

August 7, 2019

Regulatory Division SAS-2015-00878

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:

Application Number: 2015-00878

- <u>Applicant</u>: Mr. Joseph Vaughn Contracting Manager Bemiss Road Moody Air Force Base, Georgia 31699
- <u>Agent</u>: Mr. Mark Ray Ray EA, LLC 1579 Willow Drive Marietta, Georgia 30066

<u>Location of Proposed Work</u>: In waters and wetland located north of Robinson Road, on Moody AFB, in Lowndes County, Georgia (Latitude 30.9814, Longitude -83.2044). These wetlands and waters are directly adjacent to Beatty Branch, which flows into the Withlacoochee River a Traditional Navigable Waterway (TNW).

Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: On April 19, 2018, the applicant was issued a permit to impact approximately 2.098 acre of wetland and 40 linear feet of stream for new road and utility corridor construction to service a new combat rescue helicopter support facility on Moody AFB. By letter dated July 19, 2019, Moody AFB submitted an application to modify the existing permit to include an additional 1.85 acres of wetlands and 146 linear feet of ephemeral stream associated with the construction of a hanger, tow-away, ramps, stormwater basin and utilities. The proposed impacts would be associated with the construction of a hanger, tow-away, ramps, stormwater basin and utilities. Mitigation for the proposed impacts would be provided through the purchase of 788.4 compensatory stream mitigation credits from the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust and 11.2 wetland mitigation credits from Cecil Bay wetland mitigation bank.

BACKGROUND

On April 19, 2018, the applicant was issued a permit to impact approximately 2.098 acre of wetland and 40 linear feet of stream for new road and utility corridor construction to service a new combat rescue helicopter support facility on Moody AFB.

STATE OF GEORGIA

<u>Water Quality Certification</u>: The Georgia Environmental Protection Division has reviewed Moody AFB's Individual Section 404 permit addendum (SAS-2015-00878) for additional proposed impacts to 1.85 acres of wetland and 146 linear feet of an ephemeral stream associated with the development of the Moody AFB Hangar Building 675-New Helicopter Maintenance Unit. The currently proposed modification is within the general area, and similar to the pre-existing 401 WQC issued February 13, 2018. Therefore, a new 401 WQC is not necessary, and the pre-existing 401 WQC issued February 13, 2018, will apply to the proposed modifications.

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. By letter dated April 10, 2016, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division stated they concur that no historic properties that are listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP will be affected by this undertaking.

Endangered Species: Based on the information provided by the applicant the project area was most recently surveyed by the installation's certified wildlife biologist for listed and candidate species in 2013 and 2015. The only listed or candidate species known to occur in the project area is the American alligator. No occurrence of any other listed, candidate, or protected species, to include gopher tortoises, eastern indigo snakes, frosted flatwoods salamanders, wood storks, or bald eagles have been documented in the proposed project area. There is no suitable habitat for wood storks or bald eagles in this location. The closest wood stork rookery occurs approximately 8 miles west of Moody AFB near Hahira, Georgia. The site has marginal habitat for eastern indigo snakes and is too small to support an indigo snake population. Also, there are no associated sand hills near the site for winter refugia. Additional information on rare, threatened, and endangered species surveys and management is provided in the base's INRMP (Moody AFB, 2013a). By letter dated February 6, 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services stated the proposed action is "not likely to adversely affect federally protected species.

<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 by email to <u>terry.c.kobs@usace.army.mil</u>. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Mr. Terry Kobs, 1104 North Westover Boulevard, Albany, Georgia 31707, no later than 15 days from the date of this notice. Please refer to the applicant's name and the application number in your comments. If you have any further questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. Terry C. Kobs, Project Manager, Coastal Branch at 229-430-8567.

Enclosures:

- 1. Figure 1 –Location Map
- 2. Figure 2 Impact to Wetlands Map (2)





