

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, MOBILE DISTRICT

P.O. BOX 2288 MOBILE, AL 36628-0001

CESAM-RD-M
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. SAM-2020-00122-APS

September 3, 2020

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL (MDEQ)

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

PROPOSED MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND DEBRIS REMOVAL IN WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE ASSOCIATED DISCHARGE OF DREDGED MATERIAL INTO A DESIGNATED BENEFICIAL USE SITE, BILOXI, HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This District has received an application for a Department of the Army (DA) permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344). Please communicate this information to interested parties.

APPLICANT: City of Biloxi

214 A Delauney Street Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The proposed activities are located in the waters of the Tchoutacabouffa River and Howard Creek in Biloxi, Mississippi. The project is within Section 1, Township 7 South, Range 10 West in Harrison County, at Latitude 30.466480° North and Longitude 88.939794° West. Impacts to waters of the U.S. are associated with the dredging of the waterbottoms of the subject waterway and the potential discharge of dredged material into waters of the United States. The discharge location would be determined based upon sediment test results, if required. If the material is determined to be suitable, the dredged material would be placed in the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (MDMR) Greenwood Beneficial Use (BU) Disposal Site at the mouth of Bayou Casotte in Pascagoula, Jackson County, Mississippi. Approximate coordinates for the Greenwood BU Site are Latitude 30.335186° North and Longitude 88.519813° West. If the material is determined to be unsuitable for discharge in the MDMR BU Site, the material would be placed at the Harrison County Development Commission's (HCDC) Disposal Area, C-1, at the mouth of Bayou Bernard in Gulfport, Harrison County, Mississippi. Approximate coordinates for the HCDC Disposal Area, C-1, are Latitude 30.422170° North and Longitude 89.010651° West. The project location and potential disposal sites are located in the Mississippi Coastal watershed (HUC 03170009).

PROPOSED WORK:

<u>Tchoutacabouffa River</u>: The applicant proposes to mechanically dredge approximately 1,220 cubic yards of material from an area near the convergence of Howard Creek and the Tchoutacabouffa River. The area proposed to be dredged is 850 feet long and 20 feet wide. The dredge depth would be to 5 feet below mean low water. Current depths range from 1.5 feet to 7.5 feet below mean low water. The dredged material would be loaded onto a barge and transported to an appropriate disposal location to be determined based upon the results of sediment testing, if required. The dredged material would be disposed at either the MDMR BU Site or the HCDC Disposal Area C-1.

<u>Howard Creek</u>: The applicant also proposes to mechanically remove approximately 200 cubic yards of sediment and debris from an 855-foot-long segment of Howard Creek from south of the Old Highway 67 bridge. The target depth along the canal is the natural contour of the waterway. Only areas of elevated sediment accumulation would be removed to restore depth to that of the surrounding waters. Debris removed from the canal would be transported to an approved upland disposal facility. Sediment would be disposed at either the MDMR BU Site or the HCDC Disposal Area C-1.

The applicant has applied for state water quality (WQ) certification in accordance with Section 401(a)(1) of the Clean Water Act, and for coastal zone (CZ) consistency in accordance with the State Coastal Zone Management Program. Upon completion of the required advertising and public comment review, a determination relative to WQ certification and CZ consistency will be made by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts on which a decision by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) can be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an 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 benefit which reasonably may be 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, 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, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

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The USACE of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. 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. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Evaluation of the probable impacts involving deposits of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States will include the application of guidelines established by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Appendix C of 33 CFR 325, the undertaking defined in this notice is being considered for the potential to affect historic properties. In accordance with Appendix C of 33 CFR 325, the Corps has determined the permit area consists of the two areas proposed to be dredged as well as the two potential disposal locations. The National Register of Historic Places Google Earth layer and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) Historic Resources Inventory Map has been consulted regarding properties listed in or eligible for the National Register. No historic properties were identified or are known to exist within the Section 106 permit areas that would be affected by the proposed work. The USACE has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project would have no effect on historic properties due to past human disturbances in each of the Section 106 permit areas. However, we are seeking comment from the State Historic Preservation Officer, federallyrecognized American Indian tribes, local historical societies, museums, universities, the National Park Service, and the general public regarding the existence or the potential for existence of significant cultural and historic properties which may be affected by the work. This action constitutes the full extent of cultural resources investigations unless comment to this notice is received documenting that significant sites or properties exist which may be affected by this work, or that adequately documents that a potential exists for the location of significant sites or properties within the project area.

A preliminary review of this application, the U.S. Department of the Interior List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants, the National Marine Fisheries Service list of Mississippi's Threatened and Endangered Species, and the 2020 South Mississippi (MS) Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species (SLOPES) indicates that the proposed activities would have no effect on endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat with the exception of two species, the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) and the Alabama red-bellied turtle (*Pseudemys alabamensis*). Based upon the

2020 South MS SLOPES, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is required for the Alabama red-bellied turtle. Should a permit be issued with the "Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Activities" incorporated as a permit condition, the 2020 South MS SLOPES indicates that the proposed activities may affect, but are not likely to affect, the West Indian manatee. This notice serves as a request to the USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for information on whether any listed or proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species may be present in the area which would be affected by the proposed activity. Additionally, this notice also serves as a request to the USFWS to initiate informal consultation regarding the potential of effects to the Alabama red-bellied turtle as a result of the proposed activities. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the USFWS.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The proposal would impact approximately 6.5 acres of estuarine substrate and emergent wetlands utilized by various life stages of species included in Fishery Management Plans for Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Red Drum, Reef Fish, Shrimp, Corals, or Highly Migratory Species. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or Federally managed fisheries.

Correspondence concerning this Public Notice should refer to Public Notice Number SAM-2020-00122-APS and should be directed to the District Engineer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Mobile, Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, Attention: South Mississippi Branch, with a copy to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control, Post Office Box 2261, Jackson, Mississippi 39225, and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530, in time to be received within **30 days** of the date of this public notice.

If you have any questions concerning this publication, you may contact the project manager for this application, Amiee P. Smith (Amiee.P.Smith@usace.army.mil), phone (228) 627-8641. Please refer to the above Public Notice number.

For additional information about our Regulatory Program, please visit our website at: www.sam.usace.army.mil and please take a moment to complete our customer satisfaction survey while you're there. Your responses are appreciated and will allow us to improve our services.

MOBILE DISTRICT U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Attachments









