



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

ISSUE DATE: 04 March 2021
EXPIRATION DATE: 04 April 2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT 404(b)(1)

REPLY TO:

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Environmental Compliance Branch
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
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TITLE: St. Francis River Basin – Big Slough Scour Repairs

AUTHORITY: The proposed action is authorized as part of the Flood Control Act of 15 May 1928 as amended. These Acts provided for the construction, enlargement, and strengthening of the levees of the St. Francis Basin Project to safely pass the floodwaters of the St. Francis River and its tributaries. The purpose of this project is to reduce flood risk, flood damages, and flood protection costs resulting from flood events on Big Slough Ditch.

LOCATION: The proposed scour repair measures include five designated scour sites over a 12-mile reach along Big Slough Ditch, which is part of the St. Francis River system. The proposed action is in the vicinity of levee baseline station 1040+00 – 440+00, located near the town of Rector in Clay County, Arkansas (Figure 1).

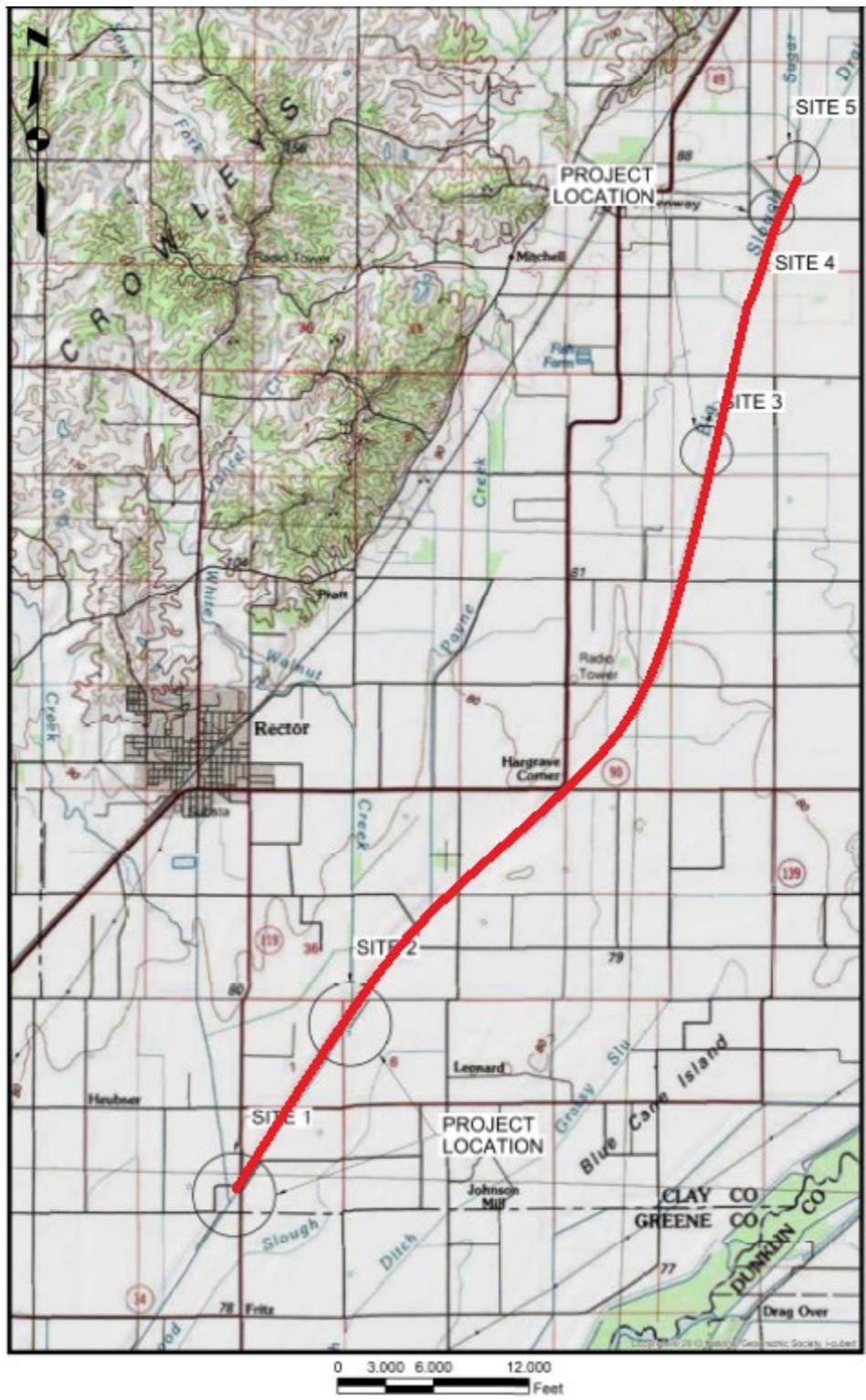


Figure 1. Location of Proposed Scour Repairs, Clay County, AR.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Big Slough Ditch construction was covered under the 1973 Environmental Impact Statement, and this 404 (b)(1) evaluation is being conducted because the fill quantities to be used for this maintenance activity (scour repairs) are not appropriate for a permit under the Nationwide permit program.

PURPOSE: The proposed work calls for the repair of five scour sites that have developed along a 12-mile reach of Big Slough Ditch. Due to large flows and high velocities, typical after rain events, head cutting has given rise to major scour problems along the banks of the channel that could affect the adjacent levee integrity. Without installation of scour control measures, the integrity of Big Slough Ditch would be compromised resulting in increased potential for flood risk, flood damages, and flood protection costs resulting from flooding events in the St. Francis River system.