

June 08, 2018

Regulatory Branch SAS-2018-00411

## JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE Savannah District/State of Georgia

The Savannah District has received an application for a Department of the Army permit, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C § 1344), as follows:

The comment period for the Department of the Army Permit application will close 30 days from the date of this public notice. Written comments, including suggestions for modifications or objections to the proposed work, stating reasons thereof, are being solicited from anyone having interest in this permit, and must be submitted so as to be received on or before the last day of the comment period. Written comments concerning the Department of the Army Permit application must reference the Applicant's name and the Permit Application Number, and be forwarded to the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) at the above address.

Application Number: SAS-2018-00411

- <u>Applicant</u>: Mr. Ashley Durrence Lamar Smith Signature Development 152 Thunderbird Drive, Suite 207 Richmond Hill, Georgia 31324
- Agent: Mr. Brandon Wall Sligh Environmental Consultants, Incorporated 31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B Savannah, Georgia 31405

Location of Proposed Work: The project site is located in the Settler's Hammock Subdivision, east of and adjacent to Wildcat Drive, in Kingsland, Camden County, Georgia (Latitude 30.8143, Longitude -81.6409). The wetlands on-site are contiguous with Gum Branch which drains to the Crooked River, a Traditional Navigable Waterway (TNW). <u>Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</u>: The applicant is proposing to fill 2.85 acres of wetland to facilitate the expansion of an existing residential subdivision in order to meet current demand. The expansion would consist of the development of lots and the associated infrastructure (i.e. roads and utilities). To offset the loss in aquatic function associated with the proposed impacts, the applicant would purchase 18.81 wetland mitigation credits from a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved mitigation bank servicing the project area.

## BACKGROUND

This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the Corps and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval.

## STATE OF GEORGIA

<u>Water Quality Certification</u>: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, intends to certify this project at the end of 30 days in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which is required for a Federal Permit to conduct activity in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia. Copies of the application and supporting documents relative to a specific application will be available for review and copying at the office of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, Water Protection Branch, 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30334, during regular office hours. A copier 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 application can be reviewed in the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch, 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31401-3604.

<u>State-owned Property and Resources</u>: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or other appropriate instrument.

<u>Georgia Coastal Management Program</u>: Prior to the Savannah District Corps of Engineers making a final permit decision on this application, the project must be certified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division, to be consistent with applicable provisions of the State of Georgia Coastal Management Program (15 C.F.R. § 930). Anyone wishing to comment on Coastal Management Program certification of this project should submit comments in writing within 30 days of the date of this notice to the Federal Consistency Coordinator, Ecological Services Section, Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, One Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia 31523-8600 (Telephone 912-264-7218).

## **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

The Savannah District must consider the purpose and the impacts of the applicant's proposed work, prior to a decision on issuance of a Department of the Army permit.

<u>Cultural Resources Assessment</u>: Review of the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places indicates that no registered properties or properties listed as eligible for inclusion are located at the site or in the area affected by the proposed work. Presently unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistorical or historical data may be located at the site and could be affected by the proposed work.

Endangered Species: A review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) system indicates the following listed species may occur in the project area: Atlantic Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*), Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), North Atlantic Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), and Kemp's Ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), Red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), Hairy Rattleweed (Baptista arachnifera), Striped Newt (Notophthalmus perstriatus) and Wood stork (*Mycteria americana*).

The habitats on-site consist of pine forest and forested hardwood wetland. These habitats do not support any life stages of the above species. The applicant's agent conducted a pedestrian survey of the site and did not observe any of the above species. In addition, the site does not contain listed critical habitat. Therefore, the Corps has determined that the proposed project would have no effect to any listed threatened or endangered species or listed critical habitat.

Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), we request information from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; or, any other interested party, on whether any species listed or proposed for listing may be present in the area.

<u>Public Interest Review</u>: The decision whether to issue a permit 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 protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable

detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

<u>Consideration of Public Comments</u>: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

<u>Application of Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines</u>: The proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States. The Savannah District's evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

<u>Public Hearing</u>: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application for a Department of the Army permit. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for requesting a public hearing. The decision whether to hold a public hearing is at the discretion of the District Engineer, or his designated appointee, based on the need for additional substantial information necessary in evaluating the proposed project. <u>Comment Period</u>: Anyone wishing to comment on this application for a Department of the Army permit should submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Ms. Sarah F. Spatzer, 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31401-3604, no later than **30 days** from the date of this notice. Please refer to the applicant's name (Lamar Smith Signature Development) and the application number (SAS-2018-00411) in your comments.

If you have any further questions concerning this matter, please contact Ms. Sarah F. Spatzer, Project Manager, Coastal Office at 912-652-5048, or <u>Sarah.F.Spatzer@usace.army.mil</u>.

Enclosures:

- 1. Figure 1 Vicinity Map
- 2. Figure 2 Site Location Map
- 3. Figure 3 Impact to Wetlands Map













