



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, MOBILE DISTRICT  
P.O. BOX 2288  
MOBILE, AL 36628-0001

**CESAM-PD-EI**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP19-WG01-07**

**16 September 2019**

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS,**  
**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT,**  
**AND**  
**GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION**  
  
**WALTER F. GEORGE LONG TERM RIPRAP REPAIR**  
**WALTER F. GEORGE DAM**  
  
**CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER**  
**HENRY COUNTY, ALABAMA AND CLAY COUNTY, GEORGIA**  
  
**A FEDERALLY AUTHORIZED PROJECT**

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mobile District proposes to perform a long term repair of the Walter F. George project embankments to permanently fix damages sustained during Hurricane Michael in October 2019.

This public notice is issued in accordance with rules and regulations published in the Federal Register on 26 April 1988. These regulations provide for the review of dredging programs for federally authorized projects under the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) whenever dredged or fill materials may enter waters of the United States.

The recipient of this notice is specifically requested to review the proposed action as it may impact water quality relative to the requirements of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Comments on any other potential impacts also are requested.

**WATERWAY AND LOCATION:** Chattahoochee River, Walter F. George Lock and Dam Project, Henry County, Alabama, Clay County, Georgia.

**DESCRIPTION OF ENTIRE AUTHORIZED PROJECT:** USACE first considered navigation locks and dams for the Apalachicola River Basin in the early 1930s in a report on the Apalachicola River System in accordance with House Document No. 308, 69th Congress, First Session. The report, which had a general plan for the overall development of the basin was submitted to Congress in 1934 but was immediately recalled to consider additional information. The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1945 approved the general plan presented in House Document No. 342, 76th Congress, First

Session, and authorized the initiation and partial accomplishment of that plan by constructing two locks and dams, one of which was the Junction Project. No work was accomplished on the project authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1945. The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1946, House Document No. 300, 80th Congress (Public Law 79-525) approved modification of the general plan including the substitution for the authorized lock and dam at Junction of a higher lock and dam with normal pool elevation 77.0 feet NGVD29 and with provisions for a hydroelectric power plant. The modification also included an increase in the size of the locks at all navigation dams from 45 by 450 feet to 82 by 450 feet. On May 19, 1953, the House of Representatives Committee on Public Works approved a plan consisting of a low navigation dam near Columbia, Alabama, and a high navigation and power dam near Fort Gaines, Georgia, in lieu of the Fort Benning Lock and Dam and the upper Columbia projects. In March 1958, the 85th Congress, Second Session, enacted Public Law 85-363 officially designating Fort Gaines Lock and Dam as the Walter F. George Lock and Dam in honor of the Senator Walter F. George of Georgia.

The WFG project incurred significant damage during the October 10, 2018 Hurricane Michael which produced excessive wave action that damaged both sides of the WFG dam. The proposed repair will be conducted as Operations and Maintenance of the WFG embankments.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:** The work to be performed consists of repairing the upstream armored face on two non-overflow earthen dikes (embankments) at Walter F. George Dam on the Chattahoochee River. The embankments are located on the west (Alabama side) and east (Georgia side). The approximate total length of the two embankments is 12,128 feet with approximately 6,124 feet (ft) located on the Alabama side and 6,004 ft on the Georgia side. The crest of the embankments is at elevation 215.0 with a 30-foot width to provide a 20 foot access roadway. The upstream slope of the embankments was originally protected by 24 inches of dumped armor stone on a 9-inch bedding stone from the crest to a berm at elevation 180 ft. The armored portion of the upstream slope is 1 vertical to 2.5 horizontal. Below the berm, the slope is 1 vertical to 3 horizontal. The new armoring system will be placed on both the Alabama and Georgia embankments. Construction shall be completed in three phases and staging areas are provided on both the Alabama and Georgia side. During the removal and placing of the new armor system, the contractor shall not penetrate the soil layer of the embankment.

Phase I will include the removal of the existing armor stone and bedding stone, and installation of the new armoring system from elevation 186 ft to elevation 190 ft. To facilitate removal of the existing armor system without damaging the impervious embankment, the reservoir pool will be lowered to elevation 186 ft for 6 weeks (September 15, 2020 to November 1, 2020). The Contractor shall remove the existing armor system and install the new armoring system from elevation 186 ft to elevation 190 ft in this 6 week period. The contractor shall not expose more than 6,500 square feet (sq ft) of impervious embankment at a time per crew, or as approved by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).



