multiple predominantly Black neighborhoods that would continue to flood, albeit less severely, with the One Lake. Homes there would “experience benefits” with the One Lake but would “continue [to] be at risk” from 25-year and above events. The DEIS proposed a voluntary buy-out to compensate for the lack of protection. (See PDF pages 18 and 19 of Appendix E.)

Better over there

The One Lake will reduce flood peaks by upwards of 8 feet along wealthier and predominantly White communities. **Does the project offer a greater level of protection to wealthier and Whiter communities than those offered to less wealthy and predominantly Black communities?** The “remarkable” 8 foot drop may also promote increased floodplain occupation downstream.¹ **Could this uncaringly lead to more flooding in Northeast Jackson?**

The approved plan should provide a more balanced level of environmental protections, whether through a completely different plan or a Lake combined with floodproofing or levees. By itself, the One Lake may perpetuate racial and income inequalities.

¹ The term remarkable was used in the 2020 ATR, comment 8284198. “If the project’s results are firm, the case of the 100-year flood being lowered 5-8 ft is remarkable and should be written up in the executive summary and similar paragraphs of the [DEIS]”

References

Citations

- [1] **Newspaper article.** Nick Judin. "West Jackson Creek Woes Become 'One Lake' Pitch." *Jackson Free Press*. 19 February 2020. Available online at <https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2020/feb/19/west-jackson-creek-woes-become-one-lake-pitch/>
- [2] **News video.** "Jim Hill parkinglot flooded. Cars towed away." *16 WAPT News*, 9 May 2019. Available online at <https://www.wapt.com/article/jim-hill-parking-lot-flooded-cars-damaged/27422329>
- [3] **News video.** "Parents describe Jim Hill's early dismissal as 'chaos'." *12 WJTV News*, 24 August 2022. Available online at <https://www.wjtv.com/mississippi-flooding/parents-describe-jim-hills-early-dismissal-as-chaos/>
- [4] **News video.** "Flooding approaches Jim Hill High School." *16 WAPT News*, 14 January 2020. Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97ESN9k51sg>
- [5] **Journal article.** Christopher Tessum, et al. "Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial-ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure" *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences of the U.S.A.* 11 March 2019.
- [6] **Journal article.** Rutherford Platt. "The Jackson Flood of 1979 A Public Policy Disaster." *Journal of American Planning Association*. Spring 1982.
- [7] **Newspaper article.** Beverly Canerdy. "Experts: Development Could Worsen Floods." *Clarion-Ledger*. 21 December 1986.
- [8] **Storymap.** "The Pearl River Flood of 2020." National Weather Service. 20 March 2020. Available online: www.tinyurl.com/PearlRiver2020
- [9] **Newspaper article.** Bruce Reid. "Residents wary of development" *Clarion-Ledger*. 11 April 1999.

Predicting One Lake levels near the mouth of Lynch Creek

Predicting river elevations with the One Lake in place. Summary of process. This algorithm was used to calculate the dashed line in figure page 18. The code used to generate the graphs is available on Google Colab. <https://tinyurl.com/JimHillAnalysis>

1. Digitize the stage curve data from Appendix K of the DEIS. A copy is available on Google Sheets. <https://tinyurl.com/OneLakeReductions>
2. Calculate the WSE difference between the Alt C curve and the Existing Conditions curve. For example, at a discharge of 10,000 cfs between Hwy. 80 and I20, the One Lake WSE is 259.89 ft and the existing WSE is 254.29. ft. The WSE difference is 5.6 ft.

See Google Sheet doc above, under the tab titled, "app k • state discharge difference," lines 12 through 20.

3. Using the WSE difference, generate a function that will take in a discharge value and will output a WSE difference value. I used a function with a cubic interpolator and no extrapolation. This step may be replicated with the following Python code snippet.

```
import numpy as np
import pandas as pd
from scipy import interpolate
url = 'https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vT19q5_EMqYLjr6ugGyYt-7daBJJNbxTBUR7Samo1HysrOsEIodxzzJEAvgxBa7lQd3TfrWwNp701wN/pub?output=csv'
altc_curve = pd.read_csv(url)# read the stage curve data; a column already includes the WSE difference
f = interpolate.interp1d(altc_curve.discharge,
                        altc_curve.difference,
                        kind="cubic",
                        bounds_error=True,
                        fill_value=np.nan)
```

4. Read USGS discharge data; feed this data into the WSE difference function. This generates a predicted WSE difference. For example, if the discharge is 10,000 cfs, then the WSE difference will be 5.6 feet.
5. Add the data generated in the previous step to the USGS measured gage level. Continuing the example from the previous step, if the river gage is at 20 feet, then the predicted One Lake level will be 25.6 feet.

From: [Kathleen Hutchison](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] Pearl River Reservoir and lower river property owners
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 10:06:36 AM

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

RE: Notice of Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

Dear Colonel Klein-

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and be heard as an individual landowner regarding the future of the Pearl River and properties situated miles south of Jackson, Mississippi. Such properties are now experiencing unforeseen damage and destruction by the rise and fall of a river that is controlled by the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District. I am a landowner of just one of these properties, but I speak for others who own businesses and family-owned farms along the Pearl River here in Copiah County, Mississippi. These families and businesses in recent years have experienced loss of property and damage created by this control by an entity that seems oblivious to the harmful effects the unnatural 'rise and fall' of a powerful river flow has on properties downriver from the Ross Barnett Reservoir.

Information leads me to the doorstep of the Army Corps of Engineers who possess a study that recommends a 'One Lake' solution with no real evidence of what the result may be for those living down river. In reading the solution taken from Notice found in the Federal Register (vol. 88, No. 96, /Thursday, May 18, 2023) the cause and effect of this solution is actually unknown for private landowners, businesses, or the environment in the Lower Pearl River area.

I am sympathetic to Jackson's flooding problems. However, they are not problems that I or those I speak for created. Those experiencing flooding in the Jackson area now seek solutions that cause damage and destruction of lower Pearl River properties and threaten our livelihoods and way of life. This solution seems to trade one flooding problem of a metro area for the same devastating problem for a more rural and less wealthy area. From the information I found, this unproven solution is unfair.

On a personal note, our property has been family owned for almost 90 years. The property has a beautiful and natural spring-fed pool that has been kept in its natural state. The increasing 'rise and fall' controlled by the Reservoir breaches the river bank and the high bluff above which is our beautiful spring

fed pool. This causes loss of use and extensive clean-up costs multiple times a year. Prior to the current practice of water management of the reservoir, we rarely experienced such flooding and only in rare seasons of extensive rainfall. The ongoing, regularly occurring flooding we are now experiencing is overwhelming our resources and eroding our property.

Water levels have reached unprecedented levels which now threaten the higher bank on which our family cabins sit. Destruction of the natural, reinforced grade seems imminent unless changes in the way the river levels are addressed. Our place is a beloved gathering site for family and loss of this property through flooding damage cannot be measured monetarily for our family or other families and properties along the river.

There are also environmental issues and concerns regarding the 'One Lake' solution. The Pearl River appears as number 3 on the American Rivers 2023 Most Endangered Rivers list. The care of this river and those who have chosen to live near it bears serious consideration.

Our request is a simple one and that is to give us more time and opportunity for the Army Corps of Engineers to listen about the flooding and land loss problems effecting property owners and businesses downriver of Jackson. Please advise us of the mechanisms available to us to voice their concerns.

I appreciate your time and serious consideration of this request and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hutchison

khutchis@mc.edu

501-504-9757

--



Kathleen Hutchison

Librarian, Library

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From: [Kenneth Harris](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Reject One Lake in Jackson, MS
Date: Thursday, June 22, 2023 9:53:42 AM

My comment is very simple, the Pearl River is not the property of MS, nor anyother State. Is is not the prerogative of any one state to attempt control of the river.

I would add that there is a long history of river control with all sorts of claims for benefits that in retrospect have not worked out as planned at all. Nature should override the "controllers"

please leave well alone!

Ken harris
New Orleans

From: kismetcollins@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [KISMET COLLINS](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] DO NOT DAM the Pearl River
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 9:12:56 AM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

As someone who cares deeply about our country's birds, wildlife, and habitats, I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

I think there is ample evidence from our Nation's history that humankind's attempts to dam rivers has unintended and negative consequences on our environment, and by extension, on us.

Please "think outside the box" on this flood relief project to prevent the building of a dam on this important flowing river!

Sincerely,
KISMET COLLINS
New Orleans, LA 70124
kismetcollins@gmail.com



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David Waggoner

Robert Williams

Kristi Trail
Executive Director

June 29, 2023

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Re: Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

To whom it may concern;

At Pontchartrain Conservancy (PC), our mission is to drive environmental sustainability and stewardship through scientific research, education, and advocacy. Given the environmental impacts that can occur in the Pontchartrain Basin due to conditions and physical alterations to the Pearl River, we present the following comments as the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) prepares its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project (DEIS).

Scoping materials presented at USACE public meetings detail three alternative projects to be considered:

Alternative A – Relocation of structures and property buyout

Alternative A1 - Non-structural (flood proofing, elevation and acquisition)

Alternative C - Channel improvements (excavate and widen channel, enhance levees, create habitat islands and weir relocation)

PC's most significant concern is with regard to Alternative C, since this has the potential to have implications for the entire reach of the Pearl River. Alternative C would have consequences of converting 2,000+ acres of habitat to open water and impact over 1,800 acres of wetlands. Beyond that, channel modifications could have far reaching effects on the entire watershed. USACE should consider the entire main stem of the Pearl River in its analysis. The Pearl River is a relatively unmanaged system so channel modifications can have far reaching consequences for downstream flow conditions. A primary concern of PC is that the reduction in flow during low-flow conditions can have dire consequences for habitats within the flood plain and in the coastal waters of Louisiana and Mississippi. Downstream impacts from the City of Jackson to the mouth of the Pearl River must be considered in the analysis of Alternative C. PC has raised this issue twice before in

[NEW CANAL LIGHTHOUSE]

Education, Development & Outreach
8001 Lakeshore Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70124

[MAILING ADDRESS]

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504.836.2215 | ScienceForOurCoast.org

[CORPORATE OFFICE]

Coastal, Water Quality & GIS
3501 N. Causeway Blvd, Suite 220
Metairie, LA 70002

2013 and 2018 during the scoping process and during the public comment period for the EIS entitled “Integrated Draft Feasibility & Environmental Impact statement for the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS”. Simply put, the EIS must consider downstream impacts to flows and habitats related to Alternative C.

PC understands the importance of flood control for the City of Jackson. As Louisianans, we have recently experienced devastating flooding from large rain events. Losses of infrastructure and personal property is devastating to communities, and economically, a large burden.

Therefore, given the environmental consequences of converting a riverine system to a lake system for flood control, PC urges the USACE to consider the following alternatives:

Levee setbacks to allow the flood plain to absorb more flood waters and reconnect as much of the floodplain back to the Pearl River

Consider Ross Barnett Reservoir operation adjustments in conjunction with Alternatives 1 and 1A. Since any flood water must enter from the Reservoir, then the operation of the Reservoir must be considered first.

PC appreciates the opportunity to provide and comment on this document, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with USACE.

Sincerely,



Kristi Trail, Executive Director

[NEW CANAL LIGHTHOUSE]

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8001 Lakeshore Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70124

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[CORPORATE OFFICE]

Coastal, Water Quality & GIS
3501 N. Causeway Blvd. Suite 220
Metairie, LA 70002

From: [Kristol Smith](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source]
Date: Sunday, June 25, 2023 3:48:40 PM

Hello. I live in the city of Jackson and enjoy the trails located within LeFleurs Bluff State Park. I want to see the bird populations there thrive , allowing my family further opportunities to see these wonderful animals and their supporting plant life. The one lake project could be disastrous to the park, but also to communities that live further downstream. I strongly support option A or A1. I would like you to please reject the one lake project.

From: ato137528@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Lamar Lott](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Thursday, June 8, 2023 1:22:02 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

This crap again??? I thought we all had already made it clear that this is a ridiculous project that we absolutely refuse to accept. The city of Jackson has been dumping billions of gallons of untreated sewage into the river for years with no one doing anything about it. Now you want to make a lake out of the sewage so that private developers can make millions selling waterfront real estate at the taxpayers expense. Which of these developers is paying your leadership bribes to push this on us? This smells of corruption as bad as it does sewage.

No!!!

Sincerely,
Lamar Lott
Brandon, MS 39042
ato137528@gmail.com

From: [Laurell Schultz](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pearl River
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 2:54:57 PM

As a citizen of Lawrence Co., I'm asking you to please reject the destructive Alternative C/One Lake project.
Sent from my iPhone

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 7:08:35 PM

CAUTION: Your email client may display clickable links. The data in this email is provided without modification, as the user entered it. Before you click or use any link provided in this email, please confirm the authenticity of the link.

**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

Please do not go forward with the one lake project. I am a Jackson resident. There are surely less environmentally damaging options. Please let us preserve this ecosystem. Things are fragile enough as it is.

Lauren Fassero

Ref Id: fHKfMVHIlkmDuPFpyhJhfQ

From: [Lea Campbell](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pearl River Flood Risk Management comments: NO TO ONE LAKE PROJECT
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 1:28:29 PM

To Army Corps of Engineers,

I am writing to **SAY NO to the One Lake Project!** I work in Jackson and have concerns about the proposed One Lake project proposal. The One Lake plan will not help already vulnerable areas of Jackson with flooding - it will actually make it worse.

- **One Lake will destroy 2,500 acres of river habitats that support hundreds of species, including Lynch and Town Creek areas.**
- **One Lake will not eliminate flash flooding that already impacts neighborhoods, but instead will make flash flooding worse by permanently elevating parts of these creeks and creating new back-flooding problems in other areas.**
- The lake dredging in Alternative "C" will release toxic pollutants into our water, threatening the health and safety of our community - including the most vulnerable members of our population. **There is no plan to protect public health** with only a paltry \$8 million set aside for cleanup of three known toxic waste sites during construction.
- The J.H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant, which supplies 30% of the City of Jackson's drinking water and operated during the recent water crisis, could not operate during construction because of dredging-induced water quality problems
- **One Lake will likely raise Mississippians' property taxes:** Passed in the 2017 state legislative session, House Bill 1585 gives the local Levee Board a blank check to raise property taxes for owners they determine are "*directly or indirectly benefited*" by the project.

I work directly with folks in the areas along impacted tributaries (Town, Lynch and Eubanks Creeks) who are integral members of the community and deserve a better plan that will ensure their safety and health. The Corps should prioritize more effective, less costly options that truly address flooding concerns include improvements to existing levees,

elevating homes and buildings, or offering voluntary buyouts for properties with a history of flooding problems.

I SAY NO to the One Lake Project.

I urge the Army Corps of Engineers to do the same.

--

Lea Campbell
(228) 219-1548



The Interim Third-Party Manager
of the Jackson Water System

May 24, 2023

US Army Corps of Engineers
Vicksburg District
CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street, Vicksburg, MS 39183

RE: Pearl River Basin, Mississippi, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Hinds and Rankin Counties, Mississippi

I am writing in support of the Channel Improvements Plan (Alternative C) as presented in the Integrated Draft Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement (FS/EIS) for the referenced project. I was appointed the Interim Third-Party Manager (ITPM) by Federal Judge Henry T. Wingate on November 29, 2022, when he entered an interim stipulated order (ISO) negotiated between the City of Jackson (CoJ), the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH), the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the US Department of Justice (DOJ). The ISO puts the CoJ drinking water system under the full control and responsibility of the ITPM with a goal of stabilizing the system and putting the system on a sustainable path forward to provide a continuous supply of safe drinking water to all customers of the system. Additionally, recent discussions between the parties and Judge Wingate indicate there is a high likelihood the CoJ wastewater system make be placed under the ITPM control in similar fashion. As a result, the ITPM has a court ordered obligation to review and comment on any project that could impact the drinking water and wastewater systems in Jackson.

An overall objective of the referenced project is to "avoid adverse impacts to the water supply." The JH Fewell Water Treatment Plant withdraws water behind the weir at RM 290.7. The JH Fewell WTP has been in operation at that location since 1916. The raw water pumping stations, adjacent to the existing weir, are regularly isolated from the plant during periods of high water, limiting access to a long foot bridge. During these periods, trucks, cranes, and other heavy equipment cannot reach the intake structure or raw water pumping facilities to make critical repairs, threatening the water supplied by JH Fewell to the 150,000 customers. Due to the age and condition of JH Fewell, and the on-going threat created by regular flooding of the Pearl River, the ITPM has been tasked with developing a long-term water supply recommendation as a requirement of the ISO that will address reconstruction, relocation, or elimination of the JH Fewell Water Treatment Plant.

The current weir at RM 290.7 provides access to high quality water for water intake with less stratification than experienced in the Ross Barnett Reservoir at the intake structure to the OB Curtis Water Treatment Plant (the other CoJ drinking water source). Stratification, especially rapid changes in stratification during major flood events, has created water treatment challenges at the OB Curtis WTP that have not been

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experienced at the JH Fewell WTP due to the weir configuration at RM 290.7. Flood related changes in stratification and the related water treatment challenges have been responsible for at least two of the most recent water crises in Jackson. The stratification issue will be a consideration in any long-term water supply planning conducted by the ITPM.

The ISO requires the ITPM to complete multiple priority projects, starting them all within this year. While the long-term water supply study has not commenced, the ITPM supports the Channel Improvements Plan (Alternative C) because it preserves the broadest options for Jackson's long-term drinking water needs. With a new weir, relocated to RM 284.3, a new water intake structure could be located anywhere along the river from the current location downstream to the new weir. Having more options would allow optimization of siting the plant to provide significant community benefits, elimination of flood risk to plant facilities, and target the best hydraulic location for pumping water throughout the system without limitations created by the location of the existing weir.

For this reason, maintaining the broadest array of options for location of future water withdrawals, the ITPM strongly supports the Channel Improvements Plan (Alternative C).

Sincerely,



Ted Henifin, P.E (MS and VA)
Interim Third-Party Manager
The City of Jackson Water System

From: lisavollmer@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Lisa Price](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 7:48:52 AM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Dear Sirs;

This project shows immeasurable potential damage to not only the river communities but to the Gulf of Mexico fisheries and wildlife!! I ask that you reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

I ask you to listen to the long-standing opposition that One Lake has drawn from hundreds of concerned citizens, elected officials, community and business leaders, conservation groups and others and abandon this destructive project once and for all.

One Lake will only put more people and property in harm's way while exposing communities to toxic pollution, worsening Jackson's flooding and drinking water problems, reducing downstream freshwater flows critical to the region's seafood and tourism economies, and destroying wildlife habitat that provides natural flood protection for communities.

Instead, I urge you to implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

Please protect the Pearl River!!

Sincerely,
Lisa Price
Vanceleave, MS 39565
lisavollmer@bellsouth.net



June 30, 2023

Submitted by Electronic Mail to: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil and andrea.e.walker.civ@army.mil

Colonel Christopher Klein
Vicksburg District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Re: Comments on Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS

Dear Colonel Klein,

The Mississippi Sierra Club writes today to express our Staunch Opposition to the so called "One Lake" project, of which your agency is considering as a top alternative in the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project being developed for the Greater Jackson area.

Let us be crystal clear; this proposal is nothing short of a Real Estate Development Scheme, promoted by well-known, politically connected local real estate developers, and masquerading as flood control.

The project's local sponsor, the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District (Levee Board), continues to push for this bogus real estate development scam that had previously been soundly rejected by the Corps' Vicksburg District. It comes as no surprise that the local sponsor has rejected any alternative proposals that would provide environmentally sound and sustainable flood damage reduction benefits.

The One Lake project will devastate one of the most intact rivers in the United States through massive dredging to widen nearly 10 miles of the Pearl River and building a dam at the southern end of this stretch to create a 1,900-acre lake near Jackson, Mississippi.

Again, the well-publicized purpose of this project is to create developable waterfront real estate, which in reality will put even more ill-fated development in the river floodway, continuing a decades-long pattern that has plagued the Metro Jackson area. Ultimately, this will put unsuspecting people in harm's way.

As discussed below, One Lake will destroy vital habitat for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, exacerbate already significant water quality problems, alter water flows all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, and damage the region's vital seafood and nature-based tourism economy.

Critically, construction of One Lake will expose vulnerable communities in Jackson to extensive toxic contamination. At least three highly contaminated Hazardous-Toxic-Radiological Waste sites, two Superfund sites, and three Hazardous Waste sites are located directly within or adjacent to One Lake's dredging footprint.

The damage that One Lake would cause to this exceptional resource, and the many deficiencies that we and many others identified in the Levee Board's incomplete 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), have generated widespread opposition to the project by political and community leaders, business and conservation interests, state and federal agencies, and the public. Fifteen downstream stakeholders have passed resolutions opposing One Lake – from the Louisiana legislature to the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources to counties and municipalities. Also, Mississippi Congressman Bennie G. Thompson (D-02, Ranking Member, House Homeland Security Committee) and Louisiana Congressman Steve Scalise (R-01, House Republican Whip) have publicly expressed serious concerns about the project. Overwhelming opposition to the project was expressed by more than 80 stakeholder groups and elected leaders, spanning the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, and nature-tour businesses to faith, conservation, and recreational-commercial fishing, including 3,000 members of the public in commenting in opposition to the project.

The Corps has also historically opposed the One Lake proposal and similar plans, instead supporting a Comprehensive Levee Plan. Indeed, in 2007 the Corps terminated its agreement with the Drainage District because the District wanted to continue pursuing a "lake" plan for real estate development purposes and refused to consider any other actual flood risk management alternatives.

The Mississippi Legislature's PEER Committee has also previously signaled its support for alternative plans that did not include economic development components. For example, in 2010, the Committee noted that the **"plans incorporating economic development cost more than levees"** and the **flood control plans developed before 1996 offer less costly options that better address flooding concerns** (*MS Legislature PEER Committee Report #540, p.34, 10/12/2010*). These pre-1996 alternative plans included restoring the Pearl River's floodplain either alone or in combination with commonsense measures such as improvements to existing levees, raising buildings and homes, relocations or buying out properties with historical flooding problems, and stronger floodplain policies and regulations to control development activities.

Therefore, we find it incomprehensible and deeply disturbing that the Corps continues to defy its own position by considering One Lake as a top alternative (i.e., Alternative C). We urge the Corps to reject the nonsensical One Lake project. In its place, the Corps should develop a legitimate planning process that focuses on non-structural, natural and nature-based solutions to provide sustainable and environmentally sound flood mitigation for the Greater Jackson area while protecting the Pearl River Basin, downstream communities, and the regional economy.

The Corps should reject kowtowing to political pressure generated by self-serving local real estate developers.

The commonsense flood solutions that should be included are:

- Restoring wetlands and green spaces in the Pearl River's floodplain with special priority given to its 12 urban tributaries that flow through metro Jackson where most of the recurring flood events (i.e., rain-induced flash flooding) have been documented.

- Selectively elevating and/or flood-proofing existing homes and buildings with historical flooding problems. Importantly, we oppose the Corps' currently proposed Alternative A1 as it does not reflect the practical, targeted approach that we are supporting.
- Carrying out targeted voluntary relocations or buy-outs of properties with historical flooding problems. Importantly, we oppose the Corps' currently proposed Alternative A that suggests purchase of at least 3,000 structures. This is completely without merit and is totally impractical.
- Improving the existing levee system, with a critical goal of setting levees back farther from the river.
- Improving management of existing infrastructure (i.e., Ross Barnett Reservoir and Spillway).

To this end, Mississippi Sierra Club considers One Lake a fabricated, dangerous and environmentally unacceptable project that is based on a fundamentally flawed planning process as demonstrated by the following:

- **One Lake will encourage new development in the floodway and floodplain of the Pearl River, resulting in placing more people and property in harm's way.** Notably, a 1982 study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) attributed much of the City of Jackson's damage from the 1979 Flood of Record to development within the floodplain.
- **A major alternative in the Corps' scoping announcement, One Lake is based on the Levee Board's same flawed analysis.** Importantly, the Corps' Agency Technical Review (ATR) and Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) panels' assessments of the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS identified many of the same flagrant concerns that we have shared with the Corps, including that the project would expose communities to extensive toxic contaminations and that the few proposed alternatives did not adequately consider, nor thoroughly or practically evaluate, an array of structural and non-structural measures.
- **One Lake will worsen environmental injustices by exacerbating flooding in underserved Jackson neighborhoods.** Many of the flooding woes experienced in the Greater Jackson area in recent years have been significantly attributed to rain-induced flash flooding that impacts urban neighborhoods located along the 12 creeks that flow into the Pearl River. These neighborhoods are predominantly low-income communities of color. The Levee Board's 2018 DEIS acknowledges that One Lake will not protect against local creek flooding, and in fact states that the One Lake impoundment will permanently elevate water levels in all 12 Pearl River tributaries.
 - This will further exacerbate localized flash flooding, increase underserved neighborhoods' vulnerability to backwater flooding from high river events, and magnify flood risk from rain events in the upper reaches of the tributaries that ultimately flow into the now-elevated creek channels. Affected tributaries include those that regularly experience flash flooding, run through environmental justice communities, and pass by public schools, museums, and other important community facilities and resources.
 - The elevated water levels and increased flooding will also add to the city's many stormwater permit violations. Urban stormwater flooding already affects mainly Black neighborhoods located along Town Creek and Lynch Creek, which are Pearl River tributaries that flow through majority Black census tracts in downtown Jackson. These two creeks run through Jackson Wards 3 and 5; according to data from EPA EJ Screen

tool, these Wards are in the nation's 95-100th percentile for a combination of percent low-income and percent minority population.

- **One Lake project will worsen Jackson's drinking water problems.** The J.H. Fewell drinking water plant draws directly from the area in the Pearl River that would be extensively dredged and ponded to build One Lake. Project construction would increase turbidity in the Pearl River to the point where this 100-year old facility will not be able to operate, as acknowledged in the 2018 Draft EIS. As a result, the City of Jackson would be required to somehow find a "temporary" water supply alternative for 30% of the City's drinking water during project construction, which would take at least "three or four years" according to the local Levee Board.¹
 - It is equally clear that the One Lake project would not have prevented Jackson's most recent crisis, which was caused by the collapse of the city's primary water treatment plant, the O.B. Curtis plant, which supplies up to 70% of Jackson's drinking water supply. That collapse was caused by flood-induced high turbidity (and other polluted runoff) in the Ross Barnett Reservoir, which is the water source for the O.B. Curtis plant and is located seven miles upstream of the proposed One Lake project. The One Lake project has no ability to –and will not– alleviate flood-induced high turbidity in the Reservoir.
- **One Lake will further degrade the water quality in the Pearl River.** The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's review of the Levee Board's 2018 DEIS raised numerous questions about the project's water quality modeling, and called for more analysis "to consider how [One Lake] would affect water quality downstream of the project area. . . ."
 - As of 2020, a total, 20 miles of the Pearl River remained closed for water contact activities such as swimming, fishing, or wading; from its confluence with Hanging Moss Creek in Jackson to the Swinging Bridge at Byram, and twelve of its Jackson-area tributaries.
 - Pearl River water quality in the metro Jackson area suffers from egregious sewerage discharges. For example, the City of Jackson Sewer Consent Decree Quarterly Report for April-June 2022 documented 77 Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) events that released 67.5 million gallons of untreated sewage into Waters of the State. More sewage was released in those three months than the entire amount released in 2021. Fifty-four of the SSOs reported were listed as ongoing/unresolved. Eleven of the 77 SSOs released over one million gallons at a single location.
 - One Lake would only serve to amplify water quality degradation in the Pearl River by slowing and confining the flow of sewage and creating a eutrophic 1,900-acre impoundment that is unsuitable for aquatic life.
- **One Lake will amplify the area's environmental injustices by exposing vulnerable communities to extensive toxic contamination.** At least three highly contaminated Hazardous-Toxic-Radiological Waste sites, two Superfund sites, and three Hazardous Waste sites have been identified within or adjacent to One Lake's dredging footprint. To date, little sampling has been done and no plan has been developed to protect the health of nearby communities from exposure to these toxins both during and after project construction. Although the true costs to clean up these sites are likely to be many tens of millions of dollars, the 2018 DEIS allocated only \$8 million for clean-up in the project's \$345 million estimated cost.

¹ Northside Sun, Moving Ahead: Final Public Comment Period For One Lake Coming Soon, 06/14/22 (available at <https://www.northsidesun.com/local-content-top-stories/moving-ahead-final-public-comment-period-one-lakecoming-soon#sthash.bggohcen.dpbs>) ("Keith Turner, attorney for the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood & Drainage Control District said . . . After funding is secured, the project will require three or four years of construction, and then several more years for developers to produce plans for the economic development component.")

- **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s review of the Levee Board’s 2018 DEIS concluded that One Lake “is the most environmentally damaging plan”** and that they should be required to produce a second draft environmental impact statement that would provide “greater details regarding plan formulation, design, operation, mitigation, and adaptive management” before the project advances.
- **One Lake will directly destroy over 2,500 acres of wildlife habitat**, including at least 1,500 acres of vital bottomland hardwood wetlands, much of which provides natural flood protection for local communities. An additional 1,900 acres of diverse in-stream riverine habitat and ecologically vital small streams will be destroyed and turned into an impoundment. Though not acknowledged by the Levee Board’s 2018 DEIS even more habitat will be lost as the fundamental changes to the form and function of the Pearl River system play out over time, including reduction and elimination of natural floodplain inundation.
- **One Lake will adversely affect hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, including numerous species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act or otherwise federally designated as at-risk**, due to the habitat losses and fundamental transformation of the Pearl River ecosystem. As the Service has advised, “[w]ildlife resources within the Pearl River Basin are dependent upon the diverse floral composition of associated forested wetlands” and “a higher percentage” of vertebrate wildlife species in the basin “use bottomland hardwoods as primary habitat (habitat a species depends upon for reproduction and/or feeding during all or a portion of the year) than any other habitat type.”² Notably, **the Service has initiated an Endangered Species listing determination for the Pearl River map turtle**. The agency has a deadline of October 29, 2021, to make a recommendation on whether this endemic turtle species should be listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.
- **One Lake will reduce vital freshwater flows all the way to the Gulf of Mexico**, reducing water levels in the lower Pearl River and jeopardizing water quality, seafood and tourism sectors, and hundreds of millions of dollars in coastal restoration projects underway—or planned—for Mississippi and Louisiana, such as a \$56 million marsh-oyster project in Hancock County (MS) and several projects identified in Louisiana’s \$50 billion Coastal Master Plan. Hydrologic modeling presented in the project’s DEIS is not rigorous enough to shed light on these issues and only focused only on the project’s immediate footprint. Rather a comprehensive, detailed study that includes the Ross Barnett Reservoir south to Mississippi Sound, the Pearl River Delta, and the Gulf of Mexico is crucial to fully assess One Lake or any lake project’s immediate (footprint) and downstream impacts.
- **One Lake will increase water treatment costs to nearly 100 downstream users and municipalities**. Reductions in downstream river flows are anticipated to increase costs to nearly 100 downstream Pearl River industrial users and municipalities that rely on stable freshwater flow and adequate dilution of their discharges, such as International Paper, Georgia-Pacific, and the towns of Bogalusa and Pearl River.
- **The Mississippi Department of Transportation determined that the project’s proposed dredging would result in “catastrophic failure” of critical infrastructure**, thereby requiring the replacement of nine bridges that would add nearly \$110 million to the project’s estimated \$345 million construction cost.

² U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 1 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the 2018 DEIS).

- **The Levee Board's 2018 DEIS acknowledges that One Lake's estimated cost is based on multiple assumptions and unknowns (DSEIS, Appendix C at 220).** One Lake's true costs may well exceed \$345 million for construction and \$13.9 million annually for maintenance (*Northside Sun*, 7/12/18).
- **One Lake Ignores a Key Flood Management Tool.** Since the last major flood of the Greater Jackson area in 1983 (a 100-year flood), management of the Ross Barnett Reservoir and Spillway has become an increasingly important flood risk reduction tool. During 2018, Mississippi's second wettest year on record, which included several flood stage events on the Pearl, the reservoir was effectively managed to minimize flood threats and help protect structures. These benefits also were evident during the winter of 2020, which included the wettest January on record. Importantly, the Government Accounting Office report on Jackson's 1979 Flood of Record (a 200-year event) found that while the reservoir was not built for flood control, it could be responsibly managed to help mitigate flooding for Greater Jackson area.

The Mississippi Sierra Club implores the Corps to soundly reject this real estate development scam—the One Lake proposal—and instead work to implement actual cost effective, targeted flood risk reduction measures rather than continue throwing good taxpayer money after bad to subsidize private development.

Rather, the Corps should incorporate a suite of natural, nature-based, and non-structural approaches. This new alternative would provide meaningful flood protections for the Greater Jackson area while delivering sustainable ecological benefits to the Pearl River Basin and downstream communities and resources.

Respectfully,



Louie Miller
State Director
Mississippi Chapter of the Sierra Club
Louie.Miller@sierraclub.org

From: [Louise Ouellet](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Option C - One Lake Proposal Opposition
Date: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 11:10:16 AM

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to voice my opposition to Option C, The One Lake Proposal, for flood control of the Pearl River at Jackson, Ms.

My opposition is based on a number of different issues.

I live within a couple of miles of Lefleur's Bluff State Park and have been a regular visitor to this unique, urban park for over thirty years.

I have been involved with the Prothonotary Nest Box project for over 20 years. Option C would destroy the very habitat we have worked so hard to preserve to benefit not only the prothonotary warbler, but many other species that depend on bottomland hardwood forests along the current river banks. Not all the park would be lost, but the most critical habitat would be destroyed.

Dredging the river would also imperil the Ringed Sawback Turtle, listed as federally threatened, and unique to the Pearl River.

There is at least one toxic waste site that could leach into the river if not properly cleared at taxpayer expense.

There is an ongoing issue of raw sewage making its way to the river in Jackson that would need to be addressed.

Recent heavy rains required the release of water from the Ross Barnett Reservoir to maintain proper, safe water levels at the reservoir. This results in increases in the river stages below the dam. Would a dam at One Lake then also have to release water, potentially causing more flooding downstream?

I ask that you very carefully consider the many issues that would have negative impacts if the One Lake proposal is adopted and ultimately decide that Option A or A1 would offer the flood control that Jackson so badly needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Louise Ouellet
Jackson, MS

LOUISIANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

116 Georgia Ave., Suite B
Bogalusa, LA 70427
Email: whitema@legis.la.gov
Office: 985.730.2147
Fax: 985.730.2149



MALINDA B. WHITE
State Representative ~ District 75

COMMITTEES:
Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture,
and Rural Development
House and Governmental Affairs
Ways and Means
Joint Legislative Committee on
Capital Outlay
House Select Committee on
Women and Children

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Via email comment portal: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

June 1, 2023

RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Co.

Dear Colonel Klein:

I am writing to you to provide scoping comments for the Pearl River FRM project on behalf of Louisiana House District 75 which includes the Pearl River in Washington Parish and the towns of Bogalusa, Varnado and the other nearby communities. I attended the May 23rd Slidell public engagement meeting for scoping of the new 2023 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) being prepared for the Pearl River Basin federal Flood Risk Management project in Hinds and Rankin Counties, MS. I spoke to the Army Corps and ASACW staff hosting the meeting and gave verbal comments for the record along with two other elected officials from Louisiana who represent the interests of communities along the lower Pearl River. I have raised objections about Alternative "C" advanced by the non-federal sponsors for Pearl River flood management since 2018 when the Rankin Hinds Drainage District published the first draft of the EIS. I personally visited the Pentagon in February of 2020 along with elected officials and NGO members from Mississippi to voice my concerns about Alt. "C" to Deputy Secretary Leach, Ms. Andrea Walker and others on the staff of Secretary James.

My constituents attended the Slidell meeting and raised questions about the fate of the Pearl River Navigation Canal, its locks and sills, and about the sedimentation, low flow, saltwater intrusion, habitat, storm surge and river flooding problems we have on the lower Pearl River in Louisiana.

A concern we voiced in 2018 and still remains is the extent of the study area for the project. It is limited to Rankin and Hinds Counties in Mississippi. The study area does not include our section of the river as it must to fulfill the WRDA points of analysis on environmental acceptability (WRDA 2007 Sec 3104) and economic justification (WRDA 2018 Sec 1176).

We in Southeast Louisiana understand that the historic flooding problems in the Jackson Metro area are the focus of the 2023 DEIS and array of alternatives shared at the Slidell and Jackson meetings. We empathize with the plight of the residents of Rankin and Hinds Counties who have endured serious floods in 1979, 1983, 2020 and 2022. I understand that they need a project that provides relief. However, as the "Pearl River Basin" appears in the title of the current project and in the project's name in the 2018 DEIS, I expect that the needs and concerns of the whole of the Pearl River Basin will be taken into consideration in any alternatives that are formulated, published, and supported by the Army Secretary. The last study under section 211 WRDA 1986 was authorized by Congress, with the expectation that the entire basin be taken into consideration. Louisiana's Congressional delegation left no doubt about this Congressional intent when Senator Bill Cassidy and Representative Steve Scalise inserted Section 1176 in WRDA 2018, requiring the Army Corps to take a hard look at downstream impacts from an additional dam and lake on the Pearl River in Mississippi.

Scoping Elements:

Flood Risk Reduction

There were three alternatives provided at the Army's public engagement meetings of May 23-24, 2023, : C, A, and A1 and a combination of the three, and the Corps welcomed other alternatives. One alternative from 2018 was left out, a levees only comprehensive plan. This 2023 reformulation by the Army included the lake plan that downstream counties and parishes objected to in 2018. We in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes would like to see flood risk reduced for Jackson but prefer a plan that carries no risk of altering river flow or temperature from more water impoundment, especially in the months of July-October when historic low flows on the Pearl River occur. We prefer setting levees back on one or both sides of the river to widen the Pearl's floodplain through Rankin and Hinds Counties, combined with non-structural elements from alternative A or A1.

The flood risk reduction outlined in Alternative "C" is tied to the intensification of location benefits which seems to be in clear violation of Executive Order 11988 (1977) which has a prohibition against developing floodplains that are currently undeveloped batture land. We in Louisiana don't build federal levees and then allow development on top of them as Alternative "C" contemplates. I cannot think of a worse flaunting of E.O. 11988 than placing more development adjacent to a river, less than 10 miles downstream of a 38,000-acre reservoir with a dam that has three feet of "freeboard" over which to raise water levels before the dam's design capabilities are exceeded. Adding more development to the floodplain in Rankin and Hinds Counties in the form of bed and bank dredging and wetland filling contemplated in Alternative "C" doesn't solve flooding problems that have been created by the cumulative impact of 60 years of post-reservoir floodplain development.

Water Supply

There have been comments at the public engagement meetings of May 23-24 proposing that Alternative "C", lake dredging would somehow solve Jackson's water drinking water treatment deficiencies. This is not true. Jackson's August 2022 drinking water crisis began when the O.B. Curtis treatment plant in Ridgeland, Mississippi adjacent to the Ross Barnett Reservoir was unable to treat the reservoir water due to turbidity and water chemistry changes cause by heavy rains and a heavier than usual sediment load in

the reservoir. The Curtis facility is **ten miles upriver** from the “study area” that Alternative “C” would occupy and where Alternative “C” would dredge widen and further dam the Pearl River. Having the One Lake plan (Alt. “C”) in place would not have prevented Jackson’s water crisis. Jackson also had a water crisis during the “Texas freeze” of 2020 totally unrelated to flooding when the intake structures at the O.B. Curtis plant froze and the entire water system collapsed after water towers were drained and the system could not keep up with demand.

Jackson’s river/creek flooding and drinking water supply problems are related only in the sense that when it rains heavily in Jackson and its sewer mains overflow into the stormwater system, the city’s urban tributaries send sewage to the Pearl River. Under these conditions, Jackson’s other drinking water treatment plant (J.H. Fewell) has heavier bacteria loads to disinfect during water treatment. The entire urban section of the Pearl River has been under a Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality water contact advisory for fecal coliform bacteria for four years. Until Jackson’s sewage collection system is repaired the advisory won’t be lifted. The estimated cost of repairing Jackson’s broken sewers and outdated Savanna Street sewage treatment plant is more than twice the \$355 million price tag of Alternative “C”.

The only alternative among C, A, and A1 that has the capability and likelihood of harmful reductions in river flow (water quantity) downstream of Jackson is the lake dredging plan, Alternative “C”. Evaporation from a wider, slower moving and warmer 10-mile section of the Pearl River especially in the seasonal low flow months of July-October will mean that river surface and tailwater conditions below the new weir will be warmer than current surface and tailwater conditions. A warmer, slower moving and wider river will have a higher evaporative loss than the narrower, more shaded present condition of the Pearl River through Jackson. The square 15’x15’ gate in the center of the Alt. C’s new weir can release water during low flow conditions but will require cooperation from the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District (PRVWSD) that manages the Ross Barnett Reservoir floodgates. The primary uses for the Ross Barnett Reservoir, built in 1960-1963, are water supply and recreation. If the PRVWSD is asked to increase reservoir discharge to accommodate Alternative “C” and associated increased evaporation and water temperature, or for any other reason, reservoir operational procedures will need alteration and statutory purposes of the PRVWSD will be more difficult to meet. The Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District has not prioritized communication with the PRVWSD over how the Ross Barnett Reservoir operations would be combined with the Rankin Hinds District’s locally preferred plan, Alternative “C”. Conversations about this have been inexplicably delayed. The Army Secretary and Army Corps of Engineers should engage the PRVWSD about these subjects as it writes the next Draft Environmental Impact Statement. A discussion of how climate change would affect flood control on the Pearl River was left out of the 2018 DEIS as well, and the Army Corps of Engineers should address this deficiency.

Water and Wastewater Treatment

There are two minimum flow targets to consider on the Pearl River with respect to Alternative “C” or any structural alternative to address flooding. The “contract minimum” that must be released from the Ross Barnett Reservoir is 170 cubic feet per second (cfs). However, the practical minimum flow target is 227 cfs to meet the needs of the Savannah Street sewage treatment plant about 15 miles downriver from the Ross Barnett Reservoir on the Pearl River’s west bank. The plant’s Clean Water Act National Polluted Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permit requires this discharge as a bare minimum for

adequate dilution of the effluent discharged into the Pearl River. The J.H. Fewell drinking water treatment plant withdraws 48 cfs from the river between the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the Savannah Street sewage treatment plant.

The St. Tammany Parish Engineering Department used United States Geological Survey (USGS) river gage statistics and daily readings over the period of record for river gages and analyzed minimum flow target (7Q10) measurements pre-reservoir and post-reservoir at several sites on the river: Jackson, Ms., Monticello Ms., the Strong River confluence and Bogalusa, La. The analysis focused on the number of days and percentages of occurrences below the minimum flow at a site, and the number of times and percentages that a minimum flow failed to meet the 10th percentile for flows over the daily flow readings. These analyses were made using USGS stream discharge records post-Ross Barnett Reservoir construction. Savannah Street had a minimum flow permit requirement of 290 cfs before 2017. From 1965 to 2017, flow at Jackson's Savannah Street was below the 290 cfs minimum there 3917 times or for 18% of readings. The Savannah Street's plant NPDES permit was changed to a lower minimum flow requirement of 227 cfs in 2017. For the post-Ross Barnett period, the river has fallen below 227 cfs on 1613 days or for 7.7% of daily readings. The St. Tammany report concluded "During the critically low-flow months of July-August, flows from the Ross Barnett are lower than pre-Ross Barnett construction (1965)" and further concluded on the basis of the 10% percentile analysis of Jackson's Savannah Street plant, "It is apparent that flow control at the Ross Barnett Reservoir is making the stream baseflow lower at least during July-August, summer critical months for NPDES dischargers, water quality, habitat, recreation, navigation and coastal interests."

Having a river discharge fail to meet minimum requirements on 7.7% of daily readings at the location where a sewage plant's effluent meets the receiving stream is something that the Army Corps should be concerned about because of anti-degradation rules and because of the 2015 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report for nutrients. The heated surface waters of a dredged lake (Alternative C) will generate more evaporation in the warm months of the year than the Pearl River currently experiences in the 10 mile "study area" reach. Warmed, nutrient rich surface water from the lake will flow over the weir and meet the Savannah Street plant's nutrient-laden effluent in what will likely be a very impaired location on the Pearl River. Mississippi already reports the water in the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the urban section of the Pearl as eutrophic (nutrient over-enriched) in the 303(d) and 305(b) water quality reports it sends to EPA.

Low flow problems on a regulated river like the Pearl begin with the often insufficient amount of water discharged from the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Adding a second lake (Alternative "C") to the Pearl in Jackson causing further evaporative loss, particularly in July-October will decrease water quantity problems. A second lake on the river will compound existing compliance challenges with the Savannah Street NPDES permit and cause problems for downriver dischargers with permits subject to the limits governed by the 2015 nutrient TMDL. Downstream stakeholders, permit holders, and recreational users don't need any of these additional problems that lake construction brings with it.

Washington and St. Tammany Parishes don't need the low flow problems upstream to be any more complicated than they are now. A water budget has not been offered for the entire river so far in a DEIS. Our Louisiana Parishes would like to see a water budget written with and without Alternative "C" developed and shared as part of the 2023 DEIS by the Army Corps. This must account for existing impairments, climate change, warmer water temperatures from a lake plan, evaporation and the 2015

TMDL report's non-point source pollution Best Management Practices that were enumerated but have never been implemented.

Existing Waste Sites

There are three toxic waste sites that will be disturbed if Alternative "C" is chosen: The Gulf States Creosote Plant site in Flowood, Rankin County would become part of the eastern bank/shore of the lake; The former LeFleur's Landing or Jefferson Street landfill is on the west bank, and the former Gallatin Street Dump site is on the west bank of the lake dredging and widening project. (Fig. 1 Alt. C and HTRW Site, from 2018 DEIS) Five more known toxic waste sites are close to the footprint of the lake but would be outside of the dredged floodplain wetlands.

Eight million dollars were allocated in the 2018 DEIS for remediation or cleanup of these toxic waste sites and listed as a budgeted item used in the calculation of project total cost and Benefit: Cost ratios. On March 20, 2023, Clyde Woodward of Environmental Management Services Inc. met with Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Army Jaime Pinkham and expressed his professional opinion that the cost estimate was too low by an "order of magnitude." It is hard to understand why the cost estimate for toxic site remediation and cleanup was ten times too low in the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's 2018 DEIS report and appendices.

Choosing an alternative such as A, A1 or a combination that does not disturb toxic waste sites should be a priority for the Army Corps of Engineers. Disturbance of toxic sites like the old creosote plant upstream of the J.H. Fewell water treatment plant's intake pipe would put Jackson's drinking water at risk. The writers of the 2018 DEIS have already stated that lake construction will make the Pearl River so turbid that the J.H. Fewell plant would need to stop withdrawing water to protect its filtration and water purification equipment. In this situation the Drainage District stated that Jackson would need to find a temporary alternative source of water for 3 years during construction - to replace 30% of Jackson's drinking water provided by the Fewell facility. The representative of the Army Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, Ms. Collossimo, stated at the Jackson meeting on May 24th that the Army Secretary would not support a project that interrupted Jackson's drinking water supply for any reason. The toxic components suspended by dredging and disturbing the three sites will also send polluted water downstream to the lower Pearl River counties and parishes. Washington Parish would like to avoid this situation.

Cultural Resources

Because of the need for confidentiality of site locations, the cultural resources appendix created by the Rankin Hinds Drainage District has not been made public. However, using a Mississippi public records request, a redacted version was released by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History directly to Pearl Riverkeeper (PRK). When PRK published the redacted cultural resources report on its website, the Rankin Hinds Drainage District's attorney sent a "cease and desist" letter the next day to PRK with threat of legal action if the report was not taken down immediately from the website. Pearl Riverkeeper complied.

There are many Native American sites listed in the Drainage District's cultural resources appendix and dredging and disturbing between 1800 -2400 acres of floodplain forest, including low ridges scattered in the floodplain, which could be Native American middens or mounds, will certainly disturb or destroy

some of them. This seems to be a “sore spot” with the non-federal project sponsor – one that it would like to keep out of the public eye and public discussion. Washington Parish and St. Tammany Parish do not support any flood management plan that requires disturbing Native American cultural sites and artifacts in the Pearl River floodplain.

Transportation

The only flood control option that would cause disruptions to transportation during construction and implementation is Alternative “C”, a plan to dredge the Pearl River deeper and wider over 10 miles. There are nine (9) road and rail bridges that cross the study area of Alternative “C”. A letter from Director Melinda McGrath of the Mississippi Department of Transportation dated 9/5/2018 cited bridge failures on the nine bridges if sediments were dredged away from bridge support footings during project construction for Alternative “C”. The cost of replacing or repairing bridges was omitted from the Drainage District’s 2018 Draft EIS. Replacing just the prestressed concrete decks of nine bridges would cost at least \$100 million dollars. It is hard to explain why such a major cost was left out of the budget for Alternative “C”. Neither alternative A nor A1 contemplate de-stabilizing bridge infrastructure this way.

Downstream Impacts

Downstream impacts are directly related to two of key points of analysis that the Army Secretary is statutorily required to perform by Congress, as discussed above: **environmental acceptability**, and **economic justification**.

The downstream impacts of this flood risk management project must be environmentally acceptable and must not negatively impact the economies of downstream towns, counties, and parishes. The first town downstream of Jackson directly on the Pearl River is Monticello, Mississippi. Columbia, Mississippi, and Bogalusa, Louisiana are the other two cities directly on the Pearl River in its middle section. These three towns have sewage plants that discharge to the Pearl River, and Monticello and Bogalusa have paper mills that discharge to the Pearl River. Employment in them and their surrounding counties/parishes is largely tied to the paper mills and the industrial support services for the mills. The community of Varnado, Louisiana, is also on the river. Picayune, Mississippi is not on the Pearl River, but its sewage treatment plants discharge to the Pearl, so effluent dilution in the Pearl River is an economic and public health matter to these cities.

There are many environmental and economic impacts to towns in the lower Pearl River Basin from a river dredging and lake construction project in Jackson. Recreational and commercial fishing are still important downstream of Jackson, and in Washington Parish people fish with hoop nets and slat traps for subsistence, sharing catches with family and community, and selling catch in local markets. The ability to navigate the river in small outboard powered skiffs is important to these users. Shoaling and extreme low water events in July-October make using the river very difficult. Land loss due to collapsing, sloughing banks and the associated sedimentation in the Pearl River’s channel are effects on the local economy that come from the current operation of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Landowners are losing land to the river, yet often are still paying property taxes when their land becomes part of a public navigable waterway. Different counties handle this taxation problem in different ways.

When an industrial accident happens during low flow periods on the Pearl River, such as the Temple Inland Corporation’s release of “black liquor” from treatment ponds into the Pearl River at Bogalusa

more a decade ago, the resulting impact was catastrophic. There was a total fish/mussel kill in the river in Washington Parish and for dozens of miles downstream. Turtles were sickened, and the small population of Gulf sturgeon in the Pearl was significantly reduced in the space of two days. A project such as Alternative "C" that impounds water during critical low flow periods will only make ambient water quality conditions in the Pearl River worse in the face of an industrial accident or discharge of effluent in excess of NPDES permit limits for pH temperature, dissolved oxygen, biological oxygen demand, total solids, ammonia, and other permit limit parameters.

The Army Corps needs to be deliberate and clearly explain its work in responding to WRDA 2018 Section 1176 which requires that the agency take a hard look at likely adverse impacts downstream. Alternative "C" was named in the September 2018 comments of the US Fish and Wildlife Service as the "most environmentally damaging" alternative of the four that were presented. It is still the most environmentally damaging of Alternatives A, A1 and C; the current NEPA alternatives array.

As Dr. Stanford Owen, a Levee Board commissioner from St. Tammany Parish related in his comments at the Slidell, La May 23rd, 2023, scoping meeting, the health of the estuaries, bays and marshes of both Mississippi and Louisiana need to be taken into account at the mouth of the Pearl and in the coastal waters that receive the Pearl river's freshwater discharge. St. Bernard Parish and Hancock County Mississippi have at least \$100 million dollars of BP Restore Act projects focused on oysters, marsh restoration, beneficial use of spoil to build land and shoreline protection. Any harmful changes in freshwater discharge volume or seasonality from an upstream freshwater depleting project like Alternative "C" need to be fully investigated and explained as required by Section 1176 of WRDA 2018. Decreasing the discharge of fresh water or changing its timing can undo the restoration efforts undertaken by both states if salinities increase in the estuary and marshes at the mouth of the Pearl River.

A Coastal Zone Consistency Review must be performed by Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, focused on the modeling and sampling done so far in the writing of the 2018 DEIS and subsequent work that have elevated Alternative "C" as the locally preferred alternative. The region that finds this alternative attractive only includes Hinds and Rankin Counties. Downstream counties and parishes would name it the least preferred alternative. Because the Pearl's flow affects salinities and the productivity of marshes and bays, a consistency review by the Coastal Zone Management Program in Louisiana is necessary.

Recreation Access and Opportunities

Speakers at the May 24th public engagement meeting in Jackson complained about the lack of public access to the Pearl River in urban Jackson. There is public access to the river in Jackson for canoes, kayaks and small boats. There is access on public land to trails along oxbow lakes and riverbanks in Lefleur's Bluff State Park on the Pearl River just downstream of the Hwy. 25/Lakeland Bridge over the river. A boat ramp at the Ross Barnett Reservoir spillway and a boat ramp at Lefleur's Bluff State Park have provided a launch and take-out point for 15 years.