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK: Each scour site would be restored to original design grade slopes and bottom widths. R-200 riprap and bedding material would be used to armor the slopes and in some cases the channel width. Starting at the southernmost site, Site 1, where State Highway (HWY) 139 crosses Big Slough, there is a power line pole that is at risk of being compromised due to bank erosion on the upstream side of HWY 139 Bridge. Sites 2 – 5 are experiencing bank scour where the inflow of a tributary is causing erosion on the opposite bank due to high velocities. Each of the five scour sites has been individually assessed and would be repaired based on those needs. Scour lengths, estimated riprap quantities, and excavation amounts are listed in Table 1. Slopes ranging from 2H:1V to 3H:1V would be created by the R-200 riprap. The bottom width of the channel would be excavated and restored to original design specs, which ranges from 25' to 55' (Figure 2). The excavated materials would be stored on site within the right-of-way. The spoil piles would be 10 feet offset from the top of the channel, and the slopes of the spoil pile would be no steeper than 2H:1V. No wetlands would be filled or otherwise affected. Minimal vegetation would be cleared on the banks. Access to the project areas would be from county roads, farms roads, and HWY 139. It is anticipated that no utilities would be disturbed as part of the proposed work.

Table 1. Proposed R-200 and bedding material quantities and scour lengths.

Scour Site	~ Length of Repair (Ft)	R-200 Quantity Estimated (Tons)	Bedding Material (Tons)	Silt Fence (ft)	~ Repair Section Excavation (cubic yard)
1	1,701	7,933	2,692	1,285	7,515
2	2,206	9,567	2,746	1,395	7,673
3	1,998	6,583	2,032	970	6,078
4	1,799	3,763	980	565	3,191
5	1,399	3,650	1,468	525	1,667

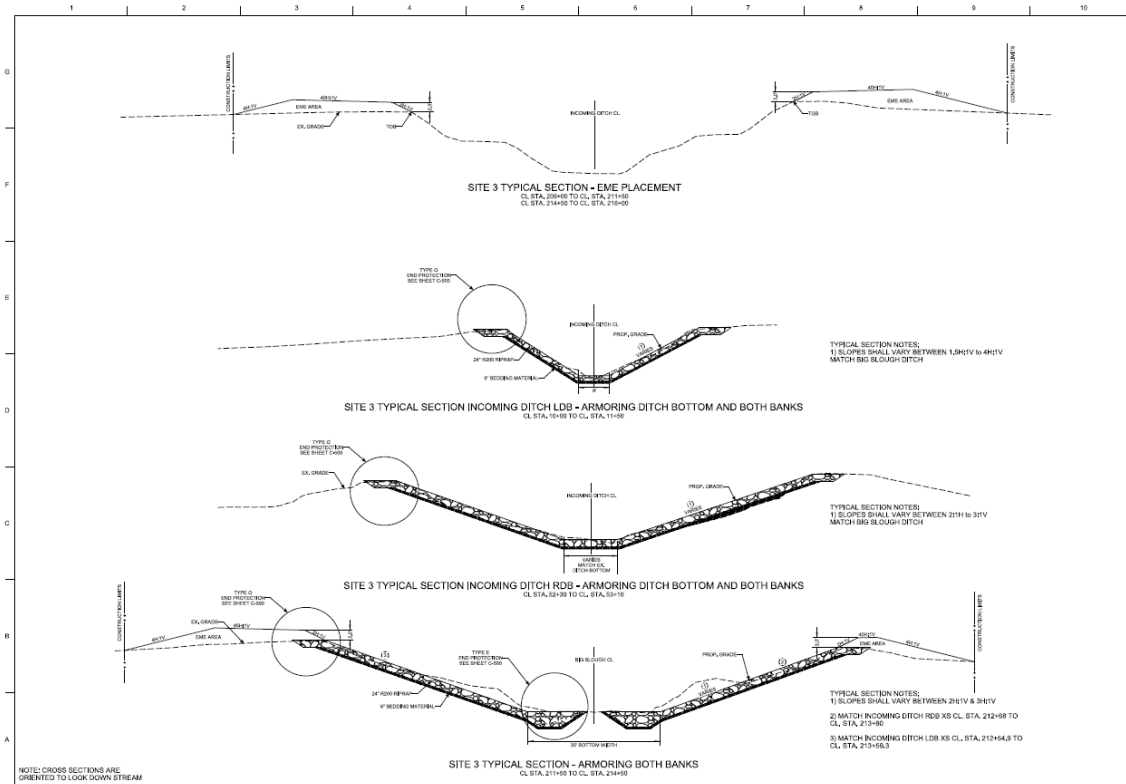


Figure 2. Typical proposed repair section.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: The project is being coordinated with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality. The impact to water qualities of Big Slough Ditch and the St. Francis River would be minimal or have no effect, as both normally carry heavy sediment loads.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The threatened Eastern Black Rail, Piping Plover, and Red Knot would potentially utilize the vegetative areas within the project areas. Site habitat assessments of the proposed project areas occurred during the fall of 2019. As the areas surrounding the project vicinity are heavily farmed, results of the site assessment concluded that no evidence of suitable habitat was present within the project location. Additionally, no evidence of bald eagles, or their nests, was observed at any project location. No federally threatened or endangered aquatic organisms, including freshwater mussels have been collected or observed in the Big Slough Ditch project vicinity. Therefore, USACE has determined that the proposed project would have no effect on any threatened or endangered species or their critical habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with a may affect, but not likely to adversely affect determination regarding federally listed threatened or endangered species on February 25, 2021.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: A cultural resources survey was conducted in the project area, and no sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places were found. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on cultural resources applicable under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. Additional coordination would 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 404 (b)(1) evaluation is being conducted because the quantities to be used are not appropriate for permits under the Nationwide permit program. This notice is being circulated to federal, Native American tribes, state and local agencies and to the public.

The draft 404(b)(1) 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 for Memphis District Civil Works Projects at:

<http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/About/Offices/Regulatory/Public-Notices/>

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 Jennifer Hiltonsmith at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Compliance Branch (RPEDS-PDC-UDC), 167 North Main Street RM B-202, Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1894, telephone 901-579-7473. **Comments should be forwarded to this office by 04 April 2021.**

Sincerely,



Edward P. Lambert
Chief, Environmental Compliance Branch
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South