Phase II will include the removal of the existing armor stone and bedding stone, and installation of the new armoring system from elevation 190 ft to 205 ft. Normal summer/winter pool levels will be operated during this phase of construction. The contractor shall not expose more than 20,200 sq ft of impervious embankment at a time per crew, or as approved by the COR. All existing armor stone from elevation 195 ft to 205 ft shall be disposed of in the "lake disposal" area atop existing accumulated riprap in order to create a platform from which to operate.

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION:** Pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, state water quality certification is required for the proposed activities. A decision on state water quality certification will be made by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and Georgia Environmental Protection Division after completion of the comment period of this public notice.

**USE BY OTHERS:** The proposed project may have a temporary negative impact on local fishing and boating activities due to the closure of the WFG lock and dam; however these impacts will be minor cumulatively and individually. Any direct or indirect impacts will revert to preconstruction conditions upon project completion.

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS:** The Walter F. George project is addressed in the existing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin which is publicly available at the USACE, Mobile District's website:

**<https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/Planning-Environmental/ACF-Master-Water-Control-Manual-Update/ACF-Document-Library/>**. The proposed action is authorized as Operations and Maintenance of the WFG project. Additionally, Engineering Regulation 200-2-2 section 9.a categorically excludes "activities at completed [USACE] projects which carry out the authorized project purposes. Examples include routine operation and maintenance actions...erosion control...repair, rehabilitation, [and] replacement of existing structures and facilities..." Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required for the proposed action.

**SECTION 404(b)(1) EVALUATION REPORT:** Water quality impacts associated with placing fill material into waters of the United States as a result of the proposed work has been addressed in a preliminary Section 404 (b)(1) Evaluation Report. This report was prepared in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. The preliminary evaluation report is available for review at the Mobile District's website at **<<https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/Planning-Environmental/Environmental-Assessments/>>**, and will be finalized upon completion of the coordination of this notice.

**CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:** Construction of the Walter F. George Dam was completed in 1964 and because the dam is more than 50 year old, it could represent a structure eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). While the dam has not been currently evaluated for NRHP eligibility, the Criteria of adverse effect was applied assuming the dam's eligibility as a historic



property according to 36 CFR § 800.5(a)(1). According 36 CFR § 800.5(a)(1), an adverse effect is found when an undertaking directly or indirectly alters the characteristics of a historic property that make it eligible for listing on the NRHP. The Area for Potential Effect comprises the upstream armored faces of the non-overflow earthen dikes (embankments) at the Alabama and Georgia sides of the Walter F. George Dam on the Chattahoochee River. The proposed action would include replacing the degraded stone riprap armor along portions of the two embankments. Similar materials would be used during construction for the undertaking and the embankment's current footprint, height, and shape would be maintained. As the proposed repairs would not significantly alter the appearance or character of the embankments, USACE has determined that the proposed undertaking would have no adverse effects to historic properties.

**ENDANGERED/THREATENED SPECIES:** No federally listed species or suitable habitat occur within the proposed action area. Therefore the proposed action would have no effect on endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat.

**EVALUATION:** The decision whether to proceed with the proposed action will be based on evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits which may be reasonably expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal 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, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shore 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.

Inasmuch as the proposed work would involve the discharge of materials into waters of the United States, designation of the proposed disposal site associated with this Federal project is being made through application of guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the EPA in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army. If these guidelines alone prohibit the designation of the proposed disposal site, any potential impairment of the authorized project purposes of the WFG project which would result from the failure to use the disposal site, will also be considered.

**COORDINATION:** USACE, Mobile District is soliciting comments from the general public; Federal, State, and local agencies, and officials; American Indian Tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed activity. Any comments received will be used by USACE, Mobile District to determine whether or not to proceed with the proposed action. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above.

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Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest in the proposed activity and in preparing an EA and/or an EIS pursuant to the NEPA compliance.

Among the agencies receiving copies of the Public Notice are:

Alabama Department of Environmental Management  
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Georgia Environmental Protection Division  
Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Athens Office  
U.S. Geological Survey

We request that you communicate the information contained in this notice to any other parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Any person who may be affected by the discharge of this fill material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this public notice. The request must clearly set forth the interest which may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Correspondence concerning this 15-day public notice should refer to **Public Notice No. FP19-WG01-07** and should be directed to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628, Attention: CESAM PD EI, Ms. Heather Bulger. Copies of comments should also be forwarded to Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Field Operations Division, Post Office Box 301463, 1400 Coliseum Boulevard, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463 and Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Environmental Compliance Specialist - Wetlands Unit, 7 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Suite 450, Atlanta, Georgia 30334. Ms. Heather Bulger may be contacted at telephone number (251) 694-3889 or email address [heather.p.bulger@usace.army.mil](mailto:heather.p.bulger@usace.army.mil) for additional information.