Lefleur's Bluff State Park has the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science on its grounds, and the park and museum share a 2-mile trail system including the Museum's "purple" trail along the Pearl River that ends at the park's public boat ramp and parking lot at the river. Boy Scout canoe trips have used the section of the Pearl River between the reservoir and the park for 15 years. Sport and trot-line fishermen

have launched in this section for the same amount of time. The Pearl Riverkeeper has planned and hosted annual river cleanups since September 2017 on the urban section of the river, using the LeFleur's Bluff State Park boat ramp on the river as a starting point for river clean-up days.

There is public access to the Pearl River and there is demonstrated use of the river by the public. The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science built its science education program around the state park, using wetlands and floodplain forests along the Pearl River to teach thousands of students and to train hundreds of teachers at Project WET and Project Wild workshops. The Museum reached its first million visitor mark by 2010 and is one of Jackson's award-winning tourism and educational attractions. It moved from Jefferson Street downtown to LeFleur's Bluff State Park in 1999 specifically to be able to use the Pearl River's wetlands, floodplain forests and river habitats in its educational programs which serve a statewide audience. The Museum's indoor exhibits interpret the Pearl River swamp, including its largest freshwater fish tank – the Pearl River tank, and its swamp terrarium, built in a greenhouse, showcases animals and plants native to the Pearl River and its floodplain.

The Alternative "C" project will dredge away many acres of LeFleur's Bluff State Park along the Pearl River trail and would reduce the quality of the park experience. A riverbank lined with mature 90-year old hardwood trees and a network of floodplain sloughs and oxbow lakes with mature cypress and tupelo gum trees in the park would be removed by dredging and replaced by banks devoid of trees and a shoreline stabilized by sheet piling, concrete or limestone rip-rap.

The impact of Alternative "C" to recreational opportunities in downstream counties and parishes has been described above in the "downstream impacts" scoping section. Small boat access to the river is already a problem downstream of Jackson when the river is at low flow July-October. Landowners are losing riverbank to erosion. The swamp tour business in St. Tammany Parish and in Hancock County Mississippi also needs to be considered. Low water reduces access to swamp areas off of the river's main channel, and causes tour boats to hit bottom with their outboard motor propellers. Even kayak tours in the Honey Island Swamp along the Pearl River are hampered by seasonal low water events. No tour guide on the lower Pearl has any confidence that low flow problems will improve if Alternative "C" is built.

Before the COVID pandemic, the economic impact of Pearl River swamp tours was over five million dollars annually. This robust and popular nature-based tourism industry, featuring the Pearl River's Honey Island Swamp, exists in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana generating approximately \$3.1 million per year in tour fees alone. A total of 122,400 tourists per year at \$25 per person is a conservative estimate of the annual activity of the three largest swamp tour companies. The \$3.1 million does not include canoe and kayak tour company fees. Also, the Honey Island Swamp has many other recreational users: campers, hunters, fishermen and canoers whose activities aren't captured by this revenue estimate. The 2015-2019 Louisiana Tourism Forecast prepared by U.N.O. for the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism reported 2015 induced tourism spending as 68% of direct tourism spending. This means that the 122,400 people who travel to St. Tammany Parish, paying \$3.1 million in tour fees to see the Honey Island Swamp would spend an additional \$2.1 million dollars a year in the local economy on fuel, food, lodging, and other travel related needs.

Recreation access and opportunities on the Pearl River are not limited to the 10 miles of the urban section of the river in Jackson, Mississippi. Any objective study of recreational uses of the Pearl River must contemplate recreation in the entire basin and include the swamp tour business in Louisiana.

Community Impacts

Community cohesion, general happiness, and freedom from fear of flooding are as important in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes as they are at any other community along the Pearl River. Having a river with caving banks, and a channel that cannot move its increased sediment load in low flow conditions doesn't make riverside landowners and residents happy or support community cohesion. Landowners downstream of Jackson in several counties and parishes are being charged property tax on more land than they have due to streambank failure and land loss because of reservoir operations upstream. They are accustomed to the loss of land and timber in the lower Pearl Basin. And when Jackson is releasing water from the Ross Barnett dam in anticipation of heavy rains from tropical storms and hurricanes two or three days away from impact in central Mississippi, Washington and St. Tammany Parish and Hancock County face storm surges from the Gulf on top of a rising Pearl River. The anxiety of a rising river and back-flooding along urban tributaries in Hinds and Rankin Counties is real, but residents along the lower Pearl River must face a storm surge on top of a river flooded by pre-storm water releases from the Ross Barnett 180 miles upstream – a situation out of their control and in which their parish and the State of Louisiana have no voice. This creates short term anxiety and long-term resentment as community impacts.

Economic Opportunities

It was clear that economic opportunities were on the minds of many of the speakers at the Army Corps' May 24th, 2023, public engagement meeting at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum auditorium. Socrates Garrett, a businessman, contractor, and Hinds County political veteran explained the need for an economic boost to Jackson's economy and was frank in his assessment that Jackson has nowhere to grow to the North, South or West, so the only place to grow is to the East **into** the Pearl River Flood Plain:

Garret said: "The only potential for growth is in that footprint of the river - the only chance for Jackson to grow and get a new tax base - Develop this river - it's underutilized." This comment could not have been more clear about interests in Jackson seeking economic opportunity through development in the footprint of the river – its floodplain.

Garrett said it took years to convince Hinds and Rankin Counties to work together on this lake project, and cited many trips to Washinton D.C. to persuade Senator Cochran, Senator Wicker, Leland Speed (Miss Devel. Authority) and other elected officials to support the lake. He cited the time and money contributions of many people who supported the effort.

It was a strange juxtaposition between speaker and listener considering that the Army Corps of Engineers, a federal agency that is acutely aware of the function of floodplains - was being lectured about growth by someone who has supported Alternative "C" for years with the message that the only hope for growth in Jackson is to put more development in the floodplain.

This message is squarely in conflict with Executive Order 11988 which contains a presumption against floodplain development.

Executive Order 11988 of 1977 is cited in the Engineer Notebook from 2000 that governs NED analysis for this project: "This floodplain management order, made during the Carter Presidency, has the intent of avoiding flood plain development, reducing hazards and risk associated with floods, and restoring and preserving natural flood plain values. In the event there is no alternative to construction in the flood plain, as is the case with (some) flood control projects, the Corps is required to minimize the adverse impacts induced by the construction of the project. In considering adverse impacts, the following should be addressed:

- (1) Induced new development in the flood plain or induced improvements to existing development in the floodplain that would increase potential flood damages; and,
- (2) The detrimental effect of induced activities on natural flood plain values."

Army Corps of Engineers notebook ER 1105-2-100 Section III paragraph (I) on Location Benefits outlines rules to follow that consider E.O. 11988.

Alternative "C" of this project finds a significant amount of its economic justification, in "location benefits" and "intensification benefits", both of which are derived from developing land that is currently in the flood plain on the river side (unprotected side or batture) of existing levees in both Hinds and Rankin Counties. These lands flood at least once each year. Table B-16 of the 2018 DEIS report's Appendix B lists \$10.2 million in benefits that are described as Location Benefits (Land New Use) for alternative C, lake dredging. The Drainage District, in fact, relies heavily in its calculation of project benefits upon the \$10.2 million derived from developing land that is currently active floodplain when it chooses Alternative "C" over Alternative "B" (levees only) based on benefit to cost ratio comparison.

The Executive Order above is meant to steer development out of floodplains, but if there is no alternative, the development's induced impacts to flood plain lands must be minimized.

The areas to be developed are downstream of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, and under current operating plans, the floodgate managers must have the ability to raise the Pearl River 10-12 feet in the urban reach of the river in 24 hours at any time to protect the structural integrity of the reservoir dam. The discharge of the Reservoir travels 7 miles and goes through the project area of the lake dredging plan, so any development placed along the banks of the river in the ten miles of project area should be expected to accommodate the river rising quickly by up to 10 feet. It is important to note that the Draft EIS predicts future development including the construction of an urban landscape along the raised, filled river banks in the project area. Not allowing the construction of the lake alternative and thereby keeping people and property improvements out of the floodplain would be one way of "minimizing induced impacts". Setting levees back on the east side of the Pearl River could be a better approach and, in fact, Army Corps staff commenting in the "Plan Formulation" section of the 2020 Agency Technical Review (ATR) pointed out that the first incremental benefit to test was the levee setback component, as it held the greatest benefit. Other commenters pointed out that the lake design adds no floodwater storage to the 10 mile section of the Pearl River, unless the lake excavation is kept dry except during large flows.

The lake sponsors have so far claimed that deepening and widening the river in the ten-mile dredged area would reduce the 10 foot rise caused during reservoir water releases. To what degree this may occur has been modeled, but these models don't remove the basic problem of the large upstream reservoir water releases sent directly through the project area both during construction and afterwards.

Allowing this project to be permitted by the Corps seems to be a predictable way to increase potential flood damage and to violate EO 11988. There isn't a more blatant way to contradict the intent of EO 11988 than the development contemplated by Alternative "C" for the Pearl River floodplain in Hinds and Rankin Counties.

The areas along the Pearl River under consideration for filling and development by the Drainage District are mostly now riparian wetland forest areas and are subject to annual flooding. They now do have natural flood plain values of attenuation of floods, interception of rainfall, soil storage of water, shallow groundwater contribution to river flow, settlement of suspended sediments, and evapotranspiration of water, which functions would all be lost if they were dredged and removed under Alternative "C".

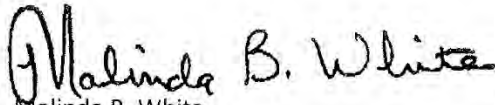
Regarding the relationship between the Rankin Hinds District and the authority in charge of the floodgates at the Ross Barnett Reservoir; as recently as February of 2020, the Drainage District had not met with the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District that operates the dam flood gates to discuss how water releases would be cooperatively managed if a second lake was built on the Pearl River downstream of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. The scoping process began in 2013, ten years ago, and no dialogue has been publicly offered by the sponsors of how the two waterbodies would cooperate in releasing water through Metro Jackson. To allow the violation of this Executive Order in the absence of a clear understanding of lake operations (such as high and low flow plans) between the two agencies would seem to overlook concern about economic intensification from post-project floodplain development and openly mock the intent of EO 11988.

It is not economically justified to permit a project that violates EO 11988 by deliberately inviting induced development in a floodplain when there is no attempt to minimize obvious impacts or avoid hazards and risks associated with floods. Those hazards, risks and impacts to downstream communities have been explained well in this comment letter.

The Army Corps which has taken over authorship of this DEIS doesn't lack alternatives to floodplain development in solving the urban Jackson and Rankin and Hinds Counties flood management problems. Alternatives A, A1 and a combination have been offered in the current scoping period as possible alternatives in addition to Alternative "C", lake dredging. The destruction, risk and impact of Alternative "C" should require that it is the **least preferred choice** on the list of alternatives for the Army Corps. Inducing development (as in (1) above) in the flood plain is clearly a motivation behind Alternative "C". Other speakers on May 24th alluded to Alternative "C" as a spark for economic progress in Jackson but no speaker explained it as frankly as Mr. Garrett.

The Army Corps of Engineers is in a difficult position as it has taken over authorship of the Draft EIS for this flood management project. The entire federal cost share, \$221 million, has been appropriated in the bipartisan infrastructure act (IIJA) and placed in the budget of the Corps for Pearl River flood risk reduction. The Corps leadership and the Assistant Secretary both know that the United States Senators from Mississippi and the elected officials, Black religious community leaders, chambers of commerce, state legislators representing the Metro Jackson area, and even the Mississippi Children's Museum director support Alternative "C", yet this project is the most destructive to the environment, has the most potential to impact the physical and biological health of the Pearl River and is opposed by downstream towns, industries and even by a joint resolution of the Louisiana Legislature.

The Army Corps should follow its own rules and directives regarding E.O. 11988 and find a flood management solution that is less environmentally disruptive and that is acceptable to Washington and St. Tammany Parishes and all downstream interests.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malinda B. White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Malinda B. White

State Representative, District 75

From: mcabiran@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Marianna Cabiran](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 6:08:18 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

I am asking that you vote NO on project One Lake.

The Pearl River is a biodiverse river in the U.S., serving the ecology, communities, and economies of Mississippi and Louisiana. Changing this river will harm these communities and wildlife. Instead of changing the natural river you should control development around the river. Do not allow over growth for the purpose of profit. The only one who benefits from overgrowth is the developer, who will be gone after the irreversible damage is done! Please respect the rights of the citizens and the ecosystem. We must be good stewards and protect the environment of which we have been entrusted and has provided life to all who inhabit it. Stop the destruction and vote NO to One Lake.

One Lake will damage the habitat, ecology, and the local economy. Over development will put great stress on water resources which is becoming scare all around the

U. S. A. It will also increase the stress caused by natural disasters. Consider that people can no longer afford homeowner and flood insurance. These problems will all be exacerbated by over development. Don't increase this problem.

Please protect the Pearl River for this and future generations by rejecting One Lake and employing nature-based and non-structural flood solutions.

Sincerely,
Marianna Cabiran

Sincerely,
Marianna Cabiran
Lacombe, LA 70445
mcabiran@sbcglobal.net

From: [Art Teacher](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] One Lake Project
Date: Thursday, June 8, 2023 9:16:55 PM

To: Col.Chrisopher Klein

I would like to respectfully ask that you preserve our beautiful Pearl River and its habitat by using plan A or A1. Please dump the one lake option known as C and only consider A or A1 or a combination of them. We must think of our children and grandchildren and the long term effect that our decisions now will make, especially in light of outcomes that could be irreversible and devastating.

Thank you.

Marijane

Whitfield, Clinton, Ms

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Marta Charria](#)
To: [PeardRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Please Stop alternative C
Date: Thursday, June 15, 2023 8:19:13 AM

Dear Commander Colonel,

I am a very outdoors person who enjoys nature very much. Also, I am an engineer for the Department of Transportation at the research office. I have seen the National trend toward projects that help the environment and benefit the community. The alternative "c" is just the opposite to that. Could you please weigh in more on the environmental cost? What kind of legacy from this decision are you going to leave? Please reconsider, a big decision is in your hands.

A very concerned citizen

-

Martav L Charria

From: [Martha Ferris](#)
To: [PeardRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] One Lake Project
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 2:39:47 PM

Dear Col. Klein,

I am writing to you to voice my opposition to the proposed One Lake Project in Jackson, MS. This project would dredge a beloved swamp area with scenic river access points that open onto some of the most beautiful parts of Jackson and would dramatically endanger essential wildlife habitats. There are alternatives to this lake project that wouldn't destroy habitats or endanger neighbors to the south. Please join with your colleagues to choose an alternative plan that won't destroy a place of public solace and refuge.

Thank you for your time,
Martha Ferris Kostmayer

--

Martha Ferris Kostmayer
40 Dancing Rock Road
Garrison, NY 10524
601-415-1250 (Cell)
marthaferris1@gmail.com
www.marthaferris.com

June 12, 2023



Mayor: Martha M. Watts
Board of Alderman:
Donald Walters
Steve Moreman
Judy McAulay Grimes

Karen Jolly Hill
Renee Rayborn
Police Chief: David Stanley
Fire Chief: Lyle Berard
Public Works: Phillip Moore
Director of Administration:
Deborah Lea
Court Clerk: Ethan Mikel
Deputy Clerk: Hollie Berard
City Attorney: John Sutton

The Town of Monticello is vehemently opposed to the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control Districts (NFI) Alternative C and urges USACE to further investigate UC Berkley's Alternative D as well as a version of the originally approved Corps drafted levee plan, or Alternative A1 and Combination Hybrid Plan. Alternative C is the most destructive plan and the most damaging to downstream interests. All areas south of the proposed placement of the Savannah St. dam have suffered unrecoverable losses of riverbank due to the operations of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. The sudden releases of water and then sudden closing of their flood gates have caused irreparable loss of riverbank, resulting in a much wider channel which causes lower downstream flows and warmer water temperatures in dry months. I would also request that the Corps perform an analysis of increased water velocity and impacts to downstream in Alternative C. It appears that in this plan the goal is to move water out at a faster rate which will exacerbate flooding downstream. The 200 miles below this dam cannot withstand further alterations to the Pearl River. Our economy and quality of life depend on the Pearl River - to dam the Pearl in two areas that are less than 10 miles apart will be a shameful travesty.

The destruction of thousands of acres of wildlife and wetland habitat, the threat to recreational and commercial fishing and Mississippi's seafood industry, the release of toxins from disturbance of the eight known waste sites, combined with the billions of gallons of raw sewage that has been emptying into our river for many years make Alternative C the absolute worst possible scenario. In addition, the true costs of Alternative C are grossly underestimated in the EIS. Alternative C is not environmentally acceptable nor technically feasible.

Mayor Martha Watts

601-587-0045/ 601-587-7731 fax
mayor@monticello.ms.gov

From: [mary brown](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake proposal
Date: Friday, May 26, 2023 9:29:30 AM

Please reject the One Lake development proposal. It is an extremely harmful option for flood relief. This private real estate plan will destroy 2500 acres of valuable river habitat and threaten downstream flows to the Pearl River. Please look to other options such as levees, house elevations or voluntary buyouts for these flood relief needs. Thank you.

Mary Brown
New Orleans

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Mary Etta Carner](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Flood management
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 8:07:10 PM

As a Hinds County resident, I am asking that you reject Alternative C and choose Alternative A or A1 for flood risk management in Jackson.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Etta Carner

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Mary Young](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 6:07:55 AM

Hello,

I hope that One Lake or a smaller version of the Lake will be enacted this time. Is there the possibility of modification to allow for flood prevention, much needed Jackson development, and allow communities downstream to get their desired flow level as well?

I hope that this can work for the best interest of Jackson and surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

Mary May Young
601-209-0013

From: [Mary Rickard](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake project
Date: Tuesday, May 30, 2023 4:44:55 PM

I strongly object to the One Lake project proposed for Jackson, Mississippi.

Despite being considered a “sportsman’s paradise,” there are few places to paddle or recreate in the Southeast. The Pearl River should be preserved, maintained and cherished, not diverted into an enormous lake to serve the financial gains of real estate developers.

Besides the aesthetic considerations, construction of a new community will decrease the amount of potable water in Jackson, which is already in crisis. Furthermore, fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters and wetlands will be impacted by the new dam.

Do not destroy the invaluable ecology to enrich investors!

The Pearl is not a 414-mile ditch!! Although it does need attention to restore its ecological health.

Mary Rickard
401 Andry Street
New Orleans, LA 70117
504-252-6290 cell

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Via email comment portal: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

June 27th, 2023

RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS

Dear Colonel Klein:

I am writing to you to provide scoping comments for the Pearl River FRM project as a concerned citizen formerly from Jackson, MS and currently residing in Vicksburg, MS. Having used the LeFleur's Bluff State Park for over 40 years as a unique urban park with exceptional resources for birds and people alike, I would like to strongly ask you to consider Alternative C as the wrong approach to flood risk management on the Pearl River in Jackson, MS. I would like the following issues and comments for the Scope of the 2023 Draft EIS be addressed:

Reasons that Alternative C is the wrong approach to flood risk management on the Pearl River in Jackson, MS. The following issues and comments for the Scope of the 2023 Draft EIS need to be addressed:

The USFWS has said that Alternative C is the most environmentally destructive option for flood control on the Pearl River. Why would the sponsors choose this option unless they plan to develop this area as lake front property for the wealthy. Is that why wealthy Jacksonians have purchased lakeside property along the river corridor where the One Lake is proposed? Is this a private development project disguised as a flood control project for Jackson that would benefit a few landowners Rankin County.

1: The \$221 million IJIA bi-partisan infrastructure money placed in the Army Corps of Engineers Budget in October 2022 for Pearl River flood control is meant for flood control in the Pearl Basin, within the project area in Rankin and Hinds Counties. All flooding problems on creeks, no matter how remote from the main channel of the Pearl River, fall within this project's study area and must be taken into consideration in a project using this federal money.

2: Creek flooding in Jackson happens in neighborhoods that fall under the definition of "environmental justice" with significant percentages of black and BIPOC residents living in poverty. A flood control alternative that seeks to solve back-flooding from the Pearl River in select neighborhoods while ignoring creek flooding in environmental justice neighborhoods is an unjust use of federal funds.

3) Flooding along the upper sections of creeks is sometimes a separate problem from back flooding caused by the Pearl River, but flood peaks on creeks and on the Pearl River can happen at the same time, depending on local rainfall over the city. These two sources of flooding must be examined and modeled together.

4) Most creek stormwater flooding will not be solved by channelizing the river, extending levees or implementing non-structural solutions. Most creek flooding is in neighborhoods too far from the Pearl River to be affected by channel or levee work on the river's main channel.

5) LeFleur's Bluff State Park (LBSP) is a public resource used by all residents of Jackson and is part of the educational campus of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. Park lands were purchased and improved with federal money from the Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund. Dredging the Pearl River's channel and banks must not impact any of the park's riverbanks or bottomland hardwood forest. The park is a cultural treasure important to all citizens of Jackson and Mississippi. Damage to the park from river dredging must be avoided. LBSP is certainly used for many types of family recreation but research projects conducted by local colleges and environmental organizations in this green space with rare public access to native species in their natural habitats is invaluable to ongoing research especially projects that study the effects of urbanization on breeding bird populations. The Jackson Audubon Society has been conducting organized monthly bird walks for the public for over 23 years in the park and submitting data to EBird. EBird plays an increasingly important role in science and conservation. Applications of E-bird data range from research and monitoring to species management, habitat protection, and informing law and policy. In addition, Jackson Audubon is in its 5th year of an ongoing research project studying Prothonotary Warbler nesting success in the park. Jackson Audubon has just released a peer reviewed paper detailing the high productivity rate of this "bird species of conservation concern" in LBSP. An extension of this project will be conducted in partnership with Audubon Delta in the coming year/s and will include mist netting, color banding, effects of mosquito control in an urban setting and radio tagging.

6) The habitat damage that would happen in Jackson or in Rankin and Hinds Counties includes a footprint of disturbance of 2,500 acres. Up to 25 million cubic yards of river beds and banks along 10 miles of river will be moved. Wetland acres are 1,860 of this total. Critical habitat for the Ringed sawback turtle would be destroyed in Jackson as basking and nesting areas would be altered in the project footprint as the river's bed and banks are cleared and excavated to widen and deepen the river. Also, we know the Gulf sturgeon does use the area of the Pearl that is described as the study area in Rankin and Hinds Counties – radio tagged sturgeon have been recorded swimming past LeFleur's Bluff State Park upstream of the weir at the JH Fewell drinking water treatment plant. Mitigation for the sturgeon in the form of a fish ladder or fish passage device has been proposed, but the environmental conditions in the lake itself may be unacceptable for the sturgeon or its juveniles. Ten miles of the river will be changed from lotic habitat to lentic habitat which will affect the sturgeon and a suite of other river-dependent fish species – those that need flowing water for either their feeding or reproductive or life-cycle requirements. Because all the riparian vegetation that currently shades the Pearl River for parts of the day will be removed, the surface water temperature in the dredged section of the river can be expected to rise, compared to pre-project conditions.

Please review all the reasons why Alternative C is the wrong approach to flood risk management on the Pearl River in Jackson, MS.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments.

Sincerely,

Mary Stripling
675 Lakewood Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180

From: [Maureen McGuire](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake Project
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 10:15:37 AM

To the US Army Corps of Engineers,

I am writing to urge you to consider Options A or A1 for reasonable flood control in Jackson. I am OPPOSED TO Option C which is an environmentally destructive plan. Getting rid of acres of acres of wetlands to control flooding is ludicrous. The One Lake Plan (or Option C) would also destroy the greatest gem that Jackson has which is LeFleur's Bluff State Park. In this park, I have seen Wood Storks, which are endangered and many other magnificent water birds.

Maureen McGuire
Jackson, Mississippi



National Wildlife Federation

National Advocacy Center

1200 G Street NW, Suite 900 • Washington, DC 20005 • 202-797-6800

June 30, 2023

Delivered by Electronic Mail to: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

Colonel Christopher Klein
Vicksburg District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

Re: Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project Scoping Comments, 88 Fed. Reg. 31738 (May 18, 2023)

Dear Col. Klein:

The National Wildlife Federation appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments on the Pearl River Flood Risk Management project. The National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps of Engineers to reject the non-federal sponsor's preferred plan (known as "One Lake"),¹ which would cause an array of significant problems for the residents of Jackson and destroy vitally important fish and wildlife habitat without providing meaningful flood relief. In its place, the Corps should develop and select a new alternative that combines the use of carefully targeted river and floodplain restoration, levee setbacks, elevations, voluntary relocations, and other similar actions that in combination can reduce flood impacts while protecting people, water quality, and vital wildlife habitat.

The National Wildlife Federation is the nation's largest conservation education and advocacy organization with more than 7.2 million members and supporters and conservation affiliate organizations in 52 states and territories. The National Wildlife Federation has a long history of advocating for the protection, restoration, and ecologically sound management of the nation's rivers, floodplains, and wetlands, including through modernizing federal water resources planning.

The comments below highlight the many problems with the One Lake plan, and provide recommendations to help guide the development of an ecologically sound solution for reducing flood risks.

¹ The One Lake plan is identified as Alternative C, the Channel Improvements Plan in the Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi. 88 Fed. Reg. 31738, 31739 (May 18, 2023). Alternative C is the "NFI Recommended Plan." Id.

General Comments

The National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps to reject the proposed One Lake plan and in its place, develop and select an alternative that combines the use of carefully targeted elevations, voluntary relocations, river and floodplain restoration, levee setbacks, and other similar actions that **in combination can reduce flood impacts** while protecting people, water quality, and vital wildlife habitat.

One Lake would destroy more than 2,000 acres of floodplain wetlands and other habitats; eliminate an additional 2,000 acres of diverse in-stream riverine habitats and ecologically vital small streams; significantly reduce water quality in the Pearl River; and reduce critically important downstream flows. These impacts will affect hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, including federally listed endangered species, and the many nature-based and other businesses that rely on the Pearl River. These adverse impacts caused the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to properly conclude that One Lake “is the most environmental damaging plan”² evaluated by the non-federal sponsor³ in its 2018 Draft EIS.⁴

But the damage from One Lake would not stop there. One Lake would expose already vulnerable Jackson residents to high levels of toxic pollution from up to 8 highly contaminated toxic sites unless these sites are properly and fully cleaned up—which is very difficult to do—before **any** construction begins. One Lake would also exacerbate the flash flooding that already plagues many communities in the City of Jackson by permanently elevating water levels in portions of the Pearl River tributary streams that flow through the City.

Critically, One Lake would also make Jackson’s entrenched water problems even worse. During the three to four **or more years** of construction, the City would be forced to somehow find an alternative source of water for the J.H. Fewell water treatment plant which provides up to 30% of Jackson’s water supply.⁵ The J.H. Fewell plant draws water directly from the area in the Pearl River that would be extensively dredged and ponded to build One Lake. Once completed, One Lake’s slow moving impoundment would further degrade the River’s water quality—including by trapping billions of gallons of raw sewage, toxics, and other pollutants—making it harder to operate the J.H. Fewell plant. The Pearl River is currently listed as an impaired water on Mississippi’s Clean Water Act section 303(d) list, is classed as eutrophic, has a nutrient TMDL, and has been under a Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality water contact advisory for four years due to the presence of sewage bacteria.

One Lake is prohibited by the Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Guidelines, including at a minimum, because One Lake “will cause or contribute to significant degradation of the waters of the United States” and

² Letter from Joseph A. Ranson (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Field Supervisor, Louisiana Ecological Services) to Michael E. Goff dated August 16, 2018 (providing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services’ comments on the 2018 Draft EIS).

³ The non-federal sponsor is the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District.

⁴ Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement, Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS (June 13, 2018) (the “2018 Draft EIS”).

⁵ The National Wildlife Federation recognizes that some discussions have taken place regarding closing the J.H. Fewell plant at some point in the future. However, that this could not happen unless, and until, the OB Curtis plant is functioning at full capacity and all water leaks in the City’s water distribution pipes have been eliminated according to Edward Henifin, the City of Jackson’s Interim Third-Party Manager.

there are other far less damaging (and more effective) practicable alternatives for reducing flood risks.⁶ One Lake is also clearly at odds with longstanding Congressionally-established federal policy directing the Corps to “protect[] and restor[e] the functions of natural systems and mitigat[e] any unavoidable damage to natural systems.”⁷

For these reasons, which are discussed in more detail below, the National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps to reject the One Lake plan. In its place, the Corps should develop and select a new alternative that combines the use of carefully targeted elevations, voluntary relocations, river and floodplain restoration, levee setbacks, and other similar actions that in combination can reduce flood impacts while protecting people, water quality, and vital wildlife habitat.

Detailed Comments

A. One Lake Would Cause Devastating and Irreparable Harm to People, Wildlife, and the Environment and Must Be Rejected

One Lake must be rejected because, among other things, it would cause irreparable harm to the environment, expose the public to high levels of toxins, reduce water quality, and induce development in areas at significant risk of flooding. Indeed, the harm that would be caused by One Lake makes it “the most environmental damaging plan”⁸ evaluated in the 2018 Draft EIS, as acknowledged by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Among other damage, One Lake would:

- **Fundamentally and irreparable harm the Pearl River ecosystem.** One Lake would require construction of a new low-head dam on the Pearl River and dredging 25 million cubic yards of sediment from the Pearl River—enough to fill 7,500 Olympic size swimming pools. These combined actions would transform a 10 mile stretch of riverine ecosystem into a 1,900-acre impoundment. The dredged sediment would then be used to enlarge a number of major levees and bury floodplain habitat to create new land for development purposes.
- **Destroy vital wildlife habitat, including wetlands, small streams, sloughs, and diverse instream habitats that also provide critical ecosystem services, including natural flood protection.** One Lake would destroy more than 2,000 acres of wildlife habitat, including at least 1,500 acres of vital bottomland hardwood wetlands. An additional 1,900 acres of diverse in-stream riverine habitat and ecologically vital small streams would be destroyed and turned into an impoundment. Though not acknowledged in the 2018 Draft EIS, even more habitat would be lost as the fundamental changes to the form and function of the Pearl River system play out over time, including reduction and elimination of natural floodplain inundation.

⁶ 40 C.F.R. § 230.10. As a result, it is not possible to demonstrate that there is no “practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem” or that the Corps has taken “appropriate and practicable” steps to minimize potential adverse impacts on the aquatic ecosystem. Id.

⁷ 42 USC § 1962–3.

⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 6 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the 2018 Draft EIS).

- **Harm hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, including numerous species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act or otherwise at-risk, including by destroying vital habitat and fundamentally transforming the form and function of the Pearl River ecosystem.** As the U.S. Department of the Interior has advised, “[w]ildlife resources within the Pearl River Basin are dependent upon the diverse floral composition of associated forested wetlands” and “a higher percentage” of vertebrate wildlife species in the Basin “use bottomland hardwoods as primary habitat (habitat a species depends upon for reproduction and/or feeding during all or a portion of the year) than any other habitat type.”⁹ A recent analysis carried out by the National Audubon Society documents that a healthy Pearl River is vitally important to 220 bird species that breed, winter, or migrate through the Pearl River.¹⁰ That analysis estimates that a minimum of 32 million birds depend on the central-lower Pearl River Basin for nesting and migration. More than 17 million birds use this region of the Pearl River basin each year during spring migration, with more than 28 million birds using this region of the Pearl River basin annually during fall migration. This analysis is discussed in more detail in the scoping comments submitted by the National Audubon Society on June 29, 2023.
- **Threaten the health and productivity of vital downstream habitats, including the Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf of Mexico, including by reducing freshwater flows below the new dam, particularly during traditional low flow periods.** The Pearl River is a major source of freshwater to the Gulf of Mexico and such reductions in flow could alter water quality and coastal salinities, affect sediment transport, and increase saltwater intrusion upriver. This would threaten the health and productivity of many downstream habitats including more than 125,000 acres of existing—and mostly public—conservation lands such as Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, and Hancock County Coastal Preserve. Altered flows could also affect the already struggling oyster sector that relies on a well-balanced mix of fresh and salt water to ensure oyster survival and harvest.
- **Expose people and fish and wildlife to high levels of toxins.** One Lake’s extensive dredging will re-suspend contaminated sediments¹¹, and would directly affect at least three highly

⁹ Id. at page 1.

¹⁰ A description of the peer-reviewed methodology used by Audubon to develop its model analysis is described in DeLuca, W.V., Meehan, T., Seavy, N., Jones, A., Pitt, J., Deppe, J.L. and Wilsey, C.B., 2021. The Colorado River Delta and California’s Central Valley are critical regions for many migrating North American landbirds. *Ornithological Applications*, 123(1).

¹¹ The 2018 Draft EIS acknowledges that toxics are present in sites located in or near the Project Area, including: Benzene, barium, cadmium, cobalt, creosote residuals, lead, lindane, manganese, mercury, nickel, raw sewage, sodium pentachlorophenolate, pentachlorophenol (PCP), phenyl mercuric acetate, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and zinc. 2018 Draft EIS, Appendix C (Environmental Evaluation of Hazardous, Radioactive, and Toxic Waste (HTRW) Sites). E.g., 2018 Draft EIS at 91 (“Creosote residuals were disposed or released to backwater sloughs of the Pearl River adjacent to the west side of the site. Creosote residuals continue to exist in sediments in the slough and potentially in groundwater beneath the former facility treatment area adjacent to the slough.”); 2018 Draft EIS at 138-139 (Numerous facilities discharge toxics into the Project Area, including the Entergy Rex Brown Plant which discharges cooling water, storm water runoff, low volume wastewater, oil and grease, pH, TSS, temperature, total residual chlorine, chromium, and zinc into a tributary located within the area to be impounded).

contaminated sites—a former creosote wood treatment facility and two unpermitted landfills.¹² One Lake also is expected to affect up to five additional highly contaminated sites, including a remediated Superfund site.¹³

- **Impair water quality.** One Lake’s large-scale dredging operations, major construction, and impoundment of a once free-flowing stretch of river, and large-scale destruction of wetlands that help filter pollutants all would adversely affect water quality and could facilitate harmful algal blooms. Project-induced changes in flow would also make it harder for downstream industrial and municipal facilities to meet their environmental permit discharge limits without installing costly new water treatment technologies, threatening water quality all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. More than one hundred downstream industrial users and municipalities in Mississippi and eight in Louisiana—including the sewage treatment plants for Jackson, Bogalusa and Pearl River as well as Georgia-Pacific and International Paper—depend on a reliable flow of freshwater from the Pearl River to meet their environmental permit discharge limits. One Lake’s induced future development would also increase runoff and adversely impact water quality.
- **Increase flooding along Pearl River tributaries that flow through the City.** The One Lake impoundment would permanently elevate water levels in portions of the Pearl River tributaries that flow through Jackson, a problem recognized in the 2018 Draft EIS.¹⁴ This would further exacerbate localized flash flooding, increase underserved neighborhoods’ vulnerability to backwater flooding from high river events, and magnify flood risk from rain events in the upper reaches of the tributaries that ultimately flow into the now-elevated creek channels. Affected tributaries include those that regularly experience flash flooding, run through environmental justice communities, and pass by public schools, museums, and other important community facilities and resources. The elevated water levels and increased flooding would also add to the City’s many stormwater permit violations. Urban stormwater flooding already affects mainly Black neighborhoods located along Town Creek and Lynch Creek, which are Pearl River tributaries that flow through majority Black census tracts in downtown Jackson.
- **Exacerbate the City of Jackson’s entrenched drinking water problems, including by compromising Jackson’s secondary drinking water treatment plant, the J.H. Fewell plant.** The 100-year-old J.H. Fewell plant supplies up to 30% of Jackson’s drinking water and was able to operate throughout the recent crisis caused by the failure of the City’s main water treatment plant, the O.B. Curtis plant. The One Lake project would exacerbate the City’s entrenched drinking water problems,¹⁵ including by:

¹² 2018 Draft EIS Appendix C, Engineering, Environmental Analysis of HTRW Sites (Gulf States Creosoting Company Site and the Creosote Slough, Gallatin Street Dump Site, Lefleurs Landing Site also known as the Jefferson Street Landfill).

¹³ 2018 Draft EIS Appendix C, Engineering, Environmental Analysis of HTRW Sites (Sonford Products Lumber Mill Superfund Site, Rival Manufacturing Company, and multiple automotive junkyards).

¹⁴ 2018 Draft EIS, Appendix C, Engineering Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis at 32-36.

¹⁵ It is equally clear that the One Lake project would not have prevented Jackson’s most recent crisis, which was caused by the collapse of the City’s primary water treatment plant, the O.B. Curtis plant, which supplies up to 70% of Jackson’s drinking water supply. That collapse was caused by flood-induced high turbidity (and other polluted runoff) in the Ross Barnett Reservoir, which is the water source for the O.B. Curtis plant and is located seven miles upstream of the proposed One Lake project. The One Lake project has no ability to—and will not—alleviate flood-induced high turbidity in the Reservoir.

- (1) **Forcing the City of Jackson to find an alternative source for 30% of Jackson's water supply for at least three to four years.** The J.H. Fewell plant draws water directly from the area in the Pearl River that would be extensively dredged and ponded to build One Lake. Project construction would increase turbidity in the Pearl River to the point where the J. H. Fewell plant will not be able to operate, as acknowledged in the 2018 Draft EIS.¹⁶ As a result, the City of Jackson would be required to somehow find a "temporary" water supply alternative for 30% of the City's drinking water during project construction,¹⁷ which would take at least "three or four years" according to the project's non-federal sponsor.¹⁸
- (2) **Adversely affect long-term operation of the J.H. Fewell plant and public health by further degrading water quality in the Pearl River.** By transforming 10 miles of flowing Pearl River into a 1,900-acre slow-moving impoundment, the One Lake project would further degrade the River's water quality, including by trapping billions of gallons of raw sewage, toxics, and other pollutants.¹⁹ From just April to June of 2022, **56.5 million gallons of raw sewage** were discharged into 6 of the tributaries that flow into the One Lake project area.²⁰ In 2021, **64.5 million gallons of raw sewage** were discharged into the One Lake project area.²¹ Many facilities regularly discharge toxic pollutants into the One Lake project area,²² and construction of One Lake would directly affect 3 highly

¹⁶ 2018 Draft EIS, Appendix C, Engineering at 16 ("Other immediate effects that may result from construction of the proposed project could include a temporary loss of the secondary water supply intake for the City of Jackson. Jackson utilizes an existing water treatment plant which is located on the Pear River at a location scheduled for dredging and development of the [One Lake project]. The water treatment plant is used as a secondary source and backup water supply source for the City. The dredging of sediments and subsurface soils in the Pearl River could potentially increase the turbidity of the surface waters to levels unacceptable for human consumption; therefore, the City of Jackson would need to evaluate a temporary water supply alternatives [sic] during the duration of dredging and construction activities.")

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ Northside Sun, Moving Ahead: Final Public Comment Period For One Lake Coming Soon, 06/14/22 (available at <https://www.northsidesun.com/local-content-top-stories/moving-ahead-final-public-comment-period-one-lake-coming-soon#sthash.bggohcen.dpbs>) ("Keith Turner, attorney for the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood & Drainage Control District said . . . After funding is secured, the project will require three or four years of construction, and then several more years for developers to produce plans for the economic development component.")

¹⁹ As noted above, the Pearl River is currently listed as an impaired water on Mississippi's Clean Water Act section 303(d) list, is classed as eutrophic, has a nutrient TMDL, and has been under a Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality water contact advisory for four years due to the presence of sewage bacteria.

²⁰ City of Jackson Sewer Consent Decree Quarterly Report for April-June 2022 (14.7 million gallons to Lynch Creek; 23.1 million gallons to Town Creek; 8.8 million gallons to Hanging Moss Creek; 4 million gallons to Belhaven Creek; 4 million gallons to Eastover Creek; and 1.9 million gallons to Eubanks Creek). The City of Jackson has been under a federal consent decree since 2013 due to extensive problems with the City's wastewater collection and treatment system. The Consent Decree, all reports, and related documents can be accessed at <https://www.cojcd.org/document-library>.

²¹ These discharges resulted from 205 Sanitary Sewer Overflows.

²² See footnote 11, above.

contaminated toxic waste sites and resuspend highly contaminated sediments.²³ One Lake also is expected to affect up to 5 additional highly contaminated sites, including a remediated Superfund site.²⁴

- **Induce development in areas that will remain at high risk of flooding, putting more people, homes, businesses, and properties at risk.** The 2018 Draft EIS acknowledges that additional future development is both a goal and likely outcome of One Lake. This new development would occur in areas that will continue to have a high risk of flooding, including potentially catastrophic flooding when One Lake and/or existing levees overtop or fail. One Lake would at best only provide protection for the 100-year flood event, leaving this newly induced (and existing development) at risk from larger floods that inevitably will happen.
- **Place unacceptable economic burdens on low-income and other residents who will be forced to pay for the project's substantial non-federal cost share, and divert scarce resources away from addressing the City's water crisis and tributary flooding.** Thirty-five percent of the costs of constructing the One Lake project—an absolute minimum of \$121 million—plus 100% of the costs of operating, maintaining, and rehabilitating the project must be paid by the non-federal sponsor. These funds are expected to come from a tax levied on the residents of Jackson.²⁵ The Draft EIS estimates that the project will cost \$345.85 million to construct.²⁶ The actual costs—and as a result, the non-federal cost share—will be much higher as the current estimate does not account for such things as: the costs of required toxic remediation for up to 8 highly contaminated sites; the Mississippi Department of Transportation's request that the project cover the costs of replacing 9 bridges threatened by collapse if One Lake is constructed²⁷; the development and implementation of a plan to protect public health; the true costs of the mandatory environmental mitigation; additional costs that will be revealed during the detailed technical design process for the project; and economic realities including that the "Corps has seen bids on important navigation and flood control projects come in at double or triple the previous cost estimates."²⁸ Such a tax would disproportionately burden low-income residents, and divert extremely limited resources away from addressing the City's water crisis and many other problems.

²³ 2018 Draft EIS Appendix C, Engineering, Environmental Analysis of HTRW Sites (Gulf States Creosoting Company Site and the Creosote Slough, Gallatin Street Dump Site, Lefleurs Landing Site also known as the Jefferson Street Landfill).

²⁴ 2018 Draft EIS Appendix C, Engineering, Environmental Analysis of HTRW Sites (Sonford Products Lumber Mill Superfund Site, Rival Manufacturing Company, and multiple automotive junkyards).

²⁵ [MS Code § 51-35-333 \(2017\)](#) gives local drainage districts—including the One Lake project's non-federal sponsor, the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood Control and Drainage District—the authority to raise property taxes to cover the costs of a "flood and drainage control improvement project" by levying "a special improvement assessment" on "property in the district that is directly or indirectly benefited by the project."

²⁶ 2018 Draft EIS at xii-xiv.

²⁷ Letter from the Mississippi Department of Transportation to the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood & Drainage Control District (September 5, 2018)(If the One Lake Project moves forward "all nine (9) bridges will need to be replaced and the cost to replace the nine (9) bridges should be reflected in the cost of the Pearl River Basin Federal Flood Risk Management Project.").

²⁸ House Committee Report, FY23 E&W Appropriations Bill at 7

(<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP00/20230622/116151/HMKP-118-AP00-20230622-SD003.pdf>).

All of these problems would be created without One Lake providing any meaningful level of flood protection. As documented in the Corps' Agency Technical Review, the impoundment created by One Lake **"does not create any additional flood storage capacity or conveyance capacity"**²⁹:

8285727 Planning - Plan Formulation

Concern: Incremental Analysis of the Final Array of Alternatives

Basis: ER 1105-2-100 specifies that the proposed project features must be shown to incrementally reduce the problem (i.e. the flood risk). **It is unclear how construction of the weir and impoundment of water reduces the flood risk to the adjacent communities. The existence of the 1,500 acre lake does not create any additional flood storage capacity or conveyance capacity.** It could provide recreation benefits however these benefits could also be provided without the impoundment of water by improving access to the river. The new widened and taller levees would seem to be an impediment to recreational access and the trapezoidal channel would lose aesthetic quality compared to the current riparian corridor.³⁰

This concern is documented as being of "critical" significance in the Agency Technical Review, but the lack of flood storage capacity was not addressed by the non-federal sponsor. To the contrary, that comment was "closed when additional responses to follow-on backcheck comments did not yield any new information."³¹

One Lake is prohibited by the Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Guidelines, including at a minimum, because One Lake "will cause or contribute to significant degradation of the waters of the United States" and there are other far less damaging (and more effective) practicable alternatives for reducing flood risks.³² One Lake is also clearly at odds with longstanding Congressionally-established federal policy directing the Corps to "protect[] and restor[e] the functions of natural systems and mitigat[e] any unavoidable damage to natural systems."³³ See additional discussion in Section C of these comments.

For all of these reasons, the Corps must reject the One Lake alternative. We also note that new Congressional authorization would be required before the Corps could construct One Lake, due to the changes and significant cost increases in the project since it was authorized in Section 3104 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.³⁴

²⁹ USACE, Agency Technical Review Summary Report June 2020 for Review of Pearl River Watershed Hinds & Rankin Counties, Mississippi Integrated Feasibility Report & Environmental Impact Statement February 2020 (Non-Federal Sponsor Prepared Decision Document), Review Organization: FRM-PCX (emphasis added).

³⁰ Id.

³¹ Id. at Section 8.2.

³² 40 C.F.R. § 230.10. As a result, it is not possible to demonstrate that there is no "practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem" or that the Corps has taken "appropriate and practicable" steps to minimize potential adverse impacts on the aquatic ecosystem. Id.

³³ 42 USC § 1962-3.

³⁴ WRDA 2007 authorizes construction of a project "generally in accordance with the plan described in the 'Pearl River Watershed, Mississippi, Feasibility Study Main Report, Preliminary Draft', dated February 2007, at a total cost of \$205,800,000, with an estimated Federal cost of \$133,770,000 and an estimated non-Federal cost of \$72,030,000." The 2018 Draft EIS estimates that the One Lake project would cost \$345,850,000, which as documented below severely understates the actual project costs. However, even this severe underestimate of

B. The Corps Should Fundamentally Reassess All Aspects of the 2018 Draft EIS and Ensure a Full Evaluation of Reasonable Alternatives and Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Impacts

The National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps to fundamentally reassess the 2018 Draft EIS, which is so flawed that it should not be used as the starting point for the Corps' analysis.³⁵ It is critical that the Corps develop and meaningfully evaluate alternatives that are far less damaging than One Lake. This will require more than the "reanalysis of engineering, economic, and environmental factors" described in the May 18 Federal Register Notice announcing this scoping period.³⁶

In developing and evaluating alternatives, the Corps should first rigorously evaluate alternatives that use a combination of natural and nature-based features and nonstructural measures to reduce flood risks while also protecting and restoring the Pearl River and its vital floodplain wetlands. This should include an assessment of measures outside the Corps' existing authorities, an approach long recognized by Congress as an important component of the Corps' evaluation of alternatives.³⁷

The National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") implementing regulations define "reasonable alternatives" to mean "a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, and meet the purpose and need of the proposed action."³⁸ The greater the impacts and scope of the proposed action, the greater the range of alternatives that must be considered.³⁹ A viable but unexamined alternative renders an EIS inadequate.⁴⁰

actual project costs is 68% higher than the authorized project and clearly would require new Congressional authorization before it could be constructed.

³⁵ See, e.g., National Wildlife Federation Comments on the 2018 Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS (submitted September 6, 2018). These comments are provided at Attachment B.

³⁶ 88 Fed. Reg. 31738 at 31739 (May 18, 2023) ("Using this information, the USACE is conducting a reanalysis of engineering, economic, and environmental factors relative to prospective flood alleviation measures in the Pearl River Watershed study area (Metropolitan Jackson area) for Alternatives A, A1, C, and a Combination/Hybrid Plan by employing Department of the Army criteria and guidelines.")

³⁷ For example, the Conference Report for the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 states: "The conferees have included several provisions in section 202 which modify the flood control program of the Corps of Engineers, reflecting an evolution in national flood control policy. The conferees have deleted the provision in the House bill to allow additional review of the proposal without prejudice to its substance. The conferees expect the Corps to continue to consider nonstructural alternatives as required by existing law, and encourage the Corps to improve its efforts at considering nonstructural alternatives in its project study and formulation. Such consideration should include watershed management, wetlands restoration, elevation, and relocation. The Corps is also encouraged to explore alternatives which may be implemented by others, beyond the authority of the Corps. Examples of such alternatives include changes in zoning or development patterns by local officials. Because the Corps has no authority to implement such recommendations, such options are generally not explored or displayed in Corps study documents. However, such alternatives could, in some cases, result in a more effective flood protection program at reduced cost to both Federal and non-Federal interests." H.R. Rep. No. 104-843, at 146 (1996) (Water Resources Development Act of 1996 Conference Report).

³⁸ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.1(z).

³⁹ *Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism v. Morrison*, 67 F.3d 723, 729 (9th Cir. 1995); see *Sierra Club v. Espy*, 38 F.3d 792, 803 (5th Cir. 1994) (the range of alternatives that must be considered in an environmental assessment decreases as the environmental impact of the proposed action becomes less and less substantial).

⁴⁰ *E.g. Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F.3d 800, 810, 814 (9th Cir. 1999).

Congress has long recognized the importance of the Corps carefully assessing nonstructural and wetland restoration measures,⁴¹ and the Water Resources Development Acts require the Corps to consider non-structural measures and practicable natural and nature-based measures⁴² when planning flood projects. Congress has also directed the Corps to ensure that all water resources projects reflect national priorities including by “protecting and restoring the functions of natural systems.”⁴³

Assessing a full range of reasonable alternatives is also critical for Clean Water Act compliance. The Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Guidelines prohibit the Corps from proceeding with a civil works project unless the Corps demonstrates that the project is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.⁴⁴ The Guidelines define a “practicable” alternative as one that “is available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall project purposes.”⁴⁵

In developing and selecting alternatives, the EIS also must comply with the full suite of federal laws and policies designed to protect the environment. In addition to NEPA and the Clean Water Act, these include, the Endangered Species Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Water Resources Development Acts including the mitigation requirements applicable to Corps civil works projects. The alternative ultimately recommended by the EIS must also obtain a Clean Water Act water quality certification from the State of Mississippi.

When developing and evaluating alternatives, the EIS must examine, among other things, the reasonably foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of alternatives, the conservation potential of those alternatives, and the means to mitigate adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided.⁴⁶

Direct effects “are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.”⁴⁷ Indirect effects “are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.”⁴⁸ Cumulative effects “are effects on the environment that result from the incremental effects of the action when added to the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.”⁴⁹

⁴¹ See footnote 38, above.

⁴² 33 U.S.C. § 701b-11, 33 U.S.C. § 2289a, 33 U.S.C. § 2282(2).

⁴³ 42 U.S.C. § 1962-3.

⁴⁴ 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a). While the Corps does not technically issue itself a Clean Water Act 404 permit, it must satisfy the requirements of the 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

⁴⁵ 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a).

⁴⁶ 40 C.F.R. § 1502.16 and § 1508.1(g).

⁴⁷ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.1(g)(1).

⁴⁸ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.1(g)(2).

⁴⁹ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.1(g)(3).

The EIS must provide “quantified or detailed information” on the impacts, including the cumulative impacts, so that the courts and the public can be assured that the Corps has taken the mandated hard look at the environmental consequences of the project.⁵⁰

These assessments are essential for: understanding the impacts of the various alternatives; determining whether less environmentally damaging alternatives are available; making a reasoned choice among alternatives; identifying the least environmentally damaging alternative, as required by the Clean Water Act; ensuring compliance with the Endangered Species Act; and identifying alternatives that would protect and restore the functions of the Pearl River and its floodplain, as required by the National Water Resources Planning Policy.⁵¹

1. The EIS Should Evaluate, and Select, An Alternative That Uses a Combination of Nonstructural, Natural, and Nature-Based Solutions

As highlighted above, the National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps to develop and select a new alternative that combines the use of carefully targeted river and floodplain restoration, levee setbacks, elevations, voluntary relocations, and other similar actions that **in combination can reduce flood impacts** while protecting people, water quality, and vital wildlife habitat. As discussed below, these actions have a proven track record of reducing flood damages.

Such an alternative could include targeted use of some or all of the following activities:

1. Restoration of the Pearl River’s in-stream functions and wetlands and green spaces in the Pearl River’s floodplain (including between RM 284 and RM 290);
2. Restoration of in-stream functions and floodplain wetland and green spaces in the 12 Pearl River tributaries that flow through the Greater Jackson area, where much of the documented flooding occurs. Particular attention should be paid to Town and Lynch Creeks which flow through highly vulnerable neighborhoods and have a history of flash flooding;
3. Levee setbacks, particularly along highly constricted reaches of the Pearl River (for example, from RM 288 to RM 291);
4. Modification of the operating plan for the Ross Barnett Reservoir to aid in flood damage reduction during large-scale flood events;
5. Targeted elevations, flood-proofing, and voluntary buyouts of residences and businesses that will remain at risk after implementation of the other components of this hybrid approach; and
6. Correcting any unaddressed root causes of the 1979 Flood that were identified in the report by the Comptroller General of the United States, entitled *Improvements Being Made In Flood Fighting Capabilities in the Jackson, Mississippi, Area*, CED-80-36 (December 18, 1979).

