



## **US Army Corps of Engineers®**

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

**May 1, 2022**

**Introduction.** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mississippi Valley Division, New Orleans District (CEMVN), has prepared a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) titled “Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Risk Reduction Study, Draft Mitigation Plan Update”, to evaluate an alternative project to compensate for unavoidable impacts to swamp habitat associated with the construction of the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction Project (WSLP project). The draft SEIS is available for your review and comment.

This Public Notice is issued in accordance with provisions of Title 33 CFR Parts 336.1(b)(1) and 337.1, which establish policy, practices, and procedures to be followed on federal actions involving the disposal of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. The draft SEIS is prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council of Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §1500-1508), as reflected in the USACE Engineering Regulation (ER) 200-2-2.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the Coastal Wetland Planning and Restoration Act project PO-0029, River Reintroduction into the Maurepas Swamp Project (MSP), as it is currently designed (max flow of 2,000 cfs) to determine whether it could be transformed into a viable mitigation project for the WSLP project impacts. Construction of the WSLP project could impact as much as 10,892 acres of swamp and 4,877 acres of

bottomland hardwood wet (BLH-wet) habitat. This equates to a mitigation need of approximately 947 (average annual habitat units (AAHUs)) of CZ swamp and 293 AAHUs of CZ BLH-wet.

**Evaluation Factors.** Evaluation includes application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through 40 CFR 230. The Section 404(b)(1) evaluation is located in Appendix L of the SEIS.

**Location.** The project is located within southeast Louisiana between the Mississippi River, and Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain within the CZ. Area communities include those within St. James, St. John and Ascension Parishes, LA.

**Description of Work.** The proposed action and tentatively selected alternative is MSA-2, a 2,000 cfs freshwater diversion from the Mississippi River into the Maurepas Swamp. The diversion would be operated yearly, as Mississippi River water levels allow, to provide benefits to existing swamp habitats and compensate for the WSLP project's swamp impacts. Construction of the diversion would include three groups of features: the conveyance channel, embankment features, and water control weirs. The conveyance channel would be located on the East Bank of the Mississippi River in St. John the Baptist Parish, immediately west of Garyville, LA, at River Mile 144 Above Head of Passes and would encompass Hope Canal. The embankment features would be located in St. John the Baptist and Ascension Parishes; and the weirs would be located within Bayou Secret and Bourgeois Canal, located in St. James Parish.

**Discharges by Others.** No discharges are anticipated by others.

**Properties Adjacent to Disposal Sites.** There are approximately 13 privately owned properties that have been identified that are adjacent to the proposed project. The habitat of the adjacent landowners is primarily forested wetlands, wetlands, and open water areas.

**Public Involvement.** The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and

other interested parties. Copies of the Draft SEIS and supporting documents are available at: <https://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/NEPA-Compliance-Documents/Bipartisan-Budget-Act-2018-BBA-18/West-Shore-Lake-Pontchartrain/>, or upon request.

Comments on the 404(b)(1) evaluation must be received by May 31, 2022. Interested parties may express their views on the draft document. All comments postmarked on or before the expiration of the comment period will be considered.

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by deposition of excavated or dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by the proposed action. You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.

Comments or requests to receive a copy of the document may be submitted by fax to (504) 862-1908, by emailing [mvnenvironmental@usace.army.mil](mailto:mvnenvironmental@usace.army.mil), or by mail to Mr. Landon Parr; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Regional Planning and Environmental Division South; CEMVN-PDC-C; 7400 Leake Avenue; New Orleans, Louisiana 70118.