CURTIS M. FLAKES  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,  
Mobile District



Figure 1: Vicinity Map

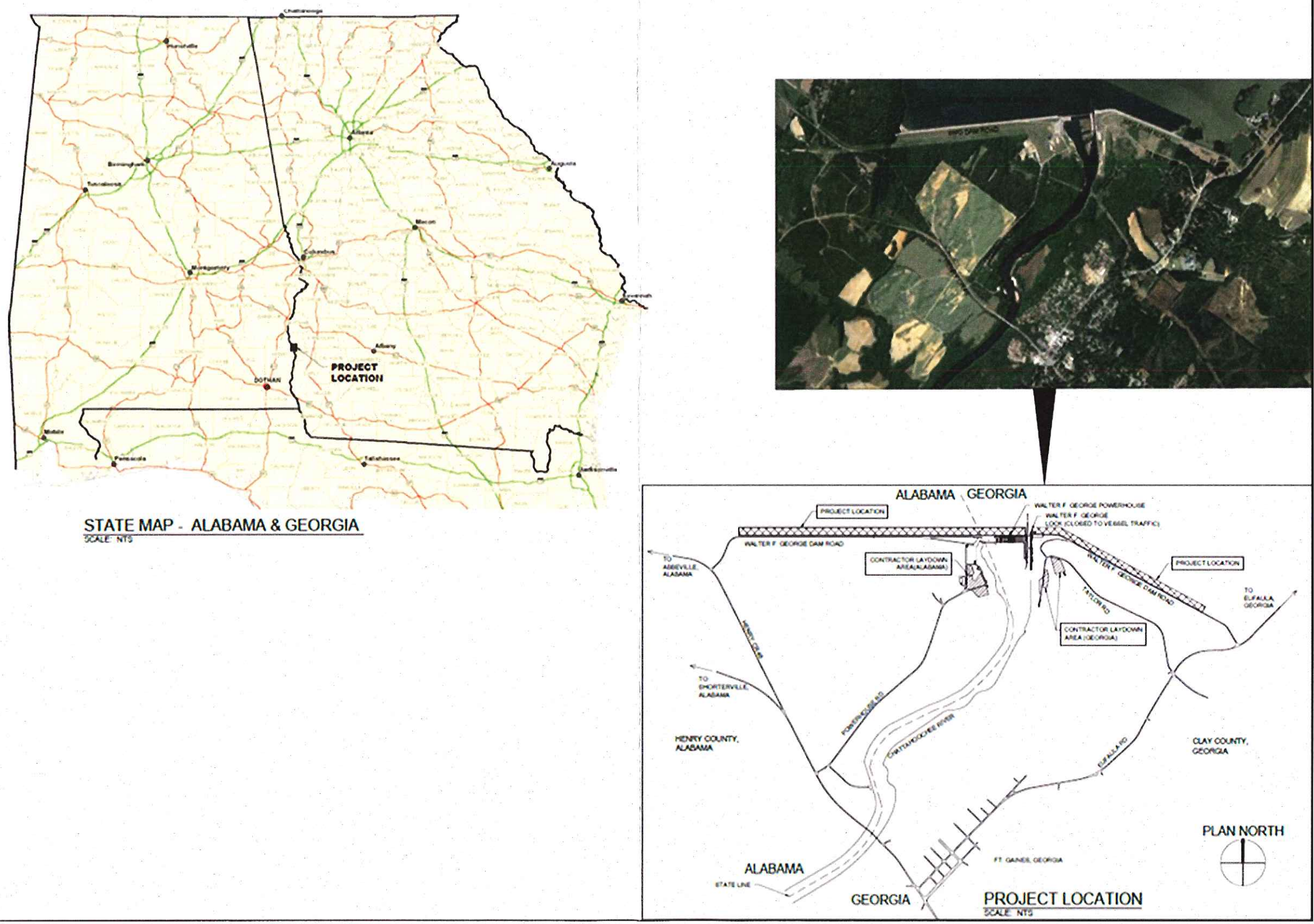
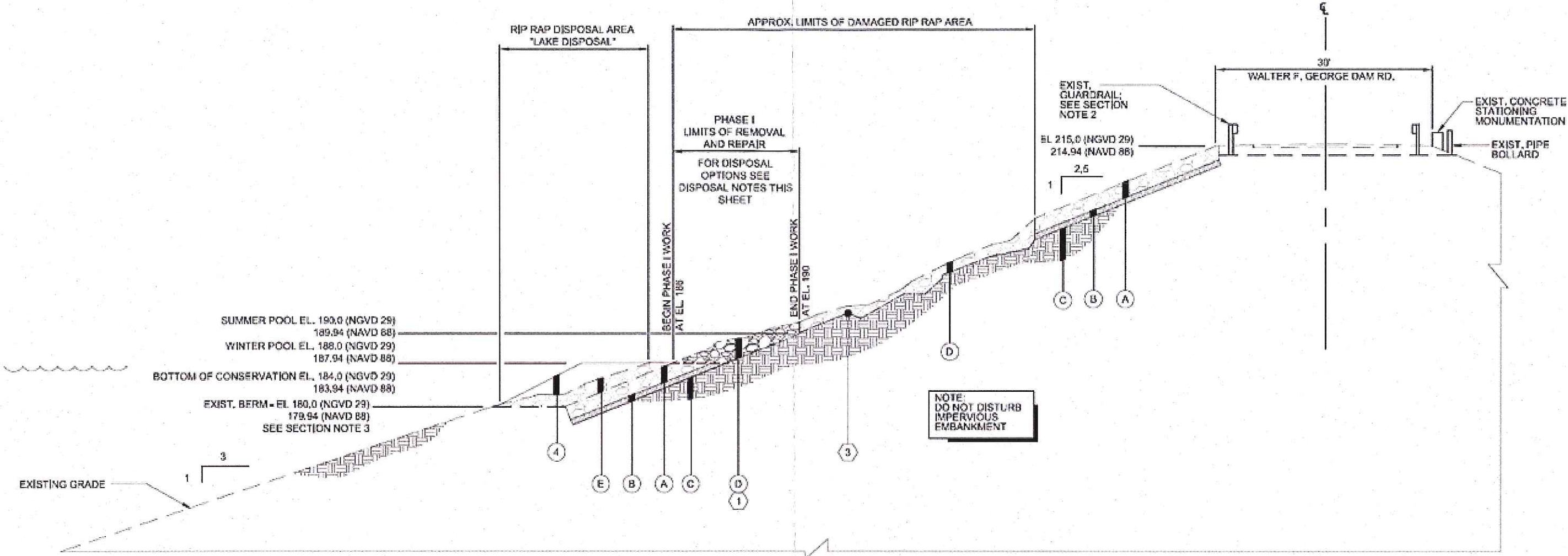




