



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT
7400 LEAKE AVE
NEW ORLEANS LA 70118-3651

October 2, 2020

Regional Planning and
Environmental Division South
Environmental Compliance Branch

**CLEAN WATER ACT, SECTION 404
PUBLIC NOTICE**

Draft Environmental Assessment #579

**Mississippi River and Tributaries,
Mississippi River Channel Improvement Program
St. Francisville Mat Casting Yard
Loadout Dock Replacement
West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana**

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (CEMVN), proposes to construct a replacement load-out dock for barge loading on the Mississippi River at the St. Francisville Casting Field (“mat casting yard”) located approximately 30 miles north of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The mat casting yard is situated along the Mississippi River approximately 1.5 miles south of the town of St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana (Figure 1). Construction of a replacement loadout dock involves discharge of dredged material and fill into navigable waters of the U.S.; therefore, the provisions of Title 33 CFR Parts 336.1(b)(1) and 337.1, effective April 26, 1988, are applicable and issuance of this public notice is required.

PROJECT AUTHORITY: The proposed action was authorized by Flood Control Acts of 1928, as amended, 1936, 1938, 1941, 1944, 1946, 1950, 1954, 1960, 1962, 1965, 1968, and 1970 and the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. The Flood Control Act of 1928 committed the Federal government to a definite program of flood control and authorized general and progressive channel stabilization and river regulation program and appurtenant program features from Cairo, Illinois to Head of Passes, Louisiana.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED: The purpose of the proposed action is to construct a new load-out dock for the mat casting yard, which is integral to Mississippi River Channel Improvement feature of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) Project. As a result of the 2019 Mississippi River high river event, the existing load-out dock sustained significant damage to various support features and no longer retains sufficient structural integrity. The damaged load-out dock was used to offload pertinent channel improvement materials required for building the articulated concrete mattresses

manufactured in the adjacent mat casting yard. The purpose of the proposed new load-out dock is the same. The Mississippi River is the primary route for commercial shipping to major ports along the river. There is national interest in providing progressive channel stabilization in order to prevent any alteration of the river flow that could potentially pose a navigation threat for large vessels transiting these sections of the river and the mat casting yard is an integral part of this program's continued operation.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION: The construction of the new dock would require installation of an estimated 51 (16-inch) precast pre-stressed concrete piles, precast concrete pile caps, and precast concrete slabs. The concrete slabs would measure approximately 25 feet in length, 6 to 8 feet in width, and 16 inches in thickness. The concrete piles would be driven to a pile tip elevation of -57 feet (North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88)). The top height of the piles would be situated at an elevation of 29.5 feet (NAVD88). The dock would be constructed so that the concrete slabs would be perpendicular to the Mississippi River. Using these slabs to create the dock platform, the overall dock would extend approximately 125 linear feet from the bankline into the Mississippi River in order to accommodate load transfer from the dock to the barges via crane. In addition, the platform would have a turn-around point located on the east side of the dock upon which trucks would be able to orient a load as close to the barge as possible, and where another truck can queue while loading occurs. Jersey barriers would be used to line the sides of the dock platform (Figure 2). The proposed elevation of the dock bridge deck platform would match the elevation of the existing machine shop at approximately 33 feet (NAVD88), which is located just north of the proposed project area. Heavy construction equipment such as bulldozers and front end loaders would be used to perform earthwork utilizing earthen material from the existing load-out ramp to the existing load-out dock in order to build a new permanent ramp up to the entrance of the dock. Construction of the entire new load-out dock would impact approximately one acre of existing river bank and river bottom. Existing access roads both within and around the mat casting yard would be utilized (i.e., Louisiana Highway 1263 (a.k.a. Ferdinand Street), River Road, and the unnamed northern access road to the mat casting yard). These roads are in continuous use by both trucks and construction equipment involved in the mat casting operation. Construction site personnel and construction equipment for the loadout dock would not be expected to disrupt ongoing daily operations at the casting yard.

The existing load-out dock, located immediately to the west of the proposed new load-out dock, would be demolished as a part of project construction (Figure 3). Heavy construction equipment such as jack hammers, front end loaders, bulldozers, and barge mounted cranes would be utilized to demolish the existing top deck and piling caps in their entirety. The existing support piles would then be cut approximately three feet below the mudline. All re-usable concrete material would be stockpiled at a previously disturbed 0.25 acre area of land located along the Mississippi River bank approximately 1,300 feet upriver of the old dock. All other demolished materials would become

property of the contractor to be disposed of by any legal means. Demolition of the old dock would impact approximately 0.15 acre of existing riverbank and river bottom.

A half-acre staging area for construction equipment, materials, and personnel would be located in a previously disturbed area immediately adjacent to the existing machine shop adjacent to river road. The construction staging area would be utilized for the duration of the project and would be returned to pre-existing conditions upon completion of the project.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT DOCUMENTATION: Environmental impacts for previously identified Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) Project features, including the Mississippi River Channel Improvement feature, were originally addressed in the 1976 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), "*Mississippi River and Tributaries Mississippi River Levees and Channel Improvement.*" A Statement of Findings was signed by Major General Ernest Graves, USACE, Director of Civil Works, on 4 April 1976.

The impacts of the proposed action and alternative to the proposed action will be analyzed and disclosed in draft Environmental Assessment #579, which is scheduled to be available for public review and comment October 2020.

SECTION 404(b)(1) GUIDELINES: The construction of the new dock would require installation of an estimated 51 (16-inch) precast pre-stressed concrete piles, precast concrete pile caps, and precast concrete slabs. The concrete slabs would measure approximately 25 feet in length, 6 to 8 feet in width, and 16 inches in thickness. The concrete piles would be driven to a pile tip elevation of -57 feet (North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88)). The top height of the piles would be situated at an elevation of 29.5 feet (NAVD88). The dock would be constructed so that the concrete slabs would be perpendicular to the Mississippi River. Using these slabs to create the dock platform, the overall dock would extend approximately 125 linear feet from the bankline into the Mississippi River in order to accommodate load transfer from the dock to the barges via crane. Construction of the entire new load-out dock would impact approximately one acre of existing river bank and river bottom.

The existing load-out dock, located immediately to the west of the proposed new load-out dock, would be demolished as a part of project construction. The existing support piles would then be cut approximately three feet below the mudline. All re-usable concrete material would be stockpiled at a previously disturbed 0.25 acre area of land located along the Mississippi River bank approximately 1,300 feet upriver of the old dock. All other demolished materials would become property of the contractor to be disposed of by any legal means. Demolition of the old dock would impact approximately 0.15 acre of existing riverbank and river bottom.

Any placement of earthen fill material into the waters of the U.S. would be made through the application of guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army.

STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Pursuant to the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972, as amended, a CWA Section 401 State Water Quality Certificate (WQC 200903-02/AI 101235/CER 20200006) was issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality by letter dated September 09, 2020.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: Pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), CEMVN has determined that the project would not likely adversely affect the endangered pallid sturgeon or any critical habitat. The FWS concurred with CEMVN's determination of "not likely to adversely affect" under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and returned a copy of USACE's letter with their office stamp of concurrence dated August 14, 2020.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, will review the proposed action during the 30-day public review and comment period to ensure compliance with Section 305 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, CEMVN has determined that there is one (1) historic property (mat casting yard) as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(I) within the Standing Structures APE. Based on the information presented in this letter, CEMVN has determined that the visual character of the dock replacement is consistent with the current use of the St. Francisville Casting Field and will not adversely affect any of the characteristics that make this resource eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. Furthermore, CEMVN has determined that the Undertaking has little potential to impact NRHP-eligible archaeological deposits. Accordingly, on July 20, 2020, CEMVN submitted a finding of "No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties" for this Undertaking to the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of the Department of Culture Recreation and Tourism, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Muscogee Creek Nation, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana. SHPO concurrence with this determination was received on August 18, 2020, the Muscogee Creek Nation concurred on July 28, 2020, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma concurred on August 21, 2020. The remaining affected Tribes did not respond within the regulatory timeframes, and therefore; CEMVN may proceed with the Undertaking assuming concurrence in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and in coordination with NEPA.

ADJACENT PROPERTIES: The only adjacent property is the St. Francisville Casting Field (“mat casting yard”) located approximately 30 miles north of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The mat casting yard is situated along the Mississippi River approximately 1.5 miles south of the town of St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana.

DREDGING BY OTHERS: No accurate estimate can be given to the amounts and/or frequency of dredging required to maintain non-Federal facilities in the vicinity of this project.

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

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Coast Guard, Eighth District
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer

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

PROJECT PLANS: Plans for the proposed work will be on file in the Regional Planning and Environmental Division South Office, Environmental Compliance Branch, Coastal Environmental Compliance Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118, and may be seen by anyone having an interest in them.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Interested parties may submit comments regarding the proposed work in writing to Mr. Mark Henry Lahare, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118. Mr. Lahare may also be reached by e-mail at mark.h.lahare@usace.army.mil and by telephone at (504) 862-1344.

