

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
BAYOU METO BASIN, ARKANSAS
POST GENERAL REEVALUATION DESIGN CHANGES
PHASE 3.1 CANAL**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, proposes to modify the project as presented in the general reevaluation report (GRR) and final environmental impact statement (EIS) that were circulated for public review in December 2006. Detailed design of the Bayou Meto Basin project was initiated following completion of the GRR and as funds were made available. As the detailed project design phase has progressed, additional modifications were proposed to the project. The modifications included modification of the Dry Bayou channel, and acquisition of a small amount of additional temporary construction Right-of-Way to construct a siphon and culvert. The modification of the Dry Bayou channel would result in 3.5 acres of bottomland hardwood forest (BLH) impacts, while 0.1 acres of wetlands vegetation would result from the temporary additional right-of-way for the construction of a culvert under Scott Road. A total of 4.7 acres of bottomland hardwood restoration on prior converted farmland would mitigate for the impacts that would result from the implementation of these project modifications. This mitigation would be subtracted from the surplus acres currently available at the Holland Bottoms mitigation tract, adjacent to the Holland Bottoms Wildlife Management Area.

A 404(b)(1) evaluation was completed during the general reevaluation and presented in the EIS. The project design modifications will not result in any changes in the amount of fill material placed in wetlands.

Water quality was addressed in detail in the final EIS and GRR for the Bayou Meto Basin, Arkansas project and was re-coordinated with ADEQ in May 2017. None of the modifications proposed in this environmental assessment would negatively impact water quality in either the Arkansas River or the Bayou Meto Basin. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality has confirmed that the Section 401 certification for the Bayou Meto Basin, Arkansas, project is still valid.

All current rights-of-way have been surveyed for cultural resources, including the Dry Bayou and temporary construction easement locations; and no evidence of archeological materials within the proposed footprint of any modification was discovered. Any cultural resources revealed during project construction would be coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer, and appropriate measures would be taken to avoid if possible or test for significance if unavoidable. Data recovery would be undertaken on any unavoidable, significant sites. Project modifications would be constructed in full compliance with all cultural resources laws and the 2009 signed Programmatic Agreement.

No impacts would occur to threatened or endangered species as a result of project modifications. All project design changes have been coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

After review of the Bayou Meto GRR and EIS, the Environmental Assessment and supporting documentation, I have determined the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, I have determined that an environmental impact statement is not required.

Date

Michael A. Ellicott
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander