

## **APPENDIX D**

# **FISH AND WILDLIFE COORDINATION ACT REPORT**



## United States Department of the Interior

### Fish and Wildlife Service

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January 21, 2014

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Mr. David Walker  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
Savannah District Planning Division  
100 W. Oglethorpe Ave.  
Savannah, GA 31401

Re: FWS Log Number: NG 14-67 Rich

Dear Mr. Walker:

Thank you for your December 6, 2013, email providing the updated materials for the Augusta Flood Control Project. To summarize our understanding, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) developed a plan in 2005 under authority of the Water Resources Development Act of 1966, Section 414 which authorized you to address current and future needs for flood damage prevention and reduction, as well as water supply and other related water resource needs (such as fish and wildlife). In collaboration with the ACOE and Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) prepared a final Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) 2(b) report (dated August 2005) that evaluated the project and included opportunities to enhance fish and wildlife resources. Funding for the complete 2005 project was never authorized, and the ACOE and August-Richmond County have since reduced the project size. They are now in the early stages of restarting this smaller project. The ACOE is seeking authorization for the project under Section 205 of the 1948 Flood Control Act, which is limited to Flood Control features. Under authority of the FWCA (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq), the Service is submitting this letter as an update to our 2005 report and reaffirmation of our conservation recommendations contained in that report.

#### CURRENT PROJECT

Table 1 shows the changes in the project from the 2005 project. The 2014 study would be limited to the Rosedale Dam Renovation and the Kissingbower Road Park features. The ACOE anticipates that these two features will remain unchanged from the 2005 project; therefore, the environmental mitigation features built into their design would remain the same.

#### **Rosedale Dam Renovation**

Our 2005 FWCA report stated that the renovation of the existing Rosedale Dam would not cause significant changes to the existing condition (in reference to fish and wildlife resources). The renovation would improve conditions for aquatic resources because the new Dam will have a permanent breach in the creek bed to allow for normal creek flow and fish passage. The proposed rock cross vane will reduce near-bank shear stress, thus reducing downstream erosion. There have

been no changes in the plan since 2005, and the Service continues to support the Rosedale Dam Renovation feature.

### **Kissingbower Road Park**

The project would remove structures from approximately 1.13 acres of floodplain and create a public park. Landscaping would consist of preserving the existing trees on site and adding shade trees, ornamental trees, and a shrub hedge along the fence, where needed, to screen and buffer the park from the neighbors.

Removal of these man-made structures would be a beneficial flood control strategy because it would provide a wider floodplain for overbank flooding without damaging property. Leaving the existing trees and adding the additional landscaping and park features, would make this area a valuable asset for the community. We continue to support this proposed action.

### **Omitted Features**

The Service has no objections or concerns about eliminating Nixon Levee or the Wheelless Detention Basin from the 2014 study.

The recreational trail was also omitted. This trail would have provided the neighborhood access to a natural area in the midst of an urban landscape.

The elimination of the two stream restoration features at Wheelless Road and Peach Orchard Road, however, is of concern to the Service because these restorations would not only improve stream and floodplain habitat for fish and wildlife resources, but would also provide flood reduction by adding flood storage capacity and reducing erosion and sedimentation downstream. We recommend that the ACOE and Augusta-Richmond County reconsider the stream restoration features and recreational trail if funds are available.

### **Endangered and Threatened Species**

We have updated our county list for Richmond County since 2005 (Table 2) to remove the bald eagle due to its recovery from its previous “threatened” status; and add the gopher tortoise, which is now a Federal candidate species. We do not expect federally endangered or threatened species to occur in the specific project area.

GADNR lists approximately 16 animals and 17 plants in Richmond County, in addition to the federally listed species. GADNR should be contacted for the most accurate information; however, in our preliminary review of GIS data, we did not note any state-listed species occurring in the project area.

### **Coordination with Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR)**

We coordinated our review and comments with GADNR. Their January 3, 2014, letter (enclosed) states that the project purpose, flood control, remains contained within the original 2005 plan. They state that the major changes are the loss of ecosystem restoration measures, including 10,720 linear feet of stream restoration and 2.6 miles of recreational trail. Although GADNR understands these ecosystem measures were a separable component to the flood control project and subject to funding availability, they encourage the non-federal sponsor to keep the ecosystem plans available for future consideration should alternative funding opportunities arise.



**Service Recommendations and Position**

The currently proposed study in Rocky Creek under Section 205 of the 1948 Flood Control Act is contained within the activities reviewed in the Service's Final 2005 FWCA Report. The Service supports the updated Augusta Food Control Plan including the renovation of Rosedale Dam and the nonstructural feature at Kissingbower Road Park. These features will not only provide flood reduction benefits, but also improve stream and wetland habitat and provide recreational opportunities.

We recommend inclusion of the two stream restoration features because of their role in flood reduction. If this is not feasible, we recommend consideration of these features in future aquatic restoration funding.