⁵⁰ *Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain v. U. S. Forest Service*, 137 F.3d 1372, 1379 (9th Cir. 1998); *Natural Resources Defense Council v. Callaway*, 524 F.2d 79, 87 (2d Cir. 1975).

⁵¹ 42 USC 1962–3(a).

Notably, none of these options were addressed in the 2018 Draft EIS.

The value of these types of activities for protecting communities is well recognized. Moreover, evidence of the effectiveness of natural systems in reducing flood and storm damages continues to mount, as highlighted in the National Wildlife Federation's report on [The Protective Value of Nature](#)⁵² and in the examples highlighted below. As aptly noted by the Reinsurance Association of America: "One cannot overstate the value of preserving our natural systems for the protection of people and property from catastrophic events."⁵³

As an example, wetlands prevented \$625 million in flood damages in the 12 coastal states affected by Hurricane Sandy, and reduced damages by 20 to 30 percent in the four states with the greatest wetland coverage.⁵⁴ The forest and other conservation lands that make up the 28,000 acre Meramec Greenway along the Meramec River in southern Missouri contribute about \$6,000 per acre in avoided flood damages annually.⁵⁵ Wetlands in the Eagle Creek watershed of central Indiana reduce peak flows from rainfall by up to 42 percent, flood area by 55 percent, and maximum stream velocities by 15 percent.⁵⁶ Coastal wetlands reduced storm surge in some New Orleans neighborhoods by two to three feet during Hurricane Katrina, and levees with wetland buffers had a much greater chance of surviving Katrina's fury than levees without wetland buffers.⁵⁷ Other examples of the effectiveness of natural and nature-based measures in reducing flood risks are provided at Attachment A to these comments.

The vital role of healthy natural systems for protecting communities has long been recognized by the Corps. In a 1972 study evaluating options to reduce flooding along Charles River in Massachusetts, the Corps concluded:

Nature has already provided the least-cost solution to future flooding in the form of extensive [riverine] wetlands which moderate extreme highs and lows in streamflow. Rather than attempt to improve on this natural protection mechanism, it is both prudent and economical to leave the hydrologic regime established over millennia undisturbed.⁵⁸

⁵² Glick, P., E. Powell, S. Schlesinger, J. Ritter, B.A. Stein, and A. Fuller. 2020. [The Protective Value of Nature: A Review of the Effectiveness of Natural Infrastructure for Hazard Risk Reduction](#). Washington, DC: National Wildlife Federation.

⁵³ Restore America's Estuaries, [Jobs & Dollars BIG RETURNS from coastal habitat restoration](#) (September 14, 2011).

⁵⁴ Narayan, S., Beck, M.B., Wilson, P., et al., [The Value of Coastal Wetlands for Flood Damage Reduction in the Northeastern USA](#). Scientific Reports 7, Article number 9463 (2017), doi:10.1038/s41598-017-09269-z.

⁵⁵ Kousky, C., M. Walls, and Z. Chu. 2014. Measuring resilience to climate change: The benefits of forest conservation in the floodplain. p 345–360. In: V.A. Sample and R.P. Bixler, eds. *Forest Conservation and Management in the Anthropocene: Conference Proceedings*. Proceedings RMRS-P-71. Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station.

⁵⁶ Javaheri, A., and M. Babbar-Sebens. 2014. On comparison of peak flow reductions, flood inundation maps, and velocity maps in evaluating effects of restored wetlands on channel flooding. *Ecological Engineering* 73: 132–145.

⁵⁷ Bob Marshall, *Studies abound on why the levees failed. But researchers point out that some levees held fast because wetlands worked as buffers during Katrina's storm surge*, *The New Orleans Times-Picayune* (March 23, 2006).

⁵⁸ American Rivers, *Unnatural Disasters, Natural Solutions: Lessons From The Flooding Of New Orleans* (2006) (quoting USACE, from Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, *Functions of Riparian Areas for Flood Control*, http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/river/pdf/riparian_factsheet_1.pdf.)

Wetlands act as natural sponges, storing and slowly releasing floodwaters after peak flood flows have passed, and coastal wetlands buffer the onslaught of hurricanes and tropical storms. A single acre of wetland can store one million gallons of floodwaters.⁵⁹ Just a 1 percent loss of a watershed's wetlands can increase total flood volume by almost seven percent.⁶⁰ Restoring a river's natural flow and meandering channel, and giving at least some floodplain back to the river, slows down floodwaters and gives the river room to spread out without harming homes and businesses.

Natural and nature-based measures are also often more cost-effective than structural measures. A recent study documents that using natural infrastructure solutions for reducing coastal flood risks in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida would have a benefit-cost ratio of 3.5 compared to just 0.26 for levees and dikes. Restoring wetlands in this region could prevent \$18.2 billion in losses while costing just \$2 billion to carry out.⁶¹ Natural and nature-based features also have the significant added benefits of being self-sustaining and avoiding the risk of catastrophic structural failures. Importantly, natural and nature-based measures can work both alone and in combination with more traditional grey infrastructure to reduce flood and storm risks.

Structural solutions, while necessary in some places, can cause significant damage in other locations. For example, a recent study found that building one large seawall in a small portion of California's San Francisco Bay could significantly increase flooding in other areas, causing up to \$723 million of flood damages to those areas during **each** flood event⁶²—an estimate that is highly conservative as it "doesn't account for potential damage to ecosystems and fisheries."⁶³

Natural and nature-based features also provide important co-benefits, including providing vital fish and wildlife habitat and allowing people and wildlife to benefit from natural flood cycles. In a healthy, functioning river system, precipitation events and other natural increases in water flow can deposit nutrients along floodplains creating fertile soil for bottomland hardwood forests. Sediment transported by these increased flows form islands and back channels that are home to fish, birds, and other wildlife. By scouring out river channels and riparian areas, these events prevent rivers from becoming overgrown with vegetation. They also facilitate breeding and migration for a host of fish species, and provide vital connectivity between habitat areas. In the deltas at the mouths of rivers, increased flows release freshwater and sediment, sustaining and renewing wetlands that protect coastal communities from storms and provide nurseries for multibillion dollar fisheries.

⁵⁹ Environmental Protection Agency, *"Wetlands: Protecting Life and Property from Flooding."* EPA 843-F-06-001. (2006) (factsheet).

⁶⁰ Demissie, M. and Abdul Khan. 1993. "Influence of Wetlands on Streamflow in Illinois." Illinois State Water Survey, Contract Report 561, Champaign, IL, Table 7, pp. 44-45.

⁶¹ Borja G. Reguero et al., ["Comparing the Cost Effectiveness of Nature-Based and Coastal Adaptation: A Case Study from the Gulf Coast of the United States,"](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0192132) PLoS ONE 13, no. 4 (April 11, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0192132>.

⁶² Michelle Hummel, Griffin R., Arkema K., Guerry A., PNAS 2021 Vol. 118 No. 29 e2025961118, [Economic evaluation of sea-level rise adaptation strongly influenced by hydrodynamic feedbacks](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2025961118) <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2025961118> (July 2021) (documenting that the seawall would divert 36 million cubic meters of flood waters (9.5 billion gallons) onto other communities, and demonstrating the value of natural infrastructure for alleviating flooding and damages along other stretches of the coastline.).

⁶³ Matt Simon, [Be very careful where you build that seawall](https://www.wired.com/story/seawall-flood-damage/), WIRED (July 14, 2021).

Wetlands are some of the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world, and support an incredibly diverse and extensive array of fish and wildlife. America's wetlands support millions of migratory birds and waterfowl. Up to one-half of all North American bird species rely on wetlands. Although wetlands account for just about 5 percent of land area in the lower 48 states, those wetlands are the only habitat for more than one third of the nation's threatened and endangered species and support an additional 20 percent of the nation's threatened and endangered at some time in their life. These same wetlands are home to 31 percent of the nation's plant species.⁶⁴

While we recognize the Corps' decision to analyze wholly nonstructural alternatives (Alternatives A and A1) which "propose the buyout of up to approximately 3,100 structures, including homes and businesses,"⁶⁵ we believe such "all-or-nothing" buy-out alternatives would be difficult to implement since it would require buying out every structure in the project area's 100-year floodplain, according to the 2018 Draft EIS.

We also note that the 2018 Draft EIS does not provide the information needed to properly evaluate either Alternative A or A1. For example, the 2018 Draft EIS: (1) does not provide a meaningful explanation as to why it would be necessary or appropriate to buy-out every single structure in the project area's 100-year floodplain; (2) does not include any information on how the number of structures was calculated; and (3) does not provide information on the methodology used to calculate the cost of buying out those structures.⁶⁶ The 2018 Draft EIS also rejected this buy-out alternative in the preliminary screening stage based solely on cost considerations.⁶⁷

Notably, however, the 2018 Draft EIS does recognize that the cost of acquiring the structures at highest risk—those impacted by the 2% exceedance flood (i.e., the 50-year flood) "would be low."⁶⁸ Despite the significantly lower cost and high benefits, this alternative was also eliminated at the preliminary screening stage and was not carried forward into the 2018 Draft EIS.⁶⁹

2. The EIS Must Examine the Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Impacts of Reasonable Alternatives

The 2018 Draft EIS did not properly analyze the impacts of One Lake or other alternatives. In many cases, the 2018 Draft EIS failed to provide any analysis at all regarding demonstrably foreseeable impacts. These failings are discussed in the National Wildlife Federation's comments on the 2018 Draft EIS⁷⁰, which are provided at Attachment B and summarized below. The Corps must correct these many,

⁶⁴ Environmental Protection Agency, Economic Benefits of Wetlands, EPA843-F-06-004 (May, 2006) (factsheet).

⁶⁵ 88 Fed. Reg. at 31739.

⁶⁶ See 2018 Draft EIS at 113-114, Appendix A at (9-10).

⁶⁷ See, e.g., 2018 Draft EIS at ix ("Although logistics and costs render it an impractical alternative, the measure of relocation structures (buy-out) was carried forward in the final array of alternatives in order to comply with the USACE EP 1165-2-1 requirement that a standalone non-structural alternative be considered through the entire process."); 2018 Draft EIS at 113 ("reference to this alternative in future discussions will be limited.").

⁶⁸ 2018 Draft EIS, Appendix A at 11.

⁶⁹ 2018 Draft EIS, Appendix A at 11.

⁷⁰ National Wildlife Federation Comments on the 2018 Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS (submitted September 6, 2018). These comments are provided at Attachment B.

fundamental failings and incorporate the improved analyses into its assessments before the Corps recommends a project.

Among other problems:

1. The 2018 Draft EIS fails to include critically important scientific information, data and analyses that are essential to making a reasoned choice among alternatives. The 2018 Draft EIS also draws contradictory conclusions; fails to justify its conclusions; and fails to provide data sources, survey and study methods and results, and needed citations to scientific literature. See Attachment B at 14-17. The Corps must correct these fundamental failings, which taint all analyses developed by the non-federal sponsor, before the Corps recommends a project.
2. The 2018 Draft EIS utilizes an inaccurate and incomplete assessment of baseline conditions. Establishing an accurate baseline is essential for determining the impacts of an action and for complying with NEPA.⁷¹ Properly assessing baseline conditions includes understanding and documenting “how conditions have changed over time and how they are likely to change in the future without the proposed action” to determine whether additional stresses will push this system over the edge.⁷² This is particularly important in situations, like those in the Pearl River, where the environment has already been greatly modified by human activities. See Attachment B at 17-19. The Corps must properly assess and consider baseline conditions before the Corps recommends a project.
3. The 2018 Draft EIS does not evaluate the risk of toxic contamination resulting from the resuspension of contaminated River sediments or from the direct and/or indirect disturbance of highly contaminated HTRW sites. See Attachment B at 19-22. Such contamination poses significant threats to public health and to fish and wildlife. The Corps must properly assess and consider this highly significant risk before the Corps recommends a project.
4. The 2018 Draft EIS does not evaluate the morphological changes that will result from the extensive dredging, restriction of flow, and destruction of the floodplain that would be caused by the One Lake plan. See Attachment B at 22-24. Meaningfully assessing the impacts of such changes on the Pearl River, the River’s floodplain, small streams and sloughs, tributary streams, and the fish and wildlife that rely on those systems will require extensive analysis and modeling of river hydrology, hydraulics, sediment loading, and sediment transport. The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their resulting biological implications before the Corps recommends a project.

⁷¹ Half Moon Bay Fisherman's Mktg. Ass'n. v. Carlucci, 857 F.2d 505, 510 (9th Cir.1988) (“Without establishing the baseline conditions ... there is simply no way to determine what effect the [action] will have on the environment, and consequently, no way to comply with NEPA.”). As a result, the entire DEIS is inadequate as a matter of law. E.g., Friends of Back Bay v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 681 F.3d 581, 588 (4th Cir. 2012) (an EIS fails to comply with NEPA if it relies on a “material misapprehension of the baseline conditions.”); N. Plains Res. Council, Inc. v. Surface Transp. Bd., 668 F.3d 1067, 1083, 1085 (9th Cir. 2011) (the EIS did “not provide baseline data for many of the species” of concern and thus “did not take a sufficiently ‘hard look’” to fulfill its NEPA-imposed obligations at the impacts as to these species).

⁷² Council on Environmental Quality, Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act at 41 (January 1997).

5. The 2018 Draft EIS does not evaluate the impacts of One Lake on the entire hydroperiod for the Pearl River (i.e., the impacts on appropriately timed low and high flows; appropriate depth, frequency and duration of overbank flooding; and connectivity to surrounding habitats). See Attachment B at 24-25. Maintaining or mimicking a natural hydrograph is critically important for ecosystem health and sustainability. For example, spring floods that overflow the Pearl River's banks are critical for nourishing bottomland hardwood and other wetlands, including the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, and Honey Island Swamp in Louisiana. Indeed, part of the reason that the Pearl River Basin forests remain healthy and thriving, and the Basin's coastal wetlands continue to regenerate (unlike many other areas on the coast), is because the River experiences a somewhat natural flooding regime. The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their resulting biological implications before the Corps recommends a project.
6. The 2018 Draft EIS does not evaluate impacts to the Pearl River's tributaries from One Lake's direct destruction of some tributary stream reaches or from the fundamental changes to the Pearl River's structure and functions, including changes to sediment loading and transport both alone and in combination with changes to flow and channel morphology. See Attachment B at 25. The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their resulting biological implications before the Corps recommends a project.
7. The 2018 Draft EIS does not meaningfully evaluate the loss of diverse and complex floodplain and riverine habitats (including instream habitats such as braided channels, crossover habitat, sand bars, and backwater habitats) or their impacts on fish and wildlife. See Attachment B at 25-26. The 2018 Draft EIS provides also fails to account for the very significant differences between riverine and lacustrine habitat and the often very different fish and other aquatic resource assemblages that they support. As highlighted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Even though water flow will be maintained through the lake, it will not provide the habitat required for those species needing a riverine environment to survive, thus representing a net loss of approximately 250 acres of this habitat type.⁷³

The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their implications for fish and wildlife before the Corps recommends a project.

8. The 2018 Draft EIS does not meaningfully assess wetland impacts and does not evaluate indirect impacts to wetlands. See Attachment B at 26-27. In addition to One Lake's highly significant direct wetland impacts, the project would also result in far-reaching hydrological changes that must be assessed to properly evaluate impacts to wetlands. Wetland hydrology "is probably the single most important determinant of the establishment and maintenance of specific types of wetlands and wetland processes."⁷⁴ Even "small changes in hydrology can result in significant biotic changes"⁷⁵ and may result in "massive changes in species composition and richness and in

⁷³ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 9 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the 2018 Draft EIS).

⁷⁴ William J. Mitsch and James G. Gosselink, *Wetlands* (5th ed.) (2015).

⁷⁵ *Id.*

ecosystem productivity.”⁷⁶ The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their implications for fish and wildlife before the Corps recommends a project.

9. The 2018 Draft EIS does not meaningfully assess water quality impacts. Among many other problems, the water quality analysis: is based on a wholly inadequate data set; ignores the water quality impacts that will result from the significant hydrologic, morphologic and flow changes; fails to meaningfully assess impacts from sedimentation; ignores the significant risk of toxic releases; and fails to assess water quality impacts due to the significant loss of project area wetlands and small streams. *See* Attachment B at 27-28. The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their implications for public health and fish and wildlife before the Corps recommends a project.
10. The 2018 Draft EIS does not evaluate impacts to the wide-range of plant species that would be affected by One Lake, including impacts to wetland plant species.⁷⁷ *See* Attachment B at 36-37. The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their implications for fish and wildlife before the Corps recommends a project.
11. The 2018 Draft EIS does not meaningfully evaluate the impacts to fish and wildlife. *See* Attachment B at 28-36. The many failings identified throughout these comments and in Attachment B preclude an adequate evaluation of impacts to fish and wildlife which require appropriate habitats and river flows that will be fundamentally and adversely affected by One Lake. The 2018 Draft EIS also fundamentally ignores the biological and ecological ramifications of the major changes that One Lake would cause to the diverse habitats, form, and functioning of the Pearl River and its floodplain. These many failures apply to fisheries, resident and migratory birds and waterfowl, reptiles and amphibians, mammals, and species listed as endangered, threatened, and of concern by the federal government and the State of Mississippi. These failings are extremely problematic as a healthy Pearl River is vitally important to hundreds of species, including 220 species of birds. As noted above, a recent analysis by the National Audubon Society estimates that a minimum of 32 million birds depend on the central-lower Pearl River Basin for nesting and migration each year. The Corps must properly assess and consider the impacts on the full array of fish and wildlife that rely on the Pearl River and its floodplain before the Corps recommends a project.
12. The 2018 Draft EIS does not meaningfully evaluate cumulative impacts. *See* Attachment B at 37-43. An accurate cumulative impacts analysis is critical to ensure that the Corps does not “treat the identified environmental concern in a vacuum.”⁷⁸ The Corps must properly assess and consider cumulative impacts before the Corps recommends a project.

⁷⁶ *Id.* at 112.

⁷⁷ While the 2018 Draft EIS provides a break-down of direct wetland impacts by acres of main plant type (i.e., forested wetlands, cypress and tupelo gum slough wetlands, scrub shrub wetlands, cypress slough wetlands, emergent wetlands bottomland hardwood wetlands), it does not provide any other information on plant species that would be affected and does not provide information on the current ecological health of the plant species that would be affected.

⁷⁸ *Grand Canyon Trust v. FAA*, 290 F.3d 339, 346 (D.C. Cir. 2002).

13. The 2018 Draft EIS does not meaningfully evaluate the risk of disproportionate impacts to minority and low-income communities from One Lake. *See* Attachment B at 44. Among other things, the 2018 Draft EIS does not assess the risk of disproportionate impacts from toxic exposure to people and wildlife, reduced water quality, increased tributary flooding, or residual flood risks. The 2018 Draft EIS does not address the disproportionate impacts arising from indirect and cumulative impacts. The 2018 Draft EIS also does not assess whether the claimed flood reduction benefits will accrue to minority and low-income communities or to non-minority, wealthy communities. The Corps must properly assess and consider these impacts and their implications for human health and safety before the Corps recommends a project.
14. The 2018 Draft EIS does not provide any assessment of the ecosystem services that would be lost to the One Lake project. Understanding the impacts to these services, including through an ecosystem services valuation, is critical for assessing the full extent of One Lake's impacts. The importance of ecosystem services valuation is made clear in the March 2013 *Principles and Requirements for Federal Investments in Water Resources* and *Interagency Guidelines* and the December 2014 *Interagency Guidelines* that implement those Principles and Requirements (collectively, the PR&G). The PR&G focus extensively on the importance of evaluating the value of ecosystem services lost and gained during project planning. While the National Wildlife Federation recognizes that the Corps has not yet issued its agency specific guidelines for the PR&G, the EIS should nevertheless evaluate the impacts on ecosystem services.
15. The 2018 Draft EIS does not meaningfully evaluate mitigation and does not comply with the mandatory civil works mitigation requirements established by the Water Resources Development Acts. *See* Attachment B at 44-47 and the discussion below. The Corps must properly assess and consider mitigation and comply with the civil works mitigation planning requirements before the Corps recommends a project.

C. The EIS Must Demonstrate Compliance with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines

The Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Guidelines prohibit a "discharge into the aquatic ecosystem **unless it can be demonstrated** that such a discharge will not have an unacceptable adverse impact either individually or in combination with known and/ or probable impacts of other activities affecting the ecosystem of concern."⁷⁹ The "degradation or destruction of special aquatic sites, such as filling operations in wetlands, is considered to be among the most severe environmental impacts covered by the[] Guidelines."⁸⁰

Under the 404(b)(1) Guidelines, a project is prohibited if the proposed discharge (and its resulting impacts) meet any of the following criteria:

1. The proposed discharge "will cause or contribute to significant degradation of the waters of the United States." 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(c).

⁷⁹ 40 C.F.R. § 230.1(c) (emphasis added).

⁸⁰ 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(d).

2. The proposed discharge will violate applicable toxic effluent standards or prohibition under Clean Water Act § 307 and cause or contribute to violations of state water quality standards. 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(b).
3. The proposed discharge will result in a likelihood of the destruction or adverse modification of formally designated critical habitat. 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(b).
4. The Corps has not clearly demonstrated that there is no “practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem.” 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a).
5. The Corps has not taken “appropriate and practicable” steps to minimize potential adverse impacts on the aquatic ecosystem. 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(d).

The EIS must demonstrate that the recommended alternative can proceed under the 404(b)(1) Guidelines. As discussed above, however, it is clear that One Lake is prohibited by many (and perhaps all) of these criteria, and thus cannot be constructed.

D. The EIS Must Fully Analyze Mitigation and Include a Detailed Mitigation Plan

The Corps must accurately assess the full scope of adverse impacts to wetlands, streams, fish and wildlife, and other critical resources and include a detailed mitigation plan to compensate for those impacts. To comply with NEPA, the EIS must analyze mitigation measures with “sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated.”⁸¹ To comply with the Water Resources Development Acts, the EIS must meet the mitigation requirements established by 33 U.S.C. § 2283, including the requirement to develop a detailed mitigation plan.

At the most fundamental level, the 2018 Draft EIS did not properly assess mitigation because it did not meaningfully evaluate the full suite of adverse impacts of the Project. The 2018 Draft EIS also violates longstanding NEPA requirements by failing to discuss mitigation measures with “sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated”; failing to discuss the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation; and failing to demonstrate that the proposed mitigation will be ecologically successful.⁸²

NEPA requires that the EIS discuss mitigation measures “in sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated.”⁸³ A “perfunctory description” of the mitigating measures is not sufficient.⁸⁴ As the Supreme Court has noted, this is because:

omission of a reasonably complete discussion of possible mitigation measures would undermine the ‘action-forcing’ function of NEPA. Without such a discussion, neither the agency nor other interested groups and individuals can properly evaluate the severity of the adverse effects. An adverse effect than can be fully remedied by, for example, an

⁸¹ Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council, 490 U.S. 332, 352 (1989).

⁸² Id.

⁸³ Id.

⁸⁴ Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain v. U.S. Forest Service, 137 F.3d 1372, 1380 (9th Cir.1998).

inconsequential public expenditure is certainly not as serious as a similar effect that can only be modestly ameliorated through the commitment of vast public and private resources.⁸⁵

The EIS also must discuss the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation:

An essential component of a reasonably complete mitigation discussion is an assessment of whether the proposed mitigation measures can be effective. The Supreme Court has required a mitigation discussion precisely for the purpose of evaluating whether anticipated environmental impacts can be avoided. A mitigation discussion without at least *some* evaluation of effectiveness is useless in making that determination.⁸⁶

This should include a discussion of how the mitigation will effectively address temporal losses (i.e., it takes many years to restore a fully functioning, mature wetland and many decades to restore a fully functioning mature bottomland hardwood wetland forest). A bald assertion that mitigation will be successful is not sufficient. The effectiveness must instead be supported by “substantial evidence in the record.”⁸⁷

The Water Resources Development Acts require the Corps to mitigate the adverse impacts of the project.⁸⁸ The Corps is required to mitigate all losses to fish and wildlife created by a project unless the Secretary determines that the adverse impacts to fish and wildlife would be “negligible.”⁸⁹ To ensure that this happens, the Corps is prohibited from selecting a “project alternative in any report” unless that report includes a “specific plan to mitigate fish and wildlife losses.”⁹⁰

Corps mitigation plans must ensure that “impacts to bottomland hardwood forests are mitigated in-kind and harm to other habitat types are mitigated to not less than in-kind conditions, to the extent possible.”⁹¹ Mitigation plans “shall include, at a minimum:”

1. The type, amount, and characteristics of the habitat being restored, a description of the physical actions to be taken to carry out the restoration, and the functions and values that will be achieved;
2. The ecological success criteria, based on replacement of lost functions and values, that will be evaluated and used to determine mitigation success;

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ *South Fork Band Council v. Dept. of Interior*, 588 F.3d 718, 727 (9th Cir. 2009) (internal citations omitted).

⁸⁷ *Wyoming Outdoor Council v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng’rs*, 351 F. Supp. 2d 1232, 1252 (D. Wyo. 2005).

⁸⁸ The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 requires the Corps to implement mitigation, and comply with mitigation planning requirements, for any project for which the Corps “select[s] a project alternative in any report.” 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d). Thus, mitigation will be required for the Project as a matter of law upon issuance of the final EIS. The National Wildlife Federation also notes that the Corps’ civil works mitigation requirements are not tied to a determination that a civil works project has harmed wetlands or other waters deemed to be jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act.

⁸⁹ 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d)(1).

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d)(1).

3. A description of the lands and interest in lands to be acquired for mitigation, and the basis for determining that those lands will be available;
4. A mitigation monitoring plan that includes the cost and duration of monitoring, and identifies the entities responsible for monitoring if it is practicable to do so (if the responsible entity is not identified in the monitoring plan it must be identified in the project partnership agreement that is required for all Corps projects). Corps mitigation must be monitored until the monitoring demonstrates that the ecological success criteria established in the mitigation plan have been met; and
5. A contingency plan for taking corrective action in cases where monitoring shows that mitigation is not achieving ecological success as defined in the plan.⁹²

Corps mitigation plans must also comply with “the mitigation standards and policies established pursuant to the regulatory programs” administered by the Corps.⁹³

Corps mitigation must be monitored until the monitoring demonstrates that the ecological success criteria established in the mitigation plan have been met. The Corps is also required to consult yearly on each project with the appropriate Federal agencies and the states on the status of the mitigation efforts. The consultation must address the status of ecological success on the date of the consultation, the likelihood that the ecological success criteria will be met, the projected timeline for achieving that success, and any recommendations for improving the likelihood of success.⁹⁴

In addition, mitigation lands for Corps civil works projects must be purchased before any construction begins.⁹⁵ Any physical construction required for purposes of mitigation should also be undertaken prior to project construction but must, at the latest, be undertaken “concurrently with the physical construction of such project.”⁹⁶

E. The EIS Must Fundamentally Reexamine the Project’s Economic Costs and Benefits

If the EIS developed by the Corps continues to consider One Lake, it is essential that the Corps also develop a comprehensive assessment of the costs of constructing, operating, and maintaining One Lake, much of which will likely fall on the shoulders of the residents of Jackson. The 2018 Draft EIS vastly underestimates One Lake’s true costs, including by among other things, failing to fully account for the costs associated with:

- Removing or otherwise fully remediating up to 8 highly contaminated toxic sites.
- Replacing 9 large bridges, as required by the Mississippi Department of Transportation:

⁹² 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d).

⁹³ 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d).

⁹⁴ 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d).

⁹⁵ 33 U.S.C. § 2283(a).

⁹⁶ *Id.*

If the predicted scour depths occur, there will be catastrophic failure of all seven (7) of the main channel bridges mentioned above and the capacity of the relief bridges on SR 25 will be severely reduced. For this reason, all nine (9) bridges will need to be replaced and the cost to replace the nine (9) bridges should be reflected in the cost of the Pearl River Basin Federal Flood Risk Management Project.”⁹⁷

- Carrying out the mandatory mitigation and mitigation monitoring that would be required to offset the extensive harm to fish and wildlife, bottomland hardwood wetlands, other floodplain wetlands, and in-river habitats that will be destroyed and damaged should One Lake move forward.
- The quantified value of the ecosystem services that would be lost to One Lake, as required by the PR&G. See discussion below.
- The economic realities facing the Corps today, including the Congressionally-recognized fact that the “Corps has seen bids on important navigation and flood control projects come in at double or triple the previous cost estimates.”⁹⁸

The Corps should also include the ecosystem services values that would be gained through non-structural, natural and nature-based measures as a project benefit.

The March 2013 Principles and Requirements state that evaluation methods “should apply an ecosystem services approach in order to appropriately capture all effects (economic, environmental and social) associated with a potential Federal water resources investment.” The December 2014 Interagency Guidelines state that “Federal investment impacts on the environment or ecosystem may be understood in terms of changes in service flows. The process of identifying, evaluating, and comparing these changes provides a useful organizing framework to produce a complete accounting. **Reduced service flows over time amount to costs, and increased services flows over time amount to benefits.**” The Guidelines also state: “Agencies must provide an explicit list of the services that flow from the existing study area ecosystems and infrastructure (including operational plans) with identification of those services that are likely to meaningfully change within the larger context of the watershed because of the Federal investment.”

There are extensive, and well-established tools for the assessing ecosystem services provided by healthy natural systems, and these should be used by the Corps in developing the EIS.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Mississippi Department of Transportation Letter to the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood & Drainage Control District (September 5, 2018).

⁹⁸ House Committee Report, FY23 E&W Appropriations Bill at 7 (<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP00/20230622/116151/HMKP-118-AP00-20230622-SD003.pdf>).

⁹⁹ See e.g., Duke University, Nicholas Institute, [Valuing Ecosystem Services from Wetlands Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley](#). Earth Economics, [Gaining Ground: Wetlands, Hurricanes, and the Economy: The Value of Restoring the Mississippi River Delta](#). The National Wildlife Federation will supply additional ecosystem services valuation studies upon request.

F. The EIS Must Undergo Independent External Peer Review

The EIS must be reviewed under the Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) process required by 33 U.S.C. § 2343. We urge the Corps to immediately initiate the IEPR process and contract with the National Academies of Science to carry out the IEPR for the EIS.

While we recognize that an IEPR was carried out on the 2018 Draft EIS, the Corps has now initiated its own independent NEPA process (as evidenced by Federal Register Notice of Intent¹⁰⁰) that must include extensive new analyses to comply with federal planning requirements, and thus requires its own IEPR. Mandatory IEPR is clearly triggered as One Lake is a civil works project that will cost well over \$200 million and is unquestionably highly controversial.¹⁰¹ The project clearly satisfies both of the IEPR controversy triggers as: “there is a significant public dispute as to the size, nature, or effects of the project” and “there is a significant public dispute as to the economic or environmental costs or benefits of the project.”¹⁰²

As the Corps is aware, “in all cases” the IEPR review must be carried out concurrently with the project study and must be completed “not more than 60 days after the last day of the public comment period for the draft project study,” unless the Chief of Engineers determines that more time is necessary.¹⁰³ The Corps provides IEPR plans online, and is required by law to provide the public with information on the timing of the IEPR, the entity that has the contract for the IEPR review, and the names and qualifications of the IEPR panel members.¹⁰⁴

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¹⁰⁰ 88 Fed. Reg. 31738 (May 18, 2023).

¹⁰¹ 33 U.S.C. § 2343(a).

¹⁰² 33 U.S.C. § 2343 (a)(4).

¹⁰³ 33 U.S.C. §§ 2343(b) and 2343(d).

¹⁰⁴ 33 U.S.C. § 2343(c).

June 30, 2023

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Conclusion

For at least the reasons highlighted above, the National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps to reject the One Lake plan. In its place, the Corps should develop and select a new alternative that combines the use of carefully targeted river and floodplain restoration, levee setbacks, elevations, voluntary relocations, and other similar actions that in combination can reduce flood impacts while protecting people, water quality, and vital wildlife habitat.

Please reach out to me at 415-762-8264 or sametm@nwf.org if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment A:
Natural Infrastructure Success Stories

Attachment B:
National Wildlife Federation Comments on the 2018 Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS (submitted September 6, 2018).

Attachment A

National Wildlife Federation Scoping Comments
Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project
88 Fed. Reg. 31738 (May 18, 2023)

NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUCCESS STORIES

The projects highlighted below used natural infrastructure solutions—including ecosystem restoration, levee setbacks, and voluntary relocations—to protect communities and the environment.

Notably, wetlands prevented \$625 million in flood damages in the 12 coastal states affected by Hurricane Sandy and reduced damages by 20% to 30% in the four states with the greatest wetland coverage. During Hurricane Katrina, coastal wetlands reduced storm surge in some New Orleans neighborhoods by two to three feet, and levees with wetland buffers had a much greater chance of withstanding Katrina's fury than those levees without wetland buffers.

In the **Gulf Coast regions of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida**, nature-based solutions to reduce coastal flood risks are significantly more cost effective than structural solutions. A 2018 study shows that in this region, the average benefit-cost ratio for nature-based solutions is 3.5 while levees and dikes have a negative benefit-cost ratio of 0.26. Restoring wetlands could *prevent \$18.2 billion in losses* while costing just \$2 billion to carry out. Spending \$1.3 billion to restore oyster reefs could *prevent \$9.7 billion in losses*. Spending \$1.2 billion to restore barrier islands could *prevent \$5.9 billion in losses*.¹

In **southern California**, the Surfers' Point Managed Shoreline Retreat Project will restore is restoring 1,800 feet of shoreline with cobble beach and vegetated sand dunes east of the mouth of the Ventura River to "provide resilience and offset risk from sea level rise and storms for 50 years" while maintaining beach access and other coastal resources. Since the project began, Surfers' Point has become Ventura County's most visited beach. Even with only one of two phases completed, the restored beach and dunes withstood 2015-2016 winter high wave conditions without damage, while other locations such as the Ventura Pier and promenade were damaged and the Pierpont neighborhood east of the project site was inundated.²

In **northern California**, the Napa Valley Flood Control Project is using a community-developed "living river" plan to reduce flood damages along the flood-prone Napa River. This plan replaces the Corps' originally-proposed floodwalls and levees with terraced marshes, wider wetland barriers, and restored riparian zones. The Project will restore more than 650 acres of high-value tidal wetlands of the San Francisco Bay Estuary while protecting 2,700 homes, 350 businesses, and over 50 public properties from 100-year flood levels, saving \$26 million annually in flood damage costs.³ Though only partially complete, the project was credited for lowering flood levels by about 2 to 3 feet during the 2006 New Year's Day flood.

In **Florida**, the Corps is using wetland restoration in the Upper St. John's River floodplain to provide important flood damage reduction benefits. The backbone of this project is restoration of 200,000 acres of floodplain which will hold more than 500,000 acre-feet of water—enough to cover 86 square miles with 10 feet of water—and will accommodate surface water runoff from a more than 2,000 square mile area. The Corps predicts that this \$200 million project will reduce flood damages by \$215 million during a 100-year flood event, and provide average annual benefits of \$14 million. This project was authorized by Congress in 1986 to reduce flood damages along the river.



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In **Illinois**, a 2014 study conducted for the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision, found that natural systems are the least costly and most efficient way to control flooding. Wetlands in the seven-county Chicago metropolitan area provide an average \$22,000 of benefits per acre each year in water flow regulation. This study also found that watersheds with 30 percent wetland or lake areas saw flood peaks that were 60 to 80 percent lower than watersheds without such coverage, and that preventing building in floodplain areas could save an average of \$900 per acre per year in flood damages.⁴

In **Iowa**, the purchase of 12,000 acres in easements along the 45-mile Iowa River corridor saved local communities an estimated \$7.6 million in flood damages as of 2009. The easement purchase effort began after the historic 1993 floods when river communities in east-central Iowa recognized the need for a more effective approach to reducing flood damages.

In **Massachusetts**, a 1972 Corps study showed that upstream wetlands were playing a critical role in reducing flooding in the middle and upper reaches of the Charles River by storing millions of gallons of water and preventing \$17 million each year in flood damages. This led the Corps to preserve 8,000 floodplain acres to ensure future flood storage, at a cost of just one-tenth of the structural project it had previously planned to build. This approach was sanctioned by Congress in 1974 when it authorized the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area. These floodplain wetlands are credited with reducing major floods, including in 1979, 1982, and 2006. The Corps estimates that this project has prevented \$11.9 million in flood damages while providing recreational benefits valued at between \$3.2 and \$4.6 million.⁵

In **New York**, restoration of wetlands and lands adjacent to 19 stream corridors in Staten Island “successfully removed the scourge of regular flooding from southeastern Staten Island, while saving the City \$300 million in costs of constructing storm water sewers.”⁶ Some 400 acres of freshwater wetland and riparian stream habitat has been restored along 11 miles of stream corridors that collectively drain about one third of Staten Island’s land area. A 2018 study commissioned by the City of New York found that using “hybrid infrastructure” that combines nature, nature-based, and gray infrastructure together could save Howard Beach, Queens \$225 million in damages in a 100-year storm while also generating important ecosystem services.⁷

In **Oregon**, the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services restored 63 acres of wetland and floodplain habitat, restored 15 miles of Johnson Creek, and move structures out of high risk areas to reduce flood damages in the Johnson Creek neighborhood. In January 2012, when heavy rainfall caused Johnson Creek to rise two feet above its historic flood stage, the restored site held the floodwaters, keeping nearby homes dry and local businesses open. An ecosystem services valuation of the restored area found that the project would provide \$30 million in benefits (in 2004 dollars) over 100 years through avoided property and utility damages, avoided traffic delays, improved water and air quality, increased recreational opportunities, and healthy fish and wildlife habitat.⁸

In **Texas**, restoration of a 178-acre urban wetland—formerly an abandoned golf course—acted as a sponge to store 100 million gallons of water during Hurricane Harvey, protecting 150 homes in Houston’s Clear Lake community from serious flooding. This project will store up to a half billion gallons of water and protect up to 3,000 homes when it is completed in 2021.⁹



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In **Vermont**, a vast network of floodplains and wetlands, including those protected by 23 conservation easements protecting 2,148 acres of wetland along Otter Creek, saved Middlebury \$1.8 million in flood damages during Tropical Storm Irene, and between \$126,000 and \$450,000 during each of 10 other flood events. Just 30 miles upstream, in an area without such floodplain and wetland protections, Tropical Storm Irene caused extensive flooding to the city of Rutland.¹⁰

Endnotes

¹ Borja G. Reguero et al., "Comparing the Cost Effectiveness of Nature-Based and Coastal Adaptation: A Case Study from the Gulf Coast of the United States," PLoS ONE 13, no. 4 (April 11, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0192132>.

² Jean Judge et al., "Surfers' Point Managed Shoreline Retreat Project," in *Case Studies of Natural Shoreline Infrastructure in Coastal California: A Component of Identification of Natural Infrastructure Options for Adapting to Sea Level Rise (California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment)*. (The Nature Conservancy, 2017), 9-15, https://scc.ca.gov/files/2017/11/tnc_Natural-Shoreline-Case-Study_hi.pdf.

³ Napa County California website at <https://www.countyofnapa.org/1096/Creating-Flood-Protection>.

⁴ Will Allen, Ted Weber, and Jazmin Varela, *Green Infrastructure Vision: Version 2.3: Ecosystem Service Valuation*. (The Conservation Fund: 2014), 13-15, <https://datahub.cmap.illinois.gov/dataset/c303fd2e-beaf-4a75-a9ec-b27c6da49b69/resource/028c9b69-bb19-425e-bb92-3d33656bea4c/download/tcfcmagiv23ecosystemsfinalreport201412v2.pdf>.

⁵ American Rivers, *Unnatural Disasters, Natural Solutions: Lessons From The Flooding Of New Orleans* (2006) (Charles River Valley Natural Storage Area case study); and <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=0bf97d033a8642b18c2e8075d4b5ecfe>.

⁶ Cooper Union, Institute for Sustainable Design, *The Staten Island Bluebelt: A Study In Sustainable Water Management* (<http://cooper.edu/isd/news/waterwatch/statenisland>). These effort was started in 1990.

⁷ The Nature Conservancy, *Urban Coastal Resilience: Valuing Nature's Role*. (2015), <https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/urban-coastal-resilience.pdf>.

⁸ "Johnson Creek Restoration, Portland, Oregon," Naturally Resilient Communities, accessed November 12, 2019, <http://nrcsolutions.org/johnson-creek-restoration-portland-oregon/>.

⁹ Exploration Green, 2018, <https://www.explorationgreen.org/>.

¹⁰ Keri B. Watson, Ricketts T., Galford G., Polasky S., O'Niel-Dunne J., *Quantifying flood mitigation services: The economic value of Otter Creek wetlands and floodplains to Middlebury, VT*, Ecological Economics, Volume 130: 16-24 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2016.05.015>.



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Attachment B

National Wildlife Federation Scoping Comments
Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project
88 Fed. Reg. 31738 (May 18, 2023)

Comments on the
Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement
Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project
Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS
June 13, 2018

Submitted by
National Wildlife Federation

September 6, 2018

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The National Wildlife Federation appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments on the Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS (June 13, 2018) (the “DEIS”). The National Wildlife Federation strongly opposes the preferred alternative in the DEIS and urge the Corps of Engineers to develop and select an alternative that will protect communities and the ecological health of the Pearl River.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is the nation’s largest conservation education and advocacy organization. NWF has almost six million members and supporters and conservation affiliate organizations in forty-nine states and territories. NWF has a long history of advocating for the protection, restoration, and ecologically sound management of the Mississippi River. NWF also has a long history of working to modernize federal water resources planning to protect the nation’s rivers, wetlands, floodplains, and coasts and the fish and wildlife that depend on those vital resources.

General Comments

The Pearl River Project would cause massive and irreparable harm to the Pearl River ecosystem, expose people and wildlife to significant amounts of toxic exposure, reduce vital freshwater flows and water quality all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, encourage development of areas that will remain at high risk of flooding, and impose enormous financial costs on federal taxpayers and local communities. This Project must be rejected.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides an important framework for developing and selecting alternatives that would reduce these significant burdens. However, rather than taking advantage of NEPA to do this, the DEIS appears to have been formulated to justify selection of the dangerous and highly controversial One Lake plan. Among many other problems, the DEIS fails to evaluate a host of highly reasonable alternatives; fails to meaningfully evaluate the project’s adverse impacts to fish and wildlife, the environment, and public health and safety; and is scientifically unsound.

The National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps of Engineers and the non-Federal sponsor to reject the TSP and abandon the current study process. A meaningful consideration of a flood damage reduction project for the Pearl River requires development of a new and fundamentally different environmental impact statement that fully considers all potential impacts; evaluates all reasonable alternatives; and complies with Federal environmental laws and Corps of Engineers’ planning requirements, including meaningful public notice and comment. Critically, any such study should develop—and select—an alternative that will protect people, wildlife, and the environment by utilizing natural infrastructure and a combination of targeted non-structural measures.

Specific Comments

I. The Tentatively Selected Plan Must Be Rejected Because It Will Devastate the Environment and Harm Public Health and Safety

The National Wildlife Federation strongly opposes the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) because, among other things, it will cause irreparable harm to the environment, expose the public to high levels of toxins, reduce water quality, and induce development in areas at significant risk of flooding. As

discussed throughout these comments, the harm from the TSP, which “is the most environmental damaging plan”¹ evaluated be far greater than acknowledged in the DEIS.

Among other harm, the TSP will:

- Fundamentally and irreparable alter the Pearl River ecosystem. The TSP will construct a new low-head dam on the Pearl River and dredge 25 million cubic yards of sediment—enough to fill 7,500 Olympic size swimming pools. These combined actions will transform a 10 mile stretch of riverine ecosystem into a 1,900-acre impoundment. The dredged sediment will then be used to raise and build a number of large levees and bury floodplain habitat to create new land for development purposes.
- Destroy vital wildlife habitat, including wetlands, small streams, sloughs, and diverse instream habitats that also provide critical ecosystem services, including natural flood protection. The DEIS acknowledges that more than 2,500 acres of wildlife habitat, including at least 1,500 acres of vital bottomland hardwood wetlands, will be destroyed. An additional 1,900 acres of diverse in-stream riverine habitat and ecologically vital small streams will be destroyed and turned into an impoundment. Though not acknowledged by the DEIS even more habitat will be lost as the fundamental changes to the form and function of the Pearl River system play out over time, including reduction and elimination of natural floodplain inundation.
- Adversely affect hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, including numerous species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act or otherwise federally designated as at-risk, due to the habitat losses and fundamental transformation of the Pearl River ecosystem. As the U.S. Department of the Interior has advised, “[w]ildlife resources within the Pearl River Basin are dependent upon the diverse floral composition of associated forested wetlands” and “a higher percentage” of vertebrate wildlife species in the Basin “use bottomland hardwoods as primary habitat (habitat a species depends upon for reproduction and/or feeding during all or a portion of the year) than any other habitat type.”²
- Threaten the health and productivity of vital downstream habitats, including the Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf of Mexico, including by reducing freshwater flows below the new dam, particularly during traditional low flow periods. The Pearl River is a major source of freshwater to the Gulf of Mexico and such reductions in flow could alter water quality and coastal salinities, affect sediment transport, and increase saltwater intrusion upriver. This would threaten the health and productivity of many downstream habitats including more than 125,000 acres of existing—and mostly public—conservation lands such as Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, and Hancock County Coastal Preserve. Altered flows could also affect the already struggling oyster sector that relies on a well-balanced mix of fresh and salt water to ensure oyster survival and harvest.
- Expose people and fish and wildlife to high levels of toxins. The TSP’s extensive dredging will re-suspend contaminated sediments, and the TSP will impact at least three highly contaminated

¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 6 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

² U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 1 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

sites—a former creosote wood treatment facility and two unpermitted landfills. At least five additional contaminated sites, including one identified for federal Superfund cleanup, could also be affected.

- Impair water quality. The Project's large-scale dredging operations, major construction, and impoundment of a once free-flowing stretch of river, and large-scale destruction of wetlands that help filter pollutants will all adversely affect water quality and could facilitate harmful algal blooms. Project-induced changes in flow will also make it harder for downstream industrial and municipal facilities to meet their environmental permit discharge limits without installing costly new water treatment technologies, threatening water quality all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. More than one hundred downstream industrial users and municipalities in Mississippi and eight in Louisiana—including the sewage treatment plants for Jackson, Bogalusa and Pearl River as well as Georgia-Pacific and International Paper—depend on a reliable flow of freshwater from the Pearl River to meet their environmental permit discharge limits. The Project-induced future development will also increase runoff and cause other adverse impacts that will affect water quality.
- Induce development in areas that will remain at high risk of flooding, putting more people, homes, businesses, and properties at risk. The DEIS acknowledges that additional future development is both a goal and likely outcome of the TSP. This new development will occur in areas that will continue to have a high risk of flooding, including potentially catastrophic flooding when the TSP and/or existing levees overtop or fail. Under the best possible scenario, the TSP would only provide protection for the 100 year flood event and larger flood events will happen.

Because the TSP will cause irreparable harm to the functions of the Pearl River and its floodplain, it is clearly at odds with longstanding federal policy directing the protection of the nation's rivers, floodplains, and wetlands, including the National Water Resources Planning Policy established by Congress in 2007:

"It is the policy of the United States that all water resources projects" are to, among other things, "protect[] and restor[e] the functions of natural systems and mitigat[e] any unavoidable damage to natural systems."³

We also note that because the DEIS lacks so much fundamental information, including information on flood heights and levels and extent of inundation, it is not possible to assess whether the TSP will in fact provide the level of flood damage reduction that it claims.⁴

For these reasons and the many other reasons discussed throughout these comments, the TSP must be rejected. Any additional consideration of a flood damage reduction project for the Pearl River must be

³ 42 USC § 1962-3.

⁴ The DEIS also fundamentally misconstrues the existing project authorization. The DEIS states that: "Section, 3104 of WRDA 2007 Pearl River Basin, Mississippi. Authorizing construction of the NED plan, locally preferred plan, or a combination thereof, if environmentally acceptable and technically feasible." DEIS at 96. However, section 3104 of WRDA 2007 is actually much more restrictive. Due to the changes in the Project, including its significantly increased cost, new authorization will be required should the Corps of Engineers recommend construction of the TSP.

based on development of a fundamentally new draft EIS that: fully considers all potential impacts; evaluates all reasonable alternatives; and complies with Federal environmental laws and Corps of Engineers' planning requirements, including a new public notice and comment period. If such a study is pursued, the National Wildlife Federation urges the development and selection of an alternative utilizes natural infrastructure and a combination of targeted non-structural measures to protect people, wildlife, and the environment.

II. The DEIS Does Not Comply with the National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that an environmental impact statement identify the full scope of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of a proposed action and determine whether there are less environmentally damaging ways to achieve the project purpose. As discussed throughout these comments, the DEIS fails to satisfy these fundamental requirements.

A. The DEIS Purpose and Need Statement Does Not Comply with NEPA

An appropriate statement of Purpose and Need is crucially important to the adequacy of the DEIS because the Purpose and Need statement "delimit[s] the universe of the action's reasonable alternatives."⁵ This is because "[o]nly alternatives that accomplish the purposes of the proposed action are considered reasonable, and only reasonable alternatives require detailed study. . . ."⁶

As the Courts have long acknowledged:

"One obvious way for an agency to slip past the strictures of NEPA is to contrive a purpose so slender as to define competing "reasonable alternatives" out of consideration (and even out of existence). . . . If the agency constricts the definition of the project's purpose and thereby excludes what truly are reasonable alternatives, the EIS cannot fulfill its role. Nor can the agency satisfy the Act. 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(E)."⁷

⁵ *Citizens Against Burlington v. Busey*, 938 F.2d 190, 195 (D.C. Cir. 1991). See also *Wyoming v. U.S. Dep't of Agric.*, 661 F.3d 1209, 1244 (10th Cir. 2011) ("how the agency defines the purpose of the proposed action sets the contours for its exploration of available alternatives."); *Sierra Club v. U.S. Dep't of Transp.*, 310 F.Supp.2d 1168, 1192 (D. Nev. 2004) (citing *City of Carmel-By-The-Sea v. U.S. Dep't of Transp.*, 123 F.3d 1142, 1155 (9th Cir. 1997)).

⁶ *Webster v. U.S. Department of Agriculture*, 685 F.3d 411, 422 (4th Cir. 2012); *Methow Valley Citizens Council v. Regional Forester*, 833 F.2d 810, 815-16 (9th Cir. 1987).

⁷ *Simmons v. United States Army Corps of Eng'rs*, 120 F.3d 664, 666 (7th Cir. 1997). See also *City of Bridgeton v. FAA*, 212 F.3d 448, 458 (8th Cir. 2000); *City of Carmel-by-the-Sea v. United States Dep't of Transp.*, 123 F.3d 1142, 1155 (9th Cir. 1997) ("an agency cannot define its objectives in unreasonably narrow terms"); *Citizens Against Burlington, Inc. v. Busey*, 938 F.2d 190, 195-96 (D.C. Cir. 1991), *cert. denied*, 502 U.S. 994 (1991) ("an agency may not define the objectives of its action in terms so unreasonably narrow that only one alternative from among the environmentally benign ones in the agency's power would accomplish the goals of the agency's action"); *City of New York v. United States Dep't of Transp.*, 715 F.2d 732, 743 (2d Cir. 1983), *cert. denied*, 456 U.S. 1005 (1984) ("an agency will not be permitted to narrow the objective of its action artificially and thereby circumvent the requirement that relevant alternatives be considered"); *Methow Valley Citizens Council v. Regional Forester*, 833 F.2d 810, 815-16 (9th Cir. 1987) (impact statements must consider all reasonable alternatives that accomplish project purpose, but need not consider alternatives not reasonably related to purpose).

Accordingly, the Courts have made it clear that an agency may not define a project so narrowly that it “forecloses a reasonable consideration of alternatives”⁸ or makes the final EIS “a foreordained formality.”⁹

A proper statement of Purpose and Need must also consider “the views of Congress, expressed, to the extent that an agency can determine them, in the agency’s statutory authorization to act, **as well as in other Congressional directives.**”¹⁰ These other Congressional directives include many that require and/or promote the protection and restoration of the nation’s waters and fish and wildlife resources, including:

- (1) The National Water Resources Planning Policy established by Congress in 2007. This policy requires “all water resources projects” to protect and restore the functions of natural systems and to mitigate any unavoidable damage to natural systems. 42 U.S.C. § 1962-3.
- (2) The National Environmental Policy Act enacted in 1970. NEPA directs the “Federal Government to use all practicable means” to, among other things: (i) “fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;” (ii) ensure “safe, healthful, productive” surroundings for all Americans; and (iii) “attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.” 42 U.S.C. § 4331(b). NEPA states explicitly that the policies, regulations and laws of the United States “**shall** be interpreted and administered in accordance with the policies set forth in this Act.” 42 U.S.C. § 4332(1) (emphasis added). NEPA also explicitly states that “policies and goals set forth in this Act are supplementary to those set forth in existing authorizations of Federal agencies.” 42 U.S.C. § 4335.
- (3) The many statutory directives to protect the environment and fish and wildlife contained in the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, the Corps’ civil works mitigation requirements (33 U.S.C. § 2283(d)), and the Water Resources Development Act of 1990 that changed the Corps’ fundamental mission to “include environmental protection as one of the primary missions of the Corps of Engineers in planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining water resources projects.” 33 U.S.C. § 2316.
- (4) The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act enacted in 1958. The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act directs that “wildlife conservation shall receive equal consideration and be coordinated with

⁸ *Fuel Safe Washington v. Fed. Energy Regulatory Comm’n*, 389 F.3d 1313, 1324 (10th Cir. 2004) (quoting *Davis v. Mineta*, 302 F.3d 1104, 1119 (10th Cir. 2002); *Citizens’ Comm. To Save Our Canyons v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, 297 F.3d 1012, 1030 (10th Cir. 2002); *Friends of Southeast’s Future v. Morrison*, 153 F.3d 1059, 1066 (9th Cir. 1998) (“An agency may not define the objectives of its action in terms so unreasonably narrow that only one alternative from among the environmentally benign ones in the agency’s power would accomplish the goals of the agency’s action”.); *Simmons v. United States Army Corps of Eng’rs*, 120 F.3d 664, 666 (7th Cir. 1997); *City of New York v. United States Dep’t of Transp.*, 715 F.2d 732, 743 (2^d Cir. 1983), *cert. denied*, 456 U.S. 1005 (1984) ((holding that “an agency may not narrow the objective of its action artificially and thereby circumvent the requirement that relevant alternatives be considered); *Citizens Against Burlington, Inc. v. Busey*, 938 F.2d 190, 196 (D.C. Cir. 1991), *cert. denied* 502 U.S. 994 (1991).

⁹ *City of Bridgeton v. FAA*, 212 F.3d 448, 458 (8th Cir. 2000) (quoting *Citizens Against Burlington, Inc. v. Busey*, 938 F.2d 190, 196 (D.C. Cir. 1991), *cert. denied* 502 U.S. 994 (1991); citing *Simmons v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng’rs*, 120 F.3d 664, 666 (7th Cir. 1997)).

¹⁰ *Citizens Against Burlington, Inc. v. Busey*, 938 F.2d 190, 196 (D.C. Cir. 1991) (emphasis added).

other features of water-resource development,” and that water resources development is to prevent loss and damage to fish and wildlife and improve the health of fish and wildlife resources. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 661, 662. See Section IV of these comments for a more detailed discussion of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and its applicability to the Project.

Corps regulations in place since 1980 also make it clear that environmental protection and enhancement of the environment must be considered during the planning, construction and operation of projects:

“Laws, executive orders, and national policies promulgated in the past decade require that the quality of the environment be protected and, where possible, enhanced as the nation grows. . . . **Enhancement of the environment is an objective of Federal water resource programs to be considered in the planning, design, construction, and operation and maintenance of projects.** Opportunities for enhancement of the environment are sought through each of the above phases of project development. Specific considerations may include, but are not limited to, **actions to preserve or enhance critical habitat for fish and wildlife; maintain or enhance water quality; improve streamflow;** preservation and restoration of certain cultural resources, and **the preservation or creation of wetlands.”**

33 C.F.R. § 236.4 (emphasis added).

The DEIS utilizes the following statement of Purpose: “to provide a recommendation for federal participation in Pearl River Mississippi, flood risk management along the Pearl River in Hinds and Rankin Counties.” DEIS at 5. The DEIS statement of Need only discusses flood risks.

This Purpose and Need statement violates NEPA because it is: (1) so narrowly drawn that it effectively limits the analysis of alternatives to only those that will result in a federal project focused solely on flood risk; and (2) fails to incorporate the critically important Congressional directives mandating protection and restoration of fish, wildlife, and the environment as key objectives of water resources planning.¹¹

To correct these failings, the National Wildlife Federation recommends adoption of the following, legally appropriate, Purpose and Need statement that would help ensure consideration of important and fully reasonable alternatives:

The purpose of the Project is to reduce flood damages in the Jackson Metropolitan Statistical Area while protecting and restoring the ecological health of the Pearl River and its floodplain.

The need for this Project includes, the need to:

- (1) Improve the degraded conditions of the Pearl River and its floodplain;
- (2) Protect and restore important and diverse in-stream habitats;
- (3) Restore as much of the natural functions of the Pearl River as possible;
- (4) Conserve and restore populations of fish and wildlife species, including federally listed and at-risk species;
- (5) Reduce the risks of exposure to contaminated materials and the resuspension of toxic sediments;
- (6) Reduce the risk of flood damages; and

¹¹ See *Citizens Against Burlington, Inc. v. Busey*, 938 F.2d 190, 196 (D.C. Cir. 1991).

(7) Ensure full compliance with Federal laws and policies.

B. The DEIS Alternatives Analysis Does Not Comply with NEPA

The DEIS fails to satisfy NEPA's critically important and longstanding requirements for conducting an adequate analysis of alternatives which is the "heart of the environmental impact statement."¹²

NEPA requires that each EIS "[r]igorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives."¹³ This requires a **"thorough consideration of all appropriate methods of accomplishing the aim of the action"** and an **"intense consideration of other more ecologically sound courses of action."**¹⁴ Importantly, "the discussion of alternatives must be undertaken in good faith; it is not to be employed to justify a decision already reached."¹⁵

While an EIS need not explore every conceivable alternative, it must rigorously explore all reasonable alternatives that are consistent with its basic policy objective and that are not remote or speculative. A viable but unexamined alternative renders an EIS inadequate.¹⁶ An alternative may not be disregarded merely because it does not offer a complete solution to the problem.¹⁷ An alternative also may not be disregarded because it would require additional Congressional authorization. To the contrary, the alternatives analysis must "[i]nclude reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency."¹⁸

In comparing and analyzing potential alternatives, the DEIS must examine, among other things, the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the different alternatives, the conservation potential of those alternatives, and the means to mitigate adverse environmental impacts. 40 C.F.R. § 1502.16. A robust analysis of project impacts is essential for determining whether less environmentally damaging alternatives are available.

These steps are critical for ensuring that that an EIS conducts an "informed and meaningful" consideration of the alternatives, as required by law:

"NEPA's requirement that alternatives be studied, developed, and described both guides the substance of environmental decisionmaking and provides evidence that the mandated decisionmaking process has actually taken place. "Informed and meaningful consideration of

¹² 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14.

¹³ 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14.

¹⁴ *Environmental Defense Fund, Inc. v. Corps of Engineers of U.S. Army*, 492 F.2d 1123, 1135 (5th Cir. 1974) (emphasis added).

¹⁵ *Citizens Against Toxic Sprays, Inc. v. Bergland*, 428 F.Supp. 908, 933 (D.Or. 1977).

¹⁶ *E.g. Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F.3d 800, 810, 814 (9th Cir. 1999).

¹⁷ *Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. v. Morton*, 458 F.2d 827, 836 (D.C. Cir. 1972).

¹⁸ 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(c); *Natural Resources Defense Council v. Morton*, 458 F.2d 827, 834-36 (D.C. Cir. 1972) (alternative sources of energy had to be discussed, despite federal legislation indicating an urgent need for offshore leasing and mandating import quotas; Department of Interior had to consider reasonable alternatives to offshore oil lease which would reduce or eliminate the need for offshore exploration, such as increased nuclear energy development and changing natural gas pricing, even though that would require Congressional action); *Environmental Defense Fund v. Froehlke*, 473 F.2d 346 (8th Cir. 1974) (acquisition of land to mitigate loss of land from river channel project must be considered even though it would require legislative action).

alternatives – including the no action alternative – is . . . an integral part of the statutory scheme.¹⁹

As discussed below, the DEIS alternatives analysis violates NEPA because it: (1) fails to evaluate highly reasonable alternatives; and (2) fails to provide an informed and meaningful consideration of the alternatives that it does evaluate, including by failing to meaningfully evaluate the alternatives' direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts.

The DEIS also fails to identify the environmentally preferable alternative. Any Record of Decision for the final EIS for the Project would be required to identify the “environmentally preferable” alternative and agencies are encouraged to identify the environmentally preferable alternative in the EIS.²⁰ The environmentally preferable alternative is:

“the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101. Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.”²¹

Identification of the environmentally preferable alternative is critical so that the public and decision makers can fully assess the appropriateness of the preferred alternative:

“Through the identification of the environmentally preferable alternative, the decisionmaker is clearly faced with a choice between that alternative and others, and must consider whether the decision accords with the Congressionally declared policies of the [National Environmental Policy] Act.”²²

The DEIS, however, does not identify the environmentally preferable alternative, which based on the information provided in the DEIS would either be the No Action alternative or the Non-Structural alternative since neither would result in any of the extensive array of adverse impacts and neither would require compensatory mitigation. Instead, as noted by the Department of the Interior²³ and as clearly evident, the DEIS selects the most environmentally damaging alternative as the TSP.

1. The DEIS Does Not Evaluate Highly Reasonable Alternatives

The DEIS clearly violates NEPA because it fails to evaluate highly reasonable alternatives to determine whether there are less damaging ways to achieve the project purpose. A viable but unexamined alternative renders an EIS inadequate.²⁴ The DEIS also violates NEPA because it fails to look at an

¹⁹ *Bob Marshall Alliance v Hodel*, 852 F.2d 1223, 1228 (9th Cir. 1988) (internal citations omitted).

²⁰ 40 C.F.R. § 1505.2.

²¹ CEQ Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations, 46 Fed. Reg. 18026 (March 23, 1981), as amended, Question 6.

²² *Id.*

²³ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 6 (August 16, 2018).

²⁴ *E.g. Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F.3d 800, 810, 814 (9th Cir. 1999).

appropriate range of alternatives.²⁵ The greater the impacts and scope of the proposed action, the greater the range of alternatives that must be considered.²⁶

For example, the DEIS fails to consider the following alternatives:

- (1) An alternative that utilizes restoration activities to reduce flood damages in the project area while also improving the ecological health and resiliency of the Pearl River, its floodplain, and the fish and wildlife species that rely on those resources. Flood damage reduction benefits can be achieved through, among other things, restoring the Pearl River floodplain wetlands, restoring wetlands along upstream tributaries, and restoring the in-stream functions of the Pearl River and its tributaries.²⁷
- (2) An alternative that utilizes a combination of restoration activities in conjunction with targeted buy-outs, targeted flood-proofing, and appropriate levee setbacks.
- (3) An alternative that utilizes a combination of targeted buy-outs, targeted flood-proofing, and appropriate levee setbacks.
- (4) An alternative that examines levee setbacks and floodplain restoration at highly constricted areas along the Pearl River, including the levee setbacks from RM 288 to RM 291 identified in the TSP and floodplain restoration between RM 284 and RM 290.
- (5) An alternative that examines options to address any unaddressed root causes of the 1979 Flood as identified in the report by the Comptroller General of the United States, entitled *Improvements Being Made In Flood Fighting Capabilities in the Jackson, Mississippi, Area*, CED-80-36 (December 18, 1979).
- (6) An alternative that examines options for changes to the operation of the Ross Barnett Reservoir to aid in flood damage reduction, both as a stand-alone alternative and in combination with other alternatives.

None of these were assessed in the DEIS.

The single nonstructural alternative carried through beyond the initial screening of alternatives did not examine combinations of different non-structural measures, and did not consider targeted nonstructural measures. Instead, it only considered buying out every single structure located in the 100 year

²⁵ *E.g. Resources Ltd., Inc. v. Robertson*, 35 F.3d 1300, 1307 (9th Cir. 1993).

²⁶ *Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism v. Morrison*, 67 F.3d 723, 729 (9th Cir. 1995); see *Sierra Club v. Espy*, 38 F.3d 792, 803 (5th Cir. 1994) (the range of alternatives that must be considered in an environmental assessment decreases as the environmental impact of the proposed action becomes less and less substantial).

²⁷ Natural infrastructure has a demonstrated track record of providing vital flood damage reduction benefits. For example, Wetlands prevented \$625 million in flood damages in the 12 coastal states affected by Hurricane Sandy and reduced damages by 20% to 30% in the four states with the greatest wetland coverage. Narayan, S., Beck, M.B., Wilson, P., et al., *The Value of Coastal Wetlands for Flood Damage Reduction in the Northeastern USA*. Scientific Reports 7, Article number 9463 (2017), doi:10.1038/s41598-017-09269-z (available at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-017-09269-z>). Additional examples of natural infrastructure and non-structural measure successes in reducing flood damages and improving ecosystem health are provided at Attachment A to these comments.

floodplain of the project area. Appendix A at 9-10. According to the DEIS, this would entail buying out 3,100 structures, including residential structures, commercial structures, government and public buildings, schools, and hospitals.” E.g., DEIS at 101, 132, 145, Appendix A at 10.

Notably, this “all-or-nothing” alternative was in fact rejected during the preliminary screening phase, making its inclusion in the DEIS meaningless window dressing. DEIS, Appendix A at 10. Other single focused nonstructural measures—including smaller buyouts—were also rejected during the preliminary screening phase. The discussion of these other nonstructural alternatives is highly limited, collectively covering just 2 pages. DEIS, Appendix A at 10-12.

To comply with NEPA, the DEIS must rigorously explore and objectively evaluate a full range of alternatives, including the highly reasonable alternatives outlined above, that will improve ecological conditions while also reducing flood damages.

2. The Alternatives Analysis Appears Designed To Justify The Pre-Selected TSP

As noted above, “the discussion of alternatives must be undertaken in good faith; it is not to be employed to justify a decision already reached.”²⁸ Regrettably, however, the alternatives analysis appears to have been developed to do just that.

Critically, the alternatives appear to have been developed in such a way that the TSP would be the only economically viable alternative. The non-TSP alternatives in the DEIS appear to include unnecessary elements that significantly increase their costs, while the costs of the TSP appears to be significantly understated.

Alternative A (Buy Out): Alternative A would buy-out every single structure located in the Project Area’s 100 year floodplain, which according to the DEIS would require a buy-out of 3,100 structures that include “residential structures, commercial structures, government and public buildings, schools, and hospitals.” DEIS at 113-114; E.g., DEIS at 101, 132, 145, Appendix A at 9-10.

The few paragraphs that describe the actions that would be carried out under Alternative A: (1) do not include any type of meaningful explanation as to why it would be necessary or appropriate to buy-out every single structure in the 100-year floodplain; (2) do not include any information on how the number of structures was calculated; and (3) do not provide any information on how the potential cost of buying out those structures was calculated. See DEIS at 113-114, Appendix A at (9-10).

Not surprisingly, this “all-or-nothing” buy-out alternative was rejected in the preliminary screening stage based solely on cost considerations, making its inclusion in the DEIS meaningless window dressing. See, e.g., DEIS at ix (“Although logistics and costs render it an impractical alternative, the measure of relocation structures (buy-out) was carried forward in the final array of alternatives in order to comply with the USACE EP 1165-2-1 requirement that a standalone non-structural alternative be considered through the entire process.”); DEIS at 113 (“reference to this alternative in future discussions will be limited.”). Notably, the DEIS does recognize that the cost of acquiring the structures at highest risk—those impacted by the 2% exceedance flood (i.e., the 50 year flood) “would be low.” DEIS, Appendix A at 11. Despite the significantly lower cost and high benefits, this alternative was also eliminated at the preliminary screening stage and was not carried forward into the DEIS. DEIS, Appendix A at 11.

²⁸ *Citizens Against Toxic Sprays, Inc. v. Bergland*, 428 F.Supp. 908, 933 (D.Or. 1977).

A meaningful analysis of a non-structural alternative would carefully assess a combination of non-structural measures that could be utilized to provide flood damage reduction benefits, including such things as a combination of targeted buyouts for repetitive loss properties in conjunction with targeted flood-proofing, appropriate levee setbacks, and natural infrastructure measures (floodplain, wetland, and stream restoration both along the Pearl River and in tributaries upstream).

Alternative B (Levee Plan): Alternative B also appears to include elements that were not, and likely cannot be, justified in order to support a pre-ordained decision to reject this alternative.

Alternative B includes construction of seven pumping stations that add \$311.6 million to the initial costs of this Alternative—significantly more than the cost of the levees and almost half of the cost of the entire Alternative B. DEIS, Appendix C at 7 (the pumping plants are estimated to cost \$181.99 million plus a risk contingency of \$129.62 million; the levees alone are estimated to cost \$135.36 million plus a risk contingency of \$100.07 million). Notably, the 2007 study on the Project did not include pumping plants in the levee plan, and “previous Corps studies found that pumping facilities (i.e., plants) were not economically justified, with costs exceeding benefits by at least an 8 to 1 margin for each of the pump areas (1994 USACE draft Feasibility Study).”²⁹

The DEIS does not explain why the pumping facilities are now justified and provides only the following cursory and unsupported statements regarding the “need” for the pumping plants:

- “From updated interior analysis, it appears levees without pumps will put property in low areas behind levees at an unreasonable level of flood risk.” DEIS, Appendix A at 34-35.
- “Also, pumps were not proposed in the 2007 draft report. When levees are placed across streams and drainage ways, the risk of flooding is created because closing the gates leaves no exit route for drainage behind the levees. Pumps are typically needed to insure that levee obstructions do not increase flooding. Pumps to move water over the levees would make the alternative more effectual by reducing the risk of flooding behind the levees from interior drainage; however, pumps can drive the costs up considerably. From updated interior analysis, it appears that levees without pumps will put property behind the levees at an unreasonable risk of flooding in low lying areas behind levees. Without pumps, flood events on the Pearl River are highly likely to result in ponding behind the levees.” DEIS at 33.
- “Although pumps were not included in the preliminary draft plan of 2007, no interior analysis was performed to determine impacts of levees without pumps at these locations. Updated information and analysis of interior areas presented significant impacts and risk associated with levees without pumps.” DEIS at 175.

The National Wildlife Federation was unable to locate any information in the DEIS or Appendices that identified the specific “updated interior” study, or explained or quantified the contents of that study. Without this information, it is impossible for the public or decision makers to determine whether or not the pumping plants are in fact a necessary component of Alternative B.

²⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 11 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

Alternative C (Channel Improvements Plan): While the other alternatives appear to include unnecessary components that significantly increase costs, Alternative C significantly understates the costs association with its implementation. For example:

- The DEIS vastly understates the costs of remediating the three contaminated sites that will be impacted by the TSP and does not discuss the potential clean-up costs that would be required if the TSP in fact impacts any of the other five highly contaminated sites in and near the Project area. The only potential clean-up costs identified in the TSP are \$8 million (or \$12.8 million with contingencies) for "landfill excavating/lining" associated with levee construction. DEIS, Appendix C at 13. Remediation of contaminated sites will be a critical prerequisite to project construction and will require much more work than "landfill excavating/lining."

For comparison, a relatively straight forward clean-up of a 22 acre Southeastern Wood Treating Plant Superfund site, which essentially consists of one ditch located along Batchelor Creek in Canton, MS, is estimated to cost \$18 million. The National Wildlife Federation understands that the costs of cleaning up the contaminated sites that will be affected by the TSP will be vastly higher – likely in the range of hundreds of millions of dollars – because the clean-ups will be more extensive and more complicated. For example, the highly contaminated Jackson Creosote Slough covers 141 acres of mostly wetlands and oxbow lakes. Remediation of this site will require an extensive and complicated clean-up effort that will involve excavation, construction of slurry walls, clay caps, liners, and groundwater extraction wells among other things. The costs of transporting contaminated soil by rail car for disposal can cost upwards of \$500/ton.

- The DEIS does not include any costs associated with critical testing for contaminated sediments, the special dredging techniques and equipment required to safely remove contaminated sediments, or the costs for properly disposing of contaminated sediments. As noted above, the costs of transporting contaminated soil by rail car for disposal can cost upwards of \$500/ton. Proper testing, dredging, and disposal of toxic sediments will add significant costs to the TSP.
- The DEIS vastly understates the costs of mitigation for the Project, including by understating the impacts of the TSP, failing to propose mitigation to address all fish and wildlife impacts as required by law, failing to account for the costs needed to ensure wetland hydrology as part of its mitigation plans, and failing to prepare and account for the full costs of implementing the specific mitigation plan that is required by law for this Project. The DEIS also fails to provide any justification or explanation for the mitigation costs it does include. Necessary mitigation is discussed in detail below.

C. The DEIS Impacts Analysis Does Not Comply With NEPA

In comparing and analyzing potential alternatives, the DEIS must examine the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the different alternatives, the conservation potential of those alternatives, and the means to mitigate adverse environmental impacts. 40 C.F.R. § 1502.16. A robust analysis of project impacts is essential for determining whether less environmentally damaging alternatives are available.

Direct impacts are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place as the action. Indirect impacts are also caused by the action, but are later in time or farther removed from the location of the action. 40 C.F.R. § 1508.8. Cumulative impacts are:

“the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.”

40 C.F.R. § 1508.7. A cumulative impact analysis ensures that the agency will not “treat the identified environmental concern in a vacuum.”³⁰ All “reasonably foreseeable” direct, indirect and cumulative environmental impacts must be analyzed.³¹ “If it is reasonably possible to analyze the environmental consequences in an EIS...the agency is required to perform that analysis.”³²

An EIS must utilize “quantified or detailed information” when analyzing impacts.³³ The DEIS may not rely “on conclusory statements unsupported by data, authorities, or explanatory information.”³⁴ This is because:

“A conclusory statement unsupported by empirical or experimental data, scientific authorities, or explanatory information of any kind not only fails to crystalize the issues, but affords no basis for a comparison of the problems involved with the proposed project and the difficulties involved in the alternatives.”³⁵

Accordingly, the DEIS must supply supporting data and authorities, and explain how and why it has drawn the conclusion it has reached. “General discussion of an environmental problem over a large area” also is not sufficient and cannot satisfy NEPA.³⁶

³⁰ *Grand Canyon Trust v. FAA*, 290 F.3d 339, 346 (D.C. Cir. 2002).

³¹ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.8.

³² *Kern v. U.S. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 284 F.3d 1062, 1072 (9th Cir. 2002).

³³ *Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain v. U. S. Forest Service*, 137 F.3d 1372, 1379 (9th Cir. 1998); *Ecology Center v. Castaneda*, 574 F.3d 652, 666 (9th Cir. 2009) (requiring “quantified or detailed data”); *Natural Resources Defense Council v. Callaway*, 524 F.2d 79, 87 (2d Cir. 1975).

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Seattle Audubon Society v. Moseley*, 798 F. Supp. 1473, 1479 (W.D. Wash. 1992), *aff’d* 998 F.2d (9th Cir. 1993); *see also, e.g., Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Ctr. v. BLM*, 387 F.3d 989, 995-996 (9th Cir. 2004) (“generalized or conclusory statements” in cumulative effects analyses do not satisfy NEPA); *Friends of the Earth v. Army Corps of Engineers*, 109 F. Supp. 2d 30, 38 (D.D.C. 2000) (ruling that the Corps must “provide further analysis” to satisfy NEPA because the Corps did not provide “the basis for any” of its claims that the project would have an insignificant impact or that fish and other organisms would simply move to other areas); *Sierra Club v. Norton*, 207 F. Supp. 2d 1310, 1335 (S.D. Ala. 2002) (stating “Defendant’s argument in this case would turn NEPA on its head, making ignorance into a powerful factor in favor of immediate action where the agency lacks sufficient data to conclusively show not only that proposed action would harm an endangered species, but that the harm would prove to be ‘significant’”).

³⁶ *South Fork Band Council v. U.S. Dept. of Interior*, 588 F.3d 718 (9th Cir. 2009); *Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain v. U.S. Forest Service*, 137 F.3d 1372, 1379-80 (9th Cir. 1998).

An EIS also must be based on “high quality” science and information and the agency preparing the EIS must “insure professional integrity, including scientific integrity, of the discussions and analysis in environmental impact statements.”³⁷ Importantly, if information that is essential for making a reasoned choice among alternatives is not available, the agency must obtain that information unless the costs of doing so would be “exorbitant.”³⁸

The Corps must also candidly disclose the risks of its proposed action and respond to adverse opinions held by respected scientists:³⁹

“‘Where scientists disagree about possible adverse environmental effect, the EIS must inform decision-makers of the full range of responsible opinion on the environmental effects.’ Where the agency fails to acknowledge the opinions held by well respected scientists concerning the hazards of the proposed action, the EIS is fatally deficient.”⁴⁰

It is not sufficient to include the statements of independent experts, including the Independent External Peer Review panel, in an Appendix or some other document. The expert comments must be included and appropriately responded to in the impacts section of the DEIS.⁴¹

As discussed below and throughout these comments, the DEIS violates these fundamental NEPA requirements.

1. The DEIS Lacks Scientific Integrity

The DEIS lacks scientific integrity. Among other problems the DEIS: fails to include and assess vital existing data and scientific analyses; fails to obtain information that is critical to making a reasoned choice among alternatives—including for areas where there are significant data gaps; draws contradictory conclusions; fails to justify its conclusions; and fails to provide data sources, survey and study methods and results, and needed citations to scientific literature. All scientific methods and data used for decision making should be explained and detailed; and the studies, models, and data used must be made available to the public and decision-makers so it can properly be vetted. Without this information, the public cannot know if data were properly applied and interpreted and cannot verify that acceptable and logical conclusions were reached.

The following are just some examples of these failings:

1. DEIS at 61, line 32 to DEIS at 63, line 16: To fill in the “sparse” water quality data for the Study Area, the non-Federal sponsor collected some additional water quality samples during two sampling periods in July 2014. Sampling one month of one year for water quality data is a highly improper sampling regime that, among other problems, cannot account for critically

³⁷ 40 C.F.R. § 1502.24 (“Agencies shall insure professional integrity, including scientific integrity, of the discussions and analysis in environmental impact statements”); *Earth Island Inst. v. U.S. Forest Service*, 442 F.3d 1147, 1159-60 (9th Cir. 2006) (quoting 40 CFR §1502.24).

³⁸ 40 C.F.R. § 1502.22.

³⁹ *Seattle Audubon Soc’y v. Mosely*, 798 F.Supp. 1473, 1482 (W.D. Wash. 1992) (citing *Friends of the Earth v. Hall*, 693 F.Supp. 904, 934, 937 (W.D.Wash. 1988)).

⁴⁰ *Friends of the Earth v. Hall*, 693 F. Supp. 904, 934 (W.D. Wash. 1988) (citations omitted).

⁴¹ *Id.*

important seasonal and yearly variations. As noted at DEIS page 65, an appropriate assessment of water quality data can only be conducted if the data complies with the CALM requirements, which among other things requires collection of samples during multiple sampling periods over multi-year periods.

2. DEIS at 65, line 30 to DEIS at 66, line 1: States that the current water quality data do not meet the requirements needed for a “rigorous assessment of the water quality status of the Pearl River near Jackson” but nevertheless concludes that a review of the water quality data collected “shows that the river water quality typically meets the criteria for the parameters that are measured.” This conclusion, however, is contradicted by the list of the Pearl River on the 2008 § 305(b) list for total nitrogen and total phosphorus and the development and then updating of TMDLs for this segment of the river. According to the DEIS at 65, the 2014 TMDL calls for a 70% reduction in total phosphorus and a 30% reduction in total nitrogen entering the river from all sources. In addition, the DEIS does not consider water quality downstream. The Louisiana 2016 list of impaired waters lists the Pearl River as impaired for sulfates for “sources outside of their jurisdiction” which most likely means Mississippi.
3. DEIS at 70, line 14: Acknowledges that only a “limited geomorphic assessment was conducted for the Project Area” despite the fundamental changes that the TSP will cause to the form and function of the Pearl River system. A comprehensive geomorphic assessment that also assess downstream changes caused by the Project is critical for under the full suite of impacts of the TSP. Moreover, this “limited” assessment is itself rife with problems, including those identified throughout these comments.
4. DEIS at 73, lines 10-18 (“Planform Geometry”): References historical photography from two periods without providing the time periods covered, or why that review justified a conclusion of low-to moderate channel migration during the 1990s. References a “ cursory inspection of earlier aerial photography” without describing what that means or providing a justification for why such a cursory review could appropriately be used to draw any type of conclusion.
5. DEIS at 73, lines 19-24 (“Cross Sectional Area”): References cross section surveys at bridge crossings without providing the location of the survey, the time period, the data obtained, or any justification for the conclusion that “there does not appear to be any significant degradation or aggradation.”
6. DEIS at 74, lines 9-19 (“Channel Erosion”): Provides an estimated erosion rate without providing the data sources used to reach this estimate, identifying what aerial photography was used and compared and for what years, and without providing how determinations made regarding sands and clays.
7. DEIS at 74, lines 20-29 (“Tributary Inputs of Sediment”): Discusses a “limited investigation of tributaries” without providing any information on the dates, locations, methods used, data obtained, or justification for the conclusions drawn.

8. DEIS at 74, line 30 to DEIS at 75 line 4 ("Watershed"): States that a detailed analysis of sediment delivery from the watershed was not conducted for the DEIS. Instead a general estimate of sediment delivery was made based on data from 1979 (or earlier) despite the fact that the 1979 data did not include any urban areas similar to the Study Area. Also reached a conclusion on an estimated sediment yield based on this data without providing a justification for the estimate or the underlying data used to justify the estimate. Sediment yields based on 40 year old data for areas with dissimilar land use cannot provide an accurate estimate of sediment yields for the TSP.
9. DEIS at 78, lines 19-20: References "the most recent surveys and studies" without providing any information on those surveys and studies, including the locations, dates, methods used, data obtained, or citations for those surveys and studies.
10. DEIS at 79, lines 4-10: States that the "quality of the fisheries habitats within the Pearl River through the Project Area has been significantly degraded due to siltation and other adverse impacts associated with past flood control projects completed within the area. As urban growth continues in the Study Area, the habitats of fish and other aquatic organisms may be further reduced, unless preservation measures are undertaken by local interests." This conclusion directly contradicts: (1) the conclusions at DEIS 73-74 the DEIS that there have not been any significant change due to sedimentation (including no changes to cross sections) and that there does not appear to be any excess sedimentation in the Pearl River; and (2) the conclusion at DEIS 78, lines 12-14 that "for the most part, the fishery resources within the watershed are considered to be of high quality and a testament to the overall health and water quality conditions with the river system."
11. DEIS at 82, lines 5-10: References the collection of bald eagle data without providing the times of year that the data was collected.
12. DEIS at 84, lines 31-36: References survey information on the Pearl Darter without providing citation to the surveys, the dates the survey was conducted, the areas covered by the survey, the methods used, or the data obtained.
13. DEIS at 85, lines 6-8: States that no federally listed plant species were observed during field studies without providing information on when, how, or where the field surveys were done and without providing any information on the data from those studies.
14. DEIS at 86, line 24: References a Cultural Resources Survey without providing a reference or citation to that survey.
15. DEIS at 170, lines 20-26: References rainfall in the basin, states that 33% is typically runoff, refers to a 1.1% rate of potential water losses downstream, and concludes that this loss could be less than 50% of this amount by the time it reaches Lake Borgne without providing any sources or citations for this data, or justification for these calculations and conclusions.

16. DEIS at 175, lines 25-31: References a “review” of tributaries and draws numerous conclusions regarding flood profiles without providing any information on the locations or conditions present during the “review”, a citation for the review, the methods used to conduct the review, the data collected during the review, or the justifications for the conclusions drawn.
17. DEIS at 177, lines 15-24: References “a more detailed analysis” being carried out which is then referred to as “preliminary assessment” on channel stability for Alternative C without providing any information on the location of the assessment, the methodology used for the assessment, the data collected from the assessment, the model used in the assessment, or the justifications for the conclusion that potential sediment issues “do not appear to be unmanageable, and a sediment management plan can be developed that will be feasible from an engineering, economic, and environmental perspective.”
18. DEIS at 177, lines 27-28 and 30-31: Concludes that cumulative impacts “to erosion and sedimentation can be confined in a small reach within the project limits” and that “[d]ownstream sedimentation and erosion are not seen as a long term concern when compare with other existing projects in the area” without providing any data, analysis, justification, or citation to studies to support these conclusions; without providing any information on the “small reach” in the project area; and without providing any information on the “other existing projects” referred to or the rates of sedimentation and erosion at those sites.
19. DEIS at 181, lines 21-23: Concludes that “[c]onversion of habitats and removal of vegetation across the watershed in general has not been significant and future conversion activity throughout the watershed is not anticipated” without providing any data, analysis, justification, or citation to studies to support these conclusions. This conclusion is also contradicted by findings in Appendix D at page 10 of the Wetlands Delineation and Determination Report: “Much of the proposed project area is influenced heavily by the adjoining urban development activities, as well as, previous flood control projects that have affected the historical flows within the drainage basin over time.”

Additional significant problems with the impacts analysis—including critical analyses that are entirely absent from the DEIS—are discussed in the following sections of these comments.

2. The DEIS Does Not Establish Accurate Baseline Conditions

The DEIS violates NEPA because it fails to accurately establish and consider baseline conditions. It is well established that:

“Without establishing the baseline conditions ... there is simply no way to determine what effect the [action] will have on the environment, and consequently, no way to comply with NEPA.”⁴²

⁴² *Half Moon Bay Fisherman's Mktg. Ass'n. v. Carlucci*, 857 F.2d 505, 510 (9th Cir.1988). As a result, the entire DEIS is inadequate as a matter of law. *E.g., Friends of Back Bay v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, 681 F.3d 581, 588 (4th Cir. 2012) (an EIS fails to comply with NEPA if it relies on a “material misapprehension of the baseline conditions.”)

Properly establishing baseline conditions requires accurate and comprehensive data on baseline conditions. Without baseline data, “an agency cannot carefully consider information about significant environment impacts. Thus, the agency fails to consider an important aspect of the problem, resulting in an arbitrary and capricious decision.”⁴³ If information that is essential for making a reasoned choice among alternatives is not available, the Corps must obtain that information unless the costs of doing so would be “exorbitant.”⁴⁴

Properly establishing baseline conditions also requires a clear description of “how conditions have changed over time and how they are likely to change in the future without the proposed action” to determine whether additional stresses will push this system over the edge.⁴⁵ This is particularly important in situations, like those in the Pearl River, where the environment has already been greatly modified by human activities because it “is often the case that when a large proportion of a resource is lost, the system nears collapse as the surviving portion is pressed into service to perform more functions.”⁴⁶

The DEIS fails to meet these requirements because the DEIS:

- (a) Lacks fundamental baseline data on water quality, contaminated sediments, sedimentation rates and patterns, and tributary conditions.
- (b) Lacks fundamental baseline data on the Pearl Rivers’ natural hydrograph and changes to that hydrograph over time.
- (c) Lacks fundamental baseline data on elevations and levels of inundation of the Pearl River floodplain.
- (d) Lacks fundamental baseline data on vitally important habitat types, including diverse in-stream river habitats and small streams.
- (e) Lacks important baseline information on the ecological health of wetland and floodplain habitats.
- (f) Lacks fundamental baseline data on losses of diverse river habitats and wetlands over time, including losses caused by construction and operation of the Ross Barnett Reservoir and other major projects affecting the Pearl River and its floodplain.

⁴³ *N. Plains Res. Council, Inc. v. Surface Transp. Bd.*, 668 F.3d 1067, 1083, 1085 (9th Cir. 2011) (the EIS did “not provide baseline data for many of the species” of concern and thus “did not take a sufficiently ‘hard look’” to fulfill its NEPA-imposed obligations at the impacts as to these species).

⁴⁴ 40 C.F.R. § 1502.22. See also, *Half Moon Bay Fisherman’s Mktg. Ass’n*, 857 F.2d 505; *N. Plains Res. Council*, 668 F.3d 1067; *Gifford Pinchot Task Force v. Perez*, No. 03:13-CV-00810-HZ, 2014 WL 3019165, at *27-29 (D. Or. July 3, 2014), *appeal dismissed* (Dec. 23, 2014), *appeal dismissed* (Dec. 29, 2014); *Idaho Conservation League v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, No. 1: 11 –CV–00341 –EJL, 2012 WL 3758161, at *16 (D.Idaho Aug. 29, 2012) (analyzing an EA, ruling that the agency needed to conduct a baseline study and actual investigation of groundwater before reaching a conclusion regarding the impacts of a mining project on groundwater).

⁴⁵ Council on Environmental Quality, *Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act* at 41 (January 1997).

⁴⁶ *Id.*

- (g) Lacks fundamental baseline data on fish and wildlife species, including migratory species, and their critical habitat needs. The DEIS fails to identify the vast majority of the many hundreds of individual species that rely on the Pearl river and its floodplain, including particularly those species that rely on diverse in-stream river habitats, small streams in the river's floodplain, and floodplain wetlands. Critically, the DEIS also fails to provide information on the various habitats needed throughout the full life cycles of those species, including habitat and flows needed to support breeding (including access to the floodplain), rearing, feeding, and resting.
- (h) Lacks fundamental baseline data on plant species, including wetland plant species.
- (i) Lacks fundamental baseline data on flood heights and levels and extent of inundation.

This information is critical to understand the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project, including biological (as opposed to just spatial) impacts of the Project. Without this information, it is also not possible to assess whether the TSP will in fact provide the level of flood damage reduction that it claims.

3. The DEIS Does Not Meaningfully Evaluate the Risks of Toxic Exposure

The DEIS does not evaluate the risk of exposing the public and fish and wildlife to toxic contaminants. The DEIS does provides no evaluation of contaminated sediments and no meaningful evaluation of the risk of exposure through the disturbance of HTRW sites.

The TSP would dredge 25 million cubic yards of sediment—enough to fill 7,500 Olympic size swimming pools—from a 10 mile stretch of the Pearl River. The dredged sediment will then be used to raise and build a number of large levees and bury floodplain habitat to create new land for development purposes. Despite this extensive sediment dredging and disposal, the DEIS: does not examine whether the sediments that will be dredged are contaminated; does not examine the potential impacts of re-suspending and disposing of contaminated sediments; and does not examine and adopt special dredging and disposal plans to minimize any such impacts. This is a major failing that puts the public and fish and wildlife at significant risk.

It is highly likely that there are contaminated sediments in the area to be dredged under the TSP for at least the following reasons:

- (a) The DEIS acknowledges that sediments in the Pearl River consist primarily of fines (silts and clay), which are highly susceptible to binding and retaining toxic contaminants. Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 13 (64.5% of streambank sediment samples are fines (silt and clay) and 35.5% are sand; and 64.4% of tested eroding streambanks are fines while 35.6% of such tested sites are sands).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The DEIS limits its review of sediments to analyzing a small handful of locations to assess sediment sources into the Pearl River. As part of this analysis, it looks at the composition of the sediments (i.e., whether the sediments consist of fines (silt and clay) or sand). This inappropriately limited review is rife with problems, including: only a few sediment samples were taken from an extremely limited area; samples were taken at only one depth in all but one location; outdated or irrelevant data was used to assess composition at some locations instead of direct measurements; graphs in the analysis are misleading; and the analysis draws several inaccurate conclusions.

- (b) The DEIS acknowledges that toxics are present in sites located in or near the Project Area. Identified contaminants include: benzene, barium, cadmium, cobalt, creosote residuals, lead, lindane, manganese, mercury, nickel, raw sewage, sodium pentachlorophenate, pentachlorophenol (PCP), phenyl mercuric acetate, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and zinc. DEIS, Appendix C (Environmental Evaluation of Hazardous, Radioactive, and Toxic Waste (HTRW) Sites); DEIS at 91 (“Creosote residuals were disposed or released to backwater sloughs of the Pearl River adjacent to the west side of the site. Creosote residuals continue to exist in sediments in the slough and potentially in groundwater beneath the former facility treatment area adjacent to the slough.”).
- (c) The Pearl River flows through highly urbanized areas that discharge runoff and pollutants into the Pearl River. The DEIS recognizes that “[r]unoff from urban areas can carry pollutants such as nutrients, sediment, and oil and grease to receiving waterbodies” and that other pollutants are present in the Pearl River. DEIS at 138; see, e.g., DEIS at 138-139 (Numerous facilities discharge toxics into the Project Area, including the Entergy Rex Brown Plant which discharges cooling water, storm water runoff, low volume wastewater, oil and grease, pH, TSS, temperature, total residual chlorine, chromium, and zinc into a tributary located within the area to be impounded.)
- (d) The Pearl River flows through agricultural lands that discharge runoff carrying fertilizers and pesticides into the Pearl River. Extensive agricultural areas also exist within the Project Area. DEIS at 60 (“Approximately 553 acres or 18.9% of the land within the Project Area is currently in agricultural use” and an “additional 249 acres or 8.5% are classified as hay fields.”).

According to the HTRW analysis, three highly contaminated sites in the Project Area will be directly affected by the project dredging and impoundment, resulting in resuspension of contaminated sediments and other toxic releases:

1. **The Gulf States Creosoting Company Site and the Creosote Slough:** This site is located directly in and along the edge of the proposed impoundment. The TSP would dredge this site resulting in the “introduction of large amounts of creosote impacted sediments to the Pearl River.” DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 15. The contaminated wetlands referred to as the Creosote Slough “will become a part of the bottom of the channel improvements” further increasing exposure to toxic sediments and other toxic releases. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 17. This site is contaminated with creosote chemical contaminants used in preserving wood, along with barium, cobalt, manganese, zinc, and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW).
2. **The Gallatin Street Dump Site:** This site is located directly in the proposed impoundment. Half of this site would be dredged, with no plan for disposing of the sediments in a confined and safe disposal site, while the remaining portion would be directly adjacent to the new impoundment. The HTRW analysis acknowledges that the TSP would result in the “introduction of large

However, even this flawed and extremely limited testing shows that Project Area sediments include large areas of silts and clays which are more likely to be contaminated than sands. DEIS at 74; DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis).

amounts of sediment to the Pearl River” from this site. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 14. This site is contaminated with cadmium, lead, and nickel, and its leachate visibly seeps through the soils and eroding bank into the Project site. The Gallatin Street Dump Site has also historically taken in hazardous waste including but not limited to hospital waste; municipal sewage sludge; raw sewage from septic tankers; dead animals; and contaminated produce, poultry, dairy products, and meat. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW).

3. **The Lefleurs Landing Site (also known as the Jefferson Street Landfill):** This site is located directly along the edge of the proposed channel improvements, where materials from the landfill have eroded into the water. Confirmed contaminants at this site include benzene and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and the evaluation mentions that soil and groundwater samples were tested for other contaminants but does not share the results of this testing. The TSP would disturb contaminated sediments in this area and result in other releases of toxic materials. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW).

The HTRW recommends further study for each of these sites to determine the full extent of contamination and the likely impacts, and calls for remediation for each site. While the HTRW briefly lists remediation options and states that some form of mitigation/remediation will be carried out, neither the HTRW nor the DEIS include a plan for carrying out these additional studies or mitigation/remediation efforts. The DEIS also does not account for the highly significant costs of such study and remediation. The DEIS nevertheless concludes, without any supporting evidence, that the long-term environmental impact of the Project would be positive with respect to these sites.

The HTRW analysis also identifies additional potential sources of highly contaminated sediments and other toxic discharges, but the DEIS does not evaluate the impacts of these sites despite their proximity to the Project Area:

1. **The Rival Manufacturing Companies National Priorities List (NPL) Site:** This highly toxic site is excluded from the impacts assessment due to the distance from the project site and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) remediation efforts. However, this site is located just 1,500 feet east of the project site, and the EPA’s remediation of the site was not complete as of the time of the 1993 EPA report that the HTRW assessment references in making this conclusion. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 9. Moreover, this site is located within the Pearl River watershed, which the Preliminary Sediment Analysis identified as one of the major sources of sediment to the Project Area, making it a potentially significant source of contamination. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW); DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 12.
2. **Sonford Products Lumber Mill Superfund Site:** This highly toxic site is also excluded from the impacts assessment due to the distance from the project site and EPA remediation efforts. However, the Sonford Superfund Site is only 0.5 miles east of the project site, and the EPA’s remediation of the site was not complete as of the time the HTRW assessment was completed. Moreover, this site is located within the Pearl River watershed, which the Preliminary Sediment Analysis identified as one of the major sources of sediment to the Project Area, making it a potentially significant source of contamination. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW); DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 12.

3. **Multiple automotive junkyards:** The HTRW evaluation identifies multiple automatic junkyards in the Project Area, with the largest junk yard site located directly along the eastern edge of the proposed channel improvements near RM 287, and three other junk yards located within a few thousand feet east of the Project between RM 290 and 288. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 22 Figure 1. Automotive junkyards historically “have been known to contribute hydrocarbons, metals, solvents, and other CoCs [Compounds of Concern] to the environment.” DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 10. However, the HTRW asserts that there is no readily available information about the presence or absence of such contaminants and recommends “investigation and characterization of these sites” before any construction is carried out. DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 10.

The HTRW analysis makes it clear that “[c]onstruction activities have the potential to increase noise levels, **erosion and runoff of silt**, generation of **air borne dust**, and the **release of hazardous substances** from these HTRW sites.” DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 16 (emphasis added). The HTRW analysis also identifies the potential for dangerous public health impacts from the TSP dredging of the City of Jackson’s secondary/back up drinking water source:

“**The dredging of sediments and subsurface soils** in the Pearl River could potentially increase the turbidity of the surface **waters to levels unacceptable for human consumption**; therefore, the City of Jackson would need to evaluate temporary water supply alternatives during the duration of dredging and construction activities.”

DEIS, Appendix C (HTRW) at 16 (emphasis added).

The high potential for resuspension of contaminated sediments and other toxic releases—and the implications of those releases for human health and healthy populations of fish and wildlife—must be examined in the DEIS. Critically, the DEIS must conduct a comprehensive assessment of the massive amounts of sediments to be dredged under the TSP, and develop detailed remediation, dredging, and disposal plans that will protect the public and wildlife from direct, indirect, and cumulative levels of toxic exposure. The DEIS should must also fully study the risk of contamination from each of the identified HTRW sites and develop and include detailed remediation plans for those sites. The costs of sediment testing, additional studies, remediation, special dredging techniques, and legally acceptable disposal methods must be fully accounted for as a Project cost.

4. **The DEIS Does Not Meaningfully Evaluate the Impacts on Sediment Loading, Sediment Transport, Hydrology, and Hydraulics in the Pearl River**

The extensive dredging, restriction of flow, and destruction of the floodplain are both intended to—and will—result in significant morphological changes to the Pearl River, the River’s floodplain, small streams and sloughs, and tributary streams. Meaningfully assessing these changes and their biological implications requires extensive analysis and modeling of river hydrology, hydraulics, sediment loading, and sediment transport. These critical assessments, however, are not included in the DEIS rendering the DEIS woefully inadequate.

For example, understanding the sediment loading and transport processes, including the effect of the Project on those processes, is critical for determining whether the TSP impoundment will become a sediment trap; cause tributary head-cutting and erosion; or reduce the amount of sediments reaching,

nourishing, and building critically important coastal wetlands. These sediment processes are fundamentally affected by river hydrology, hydraulics, and morphology.

To meaningfully assess sediment loading and transport properties, among other things the DEIS must examine particle size, settling velocity, specific gravity, and fraction distribution within each particle size—for both bed load and suspended load—in the Project Area and key tributaries. The DEIS would also need to analyze and account for annual and seasonal sediment volumes entering the Pearl River, particularly in the Project Area, and how those volumes are affected by the combined influences of channel conveyance, flood hydrographs (i.e., rising leg and falling leg), bed load, suspended sediment load, and sediment transportation.

Instead of conducting this vitally important assessment, the DEIS instead provides only an extremely limited Preliminary Sediment Analysis that is itself fundamentally flawed, as highlighted in Section II.C.1 of these comments. The DEIS repeatedly stresses the highly preliminary nature of this analysis, which does not provide sufficient information to evaluate the impacts of the TSP. For example:

- DEIS at 73: “A key component of sediment impact assessment is the identification and quantification of major sediment sources within the Project Area. For this preliminary assessment, the major sediment sources were identified but a detailed quantification of the sediment delivery from these sources was determined to be beyond the scope of the FS/EIS.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 1: “This was a limited analysis that focused on the project area between the Ross Barnett Reservoir and continuing to slightly downstream of the proposed weir location. A thorough sediment impact assessment considering the entire stream system will be required during the preconstruction, engineering, and design phase.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 2: “Although one sediment sample is insufficient to draw any definite conclusions about the transport of sand material through the reservoir, it does suggest this as a subject for further investigation.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 6: “A more detailed analysis of all the [six selected USGS stream] gages may be required during the preconstruction, engineering, and design phase.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 8: A “more detailed analysis is recommended in the feasibility study to document the longer term planform characteristics.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 9: “Unfortunately, available survey within the study area is not sufficient to conduct this type of analysis [cross sectional geometry to assess historical channel response]. Acquiring additional survey of the study reach which can be compared with the 1991 survey is recommended. This survey comparison can provide important information, particularly between the Ross Barnett Reservoir dam and Hwy 80 where gage records documenting the channel stability in the post dam period are not available.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 10: “A more detailed analysis of the [Ross Barnett] reservoir and downstream channel is needed to develop estimates of the size and quantity of sediment potentially passing through the reservoir.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 10: “A more detailed analysis of the tributaries [that enter the Pearl River between the dam and proposed weir location] may be recommended during the preconstruction, engineering, and design phase.”

- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 11: “[M]ore detailed analysis and modeling may be required during the preconstruction, engineering, and design phase of the project for confirmation” that “the channel bed is not considered to be a significant source of sediment.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 12: “It should be emphasized that this is a preliminary estimate [of sediment volume and type from the Pearl River watershed that would enter the project reach], and a more detailed analysis should be conducted during the preconstruction, engineering, and design phase.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 13: The geomorphic assessment “should be considered preliminary in nature, and a more detailed investigation is recommended for the preconstruction, engineering, and design phase of this project. The geomorphic study should also address the channel system downstream of the study reach.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 13: “A more detailed analysis of the reservoir and downstream channel is needed to develop estimates of the size and quantity of sediment that may be passing through the [Ross Barnett] reservoir.”
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 14: “The results of this preliminary analysis would require additional information to develop sediment estimates” for sediment transport analysis.
- DEIS, Appendix C (Preliminary Sediment Analysis) at 17: “Development of a viable sediment management plan will require a more detailed sediment analysis during the preconstruction, engineering, and design phase.”

In addition, while the DEIS states that a sediment management plan would be required, it does not provide that sediment management plan, and it does not provide information on the sediment issues that need to be addressed in that plan or how those issues should be addressed. See DEIS at 177.

5. The DEIS Not Evaluate Impacts to the Pearl Rivers’ Entire Hydroperiod

The DEIS does not discuss or assess the impacts of the TSP on the entire hydroperiod for the Pearl River. Maintaining or mimicking a natural hydrograph is critically important for ecosystem health and sustainability. Issues that must be addressed in a meaningful assessment of the River’s hydroperiod include assessing and accounting for: appropriately timed low and high flows; appropriate depth, frequency and duration of overbank flooding; and maintaining connectivity to surrounding habitats.

The natural flood regime is extremely important for ecosystem health. For example, spring floods that overflow the Pearl River’s banks are critical for nourishing bottomland hardwood and other wetlands, including the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, and Honey Island Swamp in Louisiana. Indeed, part of the reason that the Pearl River Basin forests remain healthy and thriving, and the Basin’s coastal wetlands continue to regenerate (unlike many other areas on the coast), is because the River experiences a somewhat natural flooding regime. This flood cycle results in the flooding of the higher elevation bottomland hardwood forests periodically and the lower elevation swamps and sloughs in most years. From 1995 to 2018, the Pearl River gauge at highway 59 (USGS 02492600) flooded its banks (over 16.5 feet) in fourteen of the 24 years and reached flood stage (14 feet) in all 24 years. Changes to this flood regime could result in major degradation and put the public at risk.

Lowering flood stages could also cause significant adverse impacts to the ecological health of the Pearl River and its floodplain, including damaging fisheries resources that rely on access to the floodplain,

degrading floodplain and other wetland habitats, causing head-cutting and incision in tributaries, reducing water quality, and elevating sediment influx including into the TSP impoundment.

Changes to the hydrograph that result in lower flows or more frequent low flows could also cause significant harm, including to downstream forested wetlands, Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf of Mexico. The Pearl River is a major source of freshwater to the Gulf of Mexico and reductions in flow could alter water quality and coastal salinities, affect sediment transport, and increase saltwater intrusion upriver. Altered flows could also affect the already struggling oyster sector that relies on a well-balanced mix of fresh and salt water to ensure oyster survival and harvest.

The Project's impact on the entire hydroperiod must be assessed in both the Project Area and downstream to the mouth of the Pearl River, including the potential for altering the River's flood regime and for reducing flows particularly during traditional low flow periods. The DEIS, however, provides only the most minimal discussion of maintaining historic low flows. *See, e.g.*, DEIS at 67-69, 171-172. High flows are viewed by the DEIS only as something to be stopped by the Project.

6. The DEIS Does Not Evaluate Impacts to Tributaries

The fundamental changes to the structure and functions of the Pearl River and its floodplain from the TSP could cause significant adverse impacts to the River's tributaries. These impacts must be evaluated to understand the full suite of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project, including the impact to fish and wildlife.

The TSP will result in significant and irreparable changes to the Project Area, including the complete destruction of tributary streams. Changes to sediment loading and transport processes both alone and in combination with changes to flow and channel morphology could also cause significant adverse impacts to tributaries, including headcutting, incision, reduction in water quality, and degradation of habitat.

These impacts must be assessed in the DEIS, along with the implication of such impacts for fish, wildlife, wetlands, and other critical resources.

7. The DEIS Does Not Evaluate Impacts to Diverse Instream Habitats

Important fish and wildlife habitat includes diverse instream habitats such as braided channels, crossover habitat, sand bars, and backwater habitats in addition to riverine and floodplain wetlands. The DEIS fails to assess impacts to these diverse habitats, and fails to meaningfully assess the impact of transforming the Pearl River's diverse and complex riverine and floodplain habitat into a relatively stagnant impoundment.

The DEIS provides virtually no discussion of the impacts of the losses of these various types of habitats on fish and wildlife, and fails to account for the very significant differences between riverine and lacustrine habitat and the often very different fish and other aquatic resource assemblages that they support. As the Fish and Wildlife Service has noted,

“Even though water flow will be maintained through the lake, it will not provide the habitat required for those species needing a riverine environment to survive, thus representing a net loss of approximately 250 acres of this habitat type.”⁴⁸

These failures preclude a meaningful assessment of fish and wildlife impacts, which requires an accurate understanding of the differences between habitat types and an accurate assessment of impacts to the full range of habitats.

8. The DEIS Does Not Meaningfully Evaluate Impacts to Wetlands

While the DEIS provides information on types and acreages of wetlands that will be directly impacted—i.e., destroyed—by the Project, the DEIS provides no information on indirect impacts to wetlands, and as discussed below fails to provide a meaningful analysis of cumulative impacts.

The Project will result in significant and fundamental changes to the Pearl River’s ecosystem that will have far-reaching hydrological impacts. These hydrologic changes will affect the remaining Project Area wetlands, and will likely also affect highly valuable wetlands downstream. For example, as noted above, changes to the Pearl River’s hydrograph could harm vast acreages of bottomland hardwood and other wetlands, including the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, and Honey Island Swamp in Louisiana.

Assessing the impacts to wetlands requires a scientifically sound assessment of the impacts of the proposed Project on wetland hydrology which “is probably the single most important determinant of the establishment and maintenance of specific types of wetlands and wetland processes”:

“Hydrology affects the species composition and richness, primary productivity, organic accumulation, and nutrient cycling in wetlands. . . . Water depth flow patterns, and duration and frequency of flooding, which are the result of all the hydrologic inputs and outputs, influence the biochemistry of the soils and are major factors in the ultimate selection of the biota of wetlands. . . . Hydrologic conditions can directly modify or change chemical and physical properties such as nutrient availability, degree of substrate anoxia, soil salinity, sediment properties, and pH.”⁴⁹

Even “small changes in hydrology can result in significant biotic changes”⁵⁰ and produce ecosystem-wide changes:

“When hydrologic conditions in wetlands change even slightly, the biota may respond with massive changes in species composition and richness and in ecosystem productivity.”⁵¹

As a result the impacts from even small changes in the duration and extent of inundation of wetlands in the Pearl River system must be evaluated, as such changes could create significant adverse impacts to the structure and function of those wetlands leading to adverse impacts to fisheries, wildlife habitat,

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 9 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

⁴⁹ William J. Mitsch and James G. Gosselink, *Wetlands* (2nd ed.) (1993) at 67-68.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 68.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 68 (emphasis added).

plant communities, water quality, water quantity, soil moisture recharge, nutrient cycling, and flood pulse conditions.

As with all impacts analyses, the wetland assessment must look at the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to wetlands.

9. The DEIS Does Not Meaningfully Evaluate Impacts to Water Quality

The DEIS does not meaningfully evaluate water quality impacts. As highlighted in Section II.C.1 of these comments, the water quality analysis suffers from a fundamental lack of scientific integrity.

Among many other problems, the water quality analysis: is based on a wholly inadequate data set; ignores the water quality impacts that will result from the significant hydrologic, morphologic and flow changes from the TSP; fails to meaningfully assess impacts from sedimentation; ignores the significant risk of toxic releases from the TSP; and fails to assess water quality impacts due to the significant loss of Project Area wetlands and small streams.

Inadequate Data Set: The entire water quality analysis is based on a highly inadequate data set. To fill in the acknowledged “sparse” water quality data for the Study Area, the non-Federal sponsor collected some additional water quality samples during two sampling periods in July 2014. Sampling one month of one year for water quality data is a highly improper sampling regime that, among other problems, cannot account for critically important seasonal and yearly variations. DEIS at 61-63. As noted at DEIS page 65, an appropriate assessment of water quality data can only be conducted if the data complies with the CALM requirements, which among other things requires collection of samples during multiple sampling periods over multi-year periods.

Indeed, the DEIS states that the current water quality data do not meet the requirements needed for a “rigorous assessment of the water quality status of the Pearl River near Jackson” but nevertheless concludes that a review of the water quality data collected “shows that the river water quality typically meets the criteria for the parameters that are measured.” DEIS at 65-66. This conclusion, however, is contradicted by the list of the Pearl River on the 2008 § 305(b) list for total nitrogen and total phosphorus and the development and then updating of TMDLs for this segment of the river. According to the DEIS at 65, the 2014 TMDL calls for a 70% reduction in total phosphorus and a 30% reduction in total nitrogen entering the river from all sources. In addition, the DEIS does not consider water quality downstream. The Louisiana 2016 list of impaired waters lists the Pearl River as impaired for sulfates for “sources outside of their jurisdiction” which most likely means Mississippi.

Hydrologic, Morphologic, and Flow Changes: The newly created impoundment will receive significant runoff from urban and agricultural areas and impoundment of the current flow, along with other changes, could greatly reduce water quality. Channelization and excavation will also cause changes to water quality and clarity. These changes could also produce frequent algal blooms as the mitigating benefits of flowing water will be lost or severely diminished.

Sedimentation from Project construction and the potential for significantly increased sedimentation due to changes in sediment transport into and through the system will also reduce water quality in the impoundment and will also likely contaminate and pollute downstream waters and habitats as well. Sedimentation is the largest form of aquatic pollution, and smothers the benthos, or bottom habitat of aquatic systems. Likely changes in sediment particle sizes through deposition of fine particles will result

in homogenization of substrates and overall reduction of community diversity. Organisms that would be impacted include aquatic invertebrates (i.e., sponges, insects, and mussels), reptiles, such as map turtles, and benthic spawning and feeding fishes, such as Gulf Sturgeon.

Increased water surface area will affect water temperatures and evaporation rates, influencing water availability and quality downstream. Warmer water evaporates faster, something that was not considered in the formula quoted from an introductory hydrology textbook on page 169 of the DEIS.

These impacts have not been assessed in the DEIS.

Toxic Releases: As discussed above, the TSP is likely to result in resuspension of contaminated sediments and other toxic releases into the Pearl River, dramatically impacting water quality. These impacts have not been assessed in the DEIS.

Loss of Wetlands and Small Streams: Wetlands and small streams are highly effective filters that provide important water quality benefits. The significant wetland and stream losses from the TSP will have effects on water quality downstream. These impacts have not been assessed in the DEIS.

10. The DEIS Does Not Meaningfully Evaluate Impacts to Fish and Wildlife

The failings identified above, preclude an adequate evaluation of impacts to fish and wildlife, since the changes to habitat and flow are among the primary changes that would affect fish and wildlife. Other failings abound, including those outlined in this section. As importantly, the DEIS fundamentally ignores the biological and ecological ramifications of the major changes that this project will cause to the form and functioning of the Pearl River and its floodplain.

Almost 500 different species of fish and wildlife utilize the Pearl River Basin, including 116 species of freshwater fish.⁵² These wildlife resources “are dependent upon the diverse floral composition of associated forested wetlands” and “a higher percentage” of vertebrate wildlife species in the Basin “use bottomland hardwoods as primary habitat (habitat a species depends upon for reproduction and/or feeding during all or a portion of the year) than any other habitat type.”⁵³ Some of these species can only survive in a riverine environment, so will not survive in the TSP impoundment.⁵⁴

The Mississippi State Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 identifies 73 “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” for the Upper and Lower Pearl River and bottomland hardwood forests (which includes the forests of the Pearl River).⁵⁵ These species include 22 birds, 17 fish, 12 mammals, 8 mussels, 5 amphibians, 5 reptiles, and 4 crustaceans. Key conservation actions to assist in the protection and restoration of these species include:

- “Encourage retention, preservation, and conservation of remaining natural habitat through purchase, easements or MOAs.” Mississippi Wildlife Action Plan at 134, 260, 346, 504.

⁵² U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 1 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *The Mississippi State Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 is accessible at https://www.mdwfp.com/media/251788/mississippi_swap_revised_16_september_2016_reduced_.pdf.*

- “Maintain/improve/restore hydrologic (depth, hydroperiod, flow) and geomorphic (channel sinuosity, floodplain, microtopography) integrity.” Mississippi Wildlife Action Plan at 134, 260, 346, 504.
- “Monitor/limit commercial/residential/industrial point source erosion and sedimentation or pollution into streams/atmosphere.” Mississippi Wildlife Action Plan at 134, 260, 346, 504.

Neither the identified Species of Greatest Conservation Need, nor the conservation actions identified as vital for protecting and restoring those species, are evaluated in the DEIS.

Neither the Biological Assessment nor the Habitat Evaluations Procedures (HEP) Report satisfy NEPA's requirements to meaningfully evaluate the impacts of the Project on fish and wildlife. The Biological Assessment looks only at species listed as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is itself flawed, and the HEP Report is both extremely limited and only designed to assess mitigation needs for a handful of species.

- **Biological Assessment:** The DEIS was prepared without the benefit of the Biological Assessment, which was not completed until after release of the DEIS for public comment. The Biological Assessment that was eventually released for public review is itself fundamentally flawed, and does not provide the meaningful assessment of impacts required under NEPA. As noted below, a Biological Opinion is undeniably required for this Project – a point that is recognized in the DEIS. DEIS at 85. The Biological Opinion should have been finalized before release of the DEIS, and avoiding impacts to listed species should be an integral driver in the development of alternatives and not a Project afterthought. Numerous problems with the Biological Assessment are identified in the DEIS comments submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity.

One particularly notable failing is the DEIS's statement that the threatened Ringed Sawback Turtle is not known to occur in the Project Areas. DEIS at 81. This statement is incorrect and shows a lack of investigation into Project impacts. Researchers from Millsaps College (Jackson, MS) have documented healthy populations of this species within the Project area.⁵⁶ The species' life history also shows that it will be severely impacted by the TSP. This species is known to be a riverine species, dependent on riverine conditions for completion of life history processes. It is known to inhabit sand and gravel substrates, which are found in flowing water habitats. It is also known to feed on riverine organisms, such as lotic invertebrates including caddisflies and freshwater sponges.

It is also important to recognize that the legal obligations under the Endangered Species Act and NEPA are entirely separate and apply fundamentally different standards. While incredibly important, a Biological Assessment (and full compliance with the ESA Section 7 prohibition against jeopardizing the continued existence of a species), does not satisfy NEPA's requirements

⁵⁶ This study is provided at Attachment B to these comments.

to analyze impacts that fall short of the threat of extinction.⁵⁷ “Clearly, there can be a significant impact on a species even if its existence is not jeopardized.”⁵⁸

- **HEP Report:** The HEP Report, which was prepared in 2014, is included in Appendix D but is only referred to in the DEIS in the discussion of mitigation acreage. The HEP Report also does not provide a meaningful assessment of impacts to fish and wildlife that utilize the Pearl River Basin or the Project Area. The HEP Report looks at only 16 species that appear to consist primarily of generalists, and the HEP Report include one species—the common carp—that is recognized by the state of Mississippi as an invasive species. None of the species looked at in the HEP Report are ranked for conservation priority in the Mississippi State Wildlife Action Plan for 2015-2025.⁵⁹

Despite the massive habitat damage that will be caused by the TSP, the HEP Report somehow concludes that the TSP will result in improved conditions (i.e. positive average annual habitat units) for 9 of the 16 species evaluated, including 5 of the 7 fish species evaluated. DEIS, Appendix D (HEP Report) at 22-23. At a minimum these conclusions demonstrate that the HEP analysis looks at far too few species and looks at the wrong species for a meaningful evaluation of mitigation needs for this Project. In addition, every HEP analysis is plagued by the fact that it only assesses average annual habitat units, which cannot account for the significance of adverse impacts related to habitat losses at critical stages in a species lifecycle. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has also raised concerns with the HEP analysis.⁶⁰

Moreover, the use of HEP analyses violates the recommendations for appropriate wetland impact and mitigation analysis because HEP focuses on limited attributes of habitat, oversimplifies species needs, and assumes that artificial management of small areas can replace natural flooding of larger areas. HEP models also make many judgments about the needs of different species with little or no evidence. The change of focus of wetland mitigation away from these kinds of habitat models recognized their inadequacy and that the full complement of wetland and other aquatic functions required that mitigation reproduce the more natural conditions of the aquatic areas to be lost.

The DEIS does not include or consider the mandatory Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report, which had not been completed as of August 31, 2018. This Report and related Planning Aid Letters should have been developed early in the process to inform development and evaluation of alternatives in the

⁵⁷ See *Greater Yellowstone Coalition v. Flowers*, 359 F.3d 1257, 1275-76 (10th Cir. 2004) (recognizing that FWS’ conclusion that the action is not likely to cause jeopardy does not necessarily mean the impacts are insignificant); *Makua v. Rumsfeld*, 163 F. Supp.2d 1202, 1218 (D. Haw. 2001) (“A FONSI . . . must be based on a review of the potential for significant impact, including impact short of extinction. Clearly, there can be a significant impact on a species even if its existence is not jeopardized.”); *National Wildlife Federation v. Babbitt*, 128 F. Supp.2d 1274, 1302 (E.D. Cal. 2000) (requiring EIS under NEPA even though mitigation plan satisfied ESA); *Portland Audubon Society v. Lujan*, 795 F. Supp. 1489, 1509 (D. Or. 1992) (rejecting agency’s request for the court to “accept that its consultation with [FWS under the ESA] constitutes a substitute for compliance with NEPA.”).

⁵⁸ *Makua v. Rumsfeld*, 163 F. Supp.2d 1202, 1218 (D. Haw. 2001) (“A FONSI . . . must be based on a review of the potential for significant impact, including impact short of extinction. Clearly, there can be a significant impact on a species even if its existence is not jeopardized.”)

⁵⁹ The Mississippi State Wildlife Action Plan for 2015-2025 is available at

https://www.mdwfp.com/media/251788/mississippi_swap_revised_16_september_2016_reduced.pdf.

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 13-14 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

DEIS. The after-the-fact Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report will not serve the purpose of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, which is to ensure that fish and wildlife are given equal consideration in the planning, construction, and operation of federal water resources projects. 16 U.S.C. § 662.

The DEIS does not include a host of highly applicable research on fish and wildlife habitat needs and no effort was made to document species occurrences and population sizes in the Pearl River or its floodplain. Additional species-specific concerns are outlined below.

Notably, there is no scientific justification for the DEIS' conclusions regarding the impacts to fish and wildlife resources. Despite recognizing adverse impacts, the DEIS essentially concludes that there isn't really a problem because species that need the habitat that was destroyed will move to other areas, and species that can use the new impoundment will move in. See DEIS at 184-186.

(a) Fisheries

The DEIS violates NEPA because it fails to meaningfully evaluate impacts to the full range of fish species found in the Project area.

Among many other failings, the DEIS does not consider the life-cycle needs of an appropriate array of fish species. For example, the DEIS does not account for impacts to fish species that utilize the Pearl River's floodplain for spawning and rearing. This is a critical deficiency as floodplains provide vital fish and wildlife habitat as demonstrated by an extensive body of science (none of which is assessed in the DEIS).

The DEIS also fails to meaningfully consider the very different needs and Project impacts on species that require riverine habitat versus species that utilize pool or impoundment habitats. Inhabitants of rivers and streams are almost always dependent on flowing water for survival. Exceptions to this include generalist species, of which there are few. The disruption of flow through impounding the riverine habitat will have detrimental effects on a multitude of riverine organisms, ranging from the tiniest of insect larvae, to pearly mussels, to riverine turtles and fishes. As noted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

"Even though water flow will be maintained through the lake, it will not provide the habitat required for those species needing a riverine environment to survive, thus representing a net loss of approximately 250 acres of this habitat type."⁶¹

(b) Birds and Waterfowl

The Pearl River Basin and the Project Area provide extremely important habitat for migratory birds and waterfowl. However, the DEIS fails to meaningfully evaluate impacts to birds and waterfowl found in the Project area. This failure presents a fundamentally flawed image of the impacts of the TSP that renders the DEIS inadequate.

A number of species of particular concern that utilize that Project Area and the Pearl River Basin include: Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Swallow-tailed Kite (Mississippi State Listed Endangered),

⁶¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 9 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

Reddish Egret, Clapper Rail, and Wood Stork (Federal and Mississippi State Listed Endangered). The Project is also likely to impact Important Bird Areas (IBAs)⁶². For example, maps in the DEIS show that dredging is still planned on property in LeFleur's Bluff State Park, which is an important IBA area. Other IBAs that are directly imperiled by One Lake include Hancock County Marsh Coastal Preserve (MS), East Delta Plain (LA), and Pearl River (LA; nominated).

A meaningful assessment of impacts to migratory birds must account for direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, including the cumulative impacts of climate change, which can significantly exacerbate the impacts on the many migratory species that utilize the Pearl River and its floodplain. Among many other things, migratory birds are affected by habitat losses, habitat shifts, changes in water regimes, losses and mismatches with food supply, changes in prey range, and increased storm frequency, which can all be greatly exacerbated by climate change, making a meaningful cumulative impacts analysis particularly critical.

Migratory birds, as with all migratory wildlife, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as recognized by the United Nations Environment Program and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals:

"As a group, migratory wildlife appears to be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change because it uses multiple habitats and sites and use a wide range of resources at different points of their migratory cycle. They are also subject to a wide range of physical conditions and often rely on predictable weather patterns, such as winds and ocean currents, which might change under the influence of Climate Change. Finally, they face a wide range of biological influences, such as predators, competitors and diseases that could be affected by Climate Change. While some of this is also true for more sedentary species, migrants have the potential to be affected by Climate Change not only on their breeding and non-breeding grounds but also while on migration."

"Apart from such direct impacts, factors that affect the migratory journey itself may affect other parts of a species' life cycle. Changes in the timing of migration may affect breeding or hibernation, for example if a species has to take longer than normal on migration, due to changes in conditions *en route*, then it may arrive late, obtain poorer quality breeding resources (such as territory) and be less productive as a result. If migration consumes more resources than normal, then individuals may have fewer resources to put into breeding"

* * *

"Key factors that are likely to affect all species, regardless of migratory tendency, are changes in prey distributions and changes or loss of habitat. Changes in prey may occur in terms of their distributions or in timing. The latter may occur through differential changes in developmental rates and can lead to a mismatch in timing between predators and prey ("phenological disjunction"). Changes in habitat quality (leading ultimately to habitat loss) may be important for migratory species that need a coherent

⁶² An IBA is an area that has been identified using an internationally agreed to set of criteria as being globally important for the conservation of bird populations. National Audubon Society administers the program in the U.S.

network of sites to facilitate their migratory journeys. Habitat quality is especially important on staging or stop-over sites, as individuals need to consume large amounts of resource rapidly to continue their onward journey. Such high quality sites may [be] crucial to allow migrants to cross large ecological barriers, such as oceans or deserts.”⁶³

As noted above, migratory birds are at particular risk from climate change since they are affected by changes in water regime, mismatches with food supply, habitat shifts, changes in prey range, increased storm frequency, and sea level rise—all of which are greatly exacerbated by climate change.⁶⁴

(c) Amphibians and Reptiles

The DEIS violates NEPA because it fails to meaningfully evaluate impacts to amphibian and reptiles. This failure presents a fundamentally flawed image of the impacts of the TSP and renders the DEIS inadequate.

Despite the significant number of reptile and amphibian species in Mississippi, the DEIS analysis of impacts looks at only a single reptile—the Federally threatened ringed sawback turtle. Another reptile (the slider turtle) is included in the HEP mitigation analysis. Indeed, other than in connection with the ringed sawback turtle, the words amphibian and reptile appear only three times in the body of the DEIS. DEIS at 77-78 (“The river watershed also supports populations of many common reptile and amphibian species including alligator snapping turtles, box turtles, copperhead moccasins, cottonmouth moccasins, and other common species.”); DEIS, Appendix E at 10 (stating that amphibians are a food source for the great blue heron, and are a food source for the great egret).

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks has documented 146 species of reptiles and amphibians in Mississippi.⁶⁵ Many of these species rely on the habitat provided by bottomland hardwood wetlands and the Pearl River. The Mississippi State Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 identifies 10 species of reptiles and amphibians as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Pearl River and the state’s bottomland hardwood forests.⁶⁶ One of the key conservation actions for these species is to: “Encourage retention, preservation, and conservation of remaining natural habitat through purchase, easements or MOAs.”⁶⁷

Evaluating the impacts of the Project on amphibians and reptiles is also particularly important because these species are facing unprecedented risks of extinction. In the United States, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species lists 56 amphibian species and 37 reptile species as known to be critically

⁶³ UNEP/CMS Secretariat, Bonn, Germany, *Migratory Species and Climate Change: Impacts of a Changing Environment on Wild Animals* (2006) at 40-41 (available at http://www.cms.int/publications/pdf/CMS_ClimateChange.pdf).

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 42-43.

⁶⁵ This species list can be accessed at

https://www.mdwfp.com/media/3283/mississippi_herpetology_checklist_013012.pdf (visited August 31, 2018).

⁶⁶ Mississippi State Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 at 25. The Action Plan is accessible at

https://www.mdwfp.com/media/251788/mississippi_swap_revised_16_september_2016_reduced_.pdf (visited August 31, 2018).

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 134.

endangered, endangered, or vulnerable.⁶⁸ Worldwide, at least 1,950 species of amphibians are threatened with extinction of which 520 species are critically endangered, 783 are endangered, and 647 species are vulnerable. This represents 30 percent of all known amphibian species.⁶⁹ In 2004, scientists estimated that most of 1,300 other amphibian species are also threatened though sufficient data are currently lacking to be able to accurately assess the status of those species.⁷⁰ The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species also lists 879 species of reptiles as threatened with extinction worldwide, which represents 21 percent of all evaluated reptile species.⁷¹

A recent study demonstrates the increasingly dire conditions of amphibians worldwide:

“Current extinction rates are most likely 136–2707 times greater than the background amphibian extinction rate. These are staggering rates of extinction that are difficult to explain via natural processes. No previous extinction event approaches the rate since 1980 (Benton and King, 1989).

Despite the catastrophic rates at which amphibians are currently going extinct, these are dwarfed by expectations for the next 50 yr (Fig. 1). If the figure provided by Stuart et al. (2004) is true (but see Pimenta et al., 2005; Stuart et al., 2005), one-third of the extant amphibians are in danger of extinction. This portends an extinction rate of 25,000–45,000 times the expected background rate. Episodes of this stature are unprecedented. Four previous mass extinctions could be tied to catastrophic events such as super volcanoes and extraterrestrial impacts that occur every 10 million to 100 million years (Wilson, 1992). The other mass extinction seems to be tied to continental drift of Pangea into polar regions leading to mass glaciation, reduced sea levels, and lower global temperatures (Wilson, 1992). The current event far exceeds these earlier extinction rates suggesting a global stressor(s), with possible human ties.”⁷²

Amphibians thrive in cool wetland environments, and are found in all types of wetlands except more saline coastal environments. Small, isolated wetlands play especially important roles in amphibian productivity.⁷³ Amphibian populations thrive when there are a variety of small ecosystems within a regional landscape in which a “dynamic equilibrium” of different populations becomes established.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ IUCN Red List version 2013:2, Table 5: Threatened species in each country (totals by taxonomic group), available at http://cmsdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/summarystats/2013_2_RL_Stats_Table5.pdf (visited on November 24, 2013.)

⁶⁹ IUCN Red List version 2013:2, Table 3a: Status category summary by major taxonomic group (animals), available at http://cmsdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/summarystats/2013_2_RL_Stats_Table3a.pdf (visited on November 24, 2013).

⁷⁰ Science Daily, Amphibians In Dramatic Decline; Study Finds Nearly One-Third Of Species Threatened With Extinction (October 15, 2004), available at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2004/10/041015103700.html> (visited on November 24, 2013).

⁷¹ IUCN Red List version 2013:2, Table 3a: Status category summary by major taxonomic group (animals), available at http://cmsdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/summarystats/2013_2_RL_Stats_Table3a.pdf (visited on November 24, 2013).

⁷² McCallum, M. L. (2007). “Amphibian Decline or Extinction? Current Declines Dwarf Background Extinction Rate. *Journal of Herpetology* 41 (3): 483–491. doi:10.1670/0022-1511(2007)41[483:ADOECD]2.0.CO;2.

⁷³ Gibbons, J. Whitfield, Christopher Winne, et. al. 2006. Remarkable Amphibian Biomass and Abundance in an Isolated Wetland; Implications for Wetland Conservation. *Conservation Biology* Volume 20, No. 5, 1457–1465.

⁷⁴ Mann, W., P. Dorn, and R. Brandl. 1991. Local distribution of amphibians: The importance of habitat fragmentation. *Global Ecology and Biogeography Letters* 1:36–41.

However, if the environment becomes overly fragmented, the dynamic equilibrium is disturbed because patterns of emigration and immigration may be disrupted.

Amphibians spend part of their life cycles in an aquatic environment and part in a terrestrial environment (typically returning to water to breed). For example, some salamanders undergo larval development within an aquatic environment, and then live along wet streamsides following metamorphosis into adult stages. Those that do not breed in water still need moist environments to prevent extreme dehydration.⁷⁵ The tadpoles of most frog species develop in ponds, lakes, wet prairies, and other still bodies of water, while others are known to breed in a wide variety of wetland habitats. As adults, toads, frogs and some salamanders can travel relatively great distances from water sources, but they return to water to reproduce.

Recent studies also point to the role of global climate change in promoting potentially catastrophic impacts to amphibian populations. For example:

- Global climate change will result in changes to weather and rainfall patterns that can have significant adverse effects on amphibians. Drought can lead to localized extirpation. Cold can induce winterkill in torpid amphibians. It is possible that the additional stress of climate change, on top of the stresses already created by severe loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation may jeopardize many amphibian species.⁷⁶
- Recent studies suggest that climate change may be causing global mass extinctions of amphibian populations. Particularly alarming is the fact that many of these disappearances are occurring in relatively pristine areas such as wilderness areas and national parks.⁷⁷ One recent study suggests that climate change has allowed the spread of a disease known as chytridiomycosis which has led to extinctions and declines in amphibians. Climate change has allowed this disease to spread by tempering the climate extremes that previously kept the disease in check.⁷⁸ About two-thirds of the 110 known harlequin frog species are believed to have vanished during the 1980s and 1990s because of the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. Other studies indicate that amphibians may be particularly sensitive to changes in temperature, humidity, and

⁷⁵ Semlitsch, R. D. 1987. Relationship of pond drying to the reproductive success of the salamander *Ambystoma talpoideum*. *Copeia* 1987:61-69; Pechmann, J. H. K., D. E. Scott, J. W. Gibbons, and R. D. Semlitsch. 1989. Influence of wetland hydroperiod on diversity and abundance of metamorphosing juvenile amphibians. *Wetlands Ecology and Management* 1:3-11.

⁷⁶ Sjogren, P. 1993a. Metapopulation dynamics and extinction in pristine habitats: A demographic explanation. Abstracts, Second World Congress of Herpetology, Adelaide, Australia, p. 244; Sjogren, P. 1993b. Applying metapopulation theory to amphibian conservation. Abstracts, Second World Congress of Herpetology, Adelaide, Australia, p. 244-245.

⁷⁷ Pounds, J. A., and M. L. Crump. 1994. Amphibian declines and climate disturbance: The case of the golden toad and the harlequin frog. *Conservation Biology* 8:72-85; Lips, K. R. 1998. Decline of a Tropical Montane Amphibian Fauna. *Conservation Biology* 12:106-117; Lips, K., F. Brem, R. Brenes, J.D. Reeve, R.A. Alford, J. Voyles, C. Carey, L. Livo, A. P. Pessier, and J.P. Collins 2006. Emerging infectious disease and the loss of biodiversity. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 103:3165-3170.

⁷⁸ Pounds, J.A., M.P.L. Fogden, J.H. Campbell. 2006. Biological response to climate change on a tropical mountain. *Nature* 398, 611-615.

air and water quality because they have permeable skins, biphasic life cycles, and unshelled eggs.⁷⁹

- Climate change may also affect amphibian breeding patterns.⁸⁰ Amphibians spend a significant part of the year protecting themselves from cold or shielding themselves from heat. They receive cues to emerge from their shelters and to migrate to ponds or streams to breed from subtle increases in temperature or moisture. As the earth warms, one potential effect on amphibians is a trend towards early breeding, which makes them more vulnerable to snowmelt-induced floods and freezes common in early springs. Some studies already indicate a trend towards earlier breeding in certain amphibian species.⁸¹
- Increases in UV-B radiation in the northern hemisphere due to ozone depletion is also having an adverse impact on amphibians.⁸² One study suggests that ultraviolet-B (UV-B) radiation adversely affects the hatching success of amphibian larvae.⁸³ High levels of UV-B also induced higher rates of developmental abnormalities and increased mortality in certain species (*Rana clamitans* and *R. sylvatica*) than others that were shielded from UV-B.⁸⁴ UV-B also can have detrimental effects on embryo growth.

(d) Mammals

The DEIS violates NEPA because it fails to meaningfully evaluate impacts to mammals. Many mammal species are found in the Pearl River Basin and the Project Area, including many that utilize riparian areas.

The DEIS, however, limits its “assessment” of impacts to mammal species to: inadequately analyzing impacts to the Federally threatened Northern Long-eared bat; mentioning that Louisiana black bears have not been seen in the Project Area; and including the grey squirrel and swamp rabbit in the HEP analysis. This does not satisfy NEPA’s requirement to take a “hard look” at the impacts of this Project on mammals.

11. Impacts to Plants Are Not Meaningfully Evaluated

⁷⁹ Carey, C., and M. A. Alexander. 2003. Climate change and amphibian declines: is there a link? *Diversity and Distributions* 9:111-121.

⁸⁰ Carey, C., and M. A. Alexander. 2003. Climate change and amphibian declines: is there a link? *Diversity and Distributions* 9:111-121.

⁸¹ Beebee, T. J. C. 1995. Amphibian Breeding and Climate. *Nature* 374:219-220; Blaustein, A. R., L. K. Belden, D. H. Olson, D. M. Green, T. L. Root, and J. M. Kiesecker. 2001. Amphibian breeding and climate change. *Conservation Biology* 15:1804-1809; Gibbs, J. P., and A. R. Breisch. 2001. Climate warming and calling phenology of frogs near Ithaca, New York, 1900-1999. *Conservation Biology* 15:1175-1178.

⁸² Blumthaler, M., and W. Ambach. 1990. Indication of increasing solar ultraviolet-B radiation flux in alpine regions. *Science* 248:206-208; Kerr, J. B., and C. T. McElroy. 1993. Evidence for large upward trends of ultraviolet-B radiation linked to ozone depletion. *Science* 262:1032-1034.

⁸³ Blaustein, A. R., P. D. Hoffman, D. G. Hokit, J. M. Kiesecker, S. C. Walls, and J. B. Hays. 1994a. UV repair and resistance to solar UV-B in amphibian eggs: A link to population declines? *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 91:1791-1795.

⁸⁴ Grant, K. P., and L. E. Licht. 1993. Effects of ultraviolet radiation on life history parameters of frogs from Ontario, Canada. Abstracts, Second World Congress of Herpetology, Adelaide, Australia, p. 101.

The DEIS violates NEPA because it fails to evaluate impacts to the wide-range of plant species that would be affected by the Project, including wetland plant species. While the DEIS breaks down direct wetland impacts by acres of main plant type (i.e., forested wetlands, cypress and tupelo gum slough wetlands, scrub shrub wetlands, cypress slough wetlands, emergent wetlands bottomland hardwood wetlands), it does not provide any other information on plant species that will be affected by the Project and does not provide information on the current ecological health of any plant species or main plant types.

Direct impacts to plant species and health will be significant. Indirect and cumulative impacts will also be significant, including through both large and small changes to hydrology. As noted above, even “small changes in hydrology can result in significant biotic changes”⁸⁵ and produce ecosystem-wide changes:

“When hydrologic conditions in wetlands change even slightly, the biota may respond with massive changes in species composition and richness and in ecosystem productivity.”⁸⁶

The impacts of the proposed alternatives on plant species, including wetland plant species must be analyzed. This is also important for understanding adverse impacts to fish and wildlife species.

12. Cumulative Impacts Are Not Meaningfully Evaluated

The DEIS violates NEPA because it fails to meaningfully evaluate cumulative impacts. This failure renders the DEIS grossly inadequate.

The cumulative impacts analysis is a critical component of NEPA review. It ensures that the reviewing agency will not “treat the identified environmental concern in a vacuum.”⁸⁷ Cumulative impacts are defined as:

“the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.”⁸⁸

A meaningful assessment of cumulative impacts must identify:

“(1) the area in which effects of the proposed project will be felt; (2) the impacts that are expected in that area from the proposed project; (3) other actions – past, present, and proposed, and reasonably foreseeable – that have had or are expected to have impacts in the same area; (4) the impacts or expected impacts from these other actions; and (5) the overall impact that can be expected if the individual impacts are allowed to accumulate.”⁸⁹

⁸⁵ *Id.* at 68.

⁸⁶ *Id.* at 68 (emphasis added).

⁸⁷ *Grand Canyon Trust v. FAA*, 290 F.3d 339, 346 (D.C. Cir. 2002).

⁸⁸ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7.

⁸⁹ *TOMAC, Taxpayers Of Michigan Against Casinos v. Norton*, 435 F.3d 852 (D.C. Cir. 2006) (quoting *Grand Canyon Trust*, 290 F.3d at 345); *Fritiofson v. Alexander*, 772 F.2d 1225, 1245 (5th Cir. 1985) (holding this level of detail necessary even at the less detailed review stage of an Environmental Assessment).

In conducting the cumulative impacts assessment, it is not enough to simply catalog past actions. The DEIS instead must determine the specific impacts of those actions on the system. The DEIS must also assess whether the past degradation of the system combined with the proposed alternative will significantly affect the ecological health and functioning of the Pearl River ecosystem. Indeed, this is the primary goal of the cumulative impacts analysis:

“The analyst’s primary goal is to determine the magnitude and significance of the environmental consequences of the proposed action in the context of the cumulative effects of other past, present, and future actions. Much of the environment has been greatly modified by human activities, and most resources, ecosystems, and human communities are in the process of change as a result of cumulative effects. The analyst must determine the realistic potential for the resource to sustain itself in the future and whether the proposed action will affect this potential; therefore, the baseline condition of the resource of concern should include a description of how conditions have changed over time and how they are likely to change in the future without the proposed action. The potential for a resource, ecosystem, and human community to sustain its structure and function depends on its resistance to stress and its ability to recover (i.e., its resilience). Determining whether the condition of the resource is within the range of natural variability or is vulnerable to rapid degradation is frequently problematic. Ideally, the analyst can identify a threshold beyond which change in the resource condition is detrimental. More often, the analyst must review the history of that resource and evaluate whether past degradation may place it near such a threshold. For example, the loss of 50% of historical wetlands within a watershed may indicate that further losses would significantly affect the capacity of the watershed to withstand floods. It is often the case that when a large proportion of a resource is lost, the system nears collapse as the surviving portion is pressed into service to perform more functions.”⁹⁰

The DEIS completely fails to satisfy this primary goal of a cumulative impacts analysis.

There are numerous, significant problems with the DEIS cumulative impacts assessment. These problems start with the fundamental problems regarding a lack of scientific integrity and lack of meaningful evaluation of the direct and indirect impacts of the TSP and other alternatives. If the direct and indirect impacts are not fully assessed—as they are not in the DEIS—it is not possible to fully evaluate cumulative impacts.

Examples of other significant problems with the cumulative impacts assessment include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The DEIS draws conclusions regarding impacts and cumulative impacts that are patently false and directly contradicted even by the inadequate assessments contained in the DEIS. Notably, for example, the DEIS states that: “Structural measures such as levees, channel excavation, and construction of an in-channel weir (Alternative C) would not have significant direct or indirect impacts on the existing conditions of the Pearl River” and Alternative C “will not result in adverse cumulative effects to existing conditions of the Pearl River.” DEIS at 133-134.

⁹⁰ Council on Environmental Quality, *Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act* (January 1997) at 41 (emphasis added).

2. The DEIS does not consider the cumulative nature of the various impacts that are identified. For example, the DEIS does not assess the cumulative impacts to water quality that would be created by the TSP-induced significant wetland losses, significant loss of small streams, creation of an artificial and artificially controlled impoundment, impacts to sites containing toxic contaminants, and tremendous dredging and construction from the TSP. Instead, each of these items are looked at and considered separately (and inadequately).
3. The cumulative impacts analysis does not consider the magnifying and additive adverse effects of climate change on the resources affected by the Project. Despite clear evidence of the impacts of climate change, the DEIS does not evaluate whether the impacts of climate change could exacerbate the adverse impacts of the Project or whether the Project would make the Pearl River system and the species that rely on it less resilient to climate change.

Climate change impacts must be taken into account as they are clearly occurring now and have already caused significant harm. In *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency*,⁹¹ the Supreme Court acknowledged the reality of global climate change, the “enormity of the potential consequences associated with manmade climate change,” and the fact that climate change impacts have already occurred:

“The harms associated with climate change are serious and well recognized. Indeed, [the National Research Council report relied on as objective and independent by the Environmental Protection Agency] identifies a number of environmental changes that **have already inflicted significant harms**, including ‘the global retreat of mountain glaciers, reduction in snow-cover extent, the earlier spring melting of ice on rivers and lakes, [and] the accelerated rate of rise of sea levels during the 20th century relative to the past few thousand years
....’”⁹²

Federal agencies have concluded that climate change impacts are happening now and that those impacts are significant. For example, the Park Service has concluded that: “The current science confirms the planet is warming and the effects are here and now.”⁹³ The Park Service also acknowledges that climate change is already affecting the Nation’s ocean and coastal parks:

“Climate change and variability **are affecting** the National Park Service’s 84 ocean and coastal parks and over 12,000 miles of shoreline. More parks in the coastal zone will be vulnerable as sea levels rise. Additional coastal change effects include lowering water levels in the Great Lakes, changing storm patterns, increasing ocean acidity and melting permafrost. These processes and other coastal hazards are threatening parks’ resources, infrastructure, and public recreational opportunities.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ The Supreme Court held that EPA has the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new motor vehicles if EPA forms a “judgment” that such emissions contribute to climate change.

⁹² *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency*, 549 U.S. 497, 525, 591 (2007) (emphasis added) (quoting National Research Council Report, *Climate Change Science: An Analysis of Some Key Questions* (2001) at 16).

⁹³ National Park Service, *Climate Change Response Strategy* (September 2010) at 1.

⁹⁴ National Park Service, *Climate Change Response Program, Coastal Adaptation Brief* (emphasis added), available at <http://www.nps.gov/climatechange/docs/CoastalAdaptationBrief.pdf>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has similarly concluded that climate change is happening now and causing significant impacts:

“The Earth’s climate is changing at an accelerating rate that has the potential to cause abrupt changes in ecosystems and increase the risk of species extinction. Climate change transcends the Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System and poses one of the largest conservation threats of the 21st century.

Climate change has very likely increased the size and number of wildfires, insect outbreaks, pathogens, disease outbreaks and tree mortality in the interior West, the Southwest and Alaska. In the aquatic environment, evidence is growing that higher water temperatures resulting from climate change are negatively impacting cold- and coolwater-adapted populations across the country. Rising sea levels have begun to affect fish and wildlife habitats, including those used by shorebirds and sea turtles that nest on coastal national wildlife refuges. Ocean acidification and coral bleaching represent major threats to marine life in more than 50 million acres of refuge waters and beyond. We acknowledge climate change is a crosscutting theme as we continue to work with the conservation community to develop and implement conservation strategies. We also recognize that a changing climate interacts with other ongoing environmental threats and stressors such as destructive fires, water shortages, invasive species and disease transmission.”⁹⁵

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued a formal finding that climate change poses serious adverse impacts to “both the public health and the public welfare of current and future generations.”⁹⁶ This endangerment finding defines “current generations” as “a near-term time frame of approximately the next 10 to 20 years” and “future generations” as “a longer-term time frame extending beyond that.”⁹⁷ The endangerment finding further states:

“The Administrator reached her determination by considering both **observed** and projected effects of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, their effect on climate, and the public health and welfare risks and impacts associated with such climate change.

* * *

Overall, the evidence on risk of adverse impacts for coastal areas provides clear support for a finding that greenhouse gas air pollution endangers the welfare of **current** and future generations. The most serious potential adverse effects are the increased risk of storm surge and flooding in coastal areas from sea level rise and more intense storms. Observed sea level rise is already increasing the risk of storm surge and flooding in some coastal areas. The conclusion in the assessment literature that there is the potential for hurricanes to become more intense (and even some evidence that Atlantic hurricanes have already become more intense) reinforces the judgment that coastal communities

⁹⁵ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*, October 2011 at 36-37.

⁹⁶ 74 Fed. Reg. 66495-66546 (Dec. 15, 2009) (finding that “six greenhouse gases taken in combination endanger both the public health and the public welfare of current and future generations.”)

⁹⁷ *Id.* (emphasis added).

are now endangered by human-induced climate change, and may face substantially greater risk in the future.”

Over the 21st century, changes in climate will cause some species to shift north and to higher elevations and fundamentally rearrange U.S. ecosystems. Differential capacities for range shifts and constraints from development, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and broken ecological connections will likely alter ecosystem structure, function, and services, leading to predominantly negative consequences for biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem goods and services.”⁹⁸

Despite the significant impacts of climate change, the only reference to climate change in the DEIS is the statement that “changes to the climate were considered” but because of a lack of consensus on the impacts of climate change on extreme storms, “flood events of large magnitude, such as the annual 0.2% exceedance event, were used for analysis but no quantitative adjustments to the flood magnitudes were made.” DEIS at 109.

4. The cumulative impacts analysis does not include any discussion of the impacts of agriculture, including related land clearing, pesticide use, and fertilizer use on the wetlands and water quality in the Pearl River.
5. The cumulative impacts analysis does not include any discussion of the habitat changes, including wetland losses, or alterations to the natural river hydrograph created by construction and operation of the Ross Barnett Reservoir.
6. The cumulative impacts analysis does not address the cumulative impacts to downstream flows and habitats. The DEIS also does not discuss the direct or indirect impacts of flow changes. The Project has the potential to significantly affect vital downstream habitats through Project-induced changes to flow across the full hydroperiod and these impacts, including cumulative impacts, must be assessed.
7. The cumulative impacts analysis does not meaningfully assess the cumulative impacts of toxic exposure. As discussed above toxic exposure via resuspension of contaminated sediments and other discharges from the HTRW sites are likely to be highly significant. Instead, the DEIS improperly contends that future HTRW site remediation that is unstudied, unplanned, and not accounted for as a cost of the project, will translate into cumulative adverse impacts that are only “moderate in intensity and short-term in duration.” DEIS at 223.
8. The cumulative impacts analysis does not address the impacts of past and ongoing development in the Project Area (other than through discussion of some specific water treatment facilities). It is of course beyond dispute that there has been a significant amount of development in and around the Jackson area (and beyond) that has adversely affected the Project Area. See DEIS at 88 (the Project area “has been subjected to a significant amount of associated development activities over time”); DEIS at 89 (discussing development impacts on air quality); DEIS at 90-92

⁹⁸ 74 Fed. Reg. at 66497-66498.

(discussing implications of HTRW sites, which are the direct result of development and economic activities); Appendix D at page 10 of the Wetlands Delineation and Determination Report (“Much of the proposed project area is influenced heavily by the adjoining urban development activities, as well as, previous flood control projects that have affected the historical flows within the drainage basin over time.”).

9. The cumulative impact analysis does not assess the impacts of foreseeable future development, including Project-induced future development even though it repeatedly states that such impacts can be anticipated. *E.g.*, DEIS at 164 (“the determination of any future development activities associated with the project implementation would not be feasible as a part of this assessment process.”); DEIS at 181 (“The potential for further cumulative impacts associated with the increased development activities as a result of the enhanced flood protection cannot be determined at this time but can be anticipated.”); DEIS at 186 (“The potential for further cumulative impacts associated with any increased development activities as a result of the enhanced flood protection afforded by Alternative C cannot be determined at this time.”); DEIS at 206 (“The potential for indirect, adverse impacts associated with the added level of flood protection within the area and the potential future development also exist” but no assessment of such impacts are provided.); DEIS at 209 (“in addition, potential indirect, adverse impacts associated with future development activities associated with the improved flood protection could be anticipated” but no assessment of such impacts is provided).

This failure is notable since the DEIS repeatedly acknowledges that future development is reasonably foreseeable due to the TSP—and indeed that promoting future development is both a stated purpose of the TSP and a fully recognized outcome of the TSP. DEIS at xi (“The TSP will also enhance community development through the newly accessible riverfront created by the channel improvement within the confines of the existing levee structure, reconnecting the community with the river through expanded riverfront access and recreational opportunities.”); DEIS at 146 (“The channel improvements will provide significant flood risk management and will allow for riverfront access and development, along with recreational opportunities. The new activities made possible by this amenity will stimulate community development, population, and housing for the project life and beyond.”); DEIS at 147 (“Beneficial, long-term, cumulative impacts will continue with respect to employment, business activities, and industry activities over the life of the project for not only the local project area, but for the region.”); DEIS at 149 (“Long term improvement to public services would be expected due to enhancement of measures that reduce flood risk.”); DEIS at 151 (“Growth opportunities for new, improved lands through flood risk management and the waterbody amenity would provide numerous growth opportunities for the community.”); DEIS at 153 (“This alternative should result in increases in long-term tax revenue and property values due to enhanced flood risk management plus new development and growth in the Study Area.”); DEIS at 154 (“The new activities made possible by the water amenity will result in long-term, beneficial, direct and indirect impacts expected to stimulate community development and improve community cohesion for the area.”)

The DEIS also acknowledges that there will be increased urbanization both inside and upstream of the project Area under future without-project conditions. *E.g.*, DEIS at 22 and 69 (“Watershed hydrology and hydraulics would remain unchanged when compared to existing conditions except for an increase in runoff due to development within the watershed. Increased urbanization, both inside and upstream of the Project Area, will have impacts to operations including in increased in runoff and potential increase in localized flooding.”); DEIS at 61 (“Given

the past and present growth trends in the Jackson Metropolitan Area, further urbanization is projected to claim in excess of 5% of the undeveloped areas during the project life. Without constraints on development, more significant encroachment into the floodplain can be anticipated, especially along the eastern side of the Pearl River floodplain in Rankin County.”). The DEIS does not provide any information to suggest that at least this amount of development also would not occur under the TSP, particularly since it is designed and predicted to promote increased development in and near the project area.

10. The DEIS attempts to minimize the cumulative impacts it does identify by stating without any supporting data or analysis that the cumulative impacts in the Project Area are much less significant when considered in the context of the entire watershed. See DEIS at 164 (“The cumulative impacts for soils within the project area would be considered as moderate and long-term. However, cumulative impacts within the Pearl River Watershed are considered to be minor in intensity and long-term in duration.”); DEIS at 181 (“The conversion of existing vegetation resources associated with the Alternative C implementation associated with other existing and proposed projects should lead to adverse cumulative impacts within the Project Area, specifically that are considered to be major in intensity and long-term in duration. Conversion of habitats and removal of vegetation across the watershed in general has not been significant and future conversion activity throughout the watershed is not anticipated. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with the proposed alternative relative to the Pearl River Watershed would be considered as moderate in intensity and long-term in duration.”); DEIS at 186 (“Additionally, the conversion of the existing wildlife habits within the Project Area associated with the implementation of Alternative C will result in cumulative, adverse impacts that would be moderate in intensity and long-term in duration specifically within the Project Area. . . . Cumulative adverse impacts relative to the Pearl River Watershed in general will be minor and long-term in duration given the amount of available habitats that are present within the watershed.”). As noted above, this contention is completely unsupported by any analysis or data in the DEIS. We also note that the DEIS has, for reasons not provided, excluded consideration of cumulative impacts outside of the study area. DEIS at 132 (“The geographic area for this [cumulative impacts] assessment encompasses the study area”).
11. The DEIS also appears to attempt to support the TSP through misapplication of the cumulative impact analysis to the assessment of the “future without project conditions.” See DEIS at 92 (“the cumulative impacts are the incremental direct and indirect impacts of not implementing a flood risk management system on both natural and human resources.”) This is not a proper analysis since cumulative impacts are “the impact on the environment which results from the **incremental impact of the action** when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions.” 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7. If there is no action there are no cumulative impacts for the purposes of an impacts analysis under NEPA.

The cumulative impacts analysis must include a comprehensive, factually accurate, and realistic assessment of the magnitude and significance of the environmental consequences of the Project in the context of the cumulative effects of other past, present, and future actions. This assessment should determine how the TSP will affect the ability of the Pearl River ecosystem to sustain itself in the future.

13. The DEIS Does Not Meaningfully Evaluate the Risk of Disproportionate Impacts to Low Income and Minority Communities

Executive Order 12898 requires that each Federal agency achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects of federal activities on minority and low-income populations.

The failings in the DEIS preclude compliance with this Executive Order. Notably, the DEIS fails to meaningfully assess a host of critical impacts, including impacts due to toxic exposure to people and wildlife, impacts to water quality, and impacts resulting from residual flood risks that could create significant disproportionate impacts on minority or low-income populations.

Moreover, the environmental justice impacts analysis that was conducted looked only at direct impacts. It did not address indirect and cumulative impacts that could be quite significant. See DEIS at 159 (discussing direct impacts, but not indirect or cumulative impacts. “Direct impacts such as air, noise, and other health risks were analyzed. Due to setback of residential areas from the proposed project construction areas, health risks associated with air quality, noise, or other health risks would not impact the areas as described within the project area.”)

14. The DEIS Does Not Evaluate Impacts to Ecosystem Services

The DEIS fails to provide any assessment of the ecosystem services that will be lost as a result of the TSP or the other alternatives. Ecosystem services valuations are well recognized as providing important information for decision makers. Understanding the impacts to these services is critical for assessing the full extent of Project impacts.

The importance of ecosystem services valuation is made clear in the 2013 *Principles and Requirements for Federal Investments in Water Resources* and *Interagency Guidelines* (collectively, the PR&G). The PR&G focus extensively on the importance of evaluating the value of ecosystem services lost and gained during project planning. While the National Wildlife Federation recognizes that the Corps is not yet utilizing the PR&G, the DEIS should nevertheless evaluate the impacts on ecosystem services.

The National Wildlife Federation urges the non-Federal sponsor to contract with an organization expert in conducting ecosystem services valuations to properly account for the ecosystem services that will be lost to the project.

15. The DEIS Does Not Meaningfully Evaluate Mitigation

The DEIS violates NEPA because it fails to meaningfully evaluate mitigation. As discussed in Section III of these comments, the DEIS also fails to comply with federal mitigation requirements.

At the most fundamental level, the DEIS has not properly assessed mitigation because it has not meaningfully evaluated the adverse impacts of the Project. The DEIS also violates longstanding NEPA requirements by failing to discuss mitigation measures with “sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated”; failing to discuss the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation; and failing to demonstrate that the proposed mitigation will be ecologically

successful.⁹⁹ As discussed above, the HEP Analysis used to assess mitigation for this Project is also fundamentally flawed.

The DEIS also violates NEPA, and the Water Resources Development Act because it does not consider mitigation for all resource types affected. The Water Resources Development Acts require the Corps to mitigate all losses to fish and wildlife created by a project unless the Secretary determines that the adverse impacts to fish and wildlife would be “negligible.” 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d)(1).

NEPA requires that the DEIS discuss mitigation measures with “sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated.”¹⁰⁰ A “perfunctory description” of the mitigating measures is not sufficient.¹⁰¹ NEPA also requires an evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation:

“An essential component of a reasonably complete mitigation discussion is an assessment of whether the proposed mitigation measures can be effective. The Supreme Court has required a mitigation discussion precisely for the purpose of evaluating whether anticipated environmental impacts can be avoided. A mitigation discussion without at least *some* evaluation of effectiveness is useless in making that determination.”¹⁰²

A bald assertion that mitigation will be successful is not sufficient. The effectiveness must instead be supported by “substantial evidence in the record.”¹⁰³ The DEIS utterly fails to meet this requirement, including by incorrectly assuming that lacustrine habitat and riverine habitat provide equivalent habitat for fish and wildlife. As the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service has concluded, however, this conclusion is incorrect:

“Even though water flow will be maintained through the lake, it will not provide the habitat required for those species needing a riverine environment to survive, thus representing a net loss of approximately 250 acres of this habitat type.”¹⁰⁴

The mitigation proposed in the DEIS consists of restoring agricultural lands to bottomland hardwood wetlands. Such mitigation, however, is typically not successful in part due to the extreme difficulty in restoring appropriate hydrology to such mitigation sites. The proposed mitigation does not address the need for restoring appropriate hydrology and it does not commit to restoring only those lands where appropriate hydrology exists—such as natural overbank flooding. The bottomland hardwood forest that will be destroyed evolved because it was flooded periodically when the Pearl River overflowed its bank. Moreover, even if a perfect hydrologic regime was restored to the agricultural lands (which is extremely unlikely), it would take decades for restored forest to function like the mature forest that was destroyed. The temporal losses of habitat have not been accounted for in the proposed mitigation.

