US Army Corps of Engineers ®
Memphis District

ISSUE DATE: 21 Jan 2016

PUBLIC NOTICE

EXPIRATION DATE: 22 Feb 2016

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Memphis Metropolitan Area Stormwater
Cypress Creek
Ecosystem Restoration
Feasibility Study
With Integrated Environmental Assessment

REPLY TO:
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Planning Division
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
167 North Main Street, Room B-202
Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1894
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TITLE: Memphis Metropolitan Area Stormwater: Cypress Creek Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study With Integrated Environmental Assessment.

http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/MemphisMetro.aspx

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, is issuing this notice of the availability of the draft Cypress Creek Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study With Integrated Environmental Assessment. The report describes a Tentatively Selected Plan and alternatives to that plan. No decisions have been made at this time, and public input will be considered prior to any final decision. Locations for structures and access routes are somewhat flexible. They will be discussed with land owners during the development of detailed construction plans to determine the most efficient locations and willing land owners.

AUTHORITY: Memphis Metropolitan Area Stormwater: Cypress Creek was authorized in a resolution adopted on March 7, 1996 by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

LOCATION: Cypress Creek is a tributary to the Loosahatchie River located near Oakland in Fayette County, TN. Over 100 miles of streams and ditches drain a 40,000 acre watershed. Land use in most of the watershed is pastureland with some row crop agriculture, but there is some residential and commercial development around the Highway 64 corridor. The study area lies wholly within the Ninth Tennessee Congressional District.

