



Hatchie/Loosahatchie, Mississippi River Mile 775-736, TN and AR Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment



Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

February 2024

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

HATCHIE/LOOSAHATCHIE MISSISSIPPI RIVER MILE 775-736, TN AND AR INTEGRATED FEASIBILITY REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

MISSISSIPPI AND CRITTENDEN COUNTIES, ARKANSAS AND TIPTON AND SHELBY COUNTIES TENNESSEE

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Memphis District (CEMVM) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the NEPA of 1969, as amended. The FIFR and FEA dated TBD, for the Hatchie/Loosahatchie Mississippi River Mile 775-736 Feasibility Study addresses ecosystem restoration opportunities and feasibility in Mississippi and Crittenden Counties, Arkansas and Tipton and Shelby Counties, Tennessee. The final recommendation is contained in the report of the Chief of Engineers, dated TBD.

The FIFR-FEA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives that would achieve ecosystem restoration benefits in the study area. Alternative C3, the RP, is the NER and includes:

- 38 restoration measures summarized in the following categories that will benefit a total of 7,012 acres and provide 4,673 AAHUs to eight unique habitats including: BLH forest, cypress-tupelo forest, meander scarps, moist soil management areas, riverfront forest communities, seasonally herbaceous wetlands, secondary channels, and sloughs.
- four measures to increase connectivity within secondary channels through dike notching of stone and pile dikes.
- two measures to increase connectivity within meander scarps by lowering invert elevations of obstructions and increasing flow.
- five measures increasing habitat complexity in secondary channels through large woody debris traps.
- three measures to restore flow to backwater sloughs and wetland complexes by lowering invert elevations of obstructions.
- two measures to protect the bank of secondary channels with riprap hardpoints.
- 13 reforestation measures restoring the BLH community, cypress/tupelo community, and riparian buffers along the Mississippi River.
- six forest stand improvement measures to restore BLH and cypress/tupelo communities.
- two measures to restore wetland complexes and seasonal herbaceous wetlands.
- one measure to promote moist soil management areas.
- two recreational measures consisting of trail access improvements at Meeman Shelby Forest State Park and interpretive media in Wolf River Harbor to benefit public access and education.

In addition to a “no action” plan, nine alternatives were evaluated. The alternatives included a No Action Alternative and nine different combinations of locations and restoration

techniques. Section 2 describes the alternative formulation process, and Section 4 describes the alternative comparison and selection process.

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate, and are covered in Section 3. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the RP are listed in Table 1.

Table FONSI-1. Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

	Less than significant effects	Less than significant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Land Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wildlife	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquatic Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive Species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greenhouse Gases	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic properties*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal trust resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, Toxic & Radioactive Waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mississippi River & Tributaries Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socioeconomics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*USACE will follow the process described in the programmatic agreement (PA) to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).			

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the RP. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed in the IFR/EA will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts. These BMPs are detailed in Section 3 of the FIFR/FEA and include:

- The use of existing roads and location of staging areas in previously disturbed areas to the extent practical.
- Implementation of BMPs for nonpoint pollution at construction sites. A stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) would be prepared in compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and associated State regulations with each construction contract. The SWPPP would outline temporary erosion control measures such as silt fences, retention ponds, and dikes. The construction contract would include permanent erosion control measures, such as turfing and placement of riprap and filter material.
- Any measures that pose a safety concern to navigation would be added to the navigation charts.

Mitigation for resources covered by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as amended, includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- USACE will follow the process described in the Programmatic Agreement (PA) to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. Prior to initiating construction activities, USACE will complete efforts to identify archaeological sites eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within the direct area of potential effect (APE) for the project and will provide PA signatories, invited signatories, and consulting parties' opportunity to review and comment on the findings. If archaeological sites meeting the criteria for listing on the NRHP are identified, USACE will coordinate with the PA signatories, invited signatories, and consulting parties to determine practical avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures needed to be completed prior to construction to ensure compliance with the NHPA.

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the RP.

Public review of the draft IFR/EA and FONSI was completed on 13 March 2023. All comments submitted during the public review period were responded to in the FIFR-FEA and FONSI. A 30-day State and agency review of the FIFR-FEA was completed on TBD.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, the USACE determined that the RP may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect (NLAA), the following federally listed species or their designated critical habitat: Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, eastern black rail, piping plover, red knot, pallid sturgeon, fat pocketbook mussel, and pondberry. In addition, the USACE reached a “may affect but not likely to adversely affect” determination for the proposed endangered tri-colored bat, proposed threatened alligator snapping turtle, and candidate monarch butterfly. There is no designated critical habitat in the project locations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with USACE’s determinations on 22 February 2023.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended, the USACE determined that historic properties may be adversely affected by the RP. USACE and the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer, the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Tennessee Division of Archaeology entered into a PA dated 1 December 2023. All terms and conditions resulting from the agreement shall be implemented to minimize adverse impacts to historic properties.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the RP has been found to be compliant with section 404(b)(1) guidelines (40 CFR 230). The CWA section 404(b)(1) guidelines evaluation is found in Appendix A2 of the FIFR-FEA.

A water quality certification pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA will be obtained from the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation prior to construction. In letters dated 13 February 2024 and 21 April 2023, respectively, the States of Arkansas and Tennessee stated that the RP appears to meet the requirements of the water quality certification, pending confirmation based on information to be developed during the PED phase. All conditions of the water quality certification will be implemented to minimize adverse impacts to water quality.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials has been completed.

Technical, environmental, and cost effectiveness criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council’s 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other Federal, State, and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the RP would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

