

prophylactic therapy prior to or following cataract surgery.

Luz D. Ortiz,

Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Notice of Availability of Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Nationwide Permit Program

AGENCY: Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In the March 22, 1999, issue of the **Federal Register** (64 FR 13782) the Corps of Engineers (Corps) announced that it would prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) for the Corps Nationwide Permit (NWP) program. The overall purpose of the PEIS is to review and evaluate the NWP program as a whole to ensure that the NWP program authorizes only activities with minimal individual and cumulative adverse effects on the aquatic environment. The draft PEIS was prepared by the Corps' Institute for Water Resources (IWR).

DATES: Comments on the draft PEIS must be received by September 14, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Mail comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, CEIWR-PD, 7701 Telegraph Road, Casey Building, Alexandria, Virginia 22315-3868. Submit electronic comments to NWPPEIS@usace.army.mil. See

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: For file formats and other information about filing electronic comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Robert Brumbaugh, CEIWR-PD, at 703-428-6370 or access the Institute for Water Resources Home Page at <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/Regulatory/regulintro.htm>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The draft PEIS can be downloaded from the Institute for Water Resources Home Page at <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/Regulatory/regulintro.htm> For those interested parties that cannot download documents from the Internet, a limited number of copies of the draft PEIS can be obtained by contacting the Institute for Water Resources at the address or telephone number above.

You may submit comments by sending electronic mail (e-mail) to: NWPPEIS@usace.army.mil

Submit electronic comments as a text file and avoid the use of any special characters and any form of encryption. Comments sent as attachments to electronic mail messages must be in text format to ensure that those attachments can be read by IWR. Comments sent electronically as attachments in word processing program formats will not be accepted.

Dated: 23 July 2001.

Lawrence A. Lang,

Deputy, Operations Division, Directorate of Civil Works.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) for Potential Multi-Objective Projects in the Lower Colorado River Basin and Associated Tributaries for Flood Damage Reduction, Ecosystem Restoration, and Recreation Currently in and Around Austin, TX

AGENCY: United States Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The DPEIS shall investigate alternative solutions, both structural and non-structural, for identified water resource problems, needs, and opportunities within the Lower Colorado River Basin and associated tributaries. Several areas along the Onion Creek Basin, a tributary of the Colorado River, have been identified for which multiobjective flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration solutions appear feasible. In addition, other flood damage areas have been identified along Shoal Creek, Walnut Creek and the Highland Lake areas, all located in the vicinity of Austin, Texas and along the Colorado River Basin in the vicinity of Wharton, Texas. Onion, Shoal, and Walnut Creeks are located within a designated urban growth corridor for the City of Austin. Continued flood damages would be expected in the absence of flood damage reduction measures. The Highland lakes (Buchanan, Inks, LBJ, Marble Falls, Travis, and Austin) are located on the Colorado River upstream from the City of Austin. Continued urbanization in and around these lakes is expected to increased potential flood damages.

Based on preliminary studies, conducted by the Corps of Engineers, there are approximately 25,000 structures located within the 100-year floodplain of the Lower Colorado River Basin.

This action is pursued under the authority of the Flood Control Act of 1936; the Resolution by the Committee on Commerce, United States Senate, adopted in 1936; the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1937; the River and Harbor Act of 1945; and the Resolution by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, United States House of Representatives, adopted in 1998. Onion Creek was previously identified as a candidate stream system/watershed for non-structural flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration under the Challenge XXI initiative of the Clean Water Action Plan.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions pertaining to the proposed action and DEIS can be answered by: Mr. Thomas R. Vogt, CESWF-PM-C, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, P.O. Box 17300, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300, (817) 978-2669.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Utilizing previous Corps of Engineers studies, and more recent studies conducted by the City of Austin and the Lower Colorado River Authority, alternatives will be developed and evaluated for the purposes of flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, recreation, and allied purposes. Non-structural measures for reducing flood damages, which would likely include acquisition and removal, floodproofing, or raising of existing structures, would create additional opportunities for habitat restoration and recreation. Structural measures to be investigated include: Diversion channels and/or channel modifications of various widths, levees and floodwalls of various heights, upstream detention reservoirs, aquifer recharge enhancements, and/or a combination of these measures. In addition to the structural and non-structural measures mentioned above, ecosystem restoration alternatives will be developed and evaluated. Ecosystem restoration alternatives may include: Riparian corridor restoration, protection, and expansion, greenbelts, and potential wetland construction at abandoned or existing quarries. It is anticipated that these ecosystem restoration measures would aid in improving water quality and aquifer recharge, optimize aquatic and terrestrial habitat along waterways, slow erosion and scouring of the stream

banks, and provide scenic parks and recreation areas for the residents.