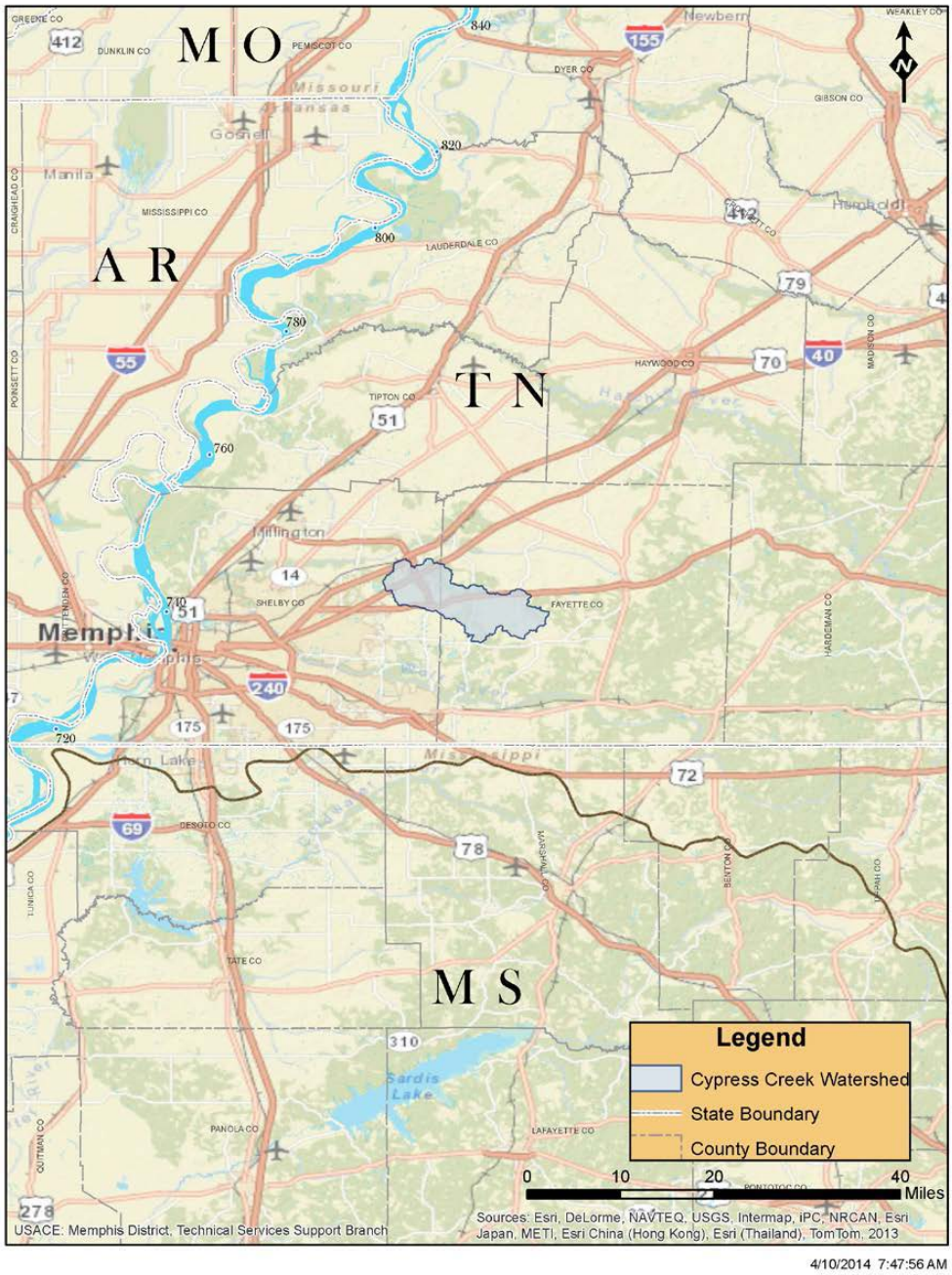

Figure 1. Map showing location of Cypress Creek Watershed

PURPOSE: Cypress Creek and its tributaries have been channelized along with most streams and rivers in West Tennessee, causing significant changes in the ecosystem. Historically, project area streams were slow moving, meandering channels with dynamic habitat complexes, stable stream beds, and stable vegetated banks that provided fish and wildlife habitat. Channelization of natural waterways generally causes impacts such as increasing the stream gradient, erosion and bank instability along with lowering of the channel. All of these effects may cause significant changes to the ecology of the stream. Currently, Cypress Creek has long straight stretches of channel with heavy flows during precipitation, little or no surface flow in dry periods, and limited floodplain to mitigate flood events. Severe erosion is causing sloughing of streambanks, lowering of the creek bed, problems with culverts that pass under roads, and sand and sediment deposition. Floodplain and bottomland hardwood forest habitat, which are important for birds and mammals have also declined due to bank instability, erosion and bank sloughing. Wildlife habitat in Cypress Creek is poor and fish movement is limited. Collapsed road crossings have interrupted traffic flow in the area and required emergency repairs.

Executive Summary

This study examined aquatic ecosystem problems and opportunities in the Cypress Creek Watershed. Cypress Creek is a tributary of the Loosahatchie River which flows into the Mississippi River at Memphis, TN. Cypress Creek was channelized in the 1920's like most of the streams in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. The habitat in Cypress Creek is degraded and continues to get worse. This study recommends placing 20 grade control weirs in Cypress Creek and its tributaries to restore aquatic habitat, stabilize the bed and banks, protect remaining riparian forests and allow some areas to revegetate, reestablish more natural hydrologic conditions, and provide some ancillary benefits to adjacent infrastructure. The Tentatively Selected Plan would cost approximately $14 million and would restore 90 acres of aquatic habitat. Each weir would be approximately 200 feet wide and 200 feet long and would lie within the channel itself. Access would require temporary real estate easements and would be negotiated with landowners as detailed designs are developed.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW: The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments and information to improve this report, and inform decision-makers regarding public opinions and local issues.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to improve the quality of this report and to determine the overall public interest in the assessment.

The Feasibility Study with all appendices (218 pages, 16MB) is available at:

http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Portals/51/docs/missions/projects/Memphis%20Metro/Cypress%20Feasibility%20Public%20Review%20Draft%20complete.pdf

The Feasibility Study without appendices (48 pages. 4MB) is available at the following link:

http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Portals/51/docs/missions/projects/Memphis%20Metro/Cypress%20Feasibility%20Public%20Review%20Draft%20without%20appendices.pdf

NEXT STEPS: Following public review, USACE will consider all comments received and the agency will select a plan. Detailed engineering designs and costs will be developed for that plan and it would be further evaluated at USACE Headquarters, Office of Management and Budget and by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. If approved, it would be presented to Congress, in Summer 2017, seeking authorization to construct the project. If Congress authorizes construction of the project, the Memphis District will request appropriations within the normal budgeting process

COMMENTS OR REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: If you wish to obtain additional information or submit comments on this proposal, contact Marsha Raus (901/544-3455 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Planning Branch, 167 North Main Street, Room B-202, Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1894. **Comments should be forwarded to this office by 22 February 2016.**

Sincerely,

Edward P. Lambert

Edward P. Lambert
Chief, Environmental Compliance Branch
Memphis District Planning Liaison