⁹⁹ *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 352 (1989).

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ *Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain v. U.S. Forest Service*, 137 F.3d 1372, 1380 (9th Cir.1998).

¹⁰² *South Fork Band Council v. Dept. of Interior*, 588 F.3d 718, 727 (9th Cir. 2009) (internal citations omitted).

¹⁰³ *Wyoming Outdoor Council v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng'rs*, 351 F. Supp. 2d 1232, 1252 (D. Wyo. 2005).

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service letter to Michael E. Goff at page 9 (August 16, 2018) (providing official comments on the DEIS).

III. The DEIS Does Not Comply With Mandatory Federal Mitigation Requirements

All losses to fish and wildlife created by a federal water resources project must be mitigated unless the Secretary of the Army determines that the adverse impacts to fish and wildlife would be “negligible.” 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d)(1). To ensure that this happens, the Corps of Engineers – and in this case, the non-Federal sponsor—is prohibited from selecting a “project alternative in any report” unless that report includes a “specific plan to mitigate fish and wildlife losses.” *Id.* Accordingly, the DEIS must include a specific mitigation plan.

Corps mitigation plans must ensure that “impacts to bottomland hardwood forests are mitigated in-kind and harm to other habitat types are mitigated to not less than in-kind conditions, to the extent possible.” 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d)(1). Mitigation plans “shall include, at a minimum:”

1. The type, amount, and characteristics of the habitat being restored, a description of the physical actions to be taken to carry out the restoration, and the functions and values that will be achieved;
2. The ecological success criteria, based on replacement of lost functions and values, that will be evaluated and used to determine mitigation success;
3. A description of the lands and interest in lands to be acquired for mitigation, and the basis for determining that those lands will be available;
4. A mitigation monitoring plan that includes the cost and duration of monitoring, and identifies the entities responsible for monitoring if it is practicable to do so (if the responsible entity is not identified in the monitoring plan it must be identified in the project partnership agreement that is required for all Corps projects). Corps mitigation must be monitored until the monitoring demonstrates that the ecological success criteria established in the mitigation plan have been met; and
5. A contingency plan for taking corrective action in cases where monitoring shows that mitigation is not achieving ecological success as defined in the plan. 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d).

Corps mitigation plans must also comply with the “the mitigation standards and policies established pursuant to the regulatory programs” administered by the Corps. 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d).

Corps mitigation must be monitored until the monitoring demonstrates that the ecological success criteria established in the mitigation plan have been met. The Corps is also required to consult yearly on each project with the appropriate Federal agencies and the states on the status of the mitigation efforts. The consultation must address the status of ecological success on the date of the consultation, the likelihood that the ecological success criteria will be met, the projected timeline for achieving that success, and any recommendations for improving the likelihood of success. 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d).

In addition, mitigation lands for Corps civil works projects must be purchased before any construction begins. 33 U.S.C. § 2283(a). Any physical construction required for purposes of mitigation should also be undertaken prior to project construction but must, at the latest, be undertaken “concurrently with the physical construction of such project.” *Id.*

The DEIS fails to comply with these important mitigation requirements for at least the following reasons.

- (1) The DEIS does not propose mitigation for all fish and wildlife impact that are more than negligible, as required by law.
- (2) The DEIS does not propose mitigation to address the temporal loss of resources. This is extremely important as it can take decades for a bottomland hardwood forest to reach maturity and during this period of growth even successfully regenerating bottomland hardwood forest areas will not mitigate for the losses of mature bottomland hardwood wetland forests.
- (3) The DEIS does not propose mitigation for the impacts to riverine habitat. Hundreds of acres of large river and small stream riverine habitat will be lost as a direct result of the TSP and these impacts must be mitigated to not less than in-kind conditions. Indeed, it is unclear whether such riverine mitigation would be possible.
- (4) The DEIS does not propose any actions to ensure wetland hydrology on lands targeted for bottomland hardwood wetland mitigation, which could prevent this wetland habitat from being mitigated in-kind.
- (5) The DEIS does not provide a description of the lands and interest in lands to be acquired for mitigation, and the basis for determining that those lands will be available.
- (6) The DEIS cannot determine the actual amount of mitigation needed because it has not meaningfully assessed the full extent of the harm to fish and wildlife as a result of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project.
- (7) The DEIS does not provide a specific plan to mitigate the adverse impacts of the Project that satisfies the requirements discussed above, including the requirement for identifying specific actions, ecological success criteria, monitoring actions to ensure ecological success, or a contingency plan.

IV. The Endangered Species Act Requires Formal Consultation and a Biological Opinion

As discussed above, even the flawed Biological Assessment demonstrates that formal consultation must be initiated under the Endangered Species Act and a Biological Opinion must be prepared for the Project. The DEIS states that the Biological Opinion is being prepared. The Biological Opinion should have been completed prior to finalization of the DEIS to help guide development of the plan, and it should have been released to the public with the DEIS.

V. The Project is Prohibited Under Clean Water Act Section 404

As an initial matter we note that the DEIS fails to include the required Clean Water Act § 404(b)(1) analysis. It is nevertheless clear, however, that the TSP is prohibited under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act due to the magnitude and severity of the environmental harm that would be caused, the ability to avoid those impacts through the use of less damaging alternatives—including the alternatives recommended for review in Section II.B.1 of these comments—and the failure to require adequate compensatory mitigation.

This Project must comply with the requirements of Clean Water Act Section 404 and the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.¹⁰⁵ Critically, the 404(b)(1) Guidelines **prohibit** the Corps from proceeding with the Project (or approving a permit for this Project) if:

- (a) The project “will cause or contribute to significant degradation of the waters of the United States;”¹⁰⁶ or
- (b) A less damaging practicable alternative is available;¹⁰⁷ or
- (c) The project fails to adequately minimize and compensate for wetland and other aquatic resource losses;¹⁰⁸ or
- (d) The project evaluation fails to establish that the project will not have unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.¹⁰⁹

The TSP is prohibited under each of these mandates.

Under the 404(b)(1) Guidelines, effects that contribute to significant degradation include:

- Significantly adverse effects of the discharge of pollutants on human health or welfare, including but not limited to effects on . . . fish, shellfish, wildlife, and special aquatic sites;
- Significantly adverse effects of the discharge of pollutants on life stages of aquatic life and other wildlife dependent on aquatic ecosystems;
- Significantly adverse effects of the discharge of pollutants on aquatic ecosystem diversity, productivity, and stability. Such effects may include, but are not limited to, loss of fish and wildlife habitat or loss of the capacity of a wetland to assimilate nutrients, purify water, or reduce wave energy; or
- Significantly adverse effects of discharge of pollutants on recreational, aesthetic, and economic values.¹¹⁰

As discussed above, the adverse impacts of the Project are so dire that they unquestionably would cause or contribute to significant degradation of the nation’s waters. The TSP would cause significant and severe impacts to virtually every factor identified above and would cause unacceptable adverse impacts to fish and wildlife habitat and special aquatic sites, including wetlands. These impacts cannot be adequately mitigated—and adequate mitigation has certainly not been proposed. Critically, less damaging, practicable alternatives are also clearly available.

¹⁰⁵ 33 U.S.C. § 1323; 33 C.F.R. § 336.1(a).

¹⁰⁶ 40 C.F.R. § 231.10(c).

¹⁰⁷ 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a).

¹⁰⁸ See 40 C.F.R. 230.10(a)–(d).

¹⁰⁹ 40 C.F.R. § 230.1(c).

¹¹⁰ 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(c).

VI. Additional Consultations Should Be Carried Out

The non-Federal sponsor must consult with the Park Service on the Project because the Pearl River is listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI).¹¹¹ More than 150 miles of the Pearl River—extending from RM 161, above the city of Columbia, to RM 312, one mile south of Jackson—has been listed since 1982 due to the Outstanding Resource Values of Scenery, Recreation, Fish and Wildlife. The listing also notes that: “Numerous endangered, threatened and rare species; excellent example of large Gulf Coastal Plain river with extensive swamplands; upper reach very scenic.”

River segments listed in the NRI are potential candidates for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System because they are believed to possess one or more “outstandingly remarkable” natural or cultural values judged to be at least regionally significant. Under the Section 5(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and related guidance, all federal agencies must seek to avoid or mitigate actions that would adversely affect NRI river segments and the National Park Service has established consultation requirements to help ensure that this happens.¹¹²

Given the significant implications for public safety and the stated goal and anticipated outcome of increasing development in areas at high risk of flooding, the non-Federal sponsor should also formally consult with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. This consultation should focus on ensuring that any project recommendation will in fact minimize—instead of create—flood risks for the community.

VII. Independent External Peer Review is Required

The DEIS must be reviewed under the Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) process established by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. 33 USC § 2343. The DEIS clearly triggers mandatory IEPR under this provision as it evaluates a highly controversial civil works project that will cost well over \$200 million. 33 USC § 2343(a). The IEPR must be finalized within 60 days of the close of the public comment period on the DEIS. *Id.* Ideally, at least a draft IEPR would have been provided with the DEIS to assist the public in identifying areas where the DEIS could be improved, but such a draft has not been released.

The public already should have received information on the timing of the IEPR, the entity that has the contract for the IEPR review, and the names and qualifications of the IEPR panel members. 33 USC § 2343(c). However, despite a formal written request for this information, it has not been provided.

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¹¹¹ Information on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory can be accessed at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/rivers/nationwide-rivers-inventory.htm>.

¹¹² Information on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory consultation process can be accessed at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/rivers/consultation-instructions.htm>.

Conclusion

The National Wildlife Federation strongly opposes the preferred alternative in the DEIS and urge the Corps of Engineers to develop and select an alternative that will protect communities and the ecological health of the Middle Mississippi River. The National Wildlife Federation urges the Corps to initiate a National Academy of Sciences study on the effect of river training structures on flood heights to inform development of this alternative, and urge the Corps to fully address the many legal, scientific, and factual deficiencies discussed throughout these comments

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments A and B

Attachment A

**National Wildlife Federation Comments
Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement
Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project
Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS
June 13, 2018**



NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUCCESS STORIES

The projects highlighted below utilized natural infrastructure solutions—including ecosystem restoration, levee setbacks, and voluntary relocations—to protect communities and the environment.

Notably, wetlands prevented \$625 million in flood damages in the 12 coastal states affected by Hurricane Sandy and reduced damages by 20% to 30% in the four states with the greatest wetland coverage. During Hurricane Katrina, coastal wetlands reduced storm surge in some New Orleans neighborhoods by two to three feet, and levees with wetland buffers had a much greater chance of withstanding Katrina's fury than those levees without wetland buffers.

California – Coyote Creek. The Santa Clara Valley Water District sought approval for levee setbacks and bypass channels after major flooding in 1983. The project was completed in 1995, and is credited for reducing flooding in 1997. According to the Santa Clara Valley Water District, flood waters would have been 40% faster and water volume would have been 57% higher without these improvements.

California – Napa River. The Napa River has flooded at least 30 times in the last 150 years, with residents sustaining more than \$540 million in flood damages in the past 40 years alone. After twice rejecting old-style Corps' plans for levees-only flood protection in 1998 a broad coalition worked to develop a "living river" plan that is reconnecting portions of the Napa River to its floodplain. This new plan replaces the Corps' proposed floodwalls and levees with terraced marshes, wider wetland barriers, and restored riparian zones. About 500 acres of previously drained farmland were returned to marshland. Though they were only partially completed, those natural flood control solutions are credited for lowering flood levels by about 2 to 3 feet during the 2006 New Year's Day flood.

Florida – Upper St. John's River. Florida has a long history of flooding caused by hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall. By the 1970s, the St. John's River had lost more than 62 percent of its historic 400,000 acres of floodplain wetlands, aggravating extensive flooding in the region. In 1986, Congress authorized a combined structural and restoration project to reduce flood damages along the river. The backbone of this project is restoration of 200,000 acres of floodplain which will hold more than 500,000 acre-feet of water – enough to cover 86 square miles with 10 feet of water – and will accommodate surface water runoff from a more than 2,000 square mile area. The Corps predicts that this \$200 million project will reduce flood damages by \$215 million during a 100-year flood event, and provide average annual benefits of \$14 million.

Illinois – Cache River. Channelized, dredged, diverted, and leveed since the early 1900s, the Cache River today has lost 91% of its historic wetlands, leaving just 472,800 acres of its once 5 million-acre floodplain. Friends of the Cache, local landowners, The Nature Conservancy, and a variety of government agencies formed a partnership in 1995 that has resulted in the restoration of 9,000 acres of wetlands, reducing erosion and sedimentation, improving water quality, decreasing flooding, and allowing wildlife to flourish. The success of this project has inspired efforts to restore small creeks in the watershed to their original channels.

Illinois – Grafton. After the historic 1993 floods, and extreme flooding almost biannually for more than 150 years, the town of Grafton moved 70 homes and 18 commercial properties out of the floodplain to higher ground. The restored floodplain provides more room for the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to spread out, reducing flood levels and damages, and providing recreational opportunities during dry periods. The 1995 Mississippi River flood left Grafton relatively unscathed.

Iowa – Iowa River. After the historic 1993 floods, communities in east-central Iowa looked to change how the land along the Iowa River was being used and purchased 12,000 acres in easements along the 45-mile river corridor for flood control purposes. Over the past decade, local communities are estimated to have saved \$7.6 million in flood damages.

Iowa – Louisa Levee District 8. In 1993, when an oxbow levee breached for the 17th time, farmers in the Louisa Levee District volunteered for a federal buyout program. More than 2,500 acres of cropland in the old levee district was converted into the Horseshoe Bend Wildlife Refuge, a combination of grassland, meadows, and wetlands, which provides natural flood protection and serves as a stopover for migrating waterfowl. Residents report that this project helped to reduce flooding in 1995. Relocating the farmers out of the floodplain kept their agricultural land safe from future flooding at a cost that was about 50 percent less than the estimated cost of repairing flood damages from the 1993 flood. The project also put a permanent end to repeated levee repairs and expensive damage payments.

North Dakota and Minnesota – Red River. The communities of Grand Forks, North Dakota and East Grand Forks, Minnesota have suffered through at least 12 major floods since 1871. Following severe flooding in the spring of 1997, the communities worked with the Corps to develop a flood protection strategy featuring a space to give the river room to expand. This project involved setting back levees and acquiring flood-prone property to create a 2,200-acre greenway along the Red River between the two cities. This greenway has produced considerable flood insurance savings and provides open space for year-round recreation.

Massachusetts – Charles River. Extensive suburban growth paved over much of the Charles River watershed in eastern Massachusetts, triggering flooding from stormwater runoff in Boston and other downstream communities. In 1972, the Corps abandoned a planned \$100 million levee and dam flood project along the Charles River after the agency determined that upstream wetlands were preventing some \$17 million worth of flood damages annually. The Corps instead developed a nonstructural plan at a fraction of the cost, the \$10 million Charles River Natural Valley Storage Project. This project, which included the purchase of 8,500 acres of wetlands with a storage capacity of 50,000 acre feet of water, helped reduce major floods in 1979, 1982, 1987, and 2006. In 1987, the storage area prevented an estimated \$3.2 million in damages. In 2006, the storage area reduced flooding to a 2 year event while nearby rivers were suffering 40 and 100-year flood levels. The storage area has the added benefit of providing important recreational opportunities for the Boston Metropolitan area.

Missouri – Missouri River. Severe flooding throughout the 1990s led local citizens to seek natural alternatives to structural flood control measures. Through a combination of fee title acquisition and easement acquisition, 19,000 acres on a 49 mile stretch between Boonville and Jefferson City, Missouri were purchased and set aside as flood overflow areas, including nearly 6,000 acres that were previously enclosed by levees. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Corps estimated that such reconnections of the river with its floodplain reduced flood levels in 1998 by about four feet.

New York – Staten Island. Restoration of wetlands and lands adjacent to 19 stream corridors in Staten Island successfully eliminated regular flooding from southeastern Staten Island, while saving the City \$300 million in costs of constructing storm water sewers.

Oklahoma – Mingo Creek. Once known as the flood capitol of the world, the city of Tulsa suffered the worst flood in its history in 1984. Five of the 14 deaths and \$125 million of the \$180 million in flood damage occurred along Mingo Creek. Rejecting the Corps' plan to build 5 structural detention sites, a team of civil engineers, urban planners, and landscape architects devised an alternative that included restoring open space where floodwater can safely overflow, creating permanent lakes, and relocating buildings from the Mingo Creek floodplain. Local property owners and businesses have not suffered major property losses due to flooding since the project was completed, and Tulsa's residents have received up to a 35% discount on their flood insurance rates. Tulsa's repetitive loss properties also declined from 93 in 1984 to just 5 in 1995.

Vermont – Otter Creek. A vast network of floodplains and wetlands, including those protected by 23 conservation easements protecting 2,148 acres of wetland along Otter Creek, saved Middlebury \$1.8 million in flood damages during Tropical Storm Irene, and between \$126,000 and \$450,000 during each of 10 other flood events. Just 30 miles upstream, in an area without such floodplain and wetland protections, Tropical Storm Irene caused extensive flooding to the city of Rutland.

Attachment B

**National Wildlife Federation Comments
Integrated Draft Feasibility Study & Environmental Impact Statement
Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project
Hinds & Rankin Counties, MS
June 13, 2018**

**Diamonds in the Rough: Status of Two Imperiled *Graptemys* Species
(*Graptemys oculifera* and *G. pearlensis*) in the Pearl River of Jackson, MS**

Year 1



Prepared for:
the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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ABSTRACT

Two *Graptemys* species (Map Turtles and Sawbacks) are endemic to the Pearl River system of Mississippi and Louisiana: *Graptemys oculifera* (Ringed Sawback) and *Graptemys pearlensis* (Pearl Map Turtle). *Graptemys oculifera* was designated as federally threatened in 1986, while *G. pearlensis* was recently petitioned in 2011 to be listed under the Endangered Species Act. Relatively little is known about either species in the Pearl River system surrounding Jackson, Mississippi, even though Jackson is the most populated city along the river's entire length. We surveyed for both *Graptemys* species and other river turtle species during June and July 2017 using spotting scopes and binoculars. Surveys occurred along five equidistant stretches (5.3 rkm; S1-S5) from south of the Ross Barnett Reservoir (east of Westbrook Road) to south of Interstate 20 (near Savanna Street Exit). We documented *G. oculifera* in all surveyed reaches of the Pearl, and all stretches had reproducing populations as evidenced by the presence of juveniles. Densities of *G. oculifera* were higher (30 – 44/rkm) in stretches upstream of Lefleur's Bluff State Park (S1, S2) and downstream of Interstate 20 (S5) compared to middle stretches (10 – 14/rkm). This is likely associated with human modifications to the middle stretches of river including altered riverine hydrology and a lack of riparian forest that borders the river. Even though densities of *G. oculifera* were lower in these stretches, we found reproducing populations in degraded habitat and sometimes moderate densities where pockets of suitable habitat occur. We found *Graptemys pearlensis* in all river stretches surveyed, but densities were lower than *G. oculifera* in all surveys (0.7 – 3.2/rkm). Stretches 2 – 4 are inclusive of a portion of the Pearl River that is proposed to be impounded for flood control and economic development via the One Lake Project. This project would certainly alter existing riverine hydrology to favor turtles that prefer non-flowing, lake settings at the expense of turtles like *G. oculifera* and *G. pearlensis* that are riverine specialists. We estimate that along the ~15.9 km that would be impounded, this would impact 1033 to 1895 *G. oculifera* and ~65 to 150 *G. pearlensis*.

INTRODUCTION

Two endemic *Graptemys* species occur sympatrically in the Pearl River system of central Mississippi: *G. oculifera* (Ringed Sawback; Baur 1890) and *G. pearlensis* (Pearl Map Turtle; Ennen et al. 2010). Much research has been conducted on *G. oculifera* including population densities (Jones and Hartfield 1995, Dickerson and Reine 1996, Lindeman 1998, Shively 1999), population structure (Jones and Hartfield 1995), reproductive ecology (Jones 2006), and population genetics (Gaillard et al. 2015). Most of this information was collected because the species was listed as federally threatened in 1986 (USFWS 1986) and subsequently, the *G. oculifera* recovery plan outlined many studies to be undertaken (Stewart 1988). However, there is very little data available for *G. pearlensis*, with most being coincidental to *G. oculifera* visual population density surveys (Dickerson and Reine, 1996; Lindeman, 1998; Shively, 1999). Almost all of the data reported occurred prior to its recognition as a separate *Graptemys* taxon (Ennen et al., 2010), and only recently has long-term and short-term population status data become available (Selman and Jones 2017). Selman and Jones (2017) and all previous data point to *G. pearlensis* being rarer and in steeper decline relative to *G. oculifera*. In turn, *G. pearlensis* was recently petitioned by the Center for Biological Diversity to be considered a candidate for federal protection status (vis-à-vis *G. gibbonsi*; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2011).

The objective of this study was to determine if both species occurred in 5 river stretches of the Pearl River that flow through the Jackson Metropolitan area (Hinds/Rankin counties). We also wanted to determine the abundance of each species via basking density surveys. Because data has only been collected for *Graptemys oculifera* north Lakeland Drive (see Jones and Hartfield 1995), our data for downstream sites are novel and will be informative for state and federal entities tasked with managing both species in this urban river stretch. Furthermore, this stretch is also inclusive of a segment of the Pearl River that would be impacted by the proposed

One Lake Project. Therefore, our data may also serve as pre-construction data for post-construction comparisons.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Site.—Five equidistant and consecutive river segments (5.3 rkm each; total 26.5 rkm) of the Pearl River were selected to survey for river turtles in Jackson, Mississippi (Hinds and Rankin counties; Fig. 1). Two of these stretches (S1, S2) occur upstream of a lowhead dam on the Pearl River that pools water for intake by the J.H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant. Three survey stretches occur downstream of the lowhead dam (S3-S5). S1 and S5 are similar because they have alternating sandbar and cutbank sections with high levels of submergent and emergent deadwood. They also have an intact riparian forest buffer (i.e., forest up to the river's edge) and the primary trees species include Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*), Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Overcup Oak (*Quercus lyrata*), and Black Willow (*Salix nigra*). Stretch 2 is a relatively straight portion of the Pearl River with fewer sandbar and cutbank sections, but similar to S1 and S5, S2 maintains moderate-high amounts of deadwood and a mostly intact riparian forest buffer. Lakeland Drive also crosses the Pearl River in S2. Stretch 3 and 4 encompass a highly modified stretch of the Pearl River, with human modifications including channelization, mowing, and desnagging of riverine deadwood. The river lacks a riparian forest buffer along most of S3 and S4, and instead, it is bordered by a grassy/shrubby margin. In stream differences include few deadwood snags and a shallow bottom with few deep sections. Also, Interstate 59, Old Brandon Road, and a railroad crossing occur within S3, while Interstate 20, U.S. Highway 80, and another railroad crossing occur along S4. Three of these river stretches occur within the

planned zone of the One Lake Project (S2-4), while two stretches (S1, S5) occur upstream and downstream of the proposed impacted segment.

Methods.—All river survey stretches were floated by boat during the months of June and July 2017. We completed 4 replicate surveys for S1 and 3 replicate surveys for S2-5 (total of ~84.8 rkm surveyed); for the latter, flooding during June prevented us completing a fourth round a surveys for S2-5. When sandbars were present, we moored the boat on the upstream end of the sandbar and viewed/counted basking turtles via spotting scope while we walked down the sandbar (similar to Selman and Qualls 2009); turtles were typically counted on emergent deadwood snags, but we also observed them on river banks and other manmade structures present in the river (e.g., rock rip rap). In the absence of sandbars, visual surveys consisted of floating downstream in an outboard motorboat with two observers that were equipped with binoculars; each observer counted opposite banks of the river and another person served as data recorder. A Nikon Coolpix p900 digital camera with 83× optical zoom was also used to take photographs of large basking aggregations of turtles that were difficult to identify from a distance with binoculars. All surveys were completed between the mid-morning to mid-afternoon hours (~0900 – 1530 hrs), when environmental conditions are conducive for basking. We avoided days when mostly cloudy conditions or precipitation occurred to minimize differences of environmental conditions during our observations.

We used a one-factor ANOVA to determine if *G. oculifera* densities were equal across the five stretches surveyed. If differences were observed, we used a Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis to determine differences among sites. Because *G. pearlensis* data were non-normally distributed, we used a nonparametric Wilcoxon Rank Sums test to determine if densities were equal among the sites.

RESULTS

***Graptemys oculifera* Status.**—The mean number of *G. oculifera* observed per survey for all stretches surveyed was 158.4 turtles (99.1 ♂, 43.4 ♀, 9.9 Juveniles) with densities averaging 29.8 per rkm. Adults of both sexes and juveniles were observed within all stretches surveyed. However, there was considerable variability in densities among the stretches (Table 1).

Graptemys oculifera densities were statistically different among the 5 stretches surveyed ($F_{4,16} = 7.78, p = 0.0031$). Results from the Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis indicated that S1 (44.0/rkm) and S5 (41.8/rkm) had higher densities than S3 (10.0/rkm) and S4 (14.8/rkm), but S1 and S5 densities were not higher than those observed in S2 (33.5/rkm); S2 did not have higher densities than S3 and S4 (Table 1). *Graptemys oculifera* were observed in higher densities than *G. pearlensis* during all surveys at all sites (Fig. 2). For all surveys combined, *G. oculifera* was observed at 23× higher densities in comparison to *G. pearlensis*. Within site comparisons of *G. oculifera* and *G. pearlensis* ranged from a low of 13× higher in S5 to a high of 48× higher in S2.

***Graptemys pearlensis* Status.**—The mean number of *G. pearlensis* observed for all stretches surveyed was 7.1 turtles (4.7 ♂, 1.4 ♀, 0.6 Juveniles) per survey with densities averaging 1.3/rkm. Adults of both sexes were observed in all stretches, but juveniles were not observed in S3. Contrary to *G. oculifera*, *Graptemys pearlensis* densities were low in all river stretches surveyed (range: 0.25 – 3.2/rkm; Table 1), but densities were statistically different across sites ($\chi^2 = 12.1, df = 4, p = 0.016$). S5 had higher densities than S1-S4.

Other Turtle Species Observed and Miscellaneous Observations.—Along with *G. oculifera* and *G. pearlensis*, we also observed *Pseudemys concinna* (River Cooter; 93 observed, 1.1/rkm), *Sternotherus carinatus* (Razorback Musk Turtle; 35, 0.41/rkm), *Trachemys scripta* (Red-eared Slider; 41, 0.48/rkm), *Apalone mutica* (Smooth Softshell; 7, 0.08/rkm), *Apalone*

spinifera (Spiny Softshell; 1, 0.01/rkm), and *Graptemys pseudogeographica* (False Map Turtle; 16, 0.19/rkm).

For *G. pseudogeographica*, 16 individuals were observed in S2 (11 individuals), S3 (1), S4 (1), and S5 (3) including both mature males and females. No juveniles were observed, but hatchling and juvenile age classes of turtles can be relatively difficult to detect. Photographs were taken of individuals, and there seems to be subspecific variability with some individuals expressing *kohnii* subspecies characters (Fig. 3A, 3B) and other expressing *pseudogeographica* subspecies characters (Fig. 3C). *Graptemys pseudogeographica* was observed basking with other native turtle species including *P. concinna*, *G. oculifera*, and *G. pearlensis*; in one observation, all three *Graptemys* species were observed basking in the same tree crown (Fig. 3D). Thus, it seems likely that this species is established (likely via the pet trade and introductions) and occurs primarily downstream of Lakeland Drive.

While conducting surveys, we made many observations of *G. oculifera* basking on “non-traditional”, manmade basking platforms. This includes individuals basking on rock rip rap (Fig. 4A), concrete culverts (Fig. 4B), exposed pipes (Fig. 4C), and discarded metal (Fig. 4D). Many of these “non-traditional” basking platforms were located in S3 and S4 (discussed below). We also observed *G. oculifera* basking on a log under Lakeland Drive even though the log was fully shaded by the bridge (Fig. 4E).

Within S3 and S4, the Pearl River has been highly modified throughout much of this 10.6 rkm stretch by channelization (i.e., straightening), desnagging, and removal of riparian trees/vegetation. Because of these actions, there are few deadwood basking structures for turtles in this stretch compared to S1, S2, and S5, and this likely contributes to turtles basking on manmade structures as mentioned above. Along with fewer deadwood basking structures, the

river channel has also filled substantially by sand/sediment, and this has left long river sections with a shallow river bottom and few deep refuges preferred by *Graptemys* species. Nonetheless, both *Graptemys* species persist in this setting – albeit at lower densities. Juveniles are also present in these stretches, an indication of a breeding population. Within S3/S4, there were short river sections where moderate to high amounts of deadwood and an intact riparian zone could be found (e.g., at the end of S3 [near E. Silas Brown Road/Old Brandon Road], in the middle of S4 [east of East McDowell Road and downstream of I-20]). In these stretches, densities of *G. oculifera* were concentrated around areas that maintained a riparian forest buffer even though few individuals occurred upstream and downstream of these locations.

DISCUSSION

***G. oculifera* Status.**—The Pearl River around Jackson has been historically altered by humans in many ways, particularly to limit flooding in the city of Jackson via channelization, desnagging, and riparian zone clearing (especially in S3 and S4). Many riverine modifications were made before and following the historic Easter Flood of 1979, and all of these modifications were implemented in an attempt to move river water faster through a segment of the Pearl River that was historically sinuous. It has also been hydrologically altered since 1963 via the Ross Barnett Reservoir that controls river flows via a dam and spillway system (~17.4 km upstream of lowhead dam in Jackson). Last, along with these modifications, this entire stretch of the Pearl River has also been historically subjected to degraded water quality via industrial, municipal, and residential sources (McCoy and Vogt 1979). However, water quality throughout this section of the Pearl River has improved following infrastructure enhancements (Mississippi Department of

Environmental Quality 1998), but litter is still present in copious amounts (WS and HS, personal observation).

Therefore, our observations that *G. oculifera* persists throughout this section of river – sometimes in relatively high densities – is surprising, encouraging, and indicative of the recovery potential of the species. Even in the most degraded habitat of S3 and S4, *G. oculifera* were still present and reproducing, and they were observed in moderately high densities where a riparian buffer was present (e.g., near Silas Brown Street). Thus, it is not surprising that densities in S1 and S5 were highest given their “more natural” river setting with sandbars, cutbanks, intact riparian buffer, and copious amounts of riverine deadwood for basking. Stretch 1 has also been the focus of long-term study by R.L. Jones (site name Lakeland), and this population of *G. oculifera* is one of the most stable populations of the 5 populations surveyed since the 1980s (Selman and Jones 2017).

Mean densities of *G. oculifera* in S1 (44.0/rkm), S2 (33.5/rkm), and S5 (41.8/rkm) exceeded the densities observed by prior researchers throughout the Pearl River system except at two study sites: Ratliff Ferry and Columbia (see Selman and Jones 2017). However, even though mean densities of *G. oculifera* in S3 (10.0/rkm) and S4 (14.8/rkm) are 2-3× less than the other river stretches we surveyed, these densities are not insignificant. Densities in S3 and S4 are similar to densities observed by Shively (1999) in the Bogue Chitto River (4 – 17/rkm), and they exceed or are similar to densities in the lower Pearl River (0 – 15.7/rkm; Dickerson and Reine 1996).

***G. pearlensis* Status.**—*Graptemys pearlensis* densities were lower during all surveys and in all stretches in comparison to *G. oculifera*. Most studies to date have found similar observations for the species comparison (see summary table Selman and Jones 2017). Our observed densities

fall within most previously reported basking densities for *G. pearlensis* (range: 0 – 7 per rkm), with only a few sites having densities exceeding our observations (range: 10 – 15/rkm; Pearl River at Columbia, Selman and Jones 2017; portions of the Bogue Chitto River, Shively 1999). Based on *G. pearlensis* capture data for the Lakeland population (i.e., S1, north of Lakeland Drive), this population has undergone a significant population decline since the 1980s (Selman and Jones 2017). For example, in the 1980s and 1990s, 20-40 individuals were regularly captured per trapping effort, while by 2013, only a single individual was captured with similar effort (Selman and Jones 2017). It is unknown why the population has declined in this stretch, but water quality and riverine regulation at the reservoir have likely impacted prey item presence and availability (Selman and Jones 2017). Ultimately, the chances of localized extirpations is higher in species with small populations like *G. pearlensis* (in comparison to *G. oculifera*) due to environmental and demographic stochastic events.

Implications of the One Lake Project on Riverine Turtles.—Proposed riverine impoundment projects on this section of the Pearl River, particularly the One Lake project, have the potential to impact populations of both *G. oculifera* and *G. pearlensis* along with other riverine turtle species we observed. The One Lake project currently proposes to impound ~15.9 rkm of the Pearl River, and that river stretch encompasses surveyed stretches S2 – S4.

Based on our surveys, the minimum number of *G. oculifera* impacted along this stretch (S2 – S4) of river would be 379 individuals (Max and Mean Counts: S2 – 211 [$\bar{x}$ = 177.5]; S3 – 58 [$\bar{x}$ = 53]; S4 – 110 [$\bar{x}$ = 78.4]). However, when factoring in basking frequency information for a similar species from the Pascagoula River (*G. flavimaculata*; Selman and Qualls 2011), it is likely that we only observed 20 – 30% of the population basking during our surveys (i.e., during the summer, thermoregulatory needs are much less for individuals, and therefore, fewer

individuals in the population are observed basking at any particular time compared to spring or fall). Therefore, if we only observed 20 – 30% of the population, the population in this stretch impacted would likely approach 1033 to 1895 *G. oculifera* individuals. This is inclusive of males and females that represent a viable and reproducing population given the presence of juveniles along all stretches.

In contrast to *G. oculifera*, a much smaller minimum number of *G. pearlensis* would be impacted along this stretch of river (S2 – S4): 15 individuals (Max and Mean Counts: S2 – 4 [$\bar{x}$ = 3.7]; S3 – 3 [$\bar{x}$ = 1.3]; S4 – 8 [$\bar{x}$ = 4.8]). However, factoring in basking frequency information for a similar species from the Pascagoula River system (*G. gibbonsi*; Selman and Lindeman 2015), it is likely that we only observed 10 – 15% of the population basking during our surveys for similar reasons as cited above for *G. oculifera*. Therefore, given that we only observed 10 – 15% of the population, the population in this stretch impacted would be ~65 to 150 *G. pearlensis* individuals.

If the One Lake project is implemented, it will dramatically alter the hydrology of this stretch of the Pearl River. It will convert from a lotic, river setting (i.e., moderate to high flow) to a more lentic, lake setting (i.e., low to no flow setting; for review see Bunn and Arthington 2002). Furthermore, it seems likely that if the One Lake Project was implemented, the conditions that result would benefit common, generalist species that thrive in low flow settings (e.g., Red-eared Slider, Common Musk Turtle, Common Snapping Turtle, Spiny Softshell) at the expense of threatened riverine specialist species (e.g., Ringed Sawback, Pearl Map Turtle, Razorbacked Musk Turtle, Alligator Snapping Turtle, Smooth Softshell). Indeed, reservoirs are a leading contributor to species endangerment in the southeastern United States (Czech et al. 2000), and a project such as this could lead to localized extirpations of flow-dependent species.

The data contained herein provide baseline basking densities for comparison if the project occurs in order to test this likely scenario. We intend to collect additional data during the summer 2018 using similar methods along the same stretches outlined.

Acknowledgments.—Funding for this project was through Millsaps startup funds to W. Selman and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute undergraduate research fellowship to H. Smith. This project could not have been completed without the assistance of several Millsaps undergraduate research assistants including McAulay Jaunsen, Drew Carter, Aaron Anderson, and Gracie Bellnap. Mary D. Carter (City of Jackson, Department of Public Works) provided permission access to a boat ramp at the J.H. Fewell Water Treatment Plant, while facilities staff at the J.H. Fewell facility permitted ingress and egress of the facility property. RJ's Outboard also assisted with boat repair during the season to get us back on the water in a timely fashion.

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Stretch	Mean (SD) <i>G.o.</i> ♂	Mean (SD) <i>G.o.</i> ♀	Mean (SD) <i>G.o.</i> Juv	Mean (SD) <i>G.o.</i> Total	Mean <i>G.o.</i> /rkm	Mean (SD) <i>G.p.</i> ♂	Mean (SD) <i>G.p.</i> ♀	Mean (SD) <i>G.p.</i> Juv	Mean (SD) <i>G.p.</i> Total	Mean <i>G.p.</i> /rkm
1	137.5 (63.7)	72.8 (26.0)	15.5 (6.2)	234.3 (86.8)	44.0 ^a (16.3)	5.5 (3.1)	1.0 (0.82)	1.5 (1.3)	8 (2.2)	1.5 ^a (0.4)
2	109.3 (11.0)	40.7 (13.3)	23 (10.8)	178.0 (31.2)	33.5 ^{ab} (5.9)	2.3 (1.5)	1.3 (1.2)	0	3.7 (0.6)	0.7 ^a (0.1)
3	28.3 (2.5)	21.7 (8.4)	2.0 (1.2)	53.0 (9.5)	10.0 ^b (1.8)	1.0 (1.0)	0.3 (0.56)	0	1.3 (1.5)	0.25 ^a (0.28)
4	47 (19.7)	21.7 (3.8)	3.7 (2.5)	79 (27.2)	14.8 ^b (5.1)	2.3 (2.5)	2.3 (1.2)	0.3 (0.6)	5.0 (3.6)	0.9 ^a (0.7)
5	160.7 (54.6)	50.7 (28.0)	3.3 (1.2)	222.3 (50.6)	41.8 ^a (9.5)	12.0 (6.1)	2.3 (0.58)	1 (n/a)	17.0 (7.0)	3.2 ^b (1.3)
Total	99.1 (63.0)	43.4 (26.6)	9.9 (9.8)	158.4 (89.5)	29.8 (16.8)	4.7 (4.9)	1.4 (1.1)	0.6 (0.9)	7.1 (6.3)	1.3 (1.2)

Table 1. Mean counts and densities of *Graptemys* species within the Pearl River near Jackson, MS. Different superscript letters are indicative of significantly different densities among river stretches. *G.o.* = *G. oculifera*, *G.p.* = *G. pearlensis*, SD = Standard Deviation, rkm = river km.

Figure 1. River turtle survey segments along the Pearl River near Jackson, Mississippi (Hinds and Rankin counties). Numbered markers note the beginning of each of the 5.3 river km stretches surveyed.

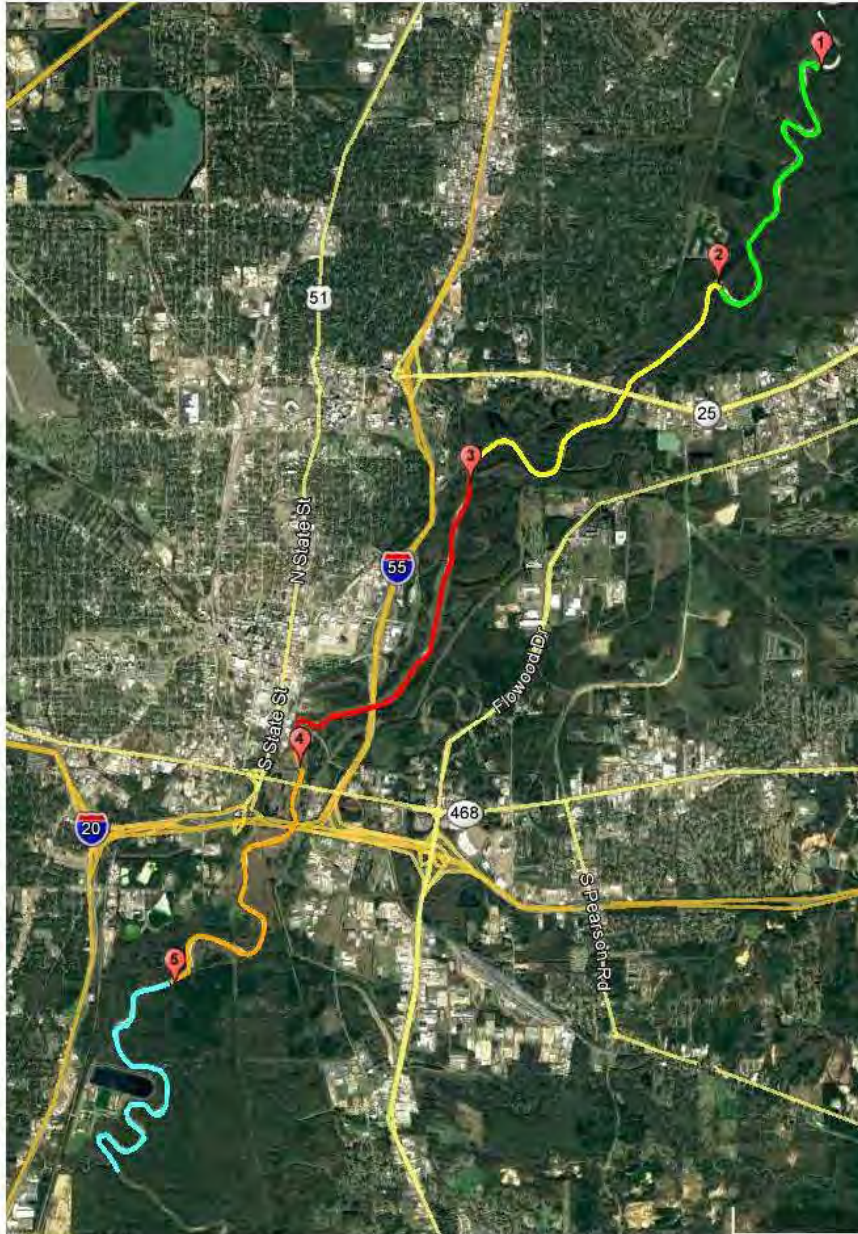


Figure 2. Variability in *Graptemys* densities among five stretches surveyed of the Pearl River. *Graptemys oculifera* is in blue and *G. pearlensis* is in red.

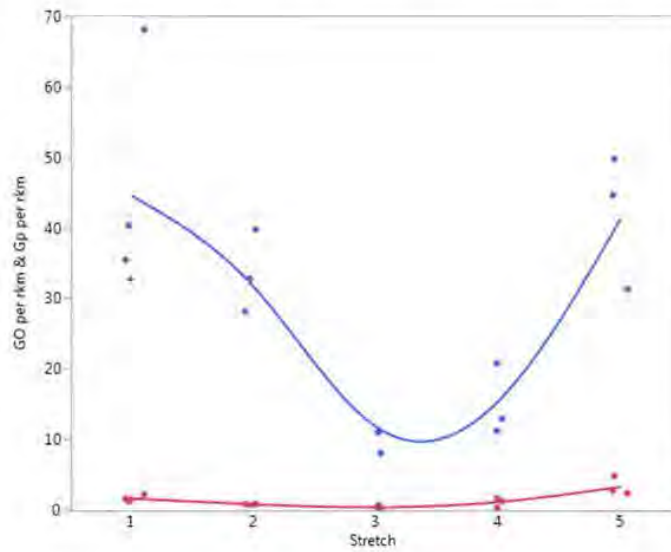


Figure 3. Observations of *G. pseudogeographica* in the Pearl River including *kohnii* subspecies forms (A, B) and *pseudogeographica* subspecies forms (C). *Graptemys pseudogeographica* was also observed basking with other native *Graptemys* (D). The white iris is characteristic for the species and can be seen here in all photographs.

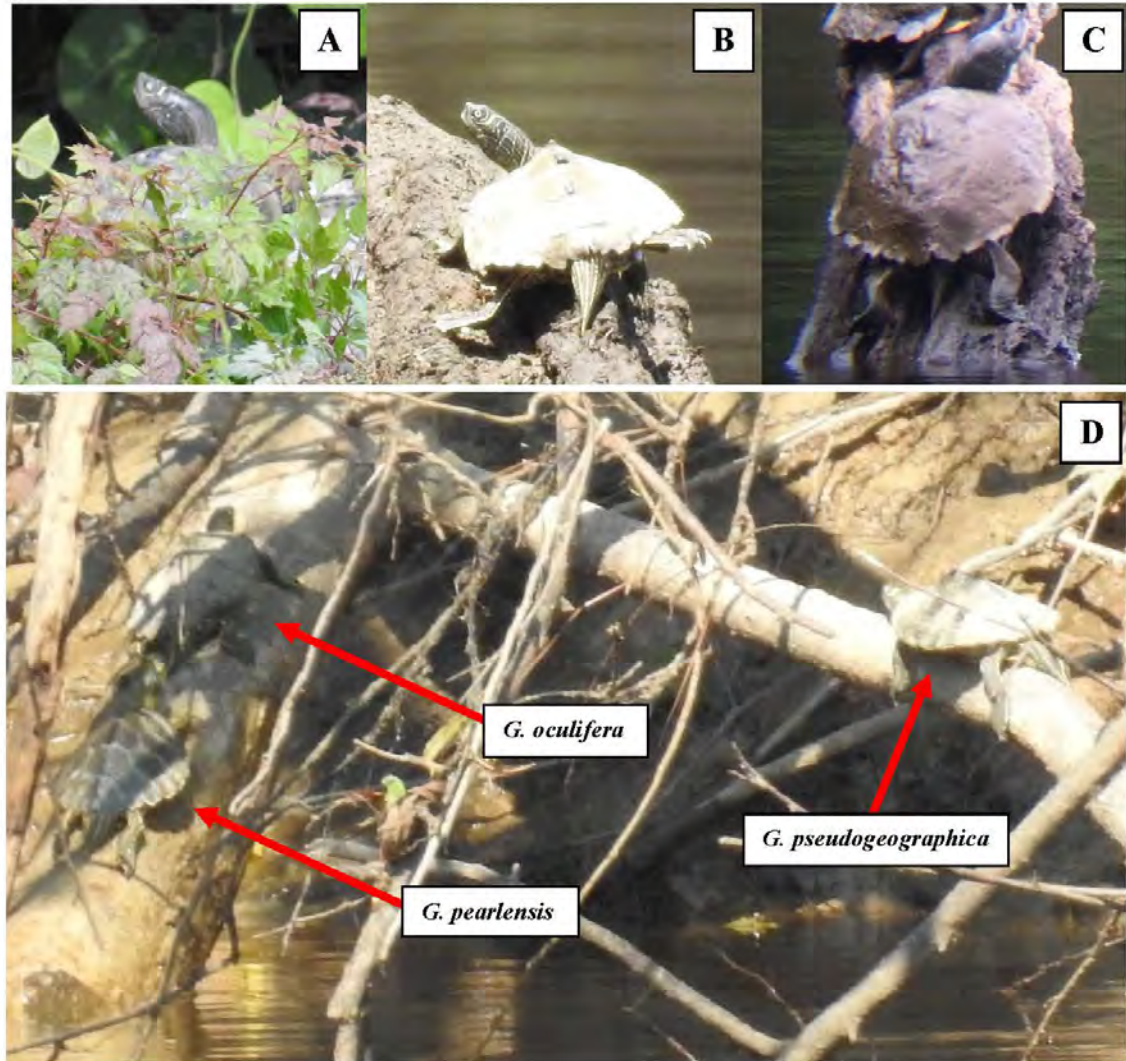
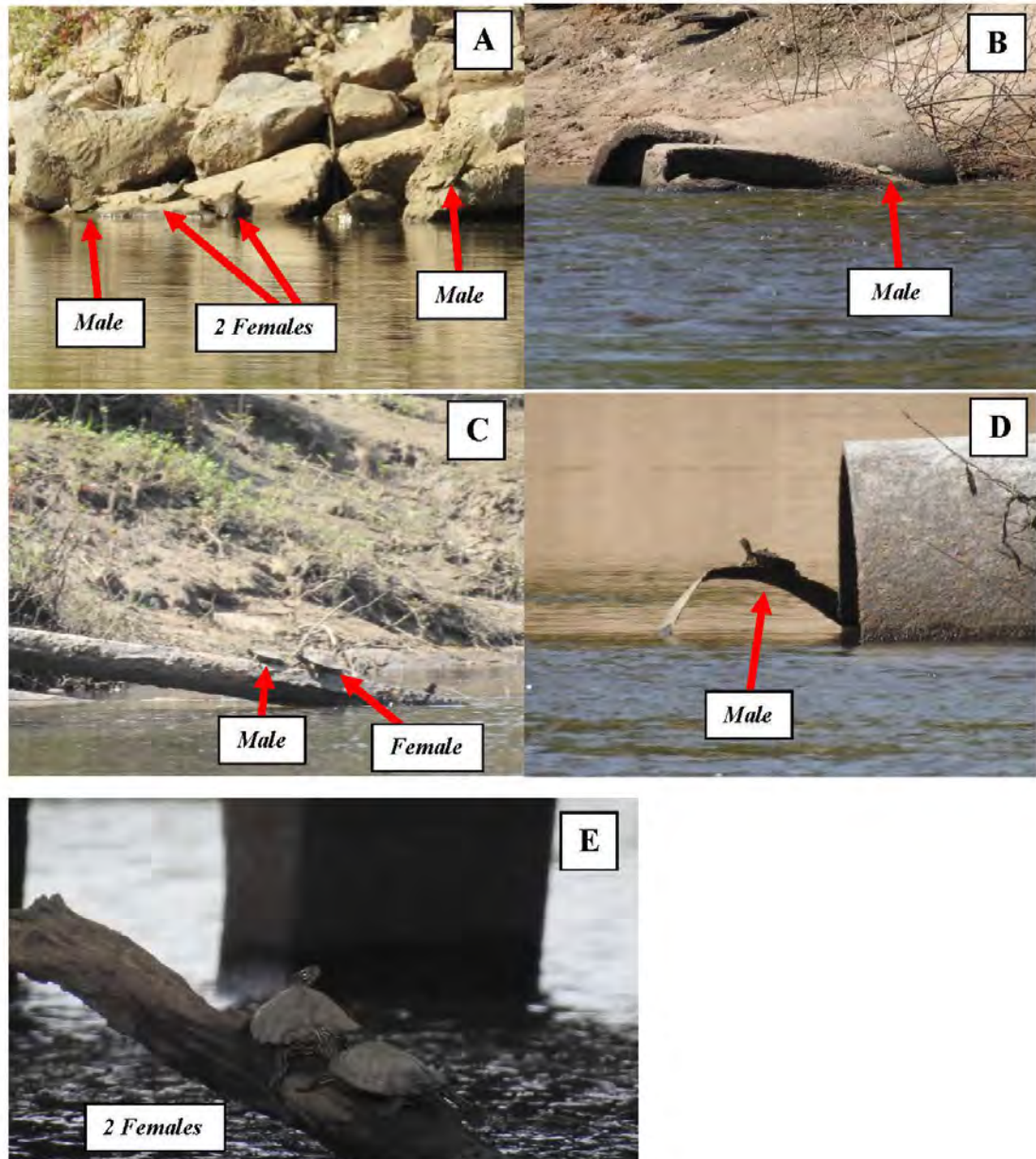


Figure 4. Observations of *G. oculifera* basking on manmade structures in the Pearl River near Jackson, Mississippi. This includes rock rip rap (A), discarded concrete culverts (B), exposed pipes (C), and discarded metal (Fig. D). We also commonly made observations of turtles basking under bridge overpasses like Lakeland Drive (E).



From: [Elizabeth D. Smythe](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Cc: [President Mike Cooper](#); [Gina T. Hayes](#); [Les Heidelberg III](#); [Ross P. Liner](#); [Daniel P. Hill](#); [Sabrina Schenk](#); [John S. Goodnow](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] St. Tammany Parish comments regarding: NOI to Prepare Draft EIS for the Pearl River Basin, MS Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MS
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 1:50:58 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[2023.05.22 Submittal Ltr. & Comments on Pearl River One Lake DEIS \(St Tammany Parish\).pdf](#)

Dear Secretary Connor:

St. Tammany Parish wishes to resubmit our detailed review comments from the 2018 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project for Hinds and Rankin Counties, Mississippi for the Corps to consider in the preparation of the DEIS proposed for release in September 2023.

We understand that USACE is preparing a DEIS to identify the national economic development (NED) plan by comparing the level of flood protection provided by alternatives presented in NFI's section 211 Study (Alternatives A & C) and two new USACE alternatives (A1 and Combination/Hybrid Plan). Alternative C, the lake construction and channel dredging, remains the preferred project of the non-federal interest, the Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District and that the Army Secretary is advancing the two non-structural alternatives, A and A1, as well as a combination/hybrid approach.

We believe the interests of our Parish are at risk with any alternatives that may affect downstream water quality, water quantity and habitat and we made our preferences and concerns known in our 2018 DEIS comments, which we again submit in the re-scoping of issues to consider in writing the new Draft DEIS for this project. In the opinion of our Engineering Department, after data analysis we found that modeling was inadequate, the study/impact area was far too small, and we feel that this project, which has Pearl River Basin in its title, did not encompass the Pearl River Basin well enough.

In fact, ALL studies and modeling should include impacts to the Lower Pearl River Basin to ultimate discharge locations in Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borne Estuaries, and the Mississippi Sound. The model domain from 2019 (Tetra Tech for Mendrop Engineering, 2019) stopped in Bogalusa, LA, too far upstream to reflect discharge impacts at the estuarine confluences. Sustained and adequate flow during low-flow conditions in the Lower Pearl Basin are critical to estuary health and to support robust recreational and commercial fisheries and oyster harvests for St. Tammany Parish and St. Bernard Parishes, in addition to Hancock County, MS.

St. Tammany Parish Council objected by Resolutions (2008, 2013 and 2018) to the "levee alternative", now Alternative C, proposed in the commonly referred to "Two Lakes" and "One Lake" Plans. Further, after the 2018 DEIS comment period closed, our Senator Cassidy and Representative Scalise inserted language into WRDA 2018 Section 1176 that asks the Army Secretary to give a hard look at adverse impacts to sections of the Pearl River downstream of this flood control project.

The comments we made in 2018 remain relevant today in asking that the Secretary's attention be focused on downstream impacts as the Corps writes a new Draft EIS and a Draft decision document for publication in September 2023. Therefore, we respectfully resubmit our comments and ask that the Army Secretary fully carry out the intent of Congress.

We will be happy to meet with the Army Secretary and his staff to relate our concerns and would be happy to host him here in St. Tammany Parish to provide a first-hand view of the habitats, resources and issues we are concerned about as this project moves from scoping to Draft DEIS this fall.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael B. Cooper, President
St. Tammany Parish



Elizabeth deEtte Smythe, Ph.D.

Regulatory Manager
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From: [Susan Campbell](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Lake Project
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 10:46:04 AM

To whom this may concern:

We live and farm on the Pearl River south of Jackson in Copiah County, we are having serious issues with bank erosion. We feel like this is due to mismanagement of the Ross Barnett spillway. The abrupt opening and closing has enhanced the bank erosion. The Lake project we are hearing about has been proposed as a possible flood control measure for us down stream however we are not buying into that because 1500 acres is only approximately 4.5 % of the capacity of the reservoir which would be insignificant. We have had no opportunity to voice our concerns at the few meetings that have taken place. We feel as though this project has been shoved down our throats and the only ones profiting are land developers. We join with many others below Jackson in opposition to this proposed project. We feel as though the corp of engineers should step in and provide better or more reasonable guidelines as to the opening and closings of the spillway and should anticipate large forecasted rain events in the opening and closing of the spillway. It is quite evident to us that the Barnett Reservoir is catering to rich landowners and their concerns while disregarding those of us down stream.

We would very much appreciate help for those of us living, farming and business livelihoods to be considered downstream.

I am awaiting your response.

Monty Campbell

Sent from my iPhone



**MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS**

Lynn Posey
Executive Director

June 27, 2023

Eric Williams
U.S. Department of Defense
Army Corps of Engineers
7400 Leake Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

Re: Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) has reviewed your agency's Notification of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement dated May 18, 2023, for the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Hinds and Rankin Counties, Mississippi. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District (MVK) is proposing flood control measures along the Pearl River, providing economic and flood control benefits for the Jackson metropolitan area. There is a demonstrated need for flood protection within the Jackson area and we support that need.

The mission of the MDWFP is to conserve and enhance Mississippi's wildlife, fisheries, and parks, provide quality outdoor recreation, and engage the public in natural resources conservation. In accordance with that mission, the MDWFP plans to cooperate with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal and state agencies in providing fish and wildlife resources information, reviewing all environmental documents, and participating in coordination meetings as they relate to the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project.

The Pearl River and its associated oxbows, tributaries, and forested wetlands support biologically diverse fish and wildlife species and their habitats. Bottomland hardwoods comprise the primary wildlife habitat type in the floodplain, while cypress-tupelo swamps add to the diversity of this system. The forested floodplain serves as habitat and a travel corridor for whitetail deer, squirrel, waterfowl, migratory songbirds, furbearers, and other species. The river itself is considered one of the most biologically diverse in the country, supporting 140 species of fish (including largemouth and spotted bass, bluegill and other sunfish, crappie, catfish, paddlefish, striped bass, etc.), 14 species of turtles (including the endemic Pearl River map turtle and ringed map turtle), 40 species of mussels, and other aquatic species. There is significant acreage along the Pearl River within the study area that provides fish and wildlife habitat unique for a metropolitan area.

Additionally, LeFleur's Bluff State Park is MDWFP's only urban state park and is the premier green space in the Jackson area. The park serves as a popular community location by providing fishing, boating, hiking, walking, camping, relaxation, bird watching, photography, and outdoor educational opportunities. The proposed flood control project alternatives may result in terrestrial public land losses and reduced recreational use in LeFleur's Bluff State Park.

Based on current project information provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, approximately 2,069 acres of terrestrial habitat may be converted to aquatic habitat. Approximately 1,861 acres of wetlands and "other waters of the U.S." and approximately 487 acres of existing surface water bodies, including the Pearl River channel and its tributaries, may be impacted. Additionally, converting the portion of the Pearl River within the project area from a riverine system to a lake system will have impacts on flow dependent species including some threatened and endangered species, and may impact resources downstream. We believe that impacts and changes to water quality and water flow affecting fish and wildlife species should be considered and assessed for all project alternatives. We believe any project selected should not result in water quality degradation, especially if future public use of the project area involves water-recreation activities.

We agree there is a demonstrated need for flood protection within the Jackson area. As stated by your agency, we also anticipate that Alternatives A and A1 would have minimal impacts on natural resources. Selecting the proposed Channel Improvement Plan, Alternative C, over other possible flood control alternatives that may be less damaging should be thoroughly vetted in terms of project costs, benefits, and impacts. Furthermore, Alternative C may impact over 1,500 acres of wetlands, including wetlands located within LeFleur's Bluff State Park. A combination of the best features from the current alternatives may provide the best project alternative.

MDWFP believes that all project alternatives should first seek to avoid fish and wildlife habitat losses and next seek to minimize such losses. If habitat losses are unavoidable, we contend that losses should be fully (100%) mitigated for in a reasonable timeframe by, protecting, enhancing, or restoring the same habitat type that was impacted, reduced, converted, or lost in accordance with Corps of Engineers approved mitigation methods. We believe that an approach which includes separate riverine and aquatic habitat mitigation is preferable. MDWFP also suggests that all mitigation project locations should occur within the Pearl River Basin, if possible.

MDWFP recommends that important aquatic and terrestrial habitats, their functions, values, and their fish and wildlife communities be conserved, protected, and restored where practicable. Many of the species which use these habitats are described in Mississippi's State Wildlife Action Plan, a comprehensive plan developed to prevent endangered species listings and encourage recovery.

In conclusion, MDWFP believes the ideal project alternative would maximize the amount of flood protection while minimizing the negative impacts to fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments to the Notification of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement dated May 18, 2023, for the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Hinds and Rankin Counties, Mississippi.

The MDWFP looks forward to working with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn P. Bosey". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "L" and "B".

Lynn P. Bosey
Executive Director



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
SAM NUNN ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET, SW
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

June 30, 2023

Colonel Christopher Klein
Vicksburg District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39183-3435

Re: Scoping Comments on the Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

Dear Colonel Klein:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the U.S. Corps of Engineers (USACE) May 18, 2023, Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi, consistent with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EIS is being developed by the USACE Vicksburg District under Section 211 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996. The USACE and the non-federal interest (NFI) Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District propose to construct a 1,500-acre lake totaling approximately 4,900 acres by excavating and widening the Pearl River floodplain and channel and relocating and changing an existing weir to a location downstream of Interstate 20.

Based on information available in the NOI, the USACE predicts the proposed project would convert approximately 2,069 acres of terrestrial habitat to aquatic habitat and impact approximately 1,861 acres of wetlands, other "waters of the United States", and approximately 487 acres of existing surface water bodies, including the Pearl River channel and its tributaries. Additionally, the proposed project is expected to impact federally endangered and threatened species by converting the portion of the Pearl River within the project area from a riverine system to a lake system. According to the NOI, the proposed project goal is to provide a comprehensive solution to flood risk in the Jackson metropolitan area. Planning objectives were developed to include reducing estimated flood risk through 2065, reducing the loss of transportation routes, reducing flood risk to critical infrastructure, and integrating design features into flood risk management features to conserve or improve natural resources.

On 5/26/2023, the USACE invited the EPA to become a cooperating agency on the proposed project. The EPA accepts the USACE's invitation to serve as a cooperating agency. However, please note that our status as a cooperating agency has no effect on our review responsibilities under section 102(2)(C) of the NEPA or Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and acting as a cooperating agency does not imply that the EPA will necessarily concur with all aspects of the EIS.

According to the NOI, the USACE plans to identify the national economic development (NED) plan by comparing the level of flood protection provided by the alternatives presented in the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study (Alternatives A and C) and two new USACE alternatives (Alternative A1 and Combination/Hybrid Plan, as allowed for by Section 3104 of the WRDA of 2007); assess the environmental acceptability and technical feasibility of the alternatives; and provide the Secretary of the Army the necessary information to choose a plan to implement. The proposed project will evaluate four alternatives that include a No-Action Alternative, Buy-out (Alternative A from NFI's Section 211 Study), Acquisition, Elevation, and Floodproofing (Alternative A1); and Channel Improvements Plan (Alternative C from the NFI's Section 211 Study and Locally Preferred Plan). In the 2018 Study, Alternative C involved the excavation of 25 million cubic yards of material from the Pearl River floodplain and widening of the existing channel width from 400 feet to 2,000 feet within a 9.5-mile reach of the Pearl River. Because Section 3104 of the WRDA of 2007 authorized consideration of an alternative that is a combination, or hybrid, of these plans, USACE is also analyzing a Combination/Hybrid Plan that may consist of features that demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in Alternatives A, A1, and C.

The proposed action may result in substantive impacts to riverine wetlands and streams. The EPA has environmental concerns that there may not be sufficient compensatory mitigation to offset the direct impacts to the Pearl River channel or the tributary streams. We understand that the section 404(b)(1) analysis required under the Clean Water Act will be included as part of the EIS analysis and request that our detailed comments below be addressed within that analysis. The EPA is also concerned about the disruption in downstream freshwater flow, changes in water quality, water quality modeling, and habitat impacts which also may affect endangered species, fisheries, and oyster production. The EPA has also identified potential issues to evaluate in the EIS including environmental justice, contaminated sites' proposed remediation, and critical infrastructure. These environmental concerns and infrastructure issues are specifically described in the enclosed detailed technical comments (See enclosure). In addition, new climate change guidance has been issued that should be considered as part of this environmental review.

On 5/26/2023, the USACE invited the EPA to become a cooperating agency on the proposed project. The EPA accepts the USACE's invitation to serve as a cooperating agency. However, please note that our status as a cooperating agency has no effect on our review responsibilities under section 102(2)(C) of the NEPA or Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and acting as a cooperating agency does not imply that the EPA will necessarily concur with all aspects of the EIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as a cooperating agency and provide scoping comments on the NOI. If you have questions regarding these scoping comments, please contact Ms. Ntale Kajumba, NEPA Section Manager, at (404) 562-9620 or by e-mail at kajumba.ntale@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Ntale Kajumba
NEPA Section Manager

Enclosure: Detailed Technical Comments

cc: Andrea E Walker, CPRP
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army

Enclosure

Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

Detailed Technical Comments

I. Purpose and Need

It is necessary to clarify for the public what risk level or annual exceedance rate is proposed through the locally preferred plan, and how it meets the primary goal to provide a comprehensive solution to reduce flood risk in the Jackson metropolitan area through the year 2065. The 2018 NFI Section 211 Study provides confusing figures and analysis related to the project purpose and how the various alternatives may/may not meet the project purpose. Out of the flood frequencies analyzed, the final design event chosen was the annual 1% chance exceedance event which would *not be protective* of another 1979 flood event. It would be protective of a flood event that is less severe or a 100-year flood event. The Final Array of Alternatives outlines that flood events having 50%, 20%, 10%, 4%, 2%, **1%**, 0.5% (1979 flood) and 0.2% annual chance exceedance were selected for hydrologic and hydraulic analysis and for economic considerations. Page ix under the Alternatives Section explains that several flood frequencies were used to analyze the alternatives but that the design event chosen was the **annual 1% chance exceedance event**. This is equivalent to the **100-year flood event** which is less protective than the 200-year 1979 (0.5%) flood.

Recommendations

- The information regarding flood risk protection afforded by the 1% design event vs the 0.5% should be made clear in the USACE's DEIS.
- Please incorporate a figure that compares the most relevant risk levels, i.e., 2%, 1% and 0.5%.
- The figures in the USACE's DEIS should reflect the accurate floodplain shading of 1% chance exceedance event/100-year flood event rather than the illustrated 200-year floodplain. Examples from the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study below demonstrate confusion in current depiction of project purpose. Figures demonstrating impacts to structures, existing levees, roads, etc. should clearly identify which flood exceedance events meet the project purpose, and any inclusion of less/more frequent exceedance events should explain whether the proposed alternative will provide for flood risk protection or consider not including.
 - **Figure 1-6** (page 9) illustrates impacts to structures from annual 1% (100-year) and 0.2% chance exceedance flood event and also the shaded 1979 (0.5%) flood event.
 - **Figure 1-7** (page 10) shows existing levees and 1979 flood event – include 1% shading
 - **Figure 2-18** (page 53) illustrates 0.2% chance exceedance flood event, roads inundated
 - **Figure 3-2** (page 107) River Markers is unclear which annual percent exceedance event is being shaded.
 - For clarity **Figure 3-3** (page 111) should illustrate structures only impacted by annual 1% chance exceedance flood event
 - For clarity **Figure 3-4** (page 115) should illustrate non-structural impacts by annual 1% chance exceedance flood - remove the 1979 flood shading to provide clarity
 - **Figure 3-6** Alternative C (page 123) should include annual 1% chance exceedance event shading. It is unclear what is being represented by the shading in the figure.

II. Alternatives:

Federal projects specifically authorized by Congress that involve discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., such as this one, must comply with the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (the Guidelines). The Guidelines (40 CFR 230.10(a)) only allow such discharges for the Least Environmentally Damaging Project Alternative (LEDPA). The Guidelines prohibit discharges with a) individual, b) secondary or c) cumulative, effects that result in significant degradation of Waters of the U.S. The EPA notes that low gradient riverine wetland habitat impacted by excavation and fill will lose riverine and adjacent floodplain and wetland functions to store floodwaters; retain sediment; export organic carbon to support downstream aquatic biota; remove and sequester pollutants; and maintain wetland plant and wildlife habitat. When habitat changes to lacustrine (lakes), physical, chemical, and biological functional losses occur.

A clearly defined project purpose determines the scope at which the array of alternatives is selected (40 CFR 230.10(a)(2)). First, as written, the proposed alternatives are not equivalent, as only one alternative includes planned and presumed recreation benefits. Specifically, Alternative C from the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study proposes to build RV pads, trails, fishing piers, wildlife viewing areas, boat ramps, and site-preparation of large areas for future recreational development in the new floodplain. Second, should the floodplain adjacent to the newly constructed reservoir flood, those newly developed areas could be at risk. These factors are either unrelated to, or in direct opposition with, the stated project purpose of flood risk reduction.

The rationale to determine the preferred alternative in the 2018 NFI Section 211 Study was unclear and based on qualitative, not quantitative, data. For instance, the level of flood protection, environmental impacts, and costs associated with each of the 16 alternatives was not made clear, which lead to a questionable selection of the final four alternatives. Of these four, the locally preferred alternative was the most environmentally impactful option, with approximate impacts to more than 1,861 acres of wetlands and "other waters of the U.S." and approximately 487 acres of existing surface water bodies, including the Pearl River channel and its tributaries.

Section 230.10(a) of the CWA Guidelines states that an "alternative is practicable if it is available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall project purposes." The 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study did not accurately or fully represent the required costs of each alternative.

Section 230.10(d) requires demonstration of avoidance and minimization of aquatic resource impacts before compensatory mitigation can be considered; this factor was not addressed in the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study.

Recommendations

- Select appropriate alternatives that address the stated project purposes. If the recreation elements do not meet project purpose of flood control, we recommend removing such elements. However, should the project purpose be rewritten to include recreation, all alternatives should include elements to improve recreation to compare an array of equivalent alternatives.

- Select alternatives that include non-structural and nature-based designs. Consideration should be given to levee setbacks to increase floodplain area, levee upgrades, and floodplain preservation or restoration to increase flood storage, roughness, and habitat.
- The EPA recommends that the effects of the project on hydrologic, biogeochemical, and plant and animal wetland functions be objectively evaluated. In addition, the effect of the proposed project on gravel or sand point bars should also be evaluated. These bars are important habitats for wildlife species and the inundation area of the lake as well as the reduced velocities in the tailwaters would limit the perpetuation of these important riverine habitat features.
- Consider other alternatives to reinforce current East and West Jackson levees to meet a 0.75%/150-year flood event. The [General Accounting Office after-action report from the 1979 flood](#) stated that the main issues were a lack of early planning, Reservoir actions, and an improperly maintained West Bank Levee. The Drainage District should evaluate enhanced management of the Ross Barnett Reservoir for increased flood control, re-evaluation of a levee option.
- The EPA recommends that the DEIS clearly indicate flood level protection that each project alternative achieves. Alternatives should be compared against the main project purpose to provide flood protection, including loss of any existing features that provide for the project purpose (e.g., wetlands that provide flood retention functions). Additionally, for each alternative, more clarity is needed on pre- and post-project flood risk to primary residences, infrastructure, and other economically important features for a variety of exceedance events (i.e., 100- to 500-year floods).
 - o A clear reservoir management plan is needed where applicable. Information should include engineering plans that detail weir height, reservoir elevations, and flows when managing for flood control, water supply, and recreation. Details on typical release schedules and operations during extreme drought and flood events should also be included.
 - o Special attention should be paid to any increases in urban flash-flooding so that an alternative is selected that maximizes equitable flood risk reduction opportunities to include communities with environmental justice.
 - o Examine flood risk associated with hazardous waste sites, remediation sites, wastewater treatment plants, and water treatment plants (e.g., J.H. Fewell WTP, Savanna Street WWTP, LeFleur's Landing, Gallatin Street Dump Site, Gulf States Creosote Slough, and others). Consideration should be given to alternatives that would help reduce leachate and creosote contamination with and without the need for costly remediation. Consideration should also be given to the risk of Sanitary Sewage Overflows associated with each alternative.
 - o Impacts to any existing recreational areas (e.g., LeFleur's Bluff State Park and Crystal Lake) as well as risk of flooding to future development areas associated with each alternative should be considered (see discussion on environmental impacts below).
 - o Consideration should be given to potential impacts to Fannye Cook Natural Area/Pearl River Basin Mitigation Bank in Rankin County resulting from altered flood regimes associated with each alternative (see discussion on environmental impacts below).
- The EPA recommends an economic assessment and information needs related to project costs that are required to evaluate the LEDPA.
 - o Costs should be updated to include 2023 prices (e.g., buyouts, flood damages, construction costs, etc.) and include a conservative inflation rate for long-term costs.
 - o Remove items associated with assumed recreational development not directly associated with this plan. Any benefits not linked to this plan cannot be presumed to occur in any specified timeframe. For other recreation items directly linked to the proposed plan (if still included), costs and benefits should be clearly indicated as separate line items. If a proposed plan reduces recreation and tourism to other parks (e.g., LeFleur's Bluff State Park and Crystal Lake), those costs should be represented as separate line items to clearly indicate what is being lost and replaced.

- o In the 2018 NFI Section 211 Study, Alternative C would have needed to replace nine bridges, but these costs were not included. If this remains true, these costs should be included.
- o Compensatory mitigation costs were severely underestimated and need to be updated. For example, mitigation for Alternative C was estimated at \$14.5 million, which comes to about \$6100 per acre impacted. Today, bottomland hardwood mitigation can cost \$25,000 to \$50,000 per acre or higher, depending on the site conditions and land value.
- o Alternative C included toxic waste site remediation, but cost estimates were unclear and appeared to have been underestimated. If remediation is still part of the proposed plan, more information is needed to determine the exact remediation measures required, with updated cost analysis per line item. Costs should also include monitoring and adaptive management if remediation efforts are not immediately successful.
- o Operation and maintenance costs for reservoir management can be cost-prohibitive. For example, downstream water quality monitoring is required for the life of the reservoir and should be included in cost estimates. Reasonable inflation rates should also be applied for realistic comparisons.
- Once it has been determined that the LEDPA has been selected, clear demonstration of measures to avoid and minimize environmental impacts should be included. This includes direct and indirect impacts to wetlands and streams, as well as cumulative and secondary downstream impacts.

III. Aquatic Resource & Environmental Impact Assessment

Section 230.11 of the CWA Guidelines describes the factual determinations that must be made to evaluate whether environmental impacts comply with the restrictions on discharge outlined in Section 230.10 and summarized again in Section 230.12. Below we provide recommendations and information needs associated with the analysis of direct, secondary, and cumulative impacts, as well as other factors that are used to evaluate whether an alternative contributes to significant degradation of the aquatic ecosystem.

The majority of the LeFleur's Landing landfill site is located within the annual 1% chance exceedance floodplain of the Pearl River (2018 NFI's Section 211 Study, page 91 Section 2.5.14.1.2 LaFleur's Landing Site). There is insufficient information and analysis regarding the environmental impacts associated, particularly for alternative C that appears to include inundation of this area.

Recommendations:

- A recent (i.e., within the past five years) aquatic resource delineation should be provided as part of the assessment process.
- An updated Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) analysis is likely needed to ascertain any changes in flooding associated with an updated period of record.
- More information is needed to evaluate direct, secondary, and cumulative impacts associated with changes to flow rates and associated changes to flood frequency and duration. The Guidelines require assessment of functional losses to aquatic resources, yet, for this project, only direct impacts were evaluated in terms of acreage, not lost functions.
- For the purposes of wetland assessment, Hydrogeomorphic (HGM) should be used to determine direct and secondary functional impacts, because it can estimate impacts associated with changes to wetland vegetation, soils, and hydrology (i.e., flood frequency and duration). The HGM Approach is used in the Section 404 Regulatory program within the Vicksburg District.
- Full consideration of impacts to the aquatic ecosystem and their dependent species is needed to determine the extent of required in-kind mitigation associated with each proposed alternative. Obligate and facultative riverine species (e.g., aquatic vegetation, invertebrates, and vertebrates)

would be adversely impacted with conversion to a fragmented lacustrine system that is likely to develop a similar suite of issues known to occur in the Ross Barnett Reservoir (e.g., high sedimentation, fecal coliforms, manganese, etc.); yet these effects were downplayed in the 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study.

- The impact assessment should include consideration of downstream impacts to water quality (including, but not limited to, downstream sedimentation during project construction), water quantities (especially during low flows), and the species that could be adversely impacted (with consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. FWS).
- A cumulative impact assessment should include proposed development intensification adjacent to the Pearl River where appropriate.
- Some of the alternatives will likely require a significant volume of fill material to construct levees and/or land building. The point of extraction and disposal determines whether the material is subject to evaluation under regulations pursuant to Resource Conservation and Recovery Act or the CWA. We recommend a description of the volumes of material proposed for excavation, dredge, fill, and disposal based on the point of extraction and disposal being 'upland' or 'waters.' Under CWA, some sediments may require testing. Regardless of the final placement/disposal site, the tiered approach found in both the Inland Testing Manual and the Upland Testing Manual are the same and should be utilized regarding testing needs for material subject to CWA regulation. Further, coordination with the EPA to produce a sampling plan and quality assurance plan is recommended to facilitate shared interpretation of testing results and avoid any future delays.

IV. Mitigation:

According to Section 2036 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, "the Secretary shall ensure that the mitigation plan for each water resources project complies with the mitigation standards and policies established pursuant to the regulatory programs administered by the Secretary." 33 U.S.C. § 2283(d)(3)(A). Compensatory mitigation is required for functional losses to waters of the U.S. and must follow the regulations outlined in 40 CFR § 230.91 and 33 CFR Parts 325 and 332. These latter regulations are commonly referred to as the 2008 Mitigation Rule. The 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study lacked sufficient information regarding compensatory mitigation and its ability to offset project impacts with the type and amount of wetland and stream habitats involved. Wetlands and streams in Mississippi are difficult-to-replace resources due to increased challenges in obtaining land for compensatory mitigation, which can increase temporal loss. In particular, bottomland hardwoods and other floodplain wetlands provide unique functions in these ecosystems, including flood retention. The scope of impacts to wetland and stream functions for each alternative, and ability to mitigate for those impacts, warrants further review by the EPA to ensure compliance with the 2008 Mitigation Rule to ensure that both permanent and temporary losses to aquatic environments are minimized. The 2008 Mitigation Rule requires a 12-element mitigation plan that includes site-specific information (40 CFR 230.93). Such information is necessary to determine whether the proposed compensatory mitigation plan is feasible and is the most environmentally preferable option that offsets functional losses to waters of the U.S. However, the 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study only provided species-based estimates for the amount of compensatory mitigation needed and did not provide any details outlining a compensatory mitigation strategy.

Previous species-based estimates included an aquatic and a terrestrial Habitat Evaluation Procedures (HEP) analysis. Aquatic HEP studies were done in 2005; it is unclear if current conditions correspond to the conditions when the HEP study was done (18 years ago). Also, the 2005 HEP report indicates replacement of riverine habitat for obligate and facultative riverine species which will be difficult to

mitigate. But the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study did not propose mitigation for aquatic species on the basis that a greater acreage of open water would be created with a proposed lake. This flawed rationale obscures functional losses to streams and rivers that would be replaced with a fragmented lacustrine system – an out-of-kind replacement that is generally not considered environmentally preferable mitigation in the 2008 Mitigation Rule.

Terrestrial HEP studies were completed along with the project's wetland delineation in 2014. The terrestrial HEP study estimated the habitat units needed to offset impacts to a variety of upland and wetland-dependent species due to the levee and the channel improvement scenarios. For Alternative B, these values ranged from 1,950 to 2,250 acres depending on the species and mitigation type assessed. For Alternative C, these estimates varied from 5,850 to 17,190 acres. Not only are these estimates too broad to reasonably develop a mitigation plan, but wetland functional losses were not evaluated as required by the 2008 Mitigation Rule.

Recommendations

- The EPA requests an opportunity to evaluate a complete, detailed compensatory mitigation plan prior to publication of the FEIS and ROD. We also recommend that U.S. FWS and other interested agencies have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposal.
- Compensatory mitigation for offsets to project impacts must occur in advance or concurrent with discharges of dredge or fill material to minimize temporary functional loss. A clear statement to this effect must be included in the FEIS and/or the ROD.
- 40 CFR Subpart J requires a 12-element mitigation plan. The EPA recommends that this plan is presented within the DEIS for expedited agency review and comment.
- If sufficient detail cannot be provided in the upcoming DEIS to include all 12 of the required elements specified in 40 CFR Subpart J, including site-specific information, we request the opportunity to carefully evaluate the completed plan prior to publication of the FEIS and ROD to determine its appropriateness to offset lost wetland and stream functions as well as its restoration potential and sustainability.
- Compensatory mitigation should prioritize “in-kind” and “in-basin” restoration opportunities, including floodplain restoration opportunities upstream of Jackson.
- Preference should be given to sites which would replace similar functions lost.
- Offsets should be provided in a similar geomorphic position, support similar communities of fish and wildlife species, and be of an appropriate scale.
- Co-locate stream and wetland restoration work to include floodplain connectivity where feasible.
- Preference should be given to a large contiguous tract of land over multiple fragmented parcels.

V. Water Quality

The NFI's Section 211 Study Appendix D did not adequately address water quality standards (WQS). The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) water quality standards are in Part 6, Chapter 2 of Title 11 of the Mississippi Administrative Code. The WQS specify designated uses (classifications) of State waters and applicable water quality criteria. MDEQ's WQS specify downstream waterbody uses and quality of the Pearl River must be maintained and protected.

Based on data from 2006 and 2008, the EPA and MDEQ developed a 2009 Pearl River Nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for stream segment ID MSUMPRLS1E (Hinds, Rankin, and Copiah counties, HUC 03180002). The historical total nitrogen and phosphorus measurements in the stream from 1988 – 2001 were observed to exceed the recommended ecoregion 65 targets. The Algal Growth

Potential Tests indicate the system is nitrogen limited and needs to be driven back to a phosphorus limited system. This TMDL recommends a 56% reduction in total phosphorus (TP) loads from point and nonpoint sources and total nitrogen loads from nonpoint sources to meet the ecoregion TP target of 0.1mg/l to fully support the uses of public water supply, fish and wildlife and recreation in this stream segment. This portion of the Pearl River was originally listed for nutrient pollution, organic enrichment, and low DO in the 1996 303d list.

The 2015 TMDL for Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus for the Pearl River for MSUMPRLS1E from reservoir to the Strong River updates the 2009 Pearl River Nutrient TMDL. Using updated modeling (Environmental Fluid Dynamics Code and Water Quality Analysis Simulation Program), the 2015 TMDL recommends an overall reduction of 70% TP and 30% TN to restore water quality in this segment. The 2016 305b report listed two segments of the Pearl River in the study area as not meeting aquatic life or secondary contact recreation, which was consistent with the 2014 305b report.

The 2011 Comprehensive Protection and Restoration Plan for the Ross Barnett Reservoir Watershed, Mississippi (the Plan) recognizes several high priority water quality issues in the reservoir and its surrounding watershed including nutrient enrichment/algae growth and erosion/sedimentation that can affect algal growth. The plan recommends measures for reducing nutrient to help manage these issues. The Plan incorporates the Source Water Protection Plan for the O.B. Curtis (Curtis) Drinking Water Intake. Because the reservoir operates as a flow-through reservoir with limited flood storage, current water quality degraded by nutrients and algal growth is passed directly to the Curtis intake within the lake and the J.H. Fewell drinking water intake located on the Pearl River a few miles downstream of the reservoir.

Monitoring data show that nitrogen and phosphorus are present in the reservoir in amounts more than what is considered normal for algae and plant growth. MDEQ classified the reservoir as eutrophic based on the Carlson Trophic State Index Secchi depth in 2010. The eutrophic classification does not automatically indicate poor water quality or lack of use support, however, as part of the plan, the reservoir will monitor nutrient levels and implement management strategies to meet public water supply and recreation uses as well as downstream aquatic life uses. Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks has observed thick mats of aquatic vegetation in parts of Pelahatchie Bay and the upper reaches of the reservoir. Excess nutrients and subsequent growth of algae and other aquatic plants may occur in any area of the Reservoir within the depth of photic zone and may become a concern if conveyed to the O.B. Curtis drinking water intake. Some types of algae can cause objectionable taste and odor in drinking water and drinking water treatment processes can result in trihalomethanes which can cause health problems to human in high levels. Mississippi Department of Health currently monitors trihalomethane presence. The reservoir watershed (Rankin, Madison, Leake counties) contains some of the most highly erosive soils (silt loam) in the United States. Phosphorus in reservoir sediments can contribute to nutrient enrichment and eutrophication, particularly in shallow lakes (Wetzel 1983, Cole 1983, Cooke et al. 1977) and high phosphorus levels in sediments in shallower areas of the reservoir can support excess growth of aquatic and semi-aquatic plants (macrophytes) (Wetzel 1983). See appendix H Pollutant Source Inventory and Locations of Concern for additional details.

Section 4.5.2.1 Water Quality (NFI's Section 211 Study, page 166) indicates that the new 10-mile impoundment (Alternative C) would "increase water depths similar to the reservoir, reduce water velocity, especially under low flow conditions, reduce dissolved oxygen especially in urban streams already experiencing low DO, increase the possibility for stratification, and possibly increase nutrients and algal growth similar to the Ross Barnett reservoir photic zones.

The inundation of the project area requires significant efforts to remove, or cap identified hazardous waste sites, considerable landfill contamination and automotive salvage yard contaminants. The Gallatin St. Landfill Site includes general industry waste and borings detected leachate with cadmium, lead and nickel above regulatory standards. (MCL and/or aquatic life criteria) Another water sample was collected which contained **cadmium, lead and nickel** above Safe Drinking Water Act MCLs. Due to the continual erosion of the outside bank of the curve (eastern and south sides) in the Pearl River around this landfill, contamination of ground and surface water will remain of concern. LeFleur's Landing Site includes underground fuel storage tanks, asphalt plant, paint shop southern edge adjacent to Pearl River and historical remediation investigations indicate this site is a source of potentially toxic chemicals which contaminate the river, soils, and groundwater.

Recommendations

Please include a full analysis of the water quality standards and designated uses, as well as how each alternative will affect these standards and uses.

- The EPA recommends that the EIS should include an evaluation of the EPA approved TMDLs within the Pearl River watershed and whether they would require revisions with the alteration of the Pearl River and a cost analysis to revise and implement these TMDLs.
- Please include additional information on how Alternative C (new lake) will reduce nutrient concentrations to meet the reductions described in the TMDLs and Restoration Plan.
- Please provide an analysis of how each alternative could impact water quality and nutrient issues regarding the Curtis drinking water intake.
- Additional explanation is needed on how preferred Alternative C will result in "long-term, beneficial cumulative impacts on water quality" when the reservoir is classified as eutrophic and the upper Pearl River watersheds are required to meet substantial nitrogen and phosphorus reductions to protect drinking water supply intakes as well as general aquatic life uses. Please provide an explanation of how the proposed new lake is not expected to have many of the same or magnified characteristics of Ross Barnett Reservoir, including increased stagnation during low flows that could intensify algae bloom conditions, incorporation of urban runoff pollutants and sedimentation. The USACE's EIS should address:
 - How will the proposed downstream lake avoid the water quality issues of Ross Barnett?
 - Will the new lake operate similarly as a flow through impoundment like Ross Barnett?
- How will the new lake operate as a flood control lake which Ross Barnett has not been able to do since its construction in 1965. Additional explanation of how water quality concerns from the hazardous waste sites will be addressed with each alternative, including impacts to drinking water, downstream uses, groundwater, and soils. Clarify what actions will be taken to address these issues with each alternative as well as whether they can effectively mitigate these water quality impacts.

Impacts of Hydrologic Alteration: In addition to fragmenting rivers and preventing the passage of aquatic life, other water quality impacts below dams are well documented, including significant changes to dissolved oxygen and temperature. These can have significant impacts to aquatic life affecting both survivability and reproduction. The purpose of providing a downstream flow analysis is to ensure the protection of a healthy aquatic environment throughout the life of the project. A minimum flow is not considered sufficient for deriving downstream flows.

Based on the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study, it was unclear how future water withdrawals and the operation of the lake would affect downstream flows. For example, should lake levels start to decline in the middle of the summer, it is unclear if more water will be held back to fulfill recreational needs at the

detriment of downstream flows. The EPA notes that 40% of Jackson's water needs are taken from the Pearl River. As urbanization increases because of decreased flood risk, the demand for water will also likely increase. The effect this will have on the availability and levels of downstream flows was not fully assessed and evaluated in the 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study. Timing of the reservoir filling was also not specified in that Study. Filling reservoirs have been found to cause impairments to the receiving downstream waters. Timing of the filling may provide some reduction in the potential to impair the water body.

In Appendix D, Section 2.5, the 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study notes that, '*...the water quality in the impounded waters of the upstream Ross Barnett Reservoir sediment/turbid water, nutrient enrichment and algal growth, bacteria/pathogens, invasive aquatic species, pesticides...*'. In addition, the NFT's Section 211 Study does not address the impacts of pollution from the impoundment. The Guidelines provide that no discharge of dredge or fill material will be permitted if the discharge causes or contributes to violations of state water quality standards (after considering disposal site dilution and dispersion), violates any applicable toxic effluent standard, or jeopardizes threatened or endangered species or results in the likelihood of destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. The EPA notes that the proposed weir will result in substantial fragmentation of the Pearl River environment.

Recommendations

- The 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study should provide information that addresses water quality in the flooded riverine section, as well as addresses the impacts on the river downstream or the downstream flow requirements needed for protection of the Pearl River during the life of the project.
- It is recommended that an instream flow study should be undertaken to determine the flows needed to meet state water quality standards and ensure that the design of the proposed project will minimize impacts to aquatic life downstream of the weir. The flow study should be designed to determine the needed flows to meet narrative and numeric water quality standards and to maintain and improve the biological integrity of the waters of the State.
- The EPA further recommends that the flows be developed consistent with current scientific literature regarding both the flows selected and the time increments at which they apply. The EPA notes that the downstream flow should not be derived solely as a low flow analysis. When a downstream flow study is completed for this river, it should not be done strictly to derive a Minimum Instream Flow. Downstream flow studies should be done that incorporate natural patterns of intra- and inter-annual variability in a manner that maintains and/or restores riverine form and function, to best maintain ecological integrity. The natural fluctuation of water (i.e., high, low, and normal flows) in rivers and streams is critical for maintaining aquatic ecosystems because aquatic biota have developed life history strategies in response to these fluctuations.
- The EPA recommends that the proposed project be evaluated on how increased withdrawals will impact flow availability and downstream water quality. The EPA also recommends that the USACE's EIS include a discussion on the timing of the filling of the reservoir. In addition, the EPA requests clarification on how it is possible to avoid water quality issues similar to those stemming from the Ross-Barnett Reservoir when impounding waters for this proposed reservoir. The EIS should address fragmentation and its associated impacts. The EPA understands that the USACE is coordinating with the U.S. FWS to assess potential impacts to threatened and

endangered species, such as the Ring-backed Turtle. The EPA principally defers to the U.S. FWS on impacts to endangered species.

Water Quality Modeling Approach: The EPA had concerns related to the modeling approach used to determine potential impacts to water quality of the proposed alternatives in the 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study. Modeling results are only useful in predicting changes when they adequately represent the system, the parameters, and the variability of those parameters. The water quality model simulation period was only one month, July of 2014, and did not provide the necessary range of wet and dry weather conditions to support a meaningful representation of hydrological conditions in the Pearl River. The selection of a longer-term continuous simulation, such as multi-year simulations, ensures that average, wet and dry conditions are included in the model.

Recommendation: The EPA recommends that the modeling timeframe be extended to include seasonal variations and both dry and wet years.

Water Quality Modeling Calibration: In the 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study, the modeling calibration, for both flow and water quality, consists solely of x/y plots of observed and modeled data for a station over time. To ensure the model is appropriately calibrated, the model must be evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively. In addition, the water quality calibration relied solely on water quality data collected in July of 2014, resulting in time series plots comparing model predictions to only 3, 2 or sometimes 1 data point per station. The limited data did not provide the data density (amount of data available over time) to judge model performance or constrain the model calibration.

Recommendation: The EPA notes that quantitative analysis consists of statistically comparing the model predictions with measured field observations. The following statistical comparisons should be considered for calibration: Mean, Normalized Root Mean Square Error, Index of Agreement, Tails of Distribution data, Qualitative inspections, Time Series Plot, Probability Distribution Plot, and 1 to 1 Plot. The EPA also recommends using all available water quality data, including data collected by other agencies (i.e., MDEQ, U.S. Geological Survey, EPA, etc.) in the watershed for calibration.

Water Quality Permits: The 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study stated one objective of the water quality modeling exercise is to determine if the downstream assimilative capacity will be impacted by the weir, but only provides information about the large current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits and future proposed NPDES permit discharges not impacting assimilative capacity. There is no analysis or discussion about how the discharge of fill and habitat changes (i.e., reduced natural filtration functions) for the proposed project would impact assimilative capacity. The 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study conclusions do not address the stated objective.

Recommendation: The EPA recommends that the EIS should evaluate whether downstream dischargers with existing NPDES permits will have to reevaluate their discharge permits to account for the change in flows due to the proposed project.

VI. Watersheds

Considering the potential significant environmental impacts to wetlands and streams, disruption in downstream freshwater flows, habitat destruction and alterations, changes in water quality, etc., and the social and economic impacts associated with the TSP, a less disruptive and environmentally damaging alternatives should be carefully considered.

Recommendation: The EPA recommends expanding ~~or~~ further examining some of the non-structural options presented in the study in conjunction with green-gray infrastructure solutions in the upper parts of the watershed to create more ~~for~~ flood storage capacity. This effort might also require improved land use planning, zoning, and building code changes. The project sponsor might also explore some of the innovative grey stormwater technology available on the market today that allows for underground stormwater storage in tightly knitted urban areas in combination with the aforementioned.

VII. Environmental Justice (EJ)

The 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study indicated that U.S. Census data from 2010 was used for the Environmental Justice Analysis. In addition, demographic information from three Counties along the project area was shown in relationship to Statewide demographic areas. There, locations or areas were highlighted as areas that experience flooding from the 1% flood event. The Study also stated that no disproportionate adverse impacts would occur if the No Action Alternative was selected.

It is recognized that additional areas with communities with environmental justice concerns experience flooding in response to 4% and 2% chance exceedance flood event (page 57 Section 2.4.8.1 Historic and Existing Conditions). Alternative C notes that several areas are expected to continue to experience flooding during events like the 1979 flood event (0.5%) and during an annual 1% chance exceedance flood event. These are addressed in further detail in Appendix E. Although these areas are expected to experience significant reductions in flooding during flood events of lesser magnitude than an annual 1% chance exceedance flood event.

Recommendation: The EPA recommends the EIS include the most recent demographic information available. In addition, this information should be provided at an appropriate scale. The EIS does not include information needed to understand how people of color/and or low-income populations were identified, nor does it explain how its conclusions were reached. Additional information and guidance regarding EJ considerations and the methodologies used can be found in a more recent document developed by the Federal Interagency Working Group on EJ entitled, "*Promising Practices for Environmental Justice Methodologies in NEPA Reviews*" (Please see: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/ej-iwg-promising-practices-ej-methodologies-nepa-reviews>).

- Evaluate flooding impacts on communities identified for environmental justice considerations.
- Explain how alternative C meets the flood control objective to reduce flood risk through 2065, particularly regarding the identified impacts to communities with EJ concerns.

VIII. Increased flash flooding in Jackson neighborhoods

The proposed elevation of water that would be pooled at the new One Lake weir is 258' or 8 feet higher than the water level of the current weir at Jackson Waterworks (250'). According to the 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study ([Appendix C, pages 32-36](#)), the new impoundment water level of 258' will *increase* the flood profiles along all 8 Jackson tributaries. The City of Jackson storm drain and tributary channel system is currently not capable of efficiently managing stormwater flash flooding. Heavy rains often cause Lynch Creek to overtop its banks, flooding neighborhood streets, businesses, and homes. Due to the deterioration of century-old sewer infrastructure, this stormwater typically contains raw sewage and other contaminants. The current flash flooding events in these Jackson neighborhoods will not be helped by the One Lake project and will instead be exacerbated as the storm drain runoff is slowed down by the backed-up tributaries. (Pearl Riverkeeper One Lake Impacts page).

Major downtown Jackson tributaries (2018 NFI's Section 211 Study page 2) include Richland Creek, Lynch Creek, Town Creek, Eubanks Creek, Prairie Branch, Hog Creek, Hanging Moss Creek, and Purple Creek. Town creek and two other EJ areas located in Northeast Jackson and South Jackson (page 57) are especially affected. Page 69 discusses the urban major tributaries that are the backwater flooding sources for the Pearl River and experience flash flooding 3 days prior to the Pearl River peaks (page 69). Page 5 of 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study states that "The existing levee system only provides protection to approximately 30% of the structures within the flood-risk area. Most of the Jackson metropolitan area remains unprotected." Please clarify in the USACE's DEIS the structures that these statements refer to. Also, identify the metropolitan areas that will remain unprotected. It is unclear whether the downtown tributaries are included in this unprotected area, therefore, please provide this information in the upcoming EIS.

The 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study, Appendix C Engineering 4.2 Tributary Impacts (pages 32-36), states that "some tributaries may be directly affected by the channel improvement concept" including Richland Creek, Lynch Creek, Town Creek, Eubanks Creek, Prairie Branch, Hog Creek, Hanging Moss Creek, and Purple Creek which convey flood water from urbanized areas within Jackson Metro area. A subset of tributaries including Town and Lynch Creek near the upstream side of the proposed weir location were reviewed through various models to determine preliminary backwater impacts based on the proposed pool elevation of 258.0 ft. Estimates for two of eight streams determined that increases in flood profiles for short reaches upstream during flood events would occur for Town Creek and Lynch Creek. Additional analysis of all tributaries has not been performed and is expected during the next updated version of the feasibility study.

Recommendation: The EPA recommends that the analysis of all 8 urbanized EJ tributaries be conducted so that the estimated flood risk for communities within these floodplain areas can be identified.

IX. Hazardous, Toxic, and Radiological Waste (HTRW) Sites

The 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study referenced a September 2014 report entitled: Environmental Evaluation of Hazardous, Toxic, and Radiological Waste (HTRW) Sites. Sections 2.5.14 and 4.5.14 of the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study provide information concerning three contaminated sites that may be impacted by the TSP (i.e., Gulf States Creosote Company Site, Jefferson Street Landfill, and Gallatin Street Landfill Site). Groundwater contamination is suspected at all three sites which drain to the Pearl River. A summary of required remediation measures is included on page 227 of the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study. Some of remediation measures include construction of slurry walls, excavation of contaminated materials, bank stabilization and groundwater controls. The EPA could not identify specific remediation plans in the 2018 NFI's Section 211 Study (e.g., Quantities of materials needing excavation, lengths of slurry walls, types, and locations of groundwater recovery wells, etc.). The EPA also could not identify proposed cleanup standards that would need to be met to protect human health and the environment as portions of these sites would be submerged under the TSP.

Recommendations: The EPA recommends that the USACE develop detailed remediation plans for the TSP that demonstrate how chemical contamination and the sources will be controlled during project implementation. The EPA also recommends that the chemical contamination be fully characterized and that detailed remediation plans with relevant cleanup standards be submitted to the MDEQ for review. Further, every effort should be made during the USACE EIS process to avoid and minimize impacts to HTRW.

X. Transportation

In a September 5, 2018, letter to the Levee Board, Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) stated that “there are nine (9) bridges owned by the State of Mississippi and maintained by MDOT within the proposed project's study area which are directly affected. The bridges of concern are the two (2) main channel bridges on SR 25 (aka Lakeland Drive), two (2) relief bridges on SR 25, two (2) main channel bridges on I-55, one (1) main channel bridge on US 80, and two (2) main channel bridges on I-20 as well as MDOT's wetlands/waters mitigation bank.”

The 2018 NFT's Section 211 Study states that Alternative C, the tentatively selected plan (preferred alternative), will involve the dredging of the Pearl River. The EPA recommends that potential impacts to local transportation infrastructure be addressed in the EIS. Of concern are 1) If dredging activities are conducted beneath any of the nine (9) bridges, it will reduce foundation embedment directly affecting the capacity of the bridges, 2) If dredging activities are conducted upstream and downstream of any of the nine (9) bridges but not under the bridges, a collapse due to sudden loss of the non-dredged material could occur. The most recent collapse of a MDOT Bridge was due to this exact situation.

It has been shared with the EPA that there may be potential impacts associated with the predicted scour depths at each bridge. If the predicted scour depths occur, there are likely to be catastrophic failure of all even (7) of the main channel bridges mentioned above and the capacity of the relief bridges on SR 25 will be severely reduced. For this reason, all nine (9) bridges will need to be replaced and the cost to replace the nine (9) bridges should be reflected in the cost of the Pearl River Basin Federal Flood Risk Management Project.” Appendix C Engineering (2018 NFT's Section 211) includes improvement estimates but not replacement estimates.

Recommendation- The EIS should compare each alternatives' ability to avoid and minimize impacts to bridges and provide estimated infrastructure repair and/or replacement costs. The EPA recommends that the USACE coordinate with MDOT and Federal Highway Administration on the proposed action to fully account for transportation facility impacts and costs and to help identify opportunities for further avoidance and minimization.

From: [Paula Flynn](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake opposition
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 11:32:32 AM

Dear Corps of Engineers representative:

As a resident of St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, I am opposed to the permitting of the proposed One Lake project. The reasons are as listed below:

1. The study area is not inclusive enough. It should extend to Lake Borgne.
2. One Lake will affect 2,500 acres of river habitats. Many of these habitats protect wildlife, some of which may be endangered and some of which may be as-yet unidentified, as well as many communities of people.
3. The development as proposed will reduce downstream flows to the Pearl River, threatening water quality and quantity.
4. It will disturb eight dangerous waste sites, exposing communities to additional toxic contamination.

I am opposed to the One Lake development, not only for these reasons, but also because it puts the interests of real estate developers and other related profit-seekers over the best interests of residents and wildlife along the Pearl River. Also, it imperils many residents of Jackson, MS, itself, according to Jill Mastrototaro, Mississippi Policy Director, Audubon Delta, who points out the potential for back-flooding should the development and its dam move forward.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Paula S. Flynn
2376 Bradbury Pl
Covington, LA 70433

From: paulawehr@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Paula Wehr](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 12, 2023 9:58:43 AM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

I am writing today to implore you to reject the "One Lake" project in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife. As witnessed by examples around the country -- both coastal and inland, now is NOT the time to create new waterfront properties for developers -- especially under the guise of flood control.

Following recent devastating storms in Florida, thousands of properties built in vulnerable areas were destroyed because they were not built to sustain rising seas and coastal flooding. At the same time, areas protected using science-based naturalized flood protection fared very well.

Even disregarding the fact that the Pearl River is one of the most biodiverse rivers in the U.S., allowing One Lake will only put more people and property in harm's way while exposing communities to toxic pollution, worsening Jackson's flooding and drinking water problems, reducing downstream freshwater flows critical to the region's seafood and tourism economies, and destroying wildlife habitat that provides natural flood protection for communities.

Instead, I urge you to implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Sincerely,
Paula Wehr
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
paulawehr@cfl.rr.com

From: [elizabeth.pavelick](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pearl River/One Lake
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 8:28:13 AM

We humbly ask that in regard to Pearl River/One Lake - that **the Corps should prioritize more effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns** such as improvements to existing levees, elevating homes and buildings, and offering voluntary buy-outs for properties with a history of flooding problems, rather than allowing developers and politicians to make money and leave residents with more problems and heartaches.

Sincerely,
Liz and Jim Pavelick
4454 Armitage Road
Gulf Breeze FL 32563

From: [Ranjan Batra](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on Pearl River Flood Control
Date: Friday, June 23, 2023 10:18:27 AM

I apologize that I am running a few days late for this comment.

Flooding in downtown Jackson arising from the cresting of the Pearl River is a serious problem, but I do not understand how building a lake would alleviate flooding. Furthermore, I do not agree with proponents who tout economic benefits of the lake.

To begin with the flooding, I have lived in Jackson for twenty-odd years. In that time, numerous areas of Jackson have flooded: downtown Jackson, West Jackson and parts of North Jackson to name a few. I do not understand how having a large inundated area near Jackson would reduce flooding in any of these areas. North Jackson is located above the location of the proposed lake, so I cannot understand how the lake would prevent flooding there. In other areas of Jackson flooding seems to arise chiefly by backfilling of the numerous creeks that run through Jackson into the Pearl River. Some enter the river in the region of the proposed lake, and others below it. The creeks that would enter the proposed lake would still be backfilled, and it seems to me the only solution is to block them off and reroute the creeks, or to have pumps that remove the water. It should be possible to do this without building the lake. For the creeks that exit further south, the lake might provide a reservoir for excess water descending the Pearl River from the north, but only if the lake is kept well below capacity.

The main economic benefit of the lake is the lakefront property that will be created. However, there is already plenty of vacant property in Jackson, but it lies in the poorer portions of the city. Developing this property would benefit these areas which sorely need it, but such redevelopment would be expensive. In contrast, the proposed lakefront development is more attractive because development costs would be lower. The disadvantage from a societal viewpoint is that it would chiefly benefit the wealthy communities near the lake and it would consume green space that is already in short supply in the Jackson metro area. In addition, the lake would greatly reduce the wetlands that border the Pearl River in Jackson. At present, the wetlands provide habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife, and, as they lie in the flood plain of the Pearl River, also provide flood protection. Destruction of such habitat has been cited as a cause of a 30% decline in songbird populations in North America.

If constructing a lake is a viable solution to the flooding problems of Jackson, then the proponents and engineers need to explain clearly to the public how the lake would solve, or at least ameliorate the flooding, and how its construction would benefit all Jackson residents, not just the wealthy. In addition, the potential loss of green space and wetlands needs to be addressed.

Yours sincerely,

Ranjan Batra
Jackson Resident

From: [Reese Partridge](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Opposition to One Lake/Alternative C
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 8:44:19 PM

Dear Colonel Christopher Klein, Vicksburg District Commander,

I am writing to oppose Alternative C, the One Lake proposal. I am asking the USACE adopt Alternative A or A1, or any other similar proposal that does not impound water with a dam/weir ,or provides for a lake, or which destroys critical wildlife habitat, particularly that within and adjoining Lefleur's Bluff State Park. I have outlined below my reasons.

Alternative C destroys critical wildlife habitat. Over a period of 20 years, I helped to draft and maintain the Bird List for Lefleur's Bluff State Park (LBSP), which contains well over 200 species. I also have done extensive conservation work in that time period on the prothonotary warbler, a rapidly declining species which heavily utilizes LBSP as breeding territory. I can tell you from first hand knowledge that One Lake/Alternative C, by destroying "batture" lands east of the park's "Purple Trail", will destroy critical breeding habitat for the prothonotary warbler, along with other migratory and endemic species such as red shouldered hawk, yellow-billed cuckoo, summer tanager, yellow-throated vireo, as well as other warbler species, most specifically Swainson's warbler, which are far more rare, and whose populations in LBSP are smaller than the prothonotary's. I have also observed ringed sawback turtle and the Pearl River map turtle in those areas of LBSP that would be destroyed by One Lake/Alternative C. On this basis alone, One Lake should be rejected.

