



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION
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August 22, 2018

Ms. Jennifer Ryan,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
4155 East Clay Street
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39183-3435

RE: Draft Feasibility Study/Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Basin federal flood risk reduction project, Rankin Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District, (USACE) MDAH Project Log #08-020-18, Hinds and Rankin Counties

Dear Ms. Ryan:

We have reviewed the June 15, 2018, draft FS/EIS, received on August 2, 2018, for the above referenced project, pursuant to our responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800. After review, we have the following comments:

Comments: Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP)/Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) – Channel Improvements Plan Alternative C)

Executive Summary Section (page x) – Features of the Tentatively Selected Plan

- 1) This alternative calls for the excavation of approximately 25 million yards of soils from 10.4 miles of the existing drainage way (400-2,000 ft.) swath. At the minimal, this amounts to north of 5,000 acres of material. MDAH would require a commitment to have the areas where this material would be deposited be subjected to cultural resources studies/examination.
- 2) The set-back of existing levees would also require cultural resources investigations of those locations and the locations where fill material would be required (if necessary).
- 3) National Register eligibility and effects determination of the existing weir need to be made prior to its relocation.

Section 2.5.9 Cultural and Historic Resources (pages 86 and 87)

General Comment: It would appear that the recommendations/comments from January 2007 and April 2018 are still in effect (further studies and potential mitigation work for specific locations prior to the initiation of disturbance activities). It should be stressed that the number of eligible sites in the project area reflect current, existing knowledge. There is potential for additional eligible resources to be identified after recommended additional cultural resources studies have been conducted association with Section 106 responsibilities.

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Section 2.5.9.1 (page 87)

Tribal consultation under Section 106 does not need to wait for MDAH review to be complete. A reasonable and good faith effort approach should be concurrent consultation with MDAH and Tribes.

There are no copies of the Tribal correspondence provided in Appendix F. It is advisable to refer to the Tribes as Federally-Recognized Indian Tribes versus local Tribes.

Section 4.5.9 Cultural and Historic Resources (pages 207-209)

Alternative A

Under *Direct Impacts* (lines 5-12 of page 207) – The alternative calls for the buyout of approximately 3,100 structures (homes, businesses, government and public buildings, schools, and hospitals). These structures would require individual NRHP eligibility determinations since they would be adversely affected by the alternative under Section 106. The fact that none are currently designated or listed does not absolve the Section 106 responsibility of evaluating historic properties that are 50 years of age or older for the NRHP.

Under *Indirect Impacts* (lines 13-17 of page 207) – The locations where relocated properties would be relocated to would require Section 106 clearance to insure that a historic property/properties are not impacted by relocation efforts.

Under *Cumulative Impacts* (lines 1-6 of page 208) – MDAH disagrees that Alternative A implementation constitutes minor cumulative effects given the unknown NRHP eligibility of the individual properties slated for relocation.

Alternative B

Under *Direct Impacts* (lines 8-18 of page 208) – The alternative calls for the construction of additional levee segments and associated and additional floodway clearing along the Pearl River channel. Three eligible and one listed archaeological site represent the known resources directly impacted by the project. Given that, data recovery is the most likely mitigation for adverse effects. The proposed footprint will require Section 106 study to identify and target where further cultural resources studies are required to identify any additional eligible cultural resources, should they exist.

Under *Indirect Impacts* (lines 19-27 page 208) – MDAH agrees that further/future development qualifies as adverse effects but argue that this represents possibly moderate-to-major and potentially long-term in duration.

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Under *Cumulative Impacts* (lines 28-35 of page 208 and lines 1-2 of page 209) - MDAH disagrees that Alternative B implementation constitutes minor cumulative effects given the potential for additional NRHP eligible resources that could be identified after recommended additional cultural resources studies.

Alternative C

Under *Direct Impacts* (lines 4-18 of page 209) – The alternative calls for the construction of channel improvements, associated weir structure, and improved levee segments. MDAH agrees with avoidance strategies provided that site avoidance does not in turn adversely affect its current condition/state through the project's implementation. MDAH also agrees with the commitment to additional cultural resources studies be completed prior to construction but argues that potential adverse impacts could be long-term in duration dependent upon the results of additional cultural resources surveys.

Furthermore, given the scale of this project, a Programmatic Agreement would be advisable to consult interested parties to develop measures/protocols through consultation to implement in the advent of inadvertent discoveries during construction.

Under *Indirect Impacts* (lines 19-27 page 208) – MDAH agrees that dredge disposal areas are an indirect impacts considering that locations have not been identified. It is the expectation that these locations would be subjected to MDAH review prior to their use as such. MDAH also agrees that further/future development qualifies as adverse effects but argue that this represents possibly moderate-to-major and potentially long-term in duration.

Under *Cumulative Impacts* (lines 30-36 of page 209 and lines 1-3 of page 210) - MDAH disagrees that Alternative C implementation constitutes minor cumulative effects given the potential for additional NRHP eligible resources that could be identified after recommended additional cultural resources studies.

If you need additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Hal Bell
Review and Compliance Officer

FOR: Katie Blount
State Historic Preservation Officer