



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Memphis District

ISSUE DATE: 17 September 2004

PUBLIC NOTICE

**EXPIRATION DATE:
18 October 2004**

AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT EA/FONSI

REPLY TO:

ATTN: Leighann Gipson
Environmental Analysis Branch
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
167 North Main Street, Room B-202
Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1894
Tele: (901) 544-4015
Fax: (901) 544-3955
E-mail: Leighann.c.gipson@mvm02.usace.army.mil

TITLE: Nash Relief Wells, Parcel 2, Missouri, Seepage Control

AUTHORITY: The project is authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1938 (Public Law 671-75) (CD1/75/1).

LOCATION: The proposed relief wells and associated drainage is located near Nash, Cape Girardeau and Scott Counties, approximately 10 miles south of Cape Girardeau in southeast Missouri. The project is shown on the Chaffee, MO and Scott City, MO, 1:24,000 quadrangle maps (Figure 1).

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District is issuing this notice to update environmental coordination on the authorized project.

PURPOSE: The relief wells are necessary to reduce the high landside seepage pressures that can occur during flood conditions on the Mississippi River and to assure that the levee system is adequate for a project flood event.

ALTERNATIVES: There were four alternatives considered for this project.

Alternative 1: No Action: The no-action alternative is defined as termination of the project. High landside seepage pressures would continue to occur during flood conditions. This could eventually lead to levee failure during major flood events. Failure of the levee would result in property damage and human injuries.

Alternative 2: Install a Slurry Trench to Reduce Landside Seepage Pressures: This alternative would involve installing a slurry trench (cutoff wall) along the riverside toe of the headwater diversion channel levee to stabilize the levee and ensure protection from major flood events. Slurry trenches are costly to construct, and they can also alter the local groundwater regime, which could affect the wetland areas at the toe of the headwater diversion channel levee and the railroad spur.

Alternative 3: Install Relief Wells to Reduce Landside Seepage Pressures: This alternative would involve installing 75 relief wells along the toe of the abandoned railroad spur to stabilize the headwater diversion channel levee and ensure protection from flood events. Since drainage ditches exist near the project area, a small collector ditch would be constructed and connect to the existing channels to carry flow released from the relief wells. Some trees would be removed from the wetland area; however, well placement would be designed so that mainly smaller trees would be removed. Little maintenance would be required for the wells.

Alternative 4: Installing a Landside Seepage Berm: This alternative would consist of construction of a seepage berm on the landside toe of the levee to block seep water from flowing underneath the levee. This would be costly and fill material to construct the berm would be required. Also, the wetland area would be filled in and all of the trees would be removed.

Alternative 1 (no action) was unacceptable, and Alternatives 2 (slurry trench) and 4 (seepage berm) were too costly and would require the removal of trees near the toe of the levee and railroad spur. Therefore, Alternative 3 was selected as the preferred plan.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK: The work would consist of installing 75 relief wells along the toe of an abandoned railroad spur adjacent to the Castor River diversion channel levee on the right descending bank. The relief wells would drain into both existing ditches or newly constructed collector ditches that are adjacent to the wells. These ditches would carry the relief well flow into existing Ditch 8. As a result of increased flows, Ditch 8 would require a cleanout for approximately one mile, with a channel enlargement on the lower one mile extending to the confluence of Ditch 1.

A portion of the project area is located in wooded wetlands, shrub-scrub wetlands, and prime farmland. Approximately, 3.0 acres are wooded wetlands, approximately 2.0 acres are shrub-scrub wetlands, and approximately 3.0 acres are prime farmland. The 3.0 acres of wooded wetlands would be cleared and the relief wells would be installed. New collector ditches would be constructed at the toe of the railroad spur with one new ditch extending across an agricultural field to connect to Ditch 8. The wooded wetlands are comprised primarily of American elm, red oak, sweet gum, cottonwood, red maple, pecan, black willow, and green ash. Also, 2.0 acre

wetland would be filled with material excavated from the new collector ditches and the Ditch 8 channel cleanout and enlargement. This area would be converted to agricultural land.

Project mitigation would consist of restoring 15 acres of prior converted or farmed wetlands to bottomland hardwoods. These 15 acres of mitigation land will be added to the land already needed to offset impacts for the Missouri portion of work presented in the 1998 Mississippi River Levee Enlargement and Seepage Control Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Although water quality certification was granted for the projects for Missouri presented in the 1998 SEIS, the final design is being coordinated with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Water Pollution Control Program.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: A site visit was conducted by Memphis District Personnel on 29 April 2004, and no threatened or endangered species were found in the project area. The project is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: A cultural resources survey was conducted in the project area, and one unrecorded site was found. It was recommended as potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The project design has been altered to avoid this site. Therefore, the proposed action will have no effect on cultural resources applicable under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. This determination included coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma. Additional coordination will be made if inadvertent discovery of potentially significant cultural resources occurs during project construction.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW: The purpose of this public notice is to advise all interested parties of the proposed activities and to solicit comments and information necessary to evaluate the probable impact on the public interest. This notice is being circulated to federal, state and local agencies and to the public.

The decision to proceed with this project will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The potential benefits that reasonably may be expected to accrue from the activity must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among the factors considered are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife, 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 Corps 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 the proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of

Engineers to determine whether to modify or condition the project. 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 preparation of the final environmental assessment and/or a draft environmental impact statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and are also used to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity. **The draft environmental assessment, and draft finding of no significant impact (FONSI) will be circulated to agencies and any other parties that respond to this notice requesting copies. Copies of these documents have been placed on the District's website at:**

<http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/regulatory/public-notices/pn.htm>

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this proposed project. Requests for a public hearing shall clearly state the reason for holding a public hearing. The District Engineer will determine if the issues raised are substantial and whether a hearing is needed in order to reach a decision on the project. Failure of any agency or individual to comment on this notice will be interpreted to mean that there is no objection to the proposed work.

COMMENTS OR REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: If you wish to obtain additional information or to submit comments on this proposal, please contact Leighann Gipson at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Analysis Branch (PM-E), 167 North Main Street RM B-202, Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1894, telephone 901/544-4015. **Comments should be forwarded to this office by October 18, 2004.**

Sincerely,



David L. Reece
Chief, Environmental Analysis Branch

Enclosures