



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For Immediate Release:
May 3, 2011
News Release No. 11-26

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Corps of Engineers approves wetlands permit for Savannah airport expansion

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA – Officials from the [Savannah Airport Commission](#), Environmental Services, and Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation joined Col. Jeffrey Hall, commander of the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District](#), for a signing ceremony today marking the Corps' approval of a permit application for an 890-acre expansion project at the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport.

Because the [proposed airport expansion project](#) would impact wetlands, it required an evaluation from the Corps of Engineers' Regulatory Division. This office processes permit applications for any construction project that affects waters of the U.S. within the state of Georgia, in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

"Our regulatory program is multi-faceted; we considered all aspects of a proposed development, including environmental and economic factors," Hall said. "After careful coordination with our state and federal partners, our team put forth a tremendous effort to expedite the permitting process for the Savannah airport project, while developing a fair and balanced mitigation plan to avoid, minimize and compensate for any impacts made to our nation's waters."

The Corps' Section 404 program ensures the nation's waters are protected from discharges of dredged or fill material that could permanently alter or destroy these valuable resources.

"The permit not only allows for the airport to complete its projects for North Aviation Development, but it also allows Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation to begin construction on its announced \$500 million dollar expansion project that will add more than 1,000 jobs to the Savannah economy," said Airport Director Patrick Graham. "The airport wishes to acknowledge the outstanding service provided by Col. Jeffrey Hall and his staff of the Savannah District Corps of Engineers, along with the Atlanta district office of the Federal Aviation Administration."

The airport expansion project involves the relocation of Gulf Stream Road, construction of a tunnel under Taxiway A, extension of Taxiway A, and construction of Taxiway H to the 175-acre Gulfstream development site. The project also includes corporate development and hangar sites, aviation manufacturing facilities, and the construction of a new complex for the Chatham Emergency Management Agency.

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Regulatory specialists from the Corps of Engineers met with the Savannah Airport Commission and their consultant, Environmental Services, in March 2010 to provide preliminary guidance on initial site development plans. Interagency coordination involved the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

The airport project's authorized wetland impacts total 42 acres and will be compensated through the purchase of 277 wetland credits from several approved mitigation banks – essentially, sites where aquatic resources are restored, established, enhanced or preserved to offset impacts and comply with the Corps' "no net loss of wetlands" policy. The wetland credits will be purchased from approved commercial mitigation banks that service the lower Savannah River watershed.

Any person, firm, or agency (including federal, state, and local government agencies) planning to work in navigable waters of the United States, or discharge material in waters of the U.S., including wetlands, must first obtain a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Similar authorization may also be required by other Federal, state and local statutes. For more information on the Regulatory program, visit www.sas.usace.army.mil/regulatory

-30-

Note to TV broadcast media: Download a video of Signing Ceremony in Quicktime Movie format at <ftp://ftp.usace.army.mil/pub/sas/> under the folder SSHI PERMITS. Video will be available for download until May 10, 2011.

SHOT SHEET

Soundbite	:36	COL Jeff Hall / Commander ,US Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District
Soundbite	:24	Patrick Graham / Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport Director
B-roll	:46	Signing ceremony including members of Corps of Engineers, SSHI Airport, Gulfstream Aerospace

Direct questions regarding video to Sandra Hudson, 912-652.5760, sandra.d.hudson@usace.army.mil.



PHOTO CAPTION: Col. Jeffrey Hall, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District, and Patrick Graham, Savannah Airport Director, sign a wetlands permit for an 890-acre airport expansion project. Also pictured is Sylvester Formey, chairman of the Savannah Airport Commission (far left) and Katie Freas, Corps regulatory specialist (far right).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' [Savannah District](#) manages [three lakes and hydroelectric dams](#) along the Savannah River. It also oversees a multi-billion dollar [military construction](#) program at 12 Army and Air Force installations in Georgia and North Carolina. Corps' projects range from barracks, hospitals and clinics to equipment shops, headquarters buildings and aircraft hangars. The Savannah District also has oversight and maintains additional civil works projects – from the Savannah and Brunswick harbors to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Additionally, the Savannah District's Regulatory program oversees all permitting actions on U.S. waters within the state of Georgia in accordance with the Clean Water Act.