The public will be invited to participate in the Scoping process, review of the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, and public meetings. The location and time of the scoping meetings will be announced in the local news media. Release of the draft DPEIS for public comment and public meetings will also be announced in the local news media, as these dates are established.

Future coordination with other agencies will be conducted accordingly to insure participation and aid in the development of the DPEIS. All affected Federal, state, and local agencies, affected Indian tribes, and other interested private organizations and parties are hereby invited to participate. Future coordination will also be conducted, with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service will furnish information on threatened and endangered species in accordance with the Endangered Species Act and they will also be requested to provide support with planning aid and to provide a Coordination Act Report. The State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on historic preservation will be consulted for information in accordance with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act.

Luz D. Ortiz,

Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Preparation of a Special Area Management Plan and Associated 404 Permit Actions for the San Diego Creek Watershed, Orange County, CA

AGENCY: Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District Regulatory Branch.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS)/Joint EIS/EIR.

SUMMARY: The Corps of Engineers will prepare an EIS on a Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) and associated 404 permit actions in connection with future development, infrastructure maintenance and aquatic restoration in the San Diego Creek watershed in Orange County, California (SAMP study area). The EIS will address

impacts of various land development and aquatic resource protection alternatives as set forth below and future identified during the preparation of the SAMP. The Corps of Engineers will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) with the California Department of Fish and Game, which must issue other approvals for development in the watershed that affects watercourses under Sections 1601 and 1603 of the State Fish and Game Code.

The SAMP will provide a comprehensive plan for protecting and enhancing aquatic resources while providing for the permitting of reasonable economic development and public infrastructure in accordance with local land use plans and a regional Habitat Conservation Plan (Natural Community Conservation Plan) for Central/Coastal Orange County. The SAMP will provide a framework for a long-term programmatic permitting process for projects in the watershed subject to the Corps of Engineers' permit authority under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulating the discharge of fill or dredged materials into "waters of the United States." In addition, the SAMP will include a comprehensive reserve program for the protection, restoration, and management of aquatic resources within the study area. Information in the EIS will be used to complete the SAMP, and to decide to issue or deny a long-term programmatic 404 permit for specific, identified projects, and criteria for permitting future projects that have not yet been identified.

Public Scoping

The Corps of Engineers invites the participation of affected state, federal, and local agencies and other interested persons in identifying issues of concern that should be addressed in the EIS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Written comments on the scope of the EIS must be submitted to the address below by August 31, 2001. A public scoping meeting to receive input on the scope of the EIS will be conducted on Tuesday, August 14, 2001 at 6 pm at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, CA 92619. This will be a scoping meeting to address both the EIS for the SAMP and the EIR for the State Master 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement (MSAA). The public scoping will be conducted in an open house format.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Fari Tabatabai, Regulatory Branch,

CESPL-CO-RS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, 911 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90017.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1.0 Proposed Action

The Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency developed the concept of a SAMP to assist in long-term planning for regulatory actions under Section 404 that involve large areas, complex projects, and valuable aquatic resources.

The SAMP study area, San Diego Creek watershed, encompasses 32,000 hectares (122 square miles or 78,000 acres) in central Orange County, California. The watershed drains westerly into Upper Newport Bay. Urban areas within the SAMP study area include portions of Santa Ana, Tustin, Laguna Hills, Costa Mesa, Irvine, and Lake Forest. Large parts of the SAMP study area are currently developed for agriculture, residential and commercial uses. Aquatic resources in the remaining undeveloped portions of the SAMP study area consist of intermittent and ephemeral drainages, riparian wetlands, and small areas of alkali marshes. The major tributaries of San Diego Creek include Peters Canyon Wash, Hicks Canyon Wash, Rattlesnake Canyon Wash, Borrego Canyon Wash, Serrano Creek, Agua Chino Wash, Bommer Canyon Creek, Shady Canyon Creek, Round Canyon Wash, Bee Canyon Wash, Trabuco Channel, Bonita Canyon Wash, and Sand Canyon Wash.

The SAMP will describe an approach and set of actions to preserve, enhance, and restore aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable economic development and construction and maintenance of public infrastructure facilities within the study area. Key objectives of the SAMP for the San Diego Creek watershed are to: (1) Evaluate the extent and condition of existing aquatic resources; (2) develop a comprehensive reserve program for the protection, restoration and management of aquatic resources; and (3) identify and evaluate alternative land development scenarios in the context of the aquatic resource reserve program.

Based on the SAMP, the Corps of Engineers will identify potential areas and/or evaluate proposed activities suitable for coverage using a programmatic permitting process under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. These regulated activities would include residential, commercial, industrial, recreational development; public infrastructure such as roads and utilities; and maintenance of public facilities.