Figure 2: Example Cross-Section of Proposed Action



D1

CD502

SECTION - TYPICAL PHASE 1 DEMOLITION FOR RIPRAP REPAIR

NOT TO SCALE

WALTER F. GEORGE DAM ROAD (AL. SIDE) - STA 5+00 THRU STA 60+00±  
WALTER F. GEORGE DAM ROAD (GA. SIDE) - STA 78+75± THRU STA 100+00±

PROJECT MATERIALS DESIGNATION LEGEND		
DESIGNATION	THICKNESS	DESCRIPTION
(A)	24 INCH	EXISTING RIP RAP (THICKNESS/SITE CONDITIONS NOT VERIFIED)
(B)	9 INCH	EXISTING BEDDING LAYER (DESIGN THICKNESS SHOWN, EXIST CONDITIONS VARY)
(C)	—	EXISTING IMPERVIOUS EMBANKMENT (DO NOT DISTURB)
(D)	VARIES	EXISTING DAMAGED RIP RAP AREA (THICKNESS VARIES)
(E)	VARIES	EXISTING ACCUMULATED RIP RAP FROM PAST SLUFFING & STORM DAMAGE (THICKNESS VARIES)
(4)	VARIES	OPTIONAL LAKE DISPOSAL OF RIP RAP: PHASE 1, SEE OPTIONAL RIP RAP DISPOSAL NOTES

SECTION KEYNOTES

- 1

EXISTING RIP RAP FROM EL. 186 TO EL. 190 TO BE REMOVED; SEE OPTIONAL RIP RAP DISPOSAL NOTES.
- 3

EXISTING TEMPORARY RIP RAP REPAIR W/GETEXTILE FABRIC. FABRIC TO BE REMOVED AS APPLICABLE IN APPROX. 31 LOCATIONS, APPROX. 6,600 SF AREA.