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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**BENDWAY WEIR CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2 – MISSISSIPPI RIVER AT BARFIELD
(RIVER MILE 812R AHP)
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, intends to install three bendway weirs along the right descending bank of the Mississippi River near Barfield at River Mile 812R above head of passes (AHP) in Mississippi County, Arkansas. An environmental assessment was completed in 2017 for five bendway weirs along this reach immediately downstream; however, USACE determined during further analysis that three additional weirs (Phase 2 construction) are needed to obtain the desired channel alignment. Point bar accretion across from this outside bend is narrowing the navigation channel and directing swift currents along the riverbank. The swift currents and high water velocities pull towboats toward the banks making it extremely difficult and hazardous for the towboats to safely navigate the river bend from either direction.

The proposed work includes placement of approximately 90,800 tons of Graded Stone A in three bendway weirs. Crown widths of the bendway weirs will be approximately 6 feet, and the weirs will extend riverward from the right descending bank for a distance of approximately 600-700 feet. A 3-ft. thickness of rock paving consisting of Graded Stone C will extend approximately 100 feet upstream and 300 feet downstream of each weir where they tie into the bank for stability totaling approximately 37,200 tons. The tops of all weirs would be constructed to an elevation of 30 feet below the Low Water Reference Plane (i.e. -30 LWRP). The LWRP is a computed water surface elevation profile based on low discharge statistics for a long period of daily gage records (i.e. the 97 percent exceedance discharge over a 20-year period of record). There would be at least 30 feet or more of water over the tops of the weirs even at low river stages to ensure safe navigation.

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to determine the potential impacts of the proposed work on wildlife; wetlands; threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socio-economic resources; environmental justice; air quality; water quality and hydrology; aquatic resources and fisheries; navigation; hazardous, toxic, and radioactive waste (HTRW); cumulative impacts; and the human environment.

The proposed project is part of the Channel Improvement Program for the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. The potential for adverse effects on the federally endangered interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*), pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), and fat pocketbook mussel (*Potamilus capax*) resulting from this program, including bendway weir construction, are addressed in the 2013 formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not believe that the proposed work would result in jeopardy to federally listed species. A bald eagle nest is located approximately 630 feet downstream of Weir #3U. Construction activities in the vicinity of the nest are planned to occur in late summer after bald eagle young have fledged minimizing the potential for any adverse impacts. No construction activities would occur within 660 feet of the bald eagle nest during the nesting season, extending from 15 December to 30 June, without a disturbance permit in accordance with the National Bald

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Eagle Management Guidelines. Investigations into HTRW activities near the project area revealed that no known HTRW sites would be impacted by the proposed project. Pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, a joint public notice and Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation were completed, and Section 401 water quality certification was requested from the State of Arkansas. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), the District Archaeologist has determined that this project has no potential to cause effects to historic properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Thus, no further Section 106 (National Historic Preservation Act) consultation is required. However, if prehistoric or historic artifacts, human bones, or other archaeological materials subject to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) are found during construction, all activities would cease immediately in that area and the Memphis District Archaeologist would be contacted. State Historic Preservation Office and tribal NAGPRA representatives, the local sheriff, etc., would be contacted as required by state and federal law.

A joint public notice, Draft Environmental Assessment, and Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation describing the proposed actions were posted on the Memphis District's website (<http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/About/Offices/Regulatory/PublicNotices.aspx>) and distributed to a wide list of interested parties including appropriate state and federal agencies.

After review of the documentation, I have determined this project is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment nor does it indicate significant new circumstances or information relative to environmental concerns or bearing on the proposed action or its impacts. Therefore, I have determined that an environmental impact statement is not required.

Date

Michael A. Ellicott
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander