



Reply to
Attention of:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
MEMPHIS DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
167 NORTH MAIN STREET B-202
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38103-1894

September 10, 2009

Planning, Programs, & Project
Management Division
Environmental Branch

Dear Meeting Participant:

On June 23, 2009, the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, conducted a public scoping meeting to discuss environmental issues relating to the West Tennessee Tributaries general reevaluation. Our records show you expressed interest in following the study's progress. With this mailing, we are providing a copy of the Post Scoping Document containing summary information gained from the scoping meeting. We attempted to document all oral comments voiced at the scoping meeting as accurately as possible in the enclosed document.

Scoping comments will be used to determine the study needs and develop alternatives. A full range of reasonable alternatives, including a "no action" alternative, will be evaluated as part of the study process. If you have questions, need additional information, or would like to be removed from this mailing list, please contact Mike Thron, Project Biologist and NEPA Coordinator, at (901) 544-0708 or john.m.thron@usace.army.mil, or Danny Ward, Project Manager, at (901) 544-0709 or daniel.d.ward@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward P. Lambert".

Edward P. Lambert
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF ARMY
MEMPHIS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

POST SCOPING DOCUMENT

**West Tennessee Tributaries, General Reevaluation Study and
Draft Supplement No. 2 to the Final Environmental Impact Statement**
Meeting held on June 23, 2009, Milan, Tennessee

Scoping Meeting Summary

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Memphis District, conducted a public scoping meeting for the proposed West Tennessee Tributaries General Reevaluation Report and Supplement No. 2 to the Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS 2). The public scoping meeting was held on June 23, 2009, and started at 7:00 p.m., at the Temple Baptist Church, 9105 East Van Hook, Milan, Tennessee. The purpose of the meeting was to identify significant issues and determine the scope of issues that need to be addressed in the proposed study. The public scoping meeting was detailed in the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement which was published in the Federal Register on May 29, 2009. The NOI and scoping meeting information were sent to an organized mailing list built from previous projects in the area, environmental groups, state and Federal agencies, trade publications and news media, Corps sponsors and Federal, state, and local government bodies. The NOI, mailing list, and news release for the public scoping meeting are included in Attachment 1.

Ninety-seven members of the public attended the meeting. Upon filling out a registration form, attendees received a handout summarizing the purpose of the meeting and a card with information of whom to contact regarding the project. All attendees were added to the mailing list. At the meeting, USACE conducted a brief presentation describing the history of the West Tennessee Tributaries Project, potential project features, and the purpose of NEPA and public scoping. The project sponsor, West Tennessee River Basin Authority, conducted a brief presentation summarizing their role in the project and provided specific examples of environmentally sensitive projects they have successfully implemented. The concepts of these projects could be used for the West Tennessee Tributaries Project. Detailed information from the public scoping meeting, including a list of attendees, handouts, contact information, and presentations is included in Attachment 2.

At the conclusion of the presentations, meeting attendees were randomly divided into five small groups in order to voice oral comments to USACE facilitators. The USACE facilitators documented all comments by use of flip charts and markers. All meeting attendees reconvened, and the USACE facilitators summarized each comment to the entire group. The majority of comments related to waterfowl, sediment issues, landowner interests and agriculture. A detailed list of comments is below (* indicates duplicate comments).

Comments related to waterfowl and duck hunting:

There is a preference for the study to look for ways to increase storage of water at lower elevations for waterfowl.*****

The study should assess impacts to waterfowl and hunting.*****

If meander restoration is pursued there is a concern that current duck holes would be drained or negatively impacted.**

There has been a significant decline in the quality of duck hunting due to a loss of desirable tree species.

An individual expressed that he is happy with current flooding regime, since he does not have pumps to get water for duck hunting.

Private and public landowners need the ability to manage waterfowl in the floodplain.

Comments related to sediment issues:

The study should address the issue of sediment influxes from tributaries of the main channels. Some work may be needed in these smaller channels/tributaries.****

It was stated that the Corps should deal more with individual landowners to repair manageable sized erosion problems while they are small. It was stated that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation could partner with Corps to address this issue.**

There is a need for a storm water management plan for urban areas, including sediment control during construction.*

There is a need for channel stabilization and sediment control.

It was stated that there is a need to remove trees and debris within the channel, and a need for large sediment basins.

Blockages currently exist at structures.

Comments related to landowner interests:

There was a concern that the project would negatively impact the appraised value of landowners' properties, primarily due to reduction of duck hunting opportunities.*****

Landowners expressed concerns regarding how site-specific criteria would be developed for determining potential work on private properties.**

There was a question as to how and if negatively impacted landowners would be compensated.

There is a need for the Corps to work with landowners on a voluntary basis.

Comments related to establishing a balanced project:

The study should consider agricultural interests and other landowner interests in the project.***

Any proposed action should be balanced to provide benefits to agricultural lands and wildlife habitat for waterfowl.**

The project should include measures that reduce stress from flooding on both bottomland hardwoods and croplands.

The project should include a balanced project between flood control for agricultural interests, waterfowl interests, and other wildlife interests.

Comments related to wetlands and water quality:

Planning should address impacts on water quality and wetlands.

Concerns were raised regarding the project's impact on streams, wetlands (i.e. whether the project has potential to reduce wetland acreages), and the associated ecosystem.

Some problems in the project area include valley plugs formed by beaver activity, fallen trees, and pollution from humans (e.g. dumping household trash into streams).

There has been a significant decline in water clarity in the Forked Deer River.

There was a request for studies to evaluate wetland environmental function and values and also economic values associated with wetlands.

It was noted that the wetlands and swamplands have economic value.

Comments related to public awareness:

The Corps should have more public meetings.

There was a request to improve the way the public is notified of project activities and meetings.

There was a request that the Corps make their documents available to the public via internet.

Comments related to bottomland hardwoods:

There is a need for bottomland hardwood restoration.

Questions were raised about how long it would take for land to be used for hunting (significant tree growth).

It was observed that there are many flooded timber areas and that they are growing.

Comments related to beaver activity:

There is a need for an aggressive beaver control program.

There were concerns that beavers are moving onto private farmlands from government-owned natural areas containing ponded water.

Miscellaneous comments (some cover multiple topics):

The study should examine use of moist soil complexes, flood detention, sediment retention, and waterfowl benefits.**

Comments were received that the comparison between the Hatchie River vs. Forked Deer River in the local sponsor's presentation was not a valid comparison.**

Will the end result of the project force the Obion and Forked Deer River Basin to have the same flooding regime as the Hatchie River Basin?

Past projects completed by project sponsor should be evaluated over an extended period of time. (Proposals made common sense but need to be re-evaluated over time.)

There is a need to continue to educate timber cutters on best management practices in order to keep trees out of the channel.

There was a concern of whether funding would be available to complete the study and project.

There is a need to compare with- project conditions to existing conditions with respect to flooding.

There is a lack of trust in USACE and the sponsor's motives.

All members of interagency team need to have an equal voice.

There is a concern that particular constituents have had too much influence in past on other projects (i.e. not permitting for green tree reservoirs).

The study should consider public access to project features such as retention reservoirs (for fishing, etc.).

A priority should be placed on mitigation lands that are accessible to the public instead of private access mitigation lands.

The current system of rapidly falling water levels is detrimental to fish.

The study should compare costs/benefits from traditional flood control measures to compensation for losses.

There was interest shown in how the Corps will work with other agencies to have mitigation lands managed per the Court decisions.

There was a concern about any project that would lead to large tracts of land in government ownership.

There was a question of who has/will have ownership of the land associated with the project.

It has been observed that the channels are getting deeper.

There was a question of whether there is intent to finish the project since it was stated that 32% of it was completed.

It was stated that all of the problems are caused by the original channelization project.

There was a concern that the project may not extend far enough upstream (i.e. Weakley and Carroll Counties).

A preference for a natural channel was voiced.

Maintenance of project features should be addressed in the study.

Written Scoping Comments

In addition to the oral comments received at this scoping meeting, USACE also received written comments through 24 July 2009. Written comments are included in Attachment 3.

Future Key Steps in the Study

Additional meetings of an interagency Environmental Team.

Complete land cover, channel surveys, sediment, bottomland hardwood, waterfowl, hydraulics and hydrology, economic, cultural resources, geotechnical, and other technical analyses supporting the DSEIS 2 and General Reevaluation Report and make available to public.

Completion and distribution of DSEIS 2 and draft General Reevaluation Report.

Public meeting and review of draft DSEIS 2 and draft General Reevaluation Report.

Completion and distribution of final Supplement No. 2 to the Environmental Impact Statement and final General Reevaluation Report.

For Additional Information and How to Contact Us

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