

Public Notice NHPA/NEPA¹

Notice of Intent to Prepare Programmatic Agreement Regarding St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana Feasibility Study

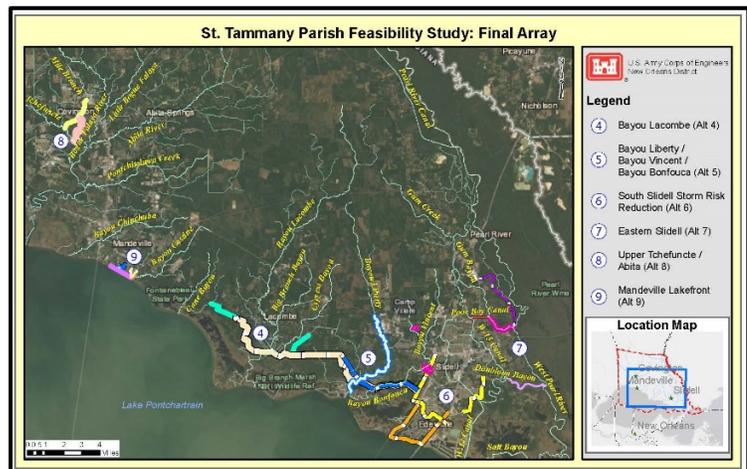
The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (CEMVN), is initiating the process to develop a Programmatic Agreement (PA) for the St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana Feasibility Study pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended (54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.), and Section 110 of the NHPA, that require Federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties during the planning process and consult with stakeholders regarding these effects.

The study area encompasses all of St. Tammany Parish with a focus on the areas impacted by flooding from rainfall and riverine bank overtopping, waves, and storm surge. St. Tammany Parish is approximately 1,124 square miles in size in southeastern Louisiana, and is located on the northeast shore of Lake Pontchartrain. The study area is located along the border with the state of Mississippi, with the Pearl River along the eastern boundary of the Parish. Lake Pontchartrain serves as the southern border, and is one of the largest estuaries in the United States. Tangipahoa Parish is located along the western boundary, and Washington Parish is located to the north. USACE began providing to the public NEPA compliance documentation on the designated project website at <https://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/About/Projects/BBA-2018/studies/St-Tammany/>. CEMVN intends to continue to use this website to post additional project information.

CEMVN is investigating the best comprehensive solutions that meet the study objective: to reduce the severity of flood damages and risks to human life in St. Tammany Parish to residents, businesses, and critical infrastructure. The USACE will evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives for the proposed action to reduce flood damages from rainfall and storm surge. Both structural and nonstructural measures are being considered in the study process. Additional information and maps regarding initial alternatives under consideration can be accessed at: <https://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/About/Projects/BBA-2018/studies/St-Tammany/>.

CEMVN has determined that the proposed action constitutes an Undertaking as defined in 36 CFR § 800.16(y) and has the potential to cause effects on historic properties. Accordingly, CEMVN proposes to develop a project-specific PA pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.14(b)(3) to provide a framework for addressing this complex Undertaking and establish protocols for continuing consultation with the LA State Historic Preservation Officer (LA SHPO), Tribal Governments, and other stakeholders. The PA would identify consulting parties, define applicability, establish review timeframes, stipulate roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, summarize Tribal consultation procedures, consider the views of the SHPO/Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and other consulting parties, afford for public participation, develop programmatic allowances to exempt certain actions from Section 106 review, provide the measures CEMVN will implement to develop an Area of Potential Effects (APE) in consultation with external stakeholders, outline a standard review process for plans and specifications as they are developed, determine an appropriate level of field investigation to identify and evaluate historic properties and/or sites of religious and cultural significance within the APE, streamline the assessment and resolution of Adverse Effects through avoidance, minimization, and programmatic treatment approaches for mitigation, establish reporting frequency and schedule, provide provisions for post-review unexpected discoveries and unmarked burials, and incorporate the procedures for amendments, duration, termination, dispute resolution, and implementation.

To help further develop a course of action for this project CEMVN is requesting your input by September 30, 2020, concerning the proposed Undertaking and its potential to significantly affect historic properties and/or of relevant parties who may have an interest in participating in this consultation. Comments can be sent electronically to: sttammanyfs@usace.army.mil or, mail comments to: Cultural & Social Resources Section (CEMVN-PDP-CSR), USACE, Room 140, 7400 Leake Ave., New Orleans, LA 70118-3651.



¹CEMVN is issuing this public notice as part of its responsibilities under the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations, 36 CFR Part 800, implementing Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. § 306108). This notice applies to activities carried out under the Congressional authority for the St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana Feasibility Study under the standing authority of The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-123), Division B, Subdivision 1, H. R. 1892-13, Title IV, Corps of Engineers-Civil, Department of the Army, Investigations, for flood and storm damage risk reduction. CEMVN is also required to fulfill the Council of Environmental Quality regulations (NEPA regulations, 43 FR 55978 (1978)) that provide policy and procedures to enable CEMVN officials to be informed and to take into account environmental considerations when authorizing or approving CEMVN actions that may significantly affect the environment of the United States. It is the intent of NEPA that federal agencies encourage and facilitate public involvement to the extent practicable in decisions that may affect the quality of the environment.