By destroying the primordial tupelo gum-cypress ponds, Alternative C hurts Mississippi and Jackson economically. At the first of the public hearings several residents stated One Lake would help their communities economically and educationally, but they did not elaborate exactly how. For one, I know exactly how One Lake/Alternative C will hurt Jackson and Mississippi economically: It will decrease interest in using Jackson as a locale for Hollywood filmmaking. In the Hollywood adaptation of Willie Morris's "My Dog Skip", the closing scenes of the movie are shot at the most photogenic of the cypress-tupelo gum ponds that will be completely wiped out by One Lake/Alternative C. While doing bird conservation work, I personally observed the film crews. More recent Hollywood feature films including "Adam the First" starring David Duchovny and one of the last Bruce Willis movies, "A Day to Die". There are others, you can ask the Mississippi Film Office state agency. The point is, this isn't just filthy swampland that needs to be developed by calling it flood control. These specific areas of Lefleur's Bluff State Park which are slated for destruction by Alternative C are part of a sought-after primordial landscape that is not just required by many of our local wildlife species for their survival, it is valued by artists in the movie industry on a national level.

Alternative C creates a huge man-made lake that is contrary to this country's purported climate change policies. Creating a new lake is contrary to a sound climate change policy. The last thing this administration should engage in is building new dams/weirs and creating a 10 mile long lake which becomes an evaporation pond on a warming planet. Wrong direction, wrong decisions. If we as a country really are for combatting climate change and sound environmental policy we don't build new dams and we don't build new lakes. Additionally, in "Potential Impact of Climate Changes on the Inundation Risk Levels in a Dam Break Scenario" (ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information ISSN 2220-9964), this academic research paper analyzes aspects of a catastrophic break of the Ross Barnett spillway and dam

due to consequences of climate change.

One Lake/Alternative C is commercial real estate development masquerading as flood control. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has already determined that One Lake/Alternative C is the most environmentally destructive option. But the One Lake proposal needs to be rejected for many reasons, foremost for providing little flood control at a huge cost so as to use federal money to fund a commercial real estate development project. If USACE is inclined to believe this is just rhetoric or idle speculation by anti-growth environmentalists, I invite USACE to review back issues of the Clarion Ledger newspaper, including one particularly telling article concerning the One Lake/Two Lake proposals in which Leland Speed, the then-Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Economic Development declared he looked forward to the day when he could “look down” on Jackson from his high-rise office built along the lake shoreline. Indeed. One Lake/Alternative C is economic development masquerading as flood control.

In the event of another New Madrid Fault earthquake or other seismic event, the dam/weir that creates the Alternative C lake will likely increase catastrophic destruction in the City of Jackson. It has not been adequately addressed the impact of catastrophic failure of the Ross Barnett Reservoir dam as a result of (New Madrid) earthquake, particularly in light of an additional dam/weir being placed downstream impeding outflow. Such complications would likely increase flooding in Jackson. Either through a breach in the earthen dam or failure of the concrete spillway structure itself, or both, as has happened in other states. Geologists have long stated that a New Madrid fault earthquake is overdue, but a reservoir dam breach also could be caused by a massive rainfall event, the likelihood of which has only increased due to climate change. Such failures could also occur from earthquakes. In either scenario, the dam/weir would serve to amplify the affects of flooding through property damage and risk to life in Jackson as a result of catastrophic flood waters being even further impeded by a dam/weir choking off water flow and backing up even higher into Jackson neighborhoods.

Hurricane Harvey and other climate-change related rain events. Alternative C, in the event of a catastrophic rain event such as a Hurricane Harvey, which crawled over Texas in August 2017, dumping more than 30 inches of rain in two days and nearly 50 inches over four days in some areas, has the potential of amplifying the catastrophic flooding effects by concentrating floodwaters in “One Lake” and backing them up even further into the interior of Jackson. The One Lake impoundment would guarantee catastrophic results would be felt in Jackson even if the extreme rain event occurred in a part of the upstream Pearl River far remote from Jackson itself.

Alternatives A and A1 will not destroy the park’s most environmentally important area, will not destroy critical wildlife habitat, and will not cause problems for downstream towns and industries. Alternative C, which is One Lake, will do all those things. Moreover, One Lake is not supported by the facts or the science and should be rejected in its entirety. Instead, the Corps should adopt Alternative A or A1, or a combination that does not create a lake. Furthermore, fair and judicious buyout offers should be made as needed to homeowners that would enable affected eligible homeowners in the most flood prone areas to purchase equivalent housing in areas with less flood risk.

Thank you.

Reese Partridge

1726 Howard St.
Jackson MS 39202

From: [Reid Casey](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake Dam
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 8:04:41 PM

Dear Army Corps of Engineers,

I usually like your work. Those salt marsh restorations are fun to walk around in. But I hate your dams, an actual gut-bending feeling of disgust towards them. I'm from Texas and they're all over the place. They ruined all the rivers so weekend warriors can rent a jet-ski, so you can water-ski on the Guadalupe river, so you can own a million dollar home that gets flooded every year. Six dams where I'm from have broken and remain broken, which I can appreciate in a fucking-over-lake-house-owners way, but it fucks over all the other stuff that lives there, too. All the turtles and fish and birds and bugs and plants and the like. I guess I'm just thinking long-term here, but this plan seems to just be fucking up the river so some soft-handed commercial real-estate guys can build multifamily dwellings and trendy eateries where people used to live. Those guys are real freaks, have you ever met one? Email me back if you have. Use your personal email and put the word "freak" in the subject line so I know it's you. Also, doesn't it seem like a lot of work to build a dam? And what do you guys get out of it -- that's right, just a bunch of hate mail from environmental groups. Is making some freak builder enough money for a 2nd vacation home worth it? You guys honestly don't even make that much money. Y'all's average annual pay is around 60k. Entry-level commercial real estate guys make more than that. Think about it, you're spending your time and effort, your actual real and only life, so those guys can profit off your hard work. I don't want to be mean here, but doesn't that seem kind of pathetic? Don't you feel a little stupid? These guys can't even take a derivative and you've taken all those hard engineering classes that gave you sleepless and anxiety filled nights. Shouldn't *you* be making more than *them*? If building dams actually mattered and was good you would be. You only have so many days in your life, why spend them in the pursuit of material gain and fleeting pleasures? I'm just saying, it feels a little silly to me. Take the day off. Go for a walk. Go fishing on the Pearl River, they're gonna dam it up and ruin it so you better do it soon.

Sincerely, truly, respectfully, honestly, faithfully,
Reid A. Casey

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 6:31:51 PM

CAUTION: Your email client may display clickable links. The data in this email is provided without modification, as the user entered it. Before you click or use any link provided in this email, please confirm the authenticity of the link.

**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

I live in Monticello, Lawrence county. I have resided here since 1957. I grew up in town on the banks of Pearl River and have commercial fished the river for over 30 years. Many residents depend on the Pearl River for everyday sustinment for their lively hood. Pearl River in Monticello is a vital resource for the county and all its residents. GP paper mill located in the county is the employer. GP was previously located in the county by St Regis due to its natural resources which include the Pearl River.

The 1 Lake project would be devastating to the land owners, fisherman, natural resources and endangerment of aquatic and reptile species, not to mention the economic impact to the county! I am totally against the 1 Lake project and there should be much more consideration and research on the downstream devastation of the project!

Respectfully

Robert Grubbs
Monticello, MS 39654

Ref Id: 2pbZpNfNEkWbl2QLNjci_g

From: [Sandra West](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake River Proposal
Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023 10:14:49 AM

As one who treasure our natural resources, we encourage you to support Option A or A1 and to reject One Lake, Option C.

It is reported to us that USFWS calls the One Lake plan the most environmentally destructive option on the table and this plan must not be accepted.

There is also a concern that the sewer system for the City of Jackson is riddled with breaks that allow raw sewage to enter all the city creeks that carry storm drain water to the Pearl River. Would One Lake then become a catch basin for this raw sewage run-off? Would this pass EPA's guidelines for water quality?

Sincerely,

Sandra and Charles S. West
5535 Marblehead Drive
Jackson MS 39211

This property borders on White Oak Creek which has intermittent, but significant, sewage contamination.

Sent from my iPad

From: [Sandra Barbier](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, MiS
Date: Saturday, June 3, 2023 9:00:52 PM

I oppose the "One Lake Project" (thePearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi) and I agree with the following comments and others offered by Audubon Delta:

One Lake is a private real estate development promoted as a flood control project that would involve dredging and damming 10 miles of the Pearl River near Jackson, for the well-publicized purpose of creating new waterfront property.

One Lake would in fact put more people and property in harm's way.

One Lake will not alleviate the rain-induced flash flooding that already impacts neighborhoods along the Pearl's 8 tributaries that flow through Jackson, but instead will make flash flooding worse by permanently elevating parts of these creeks and creating new back-flooding problems in other areas.

Additionally, this project will destroy 2,500 acres of river wildlife habitats and put at risk 125,000 acres of conservation lands.

Sandra Barbier
1805 Madewood Rd.
LaPlace, LA
70068

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Sandra Barbier
LaPlace, LA

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

RE: Notice of Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River Watershed, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

Dear Colonel Klein-

Thank you for the opportunity to speak as a concerned landowner regarding the possible development of the One Lake. I live in the Jackson area and am a joint landowner of a property in Georgetown, Mississippi. Our property has been in our family for 3 generations. As a child I spent my summers in the cabins that my grandfather built swimming in the spring water pool that he built. We have pictures dating back to 1906 of people gathering at the springs to swim. Over the last 10 to 15 years, we have experienced loss of property and damage resulting from the unnatural rise and fall of the river. Prior to the last few years, we have NEVER experienced flooding in the summer months.

Having grown up in Jackson and continuing to live in the area, I am sympathetic to the flooding in the area but am not convinced that the "One Lake" solution will improve anything, especially, down river. Information leads me to the doorstep of the Army Corps of Engineers who possess a study that recommends a 'One Lake' solution with no real evidence of what the result may be for those living down river. In reading the solution taken from Notice found in the Federal Register (vol. 88, No. 96, /Thursday, May 18, 2023) the cause and effect of this solution is actually unknown for private landowners, businesses, or the environment in the Lower Pearl River area.

There are also environmental issues and concerns regarding the 'One Lake' solution. The Pearl River appears as number 3 on the American Rivers 2023 Most Endangered Rivers list. As a child we were able to wade and swim in the river, find muscues, play in the rapids above our cabin, and sit on the bank and fish. Now the water is so dirty we are afraid to get in it. The care of this river and those who have chosen to live near it bears serious consideration.

The Pearl River's rapid rise and fall of the water increases shear stresses on the bank and increases erosion. This has caused steep banks with loss of the riparian zone and canopy. The eroded sediment covers shellfish, invertebrate, and fish habitats affecting endangered species and the over all biological community. Sediment Total Maximum Daily Loads within the Pearl River basin call for continued Best Management Practices and a reduction in non point source loading. The adding of the new lake would make variable flow events more erosive with more dramatic rise and fall of the flood waters. The loss of riparian zone increases light exposure causing a cascade of effects. Lack of canopy increases the temperature with the lack of shade from the loss of slow growth cypress and other vegetative bank protection. Hot waters drive up algal growth creating diel swings in the level of Dissolved Oxygen creating oxygen oversaturated water during the day when algal production is high, while at night the algae dies depleting oxygen levels to zero. These impacts have created eutrophic conditions and have had a negative impact to water quality, communities economies, recreation, in Mississippi public waterways, and they destroy the biological community in our river. The downstream impacts can be felt as well; the health of the Mississippi Sound is near an all time low. Harmful Algal Blooms are happening with more frequency. The sound and river are exceeding state and federal water temperature standards. Those are state guidelines approved by the legislature. Oxygen levels in the sound drop out below the dissolved oxygen standards of 5mg/l frequently contributing to the anoxic dead zones. Standards also approved by the legislature. Beaches are closing with increased frequency from HAB's and E. coli concentrations. Costing local communities millions. The Pearl river watershed is not a healthy watershed and is negatively impacting the states economy by the loss of tourism revenue, lack forward thinking Environmental justice litigation, reviving the oyster fishery has cost the state millions and will be taking 10 steps backward, and degradation of fisheries and waterways. Biologically this can have detrimental impacts on the spawn grounds of our endangered fish and shellfish.

To date, I have found no data to support the fact that there the properties downriver will be sustained. It appears that the 'powers to be' are willing to

sacrifice those of us with less of a voice. I am unclear as to why the other options have not been given closer consideration. The value of our family property cannot be measured monetarily. As a family, we are already fighting the increased flooding related to the current reservoir and we are not sure we will survive the "One Lake"

Our request is a simple one and that is to give us more time and opportunity for the Army Corps of Engineers to listen about the flooding and land loss problems effecting property owners and businesses downriver of Jackson. Please advise us of the mechanisms available to us to voice their concerns.

I appreciate your time and serious consideration of this request and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Sarah Seabrook and Family

From: [SCOTT CRAWFORD](#)
To: [Walker, Andrea E CN US96 MY HQDA ASA CW \(USA\)](#); [PearlRiverFRM](#); [Brandon Davis](#)
Subject: [Non-DOD Source] Following up on my in person remarks.
Date: Friday, May 26, 2023 2:01:07 PM
Attachments: [One Lake Plan Comment - Question_5_24_2023.pdf](#)

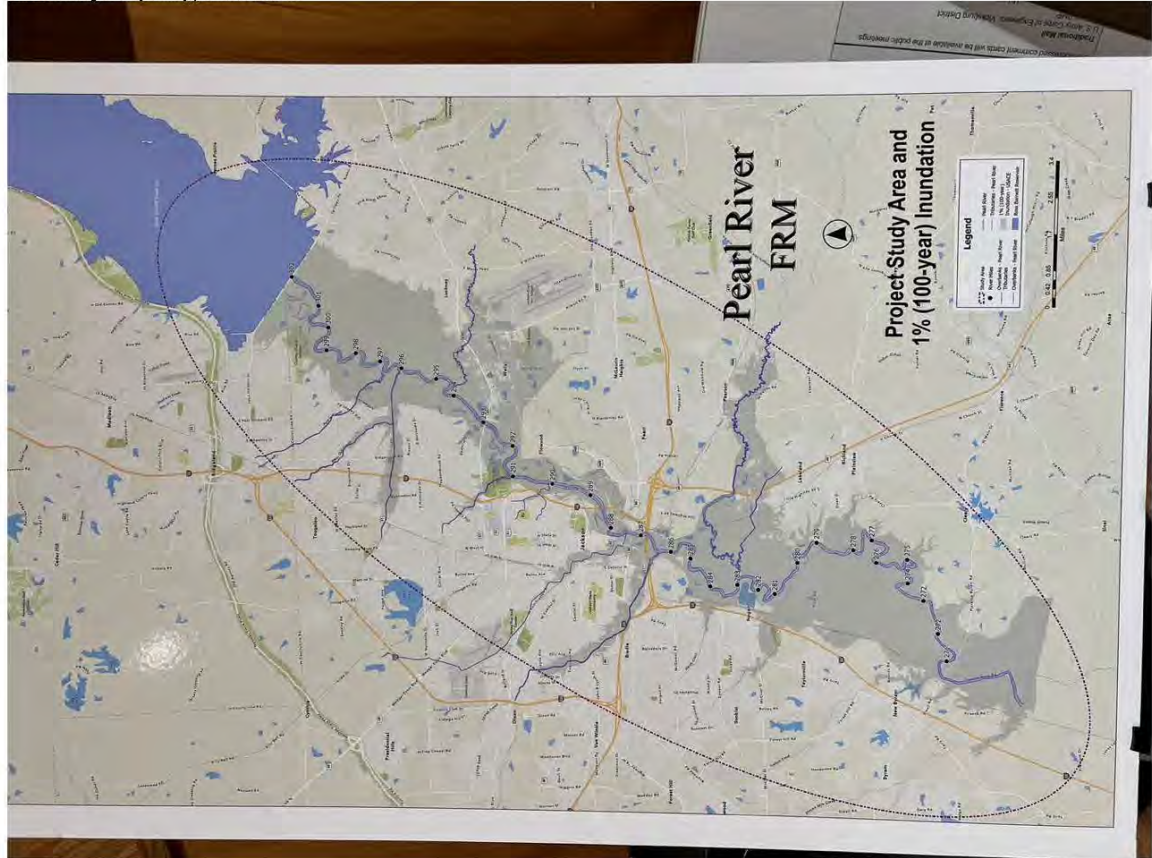
Hi Ms. Walker, Dear Mr. Davis,

You'll recall that I'm the man in the power wheelchair that lives in a high-risk flood zone (Flash flood risk zone) on Choctaw Road adjacent to Eubanks' Creek.

I'm including my prepared comments that I delivered at Wednesday afternoon's meeting (Agricultural Museum 1-3pm).

However, I have a follow-up comment/request.

I'm referencing the helpful map you shared below.



In the final EIS, I urge you and your colleagues to model this 1% inundation scenario if the various plans were implemented. Meaning, illustrating in a simple map how effective each plan would be in protecting the region, and where it will continue to flood.

Having graphics that show, side-by-side, the effects of the One Lake Plan (during a 1% inundation), Berkeley ("Green Heart of the Pearl") plan, and others, would be extremely illustrative to the general public. A simplified side-by-side cost analysis of the plans would also be helpful, presented as a table or easy to understand infographic.

The other request is that I fear many commenters are confused about what kind of flooding this plan will address: the occasional Pearl River flooding (e.g., 1979, 1983, 2020) or much more frequent FLASH flooding. It isn't clear to them what effect, if any, any of these plans will have on the far-more-frequent flash floods we experience along the creeks.

Thank you for your time and for allowing us to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Crawford, Ph.D.

On May 24, 2023, at 12:37 PM, SCOTT CRAWFORD <crawford-scott@att.net> wrote:

Subject: PDF of my planned remarks/questions with a few photos.

Remarks and questions I plan to say at today's meeting on the "One Lake" project:

Scott M Crawford, Ph.D.
Pronouns: He/Him
525 Choctaw Road
Jackson, MS 39206-5323
crawford-scott@att.net
601-368-3088 (Home-Landline)
601-383-8403 (Cell-Text)

From: [Shannon Parham](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] PLEASE!
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 8:10:02 PM

As a Hinds County resident, I am asking that you **REJECT Alternative C** and choose Alternative A or A1 for flood risk management in Jackson.

From: [Skipper Anding](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] One Lake
Date: Sunday, June 18, 2023 6:09:38 PM

I understand the One Lake Project in Option C would flood much of the State Park. It is a very small park now, although excellent and interesting habitat for birds and vegetation. It is one of the few nice options in the Capitol area for birds and nature. I hope you can work around this area.

Skipper Anding
Ridgeland, MS
601-856-7661



Virus-free. www.avg.com

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183 3435
VIA Email: PearlRiverFRM@usace.army.mil

June 26, 2023

RE: Pearl River MS. Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin & Hinds Co.

Colonel Klein,

I am writing this letter to express my opposition to the purposed flood risk reduction for Rankin & Hinds counties outlined in alternate C. I have read many comments and followed this proposed project since 2018. I work with Dr. Elizabeth Smythe, Ph.D. and read her comments in regards to the proposed project. I have also read comments by the organization Healthy Gulf and Senator Hewitt resolution to Louisiana's Senate. It seems to me the design of this project only looks at the issues affecting the counties of Rankin and Hinds.

Dr. Smythe outlines many of the downstream issues already existing on the Pearl River. The existing Ross Barnett structure has already created low water issues, rise in temperatures, evaporation, all resulting in industrial, commercial, and municipal difficulties.

As a resident of Slidell for 56 years, I have hunted and fished the lower Pearl River Basin. In those years, I have noticed changes in the landscape. I have concerns about salt water moving farther up the Pearl River thus degrading marsh and swamp. Healthy marshes and swamp are buffers needed to protect us from storm surge. Shallow wells along the lower Pearl River basin are also a concern with salt water intrusion. Shoaling is another concern for navigating the lower Pearl River Basin.

It is my opinion the design should look at the effects of the entire project as a whole. Ross Barnett has already created negative affects to the lower Pearl, and this project could ultimately create even more. I acknowledge that Rankin & Hinds need relief from the flooding, but the answer should not be at the expense of the lower Pearl River Basin.

It seems to me the other alternate solutions are not as damaging to the environment, and seem to have less down stream issues. It is my opinion that the final design should exhaust all the options to create a solution that does know farther damage to the lower Pearl River Basin in the name of flood control.

Thank you,

John "Spaff" Goodnow

Environmental Planning, RLA

St. Tammany Parish Planning and Development

From: [Stacy Ortego](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] LWF comments for Pearl River Basin Flood Risk Management Project
Date: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 10:21:26 AM
Attachments: [LWF letter to USACOE Pearl River MS 2023.pdf](#)

Good morning,

Attached are comments Louisiana Wildlife Federation would like to submit to the USACE
RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project,
Rankin and Hinds Co.

Thank you,

Stacy Ortego
Coastal Policy Manager
Louisiana Wildlife Federation
PO Box 65239
Baton Rouge, LA 70896
337-351-3973 (m)
225-344-6707 (o)
stacy@lawildlifefed.org
lawildlifefed.org





LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.

PO Box 65239, Baton Rouge, LA 70896
8480 Bluebonnet Blvd. Suite F, Baton Rouge, LA 70810

(225) 344-6707
www.lawildlifefed.org

June 30, 2023

Colonel Christopher Klein
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVK-PMP
4155 East Clay St
Vicksburg, MS 39183

via: pearlriverfm@usace.army.mil

**RE: 2023 Scoping for Pearl River Basin MS, Federal Flood Risk Management Project,
Rankin and Hinds Co.**

Dear Colonel Klein,

Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) has long had concerns around the proposed Alternative "C" project in Jackson, Mississippi – known locally as the One Lake project. We strongly urge you to protect the Pearl River by rejecting this alternative. LWF offers the following comments for your consideration as you prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for this project in Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi and analyze flood risk management plans.

The Pearl River provides habitat for more than 300 species of birds, fish, and wildlife, and 125,000 acres of wetland and bottomland hardwood conservation lands. The Pearl supplies freshwater flows critical to the health of the Gulf of Mexico; the region's oyster, crab, shrimp and tourism industries; and hundreds of industrial and municipal users. Dredging and damming the Pearl could destroy vital fish and wildlife habitat, worsen Jackson's flooding and drinking water crisis, increase toxic contamination, and reduce freshwater flows critical to the region's important seafood and tourism economies.

Recognized as one of the most intact river systems in the southeast U.S., the Pearl River supports a vast diversity of birds, fish and wildlife, and their habitats. Alternative "C" (One Lake) puts these prized resources in jeopardy. Because of these threats, American Rivers has named the Pearl River as #3 on its Most Endangered Rivers list – the second such listing since 2018.

This current proposal involves dredging and widening 10-miles of the Pearl River and building a dam to create a 1,900-acre lake under the guise of providing dubious flood control benefits for the metropolitan area of Jackson, Mississippi. The proposed Alternative "C"/One Lake project would destroy 2,500 acres of mostly wetland habitat and disturb highly contaminated toxic sites with no plan to protect public health. Even more habitat will be lost as the fundamental changes to the

form and function of the Pearl River system play out over time, including reduction and elimination of natural floodplain inundation. This project poses serious threats to the ecology of Mississippi, Louisiana, and the Gulf of Mexico as well as to local and downstream communities and the region's economy.

It would adversely affect hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, including numerous species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act or otherwise federally designated as at-risk, due to the habitat losses and fundamental transformation of the Pearl River ecosystem. As the U.S. Department of the Interior has advised, “[w]ildlife resources within the Pearl River Basin are dependent upon the diverse floral composition of associated forested wetlands” and “a higher percentage” of vertebrate wildlife species in the Basin “use bottomland hardwoods as primary habitat (habitat a species depends upon for reproduction and/or feeding during all or a portion of the year) than any other habitat type.”

Reductions to downstream flow of freshwater through the Pearl River would jeopardize water quality, the productivity of seafood, hundreds of millions of dollars of coastal restoration projects, and degrade or destroy critical habitat for vulnerable species like the federally-protected Gulf sturgeon and the Ringed Sawback Turtle – which, along with the Pearl River map turtle, is endemic to Louisiana and Mississippi. The dredging and snag removal would destroy basking and nesting sites for these species. Mississippi Wildlife Federation has identified several priority species that would be impacted by Alternative “C”/One Lake including Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson’s Warbler, Swallow-tailed Kite, Clapper Rail and the endemic Pearl River Map Turtle.

The Pearl River provides resting and feeding areas for migratory birds that cross the Gulf of Mexico. LeFleur’s Bluff State Park has been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Audubon Mississippi. The Pearl River is the stronghold of the swallow-tailed kite. Reduced flow caused by Alternative “C”/One Lake will increase toxin concentrations in the Pearl, which will bioaccumulate in the birds that feed on aquatic insects like dragonflies and mayflies.

Five Mississippi counties, two Louisiana parishes, towns in both states, and the Louisiana Legislature all passed resolutions opposing Alternative “C”. On an already dammed and regulated river, dredging another lake carries the most risk to habitat and wetlands in the project area and to channel stability. USGS researchers at the Lower Mississippi Gulf Water Science Center are modeling downstream and estuary sensitivities to flow alterations upstream on dammed Gulf-drainage rivers, including the Pearl; this modeling is being paid for by RESTORE Act funds. Basic research questions still need answers. Jackson, MS needs better flood protection, but creating another lake on the Pearl River with Alternative “C” is not the answer.

Much more study must be done to properly assess the full extent of the harm to fish and wildlife from the proposed project. This includes properly conducting fish and wildlife surveys in the study area as well as within the Pearl River basin above the project (i.e. near and around the existing Ross Barnett Reservoir) and 200-miles downstream below the proposed dam in order to properly quantify the project’s anticipated wildlife impacts. A water budget for the river needs to be developed and presented so we know the true picture of water input, water use, evaporation under present conditions and with the lake project in place. The Study Area for this project should go all the way to Lake Borgne and the Rigolets. The Rigolets is a tidal pass and Lake Borgne is an estuary in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana directly south of the mouth of the river.

The Alternative “C”/One Lake project poses significant, irreversible damages to the Pearl River, birds and their habitats and the ecological impacts go well beyond the immediate project footprint to include the downstream resources that lie along the 200-mile stretch of the Pearl below the proposed dam as well as Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf of Mexico.

A new dam on the river (as is proposed in Alternative “C”) would change the hydrology of the whole system. This could result in an alteration of the freshwater and sediment flows to resources downstream, endangering fisheries, threatening oyster production, potentially jeopardizing the success of millions of dollars of coastal restoration efforts that are underway or planned in the area, and endangering thousands of acres of important bottomland hardwood and swamp forests.

The Pearl River is a major source of freshwater to the Gulf of Mexico and such reductions in flow could alter water quality and coastal salinities, affect sediment transport, and increase saltwater intrusion upriver. This would threaten the health and productivity of many downstream habitats including more than 125,000 acres of existing—and mostly public—conservation lands such as Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, and Hancock County Coastal Preserve. LWF is concerned about Alternative “C”/One Lake’s impacts to these state and federal public landholdings and considers any impacts unacceptable.

The impacts of Alternative “C”/One Lake are so potentially dire that the Louisiana Legislature unanimously passed a joint resolution in opposition of this project as has St Tammany and Washington Parishes, the cities of Slidell and Bogalusa, and the town of Pearl River. Their resolutions note limitations on freshwater flow that can threaten industry users downstream, reduce oyster production, and restrict benefits from coastal restoration projects in Louisiana.

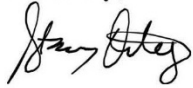
LWF has long opposed the Alternative “C”/One Lake project. In 2018, LWF signed a letter of opposition with 55 other organizations and businesses – representing millions of members and supporters from across the country – expressing concerns about Alternative “C”. Those concerns still hold strong today which is why we urge you to reject Alternative “C” and find a viable solution for Jackson’s flooding issues that will not result in more harm for surrounding and downstream communities in Mississippi and Louisiana.

A reasonable alternative is one that will not risk altering river flow or temperature from more water impoundment. Altered flows threaten the health and productivity of additional downstream habitats that support an array of fish, birds, and wildlife.

The US Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency, and US Fish and Wildlife Service must protect the Pearl River for people and wildlife by rejecting Alternative “C”/One Lake. These agencies should prioritize non-structural and natural infrastructure solutions to provide effective, environmentally sustainable flood relief to Jackson while protecting the river’s unique ecology and wildlife. Instead of subsidizing private real estate development, the federal government should invest in already identified flood relief solutions, including setting some levees farther back from the river, investing in floodplain and wetland easements, targeted elevations, and voluntary relocations of structures in flood-prone areas.

Louisiana Wildlife Federation is a statewide, nonprofit organization that represents 19 affiliate organizations and more than 8,000 members dedicated to the conservation of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources. Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments for consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacy Ortego", written in a cursive style.

Stacy Ortego
Coastal Policy Manager

From: [Stanford Owen](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Cc: [Hewitt, Sen. Sharon \(District Office\)](#); [Bob Owen](#); [sberault@mediaone.com](#); [Suzanne Krieger](#); [President Mike Cooper](#); [gcromer@cityofslidell.org](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake
Date: Sunday, May 28, 2023 10:08:09 AM

From: Stanford A. Owen MD; Commissioner, St Tammany Parish Levee, Drainage, and Conservation District (STPLDC). May 28, 2023

Please take this comment as a ***formal opposition*** for the One Lake project UNLESS precise and verifiable water flow impact can be ***published*** with resulting downstream impact data.

ANY decrease in fresh water entering the Pearl delta with endanger wildlife and humans alike.

Wildlife

The Bogue Chitto, Pearl River, Biloxi Marsh, Bayou Sauvage, and Big Branch Wildlife Management ALL receive a majority of their fresh water and river silt from the Pearl River, NOT the Mississippi River.

Combined, this collection is the largest Wildlife Management area in the lower 48 states. Negative impact will threaten numerous species, including many commercial species. This will affect income of Mississippi and Louisiana fishermen alike, both commercial and recreational. Numerous threatened species will also be impacted, not the least of which is the recent confirmation of the Ivory Billed Woodpecker (which I have personally seen three times).

I will seek the involvement of our Conservation District in this project and hope to involve all interested environmental groups.

Human

In addition to the affect on the seafood economies, these marshes provide ESSENTIAL protection against storm surge, one of the primary missions of our STPLDC. Again this will affect both Mississippi and Louisiana residents alike from Pass Christian on the East to the entire Lake Pontchartrain Basin on the West. This includes TENS of THOUSANDS of homes and businesses which, if destroyed, would multiply the damages compared to the Jackson floods by a factor of THOUSANDS.

I would like to see impact statements from each of those communities affected as well as each Wildlife Management area (which are both state and federal jurisdictions). I do not think you should proceed without these impact statements.

This project urgency is only due to secured funding, ***as we all know***. The impacts will be felt for decades or even centuries. THERE IS NO RUSH and should be NO RUSH.

Stanford A. Owen MD

From: [Smith, Steven Dr.](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on Pearl River FRM
Date: Saturday, May 27, 2023 9:12:09 PM

I'm sorry to have missed the public meeting.

My concerns relate to the One Lake proposal.

1. When there's a major flood in Jackson, a certain quantity of water has to pass through here. Apparently the approach of building up levees to get the water to scoot through Jackson faster doesn't work well enough. I don't understand how creating a lake would change the area covered by flood water.
2. As I understand it, One Lake would wipe out the Mayes Lakes state park (along with a lot of interesting nearby woods and wetlands). Is this a net loss of a unique public amenity, or is there a plan to create another comparable park?
3. What constraints are there on development on the shores of One Lake? Would the lake turn out to be a big office park lake, or an enclosed suburban lake? I love the idea of treating the Pearl as a Jackson asset rather than a sort of big backyard ditch. But I don't see how One Lake would improve quality of life in Jackson as, say, a greenway would.
4. I haven't heard good answers about the threat to endangered species that need the Pearl.

Thanks for consideration,

Steve Smith

1611 Edgewood St.

Jackson, MS 39202

From: [Susan Allen](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Reject Alt C One Lake plan
Date: Thursday, June 15, 2023 9:38:26 AM

Please reject “One Lake” plan that will destroy so much of downstream areas!

From: [Susan Harvey](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] No to Alternative C No Lake
Date: Thursday, June 15, 2023 12:27:42 PM

Please vote NO to the Alternative C - concerning the Pearl. Detrimental to water upstream and catastrophic to the flow downstream. So many species affected, not to mention what the damaging effects this would be for our communities downstream!

Rode the Pearl last Sunday and it is already so low in places that boats have trouble going through. The bank erosion is devastating. Trees down on every bend. This is due to the Reservoir keeping their landowners happy and not keeping a regular flow.

Vote No!

Keep the Pearl as a River - One River, No Lake!

Thank you.

Keith and Susan Harvey

Monticello Ms

On the Pearl

From: [Susan Harvey](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Cc: [Susan Harvey](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One River No Lake
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 9:13:39 PM

As a life long Lawrence County resident, the Pearl is a part of our heritage. It is a part of our town in a way that we never really understood until we were grown. From favorite fishing spots, to camps on the river, the Atwood Water Park, and our livelihood with Georgia Pacific, the Pearl is wrapped in every facet of our life.

The One Lake project is detrimental to everyone south of Jackson, plus those in Jackson who won't have a say about their property. We would rather have One River - our Pearl River as she is. (Cleaner would be nice, though.)

As the reports show, endangered species will be harmed, our southern river front industries will suffer, the river banks will cave in from lack of water flow, the fishing industry south of us will suffer, people's livelihoods will be crushed. And for what? For some rich cats in Jackson to have more lakefront property to sell. It is not about flood control. That has been proven that there are other ways.

Who will pay for all the new bridges required? Who will prop up the industries that will be decimated downstream? Who will be responsible for the endangered species that call the Pearl home?

Our vote is One River- No Lake.
We stand in defense of the Pearl. Long may she flow!

Keith and Susan Harvey
101 Shady Rest Lane
Monticello, Ms 39654

From: [Terri Pogue](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pearl River
Date: Friday, June 16, 2023 1:01:46 AM

The Alternative C “One Lake” plan needs to be rejected. This plan would be more damaging to the environment. Jackson already has a drinking water crisis, this plan will exacerbate that. Who exactly proposed this plan in the first place? Its purpose seems to be to cause destruction, not to alleviate it.

Thank you,

Terri Pogue

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Thia](#)
To: [PeardRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Canton Club Neighborhood Voluntary Buyout
Date: Friday, June 30, 2023 7:53:17 AM

To Whom it May Concern,

I have been negatively impacted by two floods from the river in 2020 and 2022. It caused many stressors on my life including financial setbacks and anxiety. I can't get comfortable living in my own home because I am scared to fully unpack my belongings and to purchase adequate home furnishings because I took major losses in the 2020 flood. I have some physical disabilities and limitations, and it is very difficult for me to pack up as much as possible when we do get an adequate warning of being flooded out from the release of water from the reservoir. I have to try and pay people to help and pay for a rental truck. I am one of those that couldn't fully afford flood insurance on my own and only have it through the bank, which doesn't cover my personal contents. The bank is only trying to make themselves whole, which means that they only cover your house repairs up to the amount that you owe on your home. This amount decreases every year due to you paying your mortgage. With inflation the way it is currently, there will come a point very soon when I will not be fully able to repair my home from another catastrophic flood. Every time we get large amounts of rain, my side street of Foxboro Dr. is covered with water and then it starts seeping on to my street. All of this has had a negative impact on my mental health.

I feel as the USACE should consider offering voluntary buy outs of my neighborhood, especially to those of us that took on water in our homes in the 2020 flood and had to evacuate in the 2022 flood. The 2022 flood made it up my yard and pushed ants into my house that were trying to escape the flood waters. I say this as I feel while we wait to build another dam, levees, or another solution, we are at extremely high risk to other floods. Every year tornadoes, hurricanes and thunderstorms pose major threats to us in this area and are our biggest threats. I am not confident that any other solution will fix the problem. I would appreciate a strong consideration for a quick solution to help those of us severely impacted start over, far far away from a flood zone.

Thia J. Walker
5815 Deer Trail
Jackson, MS 39211

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 10:46:23 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

In recent years, the Pearl has had plenty of water to support this new project. I would think that this project would help reduce the frequent over the bank flooding.

However, I am concerned that when the weather pattern changes, and the excess water is no longer there, this could result in extremely low water along the Pearl.

Industry depends on this flow for water intake and discharge. If the flow is not sufficient, this could affect the water quality when discharge from industry is introduced.

The only way that this project could move forward fairly, is to have some regulation on the water levels. The Pearl cannot be allowed to run dangerously low, just to keep normal levels in the proposed lake in Jackson.

Tim Harper
985-640-4734
Timharpermill@yahoo.com

Ref Id: NJX-HG0ev0CELC7S_QomzQ

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 11:00:53 AM

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**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

I wanted to add to my previous statement on this project. Years ago we had a hurricane that was forecast to affect the town Pearl river. When this forecast was released, Jackson released water in preparation for the expected rainwater. As the hurricane hit the town of Pearl River, the water from Jackson was also arriving. The water overflowed the banks at a rate I have never seen and caused flooding beyond forecast levels. I experienced equipment flooding because of this unannounced water release at Jackson.

There needs to be federal restrictions on Jackson water releases when a hurricane is in the gulf.

Tim Harper
985-640-4734
Timharpermill@yahoo.com

Ref Id: 0oqbUP1kI0SQI2JIE3ZxAW

From: [Timothy Pfeifer](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] One Lake Project
Date: Monday, June 26, 2023 9:06:28 AM

I'd like to express my concern about the One Lake project, and ask that Options A or A1 be considered and that Option C be rejected.

I have grave concerns about the preservation of the natural habitats affected there.

Thank you,

Timothy C. Pfeifer

From: [Tom Clark](#)
To: [PeardRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Reject the "One Lake" project
Date: Sunday, June 25, 2023 4:18:45 PM

I attended the Army Corps presentation in Jackson on May 24. I am convinced that One Lake (Option C) is a terrible idea. It will endanger the water supply for Jackson, destroy a vital wildlife habitat that offers residents of the city access to the natural world, and not give true protection from flooding. Jackson needs smart flood control offered by both options A or A1.

Sincerely,
Tom Clark

We have, at least on paper, come a long way since various acts by Congress gave the USACOE authority to modify harbors and rivers in the interests of commerce and protection of people from flooding. Immense environmental damage was done and is still being done, as costs of environmental alteration are externalized to other species and natural habitats, and to populations and activities of people downstream of USACOE projects. We now have the Endangered Species Act, the EPA, NEPA, and other entities and laws which provide some protection to some species and habitats, but to a large extent this is still something of a façade, providing some protection from direct take, but too often habitat destruction by drainage modification activities said to be important for the protection of people and enhancement of commerce continues unabated, and decline of populations of many species continues.

Various projects have been suggested to eliminate/minimize the threat of flooding events in the Jackson vicinity. First, it should be said that flooding is only an occasional issue (though certainly real) in the Jackson area; the main challenges to the latter are crumbling infrastructure (water and sewer lines, roads) due to the underlying montmorillonitic clay, and which has nothing to do with the Pearl River. Also, examination of the 1980 topographic map of the Jackson area indicates that when the USACOE channelized the reach of the Pearl between the low-head dam just downstream of LeFleur's Bluff State Park and Old Brandon Road that the main flow channel was displaced significantly westward, and that the floodplain terraces were severely constricted, particularly so on the eastern side of the new channel. A non-engineer might look at the straitjacket produced by the levees closely flanking the new channel and suspect that flooding prospects might be increased locally because of this constriction. A person might also wonder why so much of the floodplain terrace to the east of the Pearl (and comparatively sparsely populated at the time) was protected from future inundation, as floodwater which can no longer spread out therein *must* go somewhere else. Would it be possible to direct some floodwater flow through and east of the east levee, and across the former floodplain terrace, without severe displacement of persons and businesses now established within this zone?

Two turtle species, the Ringed Map Turtle (federally listed as threatened, state-listed as endangered) and the Pearl River Map Turtle (proposed for federal listing as threatened) occur in no other drainage in the world but the Pearl River and its tributaries, and ought to be sources of regional pride. We've already denied them a great deal of habitat with creation of the Barnett Reservoir, though it should be noted this pre-dated creation of the laws and agencies referenced above which do mandate some consideration of rare biota and habitats. These turtles still live in good numbers within the Jackson reach of the Pearl River, but creation of a lake therein would destroy the habitat necessary for these species, and anyone thinking that such a lake will be a water body suitable for recreation should remember that the Pearl River within the Jackson area is currently designated as unsafe for human contact by MDEQ due to the scale contamination due to breaches of sewer lines; the lake desired by some would not be safe unless Jackson is able to repair/replace sewer lines.

A federally threatened, state endangered fish, the Gulf Sturgeon, still swims seasonally in the Jackson reach of the Pearl, **erroneous assertions to the contrary by lake supporters notwithstanding**. Creation of the lake, particularly one infused with runoff from leaking sewer lines, will be counter-productive to recovery of this species, too. Again, this magnificent animal should be a source of regional pride. There are other

rare turtle and mussel species within this reach which will also be negatively affected if the lake is created or if deforestation of banks is implemented upstream to diminish resistance to flood run-off.

Creation of a lake would also destroy the floodplain terrace portion of LeFleur's Bluff State Park. When are we going to learn that individually and collectively we are going to have to modify the way we live in order to live sustainably on the planet? Protect the turtles, fish, mussels, and state park!!

From: [Paul Maloney](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Jackson needs smart flood control such as Options A or A1
Date: Wednesday, June 21, 2023 6:03:37 PM

The stakes could not be higher for the Jackson Audubon Society, LeFleur's Bluff State Park (LBSP) and the Pearl River. For many years JAS has had a special relationship with this state park. LBSP has an impressive 211 bird species checklist with 75 documented breeders. First class and easily accessible birding and many other outdoor activities are rarely at our fingertips. LBSP has been the site of Jackson Audubon's 23-year monthly family bird walks, our 23-year Prothonotary Warbler (PROW) nest box project, and a five year scientific study that is documenting impressive breeding success in these beautiful and special birds of conservation concern. JAS is about to begin a collaboration with renowned ornithologist Dr. Erik Johnson, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Delta. Our birds will be networked with other Prothonotary Warbler populations in a comprehensive research project. If this is not impressive enough, the park is a designated as a National Audubon Important Bird Area.

In addition, the Ringed Sawback Turtle is a beautiful small turtle that lives only in the Pearl River (nowhere else in the world) and is listed as a Federally threatened species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Ringed Sawbacks prefer fast running clean rivers with sandbars and snags for basking and nesting. Riprap is not their preferred habitat.

Normally, cities treasure and nurture their green spaces as an asset to the community but LBSP is in grave danger by the proposed USACE Option C, better known as One Lake. If this proposal is authorized and implemented, part of the park will literally be dredged away between the purple trail and the river. The whole character of the park would be ruined.

Jackson needs smart flood control such as Options A or A1 and not the crude sledgehammer approach of Option C, One Lake, and it's questionable flood control benefits. The USFWS calls One Lake the most environmentally destructive option on the table.

Traci & Paul Maloney
4243 Brussels Drive
Jackson, MS 39211-6106

Traci Cell: (601) 955-5034
Traci E-mail: tracimaloney@comcast.net

Paul Cell: (601) 500-1577
Paul E-mail: plmaloney@comcast.net

From: ywarner@redeemerjackson.com
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Virtual meeting 6/1/2023
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 1:19:22 PM

Can you please send me the link to the virtual meeting scheduled for 6:00 today please. We live in the affected areas of the Pearl River flooding.

Thanks

Velma Warner
Nursery Coordinator
Redeemer Church, PCA
W:redemerjackson.com

From: noreply@dma.mil
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: Comment from the Pearl River FRM Project page
Date: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 6:19:44 PM

CAUTION: Your email client may display clickable links. The data in this email is provided without modification, as the user entered it. Before you click or use any link provided in this email, please confirm the authenticity of the link.

**Please leave your
comment concerning the
project below**

My name is Dr. Will Selman, and I am a professor of biology at Millsaps College. I strongly disapprove of the RHFCF Project as designed for several reasons.

1. This project will impact numerous natural wetlands & wildlife species. It will impact the largest and healthiest population of the threatened Ringed Sawback, and it will impact the migration of Gulf Sturgeon that have been reported up to the RBR spillway. The Rankin-Hinds Flood Control district (RHFCF) mitigations will in no ways compensate for a drastically changed habitat. Many organisms will not be able to survive or reproduce with this a dramatic change.

2. The RHFCF has also grossly underestimated the costs to remediate toxic waste/dump sites and the replacement of all spanning bridges (including I-20 & I-55). Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, there has not been a calculation to estimate the lost time, money, and fuel consumption due to traffic snarls that will occur due to bridge replacements.

3. The RHFCF has also not calculated the impacts to water quality associated with sewage leaks and overflows into the lake. This will cause major DO issues, fish kills, and algal blooms.

Rather, I am strongly in favor of USACE doing a hybrid plan including levee setbacks to relieve the "pinchpoint" in Jackson, select buyouts, and elevating/floodproofing of structures. Indeed, the RHFCF indicated that the minor levee setbacks as planned is the greatest flood relief in their current plan - not the lake.

Ref Id: pOumiJr-V0OqjLdj3in11A

From: [Will Walker](#)
To: [PeardRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Jackson one light project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 10:23:47 AM

Alternatives A, and A1 won't wreck the park, destroy habitat or
cause problems for downstream cities and industries

No Lake, Dump Alternative C, use Alternatives A or A1 or a combination that avoids creating a lake.

From: heathwtom@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [William Heath](#)
To: [PearlRiverFRM](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Protect the Pearl River: Reject the "One Lake" Project
Date: Monday, June 5, 2023 12:37:47 PM

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

I am asking you to reject "One Lake" in any flood relief plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and instead prioritize effective nature-based and non-structural solutions that benefit Pearl River communities and wildlife.

Please implement effective, environmentally sustainable options that truly address flooding concerns such as elevating homes and roads, targeted voluntary buy-outs, and restoration of river habitats.

Sincerely,
William Heath
Plano, TX 75093
heathwtom@netscape.net



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office
6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Suite A
Jackson, Mississippi 39213
Phone: (601)965-4900 Fax: (601)965-4340

June 14, 2023

IN REPLY REFER TO:
2022-0006708a

Eric Williams
U.S. Department of Defense,
Army Corps of Engineers
7400 Leake Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, Rankin and Hinds Counties, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Williams:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your agency's Notification of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement dated May 18, 2023, for the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Hinds and Rankin Counties, Mississippi. Our comments are submitted under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

The United States Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District (MVK) is proposing flood control measures along the Pearl River, providing economic and flood control benefits for the Jackson metropolitan area. As stated in our June 12, 2023, cooperating agency concurrence letter, the Service plans to cooperate in providing fish and wildlife resources information, reviewing all environmental documents, and participating in coordination meetings as they relate to the Pearl River Basin, Mississippi Federal Flood Risk Management Project. However, based on the Corps' SMART Planning Process and time needed to analyze impacts and prepare reports, this project timeline does not provide adequate time to fulfill the necessary work, particularly impact analysis of the alternatives, authorized under FWCA. Without adequate time to analyze impacts to include in a draft FWCA report, including recommendations, there is a risk of the project not fulfilling Section 2b of the FWCA. Furthermore, based on our review of the Notice of Intent and the non-federal interest's preferred alternative, Channel Improvements Plan (Alternative C), we have identified areas of concern and provide recommendations to reduce impacts on natural resources.

The Pearl River and its associated oxbows, tributaries, and forested wetlands support biologically diverse species and their habitats. Bottomland hardwoods comprise the primary wildlife habitat type in the floodplain, while cypress-tupelo swamps add to the diversity of this system. Coastal wetlands of the Pearl River also provide nursery and foraging habitat that supports economically important marine fishery species. Some of these species serve as prey for other commercially and/or recreationally important fish species.

The forested floodplain serves as habitat and a travel corridor for deer, squirrel, wood duck, migratory birds, furbearers, and other species. This riparian corridor also provides important bank stabilization and erosion protection. Riparian forested areas are an important source of deadwood and other allochthonous materials that provide habitat for many species inhabiting the Pearl River and its tributaries. The river itself is considered one of the most biologically diverse in the country, supporting 140 species of fish (including bass, bluegill, sunfish, crappie, catfish, etc.), 14 species of turtles (including the endemic Pearl River map turtle and ringed map turtle), 40 species of mussels, and other aquatic species. There is significant acreage along the Pearl River within the study area that provides habitat unique for a metropolitan area.

Project Impacts

Based on current project information, approximately 2,069 acres of terrestrial habitat could be converted to aquatic habitat. Approximately 1,861 acres of wetlands and “other waters of the U.S.” and approximately 487 acres of existing surface water bodies, including the Pearl River channel and its tributaries, may be impacted. Additionally, converting the portion of the Pearl River within the project area from a riverine system to a lake system could have impacts on threatened and endangered species, and other resources downstream.

The Pearl River and its associated riparian and wetland habitats in the study area encompass habitat for several threatened, endangered, and at-risk species including Gulf sturgeon, inflated heelsplitter, Louisiana pigtoe, Monarch butterfly, northern long-eared bat, tri-colored bat, alligator snapping turtle, ringed map turtle, and Pearl River map turtle. These species could be impacted by actions in each of the alternatives presented. In alignment with Section 7(c) of the ESA, the Service recommends that the Corps prepare a biological assessment to determine the effects of the recommended plan on the above-mentioned species.

As stated by your agency, we also anticipate that Alternatives A and A1 would have minimal impacts on natural resources, and therefore, we’ll focus our comments on actions proposed in other alternatives: Alternative C and the hybrid/combination, thereof. It’s unclear why the levee setback/improvements (formerly known as Alternative B) plan was no longer provided as an alternative but should some degree of levee setback/improvement still be necessary in a hybrid or combination of alternatives project, then we anticipate such actions could impact natural resources, depending on exact design and action area footprint. Levee construction could result in impacts to existing wetland habitat and associated species, as well as riparian habitat for fish, mussels, and turtles. However, levee construction, depending on scale, could still be one of the least damaging alternatives if no weir or impoundment is constructed that would permanently alter velocity and flow of the river, such as in Alternative C.

We also anticipate impacts from other channel improvement actions such as dredging and widening of the channel. Such actions could cause direct and indirect harm to natural resources. Dredging can reduce prey species, remove shelter and spawning habitat, and cause mortality to turtles, mussels and fish. Channel widening could destabilize the banks, change flow regime, alter instream and terrestrial habitat, increase water temperatures, and cause direct mortality of some species. Additionally, sediment plumes from these actions can smother species both within the project footprint and downstream. However, depending on the morphology, structure, and depth of the river after dredging, some species may recolonize if no barriers exist.

The Channel Improvements Plan (Alternative C) is the most damaging alternative for both terrestrial and aquatic resources. This plan proposes dredging, channel widening, and construction of a large weir near RM 284.3 that could permanently alter the water regime over 9 miles of the Pearl River, transforming the river into a more lentic (lake-like) water body, while altering geomorphology downstream. While some species can thrive in lentic habitats, others, such as riverine obligates (e.g., Pearl River map turtle, Louisiana pigtoe), cannot exist in such habitats. As demonstrated by the models, velocities in the proposed action area could be significantly reduced 75% of the time, interrupting important life history strategies (i.e., prey sources, breeding substrate, etc.).

In addition to a loss of species and habitat diversity due to an altered flow regime, there could be a direct and indirect loss of terrestrial habitats and their functions important for wildlife. There may also be a loss of sandbar habitat due to increased water levels or to undesirable vegetation encroachment resulting from stabilized water levels. Additionally, the potential for up- and downstream channel re-adjustments may cause other hydrogeomorphic changes to the Pearl River and its tributaries within and outside of the project area. Other concerns include impacts to conservation lands within and downstream of the project area, the reduction in sediments to coastal marshes, and loss of flows.

There is a demonstrated need for flood protection within the Jackson area. The Service recommends examining existing non-structural alternatives along with a flood protection solution that doesn't permanently alter water velocities and flow regimes within the action area. Such a solution may include non-structural alternatives including pinch-point removal, levee setbacks, channel improvements etc., without construction of a large weir or impoundment. We also recommend that the draft EIS consider the inclusion of measures to promote aquatic organism passage throughout the project area.

To ensure that fish and wildlife resources receive equal consideration with other project purposes, the Service recommends that important riverine habitats, their functions, values, and aquatic communities be conserved, protected, and restored where practicable to provide natural river habitats including flowing waters, heterogeneous microhabitats, and connectivity to backwaters and oxbow lakes. We also recommend important terrestrial habitats be conserved, protected, and restored.

Sincerely,
JAMES
AUSTIN

Digitally signed by
JAMES AUSTIN
Date: 2023.06.14
12:51:09 -05'00'

James Austin
Field Supervisor
Mississippi Field Office

cc: Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
Cathy Breaux, Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office

Attachment A6

Evaluation of comments for May 23, 2023 to June 30, 2023

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