

APPENDIX H

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SAVANNAH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
100 W. OGLETHORPE AVENUE
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3604

August 17, 2016

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District,
and the
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability of a Draft Feasibility Report, Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Augusta Rocky Creek Flood Risk Management Section 205 Study.

Notice of the following is hereby given:

a. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344), notice is hereby given that the US Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District proposes to implement modifications to Rosedale Dam designed to reduce flood damages within the Rocky Creek Basin.

b. The Savannah District announces the availability to the public of a Draft Feasibility Report, Draft EA, and Draft FONSI concerning the proposed action. Copies of these documents can be obtained from the following website:

<http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/About/Divisions-and-Offices/Planning-Division/Plans-and-Reports/> or by emailing the following address: CESAS-PD@usace.army.mil.

c. Written statements regarding the Draft EA and FONSI for the proposed action will be received at the Savannah District Office until

12 O'CLOCK NOON, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016

from those interested in the activity and whose interests may be affected by the proposed action.

DESCRIPTION OF FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STUDY:

Augusta-Richmond County asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District for assistance in reducing the risks of flooding along Rocky Creek. In the past, severe thunderstorms have caused property damage and reduced public safety. Augusta-Richmond County has implemented several measures through the years that reduced the vulnerability of its residents to floods, but flood risks still remain. Under the Section 205 Continuing Authority Program, the Savannah District conducted this study to identify the best course of action to reduce flood risks.

The District and Augusta-Richmond County considered numerous ways to reduce flood risks to the residential, public, commercial, and industrial properties along Rocky Creek and reduce the potential for loss of life. The team considered the following five alternatives in detail:

1. No Action
2. Rosedale Dam Detention Area Alone
3. Kissingbower Buyouts Alone
4. Kissingbower Buyouts with Park
5. Rosedale Dam Detention Area and Kissingbower Buyouts with Recreation Park

The District then compared the alternatives to determine the most economically efficient way of reducing flood risks. The conclusion of this analysis recommends Plan 5, which consists of constructing a detention area at Rosedale Dam, acquiring 5 residential parcels in the Kissingbower Road area, and converting those parcels into a recreational park. This plan is the most economically efficient way to reduce flood risks and improve the area's resiliency and sustainability for future flood events, while complying with environmental laws and regulations. This plan builds on the previous actions of Augusta-Richmond County and substantially reduces flood risks to residents along Rocky Creek.

DESCRIPTION OF TENTATIVELY SELECTED PLAN (TSP):

1) Rosedale Dam Detention Area: The proposed renovations include placing a 5 by 6-foot (150-foot long) concrete box culvert through the breached dam in the creek bed for normal creek flow. The breach would then be filled to elevation 232.0 feet NAVD 88 to form a notch for all flows up to the 25-year flood event. At flows larger than the 25-year event, the overflow weir will be engaged and pass water in addition to the culvert flow. The dam structure will still provide a reduction in peak flows and water surface elevations downstream at flows greater than the 25-year event. However, the incremental water surface elevation reduction will decrease as flow increases.

The entire dam structure would require clearing, grubbing, and reconstruction. The reconstruction would require removal of 40,000 cubic yards (approximately 20,000 cubic yards may be suitable for reuse in the re-built dam). Earthwork operations will require

the use of an off-site borrow source for the newly constructed dam and an off-site disposal area for soils at the existing dam not suitable for re-use in the new dam. The construction contractor will be responsible for ensuring the borrow material comes from a source that is free of cultural resources, wetlands, and hazardous materials.

The box culvert would be sunk one foot below grade [per 2005 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report (FWCAR)] to allow development of a natural stream channel through the culvert and facilitate passage of wildlife. Approximately 55 cubic yards of fill in waters of the U.S. would be required to repair the Rosedale Dam culvert. Another benefit of the sunken box culvert would result from avoiding the potential for scouring of the channel bottom along the edge of the culvert, which would create a barrier to wildlife passage through the culvert. This barrier would create hazards by forcing wildlife to go around the culvert instead of utilizing the safety of the creek for movement/migration through this area. In addition to improving the conditions for wildlife passage along the canal greenway, this culvert modification would provide a more suitable substrate for wildlife that may inhabit or pass through the culvert.