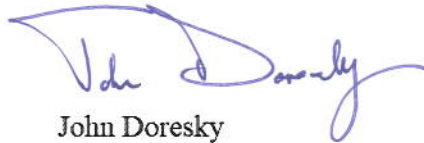
We also continue to recommend that Richmond County-City of Augusta consider incorporating the three conservation measures as discussed 2005 FWCA Report wherever possible in this and other projects throughout the county. Briefly, the conservation measures include the following actions:

- Restore and enhance fish and wildlife resources.
- Develop a comprehensive watershed management system to reduce flooding and improve water quality.
- Provide additional opportunities for natural resource enjoyment, education, and recreation for the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the latest update to the Augusta flood control study. We agree with your determination that the proposed project is contained within the 2005 proposed action and that a new FWCA 2(b) report is not required. However, please incorporate this FWCA update into your final project planning and reporting. We would be glad to work with you on development of a transfer fund agreement if the ACOE would like our further participation in site visits, team meetings, or development of new project features.

We appreciate your interest in conservation of fish and wildlife resources. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact biologist Deborah Harris at [Deborah\\_C\\_Harris@fws.gov](mailto:Deborah_C_Harris@fws.gov) or 706-613-9493 ext. 224.

Sincerely,



John Doresky  
Acting Field Supervisor

Enclosure

Table 1. Changes in Project from 2005 EA (ACOE 12/6/2013 email).

Project Feature/ Environmental Issue	2005 EA/FONSI	2014 EA/FONSI
Kissingbower Road Park	Kissingbower Road Park non-structural alternative (buy out of 3 to 5 homes) and develop park space	Conceptually unchanged from 2005 project. Buy out and demolition of homes may be less since some have been removed; recreational park/greenspace is still included
Rosedale Dam Renovation/ Detention Basin (NED Plan)	Insert 150-ft culvert 1 ft. below grade in dam breach at creek, fill to 233.p feet to form a notch for all flows between the 50 and 100-year flood events. Designed to hold water 3-4 hours during average summer rain event and 12 hrs in typical flood event. Rock cross vane downstream of dam.	Unchanged from 2005 project; still includes mitigative features as described above (e.g. rock cross vanes, etc).
Project Purpose	Authority Combined Flood Control (NED plan) and Ecosystem Restoration (NER Plan).  NER Plan (stream restoration features) was a separable element to proposed NED Plan and subject to funding constraints and delayed implementation*	Flood Control (NED Plan) only under Section 205 Authority.  NER portions of 2005 project may be implemented under separate authorities in the future (e.g. 206 ecosystem restoration)
Nixon Levee	Nixon Levee was part of project as proposed in 2005 EA/FONSI; however, became infeasible after 2005 due to HTRW liability issues related to industrial contamination in project area	Eliminated due to HTRW liability issues related to industrial contamination in project area
Wheless Detention Basin	The sheet pile detention structure designed for storm detention as in Rosedale Dam above	Eliminated due non-Federal sponsor (NFS) withdrawing support
Peach Orchard Stream Restoration (NER Plan)*	8220 linear feet of Priority 3 stream restoration *	Not authorized under section 205 authority
Wheless Stream Restoration (NER Plan)*	2500 linear feet of Priority 2 stream restoration	Not authorized under section 205 authority
Recreation trail (NER Plan)*	10-foot wide 2.6-mile long trail on top of Nixon Levee*	Eliminated due to its association with Nixon Levee that was eliminated (discussed above)
Water Quality (WQ) certification	Obtained from GADNR Aug 31, 2005 for the proposed action as described in 2005 EA/FONSI	Proposed action is contained in the 2005 proposed action; will coordinate with GADNR EPD Jennifer Welte to determine if USACE should reapply for WQ certification
Threatened & Endangered Species	No effect	Same, updated list (Table 2)
Wetlands	No impacts	Assumed to be same as 2005, subject to verification
Cultural Resources	No effect	Assumed to be same as 2005, subject to verification

Table 2. Federally protected species in Richmond County (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, January 2014).

Species	Federal status	State status	Habitat
Red-cockaded woodpecker ( <i>Picoides borealis</i> )	Endangered	Endangered	Fort Gordon. Nest in mature pine with low understory vegetation (<1.5m); forage in pine and pine hardwood stands > 30 years of age, preferably > 10" dbh
Wood stork ( <i>Mycteria Americana</i> )	Endangered	Endangered	Phinizy Swamp. Primarily feed in fresh and brackish wetlands and nest in cypress or other wooded swamps
Gopher tortoise <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Candidate	Threatened	Fort Gordon and surrounding sandhills. Well-drained, sandy soils in forest and grassy areas; associated with pine overstory, open understory with grass and forb groundcover, and sunny areas for nesting
Shortnose sturgeon ( <i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i> )	Endangered	Endangered	Found in Savannah River below New Savannah River below new Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam.
Relict trillium ( <i>Trillium reliquum</i> )	Endangered	Endangered	Moist hardwood forests. Currently found along banks of Savannah River.