

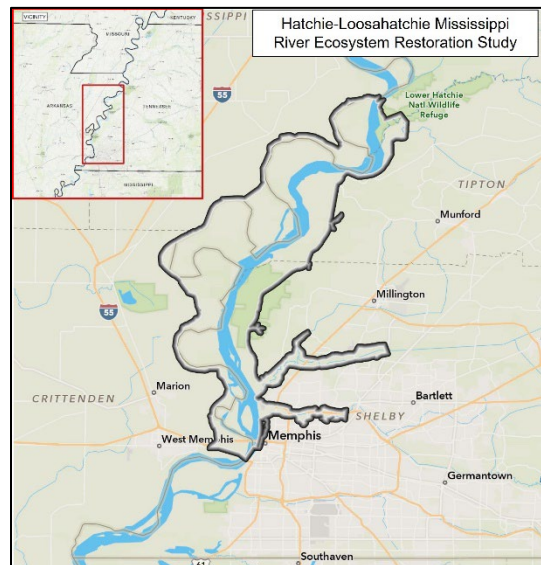
Public Notice NHPA/NEPA¹
Notice of Availability of Draft Programmatic Agreement Regarding Hatchie-Loosahatchie Mississippi River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Memphis District (CEMVM), has prepared a draft Programmatic Agreement (PA) for the Hatchie-Loosahatchie Mississippi River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended (54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.), and Section 110 of the NHPA, that require Federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties during the planning process and consult with stakeholders regarding these effects.

The proposed project area is a 39-mile reach of the Mississippi River and the surrounding bature beginning at the mouth of the Hatchie River, near River Mile 775, and extending south to the mouth of the Wolf River Harbor, near River Mile 736. The reach includes crossings, pools, side channels, bendways, gravel bars, sandbars, and overbank areas between west levee and east bluff (2-9 miles). In addition, there are three tributaries/river mouths in the reach (i.e., Hatchie, Loosahatchie, and Wolf Rivers). Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, Eagle Lake State Refuge, Fort Pillow State Park, and the Lower Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge border this reach. This approximate 3-year study will examine restoring ecological structure and function along the Mississippi River within this 39-mile reach including side channels and other aquatic habitat; floodplain forests; and several scarce vegetative communities – wetlands, canebrakes, riverfront forests and bottomland hardwood forests (BLH).

CEMVM is investigating the best comprehensive solutions that meet the study objective: examine restoration of the structure and ecological function within this reach of the Mississippi River including side channels; floodplain habitat quality enhancement; vegetative mosaic including several scarce vegetative habitats – wetlands, canebrakes, and riverfront forests and BLH in Crittenden and Mississippi Counties, Arkansas and Arkansas, Tipton, and Shelby Counties, Tennessee. The USACE will evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives for the proposed action.

CEMVM has determined that the proposed action constitutes an Undertaking as defined in 36 CFR § 800.16(y) and has the potential to cause effects on historic properties. Accordingly, CEMVM proposes to develop a project-specific PA pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.14(b)(3) to provide a framework for addressing this complex Undertaking and establish protocols for continuing consultation with the Arkansas and Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officers (ARSHPO, TNSHPO), Tribal Governments, and other stakeholders. The PA identifies consulting parties, defines applicability, establish review timeframes, stipulate roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, summarizes Tribal consultation procedures, considers the views of the SHPO/ Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and other consulting parties, affords for public participation, develops programmatic allowances to exempt certain actions from Section 106 review, provides the measures CEMVM will implement to develop an Area of Potential Effects (APE) in consultation with external stakeholders, outlines a standard review process for plans and specifications as they are developed, determines an appropriate level of field investigation to identify and evaluate historic properties and/or sites of religious and cultural significance within the APE, streamlines the assessment and resolution of Adverse Effects through avoidance, minimization, and programmatic treatment approaches for mitigation, establishes reporting frequency and schedule, provides provisions for post-review unexpected discoveries and unmarked burials, and incorporates the procedures for amendments, duration, termination, dispute resolution, and implementation. A draft copy of the PA is available for review.



The draft PA is available at the project website: <https://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental-Stewardship/Hatchie-Loosahatchie-Mississippi-River-Ecosystem-Restoration-Study/>. CEMVM is requesting your input by September 7, 2023 concerning the draft PA and/or of relevant parties who may have an interest in participating in this consultation. Comments can be sent electronically to: LMRRA-Hatchie-Loosahatchie@usace.army.mil or, mail comments to: ATTN: CEMVN-PDC-UDC, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 167 North Main St., RM B-202, Memphis, TN 38103-1894.

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¹CEMVM is issuing this public notice as part of its responsibilities under the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations, 36 CFR Part 800, implementing Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. § 306108). CEMVM is also required to fulfill the Council of Environmental Quality regulations (NEPA regulations, 43 FR 55978 (1978)) that provide policy and procedures to enable CEMVM officials to be informed and to take into account environmental considerations when authorizing or approving CEMVM actions that may significantly affect the environment of the United States. It is the intent of NEPA that federal agencies encourage and facilitate public involvement to the extent practicable in decisions that may affect the quality of the environment.