

SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE

August 30, 2021

United States Army
Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Attn: Regulatory Division, REG-W
7400 Leake Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118-3651

Project Manager:
Sara Fortuna
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Application #: MVN-2021-00165-WQQ

****UPDATE**** *This special notice is to inform pertinent resource agencies and the public of administrative changes associated with the subject project described below, and previously posted on Public Notice for a 20-day comment period on April 26, 2021.*

► *The public is hereby made aware that the applicant has requested a modification to their original application (MVN-2021-00165-WQQ), to remove the proposed southern Blanchet Site plans, located in St. Martin Parish. The applicant continues to propose the northern Chappuis site plans located in Lafayette Parish, under their present modified application, numbered (MVN-2021-00165-WQQ).*

► *The applicant additionally has submitted a new application to separately propose the southern Blanchet Site off the Vermillion River in St. Martin Parish, which will be processed under application number (MVN-2021-00698-WKK).*

This special notice is not to solicit additional comments on the proposed projects
As shown above, a new project manager from the original listed in the April 26, 2021 public notice has been assigned to review and process the two individual applications, at this present point in time. All original comments, concerns or objections received during the April 26, 2021 public notice will be utilized in the public interest review of each of the two separate applications. As per the applicant's consultant, there have been no noted changes to the original proposed project plans and work activities, for either the Chappuis or Blanchet sites.

VERMILLION RIVER FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS IN LAFAYETTE AND ST. MARTIN PARISHES

NAME OF APPLICANT: Lafayette Parish Consolidated Government - Public Works, c/o: CK Associates, Attn: Autry Atkins, 8591 United Plaza Blvd. Suite 300, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809.

LOCATION OF WORK: Located along the Vermillion River, near Lake Martin Rd. and adjacent to the Bayou Tortue Swamp, in Lafayette and St. Martin Parishes, Louisiana, (lat. 30.211503°, long. -91.969724°), as shown within the attached drawings. (Hydrologic Unit Code 08080103, Vermillion River Basin).

CHARACTER OF WORK:

Chappuis Site (MVN-2021-00165-WKK) – in Lafayette Parish, North Bank Vermillion River

The project is for the creation of a temporary flood storage retention area in an existing wetland area west of Lake Martin Rd. that is historically and currently subject to flooding from both seasonal rainfall and overbank flooding events. This proposed project will involve permanent impacts to 0.53 acre of bottomland hardwood forested wetlands for the repair of an existing levee breach, construction of a water control structure, aggregate access path, and removal and backfilling of an existing damaged culvert. Impacts to non-wetland waters of the US will total 0.09 acre or 108 linear feet. The applicant proposes to purchase mitigation credits of an appropriate type and amount from an approved bank to offset permanent wetland impacts.

Blanchet Site (MVN-2021-00698-WKK) – in St. Martin Parish, South Bank Vermillion River & Bayou Tortue Swamp

The purpose of the project is to restore the natural hydraulic exchange between the Vermillion River and Bayou Tortue Swamp in periods of overbank flooding through the removal of existing upland spoil banks just upstream from the confluence of Bayou Tortue and the Vermillion River. This proposed project will involve temporary impacts to 0.53 acre of bottomland hardwood forested wetlands related to construction, in which 0.11 of an acre will be temporarily cleared for the placement of timber matting to allow equipment to access the western end of the existing upland spoil bank, and the remaining 0.42 of an acre of temporary impacts will result from clearing forested wetlands north of the existing upland spoil bank and south of the natural bank of the Vermillion River to allow for staging of spoil material, equipment and personnel maneuvering, and barge loading. Impacts to non-wetland waters of the US will total 0.01 acre or 57 linear feet. The applicant proposes to purchase mitigation credits of an appropriate type and amount from an approved bank to offset temporal function loss, re-plant the impact areas with native bottomland hardwood species following construction, a combination of the aforementioned, or as determined necessary by the USACE.

Corps of Engineers Permit Criteria

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activities on the public interest. Those decisions will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposals must

be balanced against their reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposals will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The New Orleans District is unaware of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places near the proposed work associated with the two applications. The possibility exists that the proposed work may damage or destroy presently unknown archeological, scientific, prehistorical, historical sites, or data. As necessary, copies of the individual applications will be sent to the State Archeologist, State Historic Preservation Officer, and federally listed tribes regarding potential impacts to cultural resources.

Our initial finding is that the proposed work in the two applications would neither affect any species listed as endangered by the U.S. Departments of Interior or Commerce, nor affect any habitat designated as critical to the survival and recovery of any endangered species. Based on the Information Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool for Endangered Species in Louisiana, as signed on January 27, 2020, between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it has been determined that the project would have no effect on the West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*).

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The applicant's proposals may result in the destruction, alteration, and/or disturbance of approximately **0 acres** of EFH utilized by various life stages of red drum and penaeid shrimp. Our initial determination is that the proposed actions would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

If proposed work involves deposits of dredged or fill material into navigable waters, the evaluation of the probable impacts will include the application of guidelines established by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Also, certifications that the proposed activities will not violate applicable water quality standards will be required from the Department of Environmental Quality before a Department of the Army permit can be issued.

For: Martin S. Mayer
Acting Chief, Regulatory Division