The box culvert has been designed to approximate the existing channel width, to allow normal low flow and sediment load to pass unimpeded. This design would allow the upstream detention area to remain dry under normal weather conditions, with only normal creek flows passing through. The culvert is designed to maintain bank full width and allowing proper shear stress for proper sediment load transport. In the Design/Implementation (D/I) Phase, the size of the culvert may be modified, as needed to achieve these goals.

The detention area created by the re-built dam would not involve any excavation or fill and is designed to utilize the natural existing flood storage capacity of the existing flood plain/wetland areas for floodwater detention. The detention area as designed is expected to hold water 3-4 hours during an average summer rain event; approximately 12 hours during typical flood events; and approximately 21 hours (no more than 36 hours) during the 25-year flood event. The detention of water for longer periods in the detention area may create or enhance some wetland functions and values, including the filtering of excessive nutrients and other pollutants from runoff, decreasing sedimentation/erosion, and enhancing wetland vegetation.

Due to the recommendation of the USFWS, the rock cross vane in the original 2005 design (per 2005 FWCAR design suggestion) was excluded in this design. Water Quality (WQ) Certification was obtained from Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) on August 31, 2005 (Appendix C of Draft EA) for the Rosedale Dam Detention Area, along with the additional features proposed in the 2005 EA. Since the current proposed action is contained in the 2005 proposed action, USACE is requesting the GA EPD update or reissue the WQ certification.

Rock revetments would be used at the face and outlet of the dam structure (along with the establishment of grass cover) to reduce potential erosion and scouring at the

structure; with a subsequent reduction in sedimentation and turbidity further downstream. Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of the area would include removal of sedimentation before accumulation is excessive enough to impact existing vegetation. The accumulation of sediment is expected to be small; and therefore, the potential for adverse impacts to existing vegetation is expected to be less than the baseline condition. This project is not expected to result in increased sediment loads for the creek. Furthermore, the detention area is expected to decrease the amount of sediment discharged further downstream during flood events by slowing down the floodwaters and detaining some of the sediments.

2) Non-Structural Improvements: Section 73 of the 1974 Water Resources Development Act (P.L. 93-251) requires consideration of non-structural alternatives in flood damage risk reduction studies. They can be considered independently or in combination with structural measures. Non-structural measures reduce flood damages without significantly altering the nature or extent of flooding. These measures accomplish this by changing the use made of the flood plains or by accommodating existing uses to the flood hazard.

The non-structural measure in the TSP that is described below consists of two phases: a buyout of properties on Kissingbower Road and the subsequent development of a recreational park in the vacated area. This is the only plan that meets the USACE policy requirements for non-structural plans. The buyout area is located north of Gordon Highway on Kissingbower Road and Haynie Street, across from the Regency Mall.

Buyout of Five Parcels on Kissingbower Road: This buyout would consist of the acquisition of five residential properties (two are vacant and three contain residential homes), which includes the bottom vacant triangular lot (0.3 of an acre) on Haynie Street. Two of the homes were inundated with 4 to 5.5 feet of water during the 100-year flood; the third home received 2.5 feet of flooding. These three homes would be demolished and the owners relocated after the non-Federal sponsor purchases all five properties in fee.

Creation of Recreational Park: The proposed recreational park would be developed within the area vacated by the five residential properties within the flood plain, which consists of approximately 1.32 acres. By eliminating these developments within the flood plain and conversion to greenspace, the flood plain would be allowed to be restored to function normally.

The concept design includes playgrounds, swing sets, benches, a picnic shelter (provided by the city), trash container, a multi-purpose trail, and a bike rack. A picnic area would be provided with 16 picnic tables, each set on a concrete pad, with a grill and trash container. Landscaping would consist of preserving the existing trees on site adding shade and ornamental trees; and a shrub hedge along the fence to screen and

buffer the park from neighboring residences. Fencing would be provided around the park to protect visitors using the area.

AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA:

Water Quality Certifications: The Georgia DNR-EPD intends to certify the proposed action at the end of 30 days in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which is required to conduct an activity in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia. Copies of the proposal and supporting documents will be available for review and copying at the office of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, Water Protection Branch, 4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354, during regular office hours. A copying machine is available for public use at a charge of 25 cents per page. Any person who desires to comment, object, or request a public hearing relative to State Water Quality Certification must do so within 30 days of the State's receipt of application in writing and state the reasons or basis of objections or request for a hearing. The proposal can also be viewed at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Planning Division, 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY EVALUATION:

Environmental Assessment: Savannah District has prepared a Draft EA and a finding has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required for this action. The Draft EA is being coordinated concurrently with this notice to Federal and State natural resource agencies for review and comment.

Threatened and Endangered Species: Savannah District conducted an Endangered Species Act listed species survey and concluded that no protected species are likely to be adversely affected by the proposed action and no critical habitat has been designated in the project impact area. Within the project impact area, there is much disturbance to existing habitat from development activities and a lack of suitable habitat for listed species. As a result, the project impact area is not expected to contain any listed species. Consequently, the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any listed species.

Cultural Resources: No properties eligible for protection under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) (P.L. 88-665), as amended, are located within or near the 100-year flood plain. Cultural resources surveys were conducted of selected areas along Rocky Creek in 2005, including the 22 acre Rosedale Tract. Six cultural resources sites were identified during the survey. One of the historic sites, Rosedale Dam (9R11099), is located within the area of potential effect of the TSP. The dam was constructed between 1928 and 1950 and consists of the earthen dam and concrete and metal water control features. Coordination with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office has determined the site is not eligible for the NRHP.

The structures located along Kissingbower Road and Haynie Drive have not been recorded or formally evaluated for the NRHP. These structures would be affected by the Kissingbower Buyout alternative. Based on an initial review of tax records, all structures are over 50 years old and have undergone some degree of modification. A historic building inventory will be conducted during the Design/Implementation (D/I) phase of this project to record and evaluate the structures. No archaeological sites are known to exist within the parcels.

Wetlands: The natural stream design features in the proposed Rosedale Dam Detention Area would be expected to decrease sedimentation and erosion. Sediment from upland erosion can be trapped and retained in the riparian vegetation in the flood plain, preventing it from reaching local waterways where it is detrimental to aquatic habitat, fish, and downstream drinking water supplies.

Most of the impacts to the environment from implementation of the detention area would be beneficial; and there have not been any significant adverse impacts identified to natural resources. As designed, the Rosedale Dam Detention Area would limit downstream scour and loss of aquatic habitat by reducing the peak flow rate and energy of storm water discharges to the receiving stream. Subsequent to this reduction to downstream erosion, benefits may occur to wetlands, flood plains, riparian vegetation, and bottomland hardwoods.

The detention area created by the renovated dam would not involve excavation and is designed to utilize the natural existing flood storage capacity of the flood plain areas for floodwater detention. There would be no discharge of fill material into jurisdictional wetlands from construction of the detention area or any other elements of the TSP. The Rosedale Dam Detention Area would not adversely impact any jurisdictional wetlands or flood plains, which have been degraded in the past by the extensive development of the flood plain. The detention area on Rocky Creek as designed is expected to hold water 3-4 hours during an average summer rain event; and approximately 12 hours during typical flood events.

Public Interest Review: The decision whether to proceed with the project as proposed will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both the protection and use of important resources. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal will be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof. Among these are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife, flood hazards, floodplains, land use, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership, environmental justice, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

Consideration of Public Comments: USACE is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by USACE in its deliberations on this action. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, wetlands, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, socioeconomic effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of the Environmental Assessment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment to USACE on this proposed action should submit comments, in writing, no later than the end of the comment period shown in this notice to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, ATTN: Mr. David Walker (PD), 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31401-3640 or by email to CESAS-PD@usace.army.mil.



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