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Public Notice

Reply To:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CEMVS-OD-F
1222 Spruce Street
St. Louis, MO 63103-2833

Public Notice No.
P-2571 to P-2573
Public Notice Date
December 19, 2007

Expiration Date
January 23, 2008

Postmaster Please Post Conspicuously Until:

Interested parties are hereby notified that an application has been received for Department of the Army authorization for certain work in waters of the United States, as described below.

COMMENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Comments on the described work should reference the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers File Number shown above and must reach this office no later than the above expiration date of the Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Comments should be mailed to the following address:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
ATTN: CEMVS-OD-F ([Charles Frerker](#))
1222 Spruce Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2833

APPLICANT: The Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division of the St. Louis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2833 has applied:

a. To the St. Louis District, Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch for Department of the Army authorization under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to rehabilitate and enhance aquatic and wetland habitats on Bolters, Dardenne and Westport Islands within Mississippi River Pools 25 and 26. The proposed activities comprise the Corps' Pools 25 & 26 Islands Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, which has been developed under the Environmental Management Program (EMP-HREP), pursuant to Section 1103, Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (PL 99-662).

b. By issuance of this public notice, the project plans have been submitted to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Water Pollution Control Program for state certification, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The certification, if issued, will express the Agency's opinion that the proposed activities will not violate applicable water quality standards. Written comments concerning possible impacts to waters of Missouri should be addressed to: Water Pollution Control Program, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0176, with copy provided to the Corps of Engineers.

LOCATION: Westport Island, located in Pool 25 of the Mississippi River, lies in Lincoln County, Missouri, between river miles 257.5 and 254.0. This island is about five miles east of Elsberry. Dardenne and Bolters Islands are located about 20 miles to the south in Pool 26 of the Mississippi River in St. Charles

County, Missouri, between river miles 228.0 and 224.5. These two islands are about five miles north of St. Peters, Missouri. These islands are depicted on the attached location map.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant seeks authorization to conduct filling and dredging/excavation activities in waters of the United States in conjunction with implementing the proposed Pools 25 & 26 Islands EMP-HREP project, which consists of features at Westport, Dardenne and Bolters Islands. Planned features address the following objectives: expansion of floodplain forest, restoration of river-backwater connections, and creation and maintenance of deepwater habitat in backwater areas. Total impacts associated with filling activities in jurisdictional waters are approximately 5.0 acres of wetlands.

Bolters Island (P-2571, Pool 26)

1. Removal of sediment from island channel. Mechanical dredging of sediment from an existing 1,250-foot-long natural channel at the lower end of Bolters Island (560 acres) is proposed. Sediments totaling 1,900 cubic yards would be removed from the channel to provide an additional three feet of channel depth across a channel bottom width of five feet. Dredge material would be side cast within a 0.85-acre disposal area (30 feet wide by 1,250 feet) sited along the existing channel. Dredging would enhance the existing connection between the main river and a single slough in the interior of the island, thus providing ingress and egress for fish species over a wider range of river stages. Fish would better utilize the interior slough habitat for spawning, rearing, and over-wintering. Placement of fill materials associated with dredging would occur in 0.85 acre of forested wetlands subject to Section 404 jurisdiction. An average depth of 1.5 feet of sediments would be placed around existing larger trees. Tree clearing to allow for excavation and disposal would be limited to a handful of trees.

2. Construction of rock dike structure and excavation of deep hole in island slough. A rock dike structure is proposed to be constructed in an interior slough at the lower end of the island, and a deep hole is proposed to be excavated immediately adjacent to the dike. The rock dike structure would be U-shaped and would consist of 165 tons of graded B stone. Sediments totaling 2,900 cubic yards would be mechanically excavated to a depth of eight feet in a 0.5 acre U-shaped area having a 13-foot wide bottom. Excavated sediments would be placed along either bank of the slough in two disposal areas measuring about 200 by 300 feet each.

The island's interior slough is connected to the river by the channel to be mechanically dredged. Average water depth in the slough (about two to three feet) is not optimal for over wintering fish. The 8-foot deep hole would provide optimal over wintering habitat, and would also provide refuge for riverine fish from summer extremes. The rock structure is designed to create a scour in the slough on its downstream side when high flow events on the river overtop it, and thus maintain water depth in the excavated hole in the future. Placement of fill materials associated with dredging would occur in 0.85 acre of forested wetlands subject to Section 404 jurisdiction. An average depth of 1.5 feet of sediments would be placed in these areas. Tree clearing to allow for disposal would be necessary; a few desirable trees would be maintained.

3. Temporary access road. A 515-foot long road would be constructed to provide access to the natural channel and interior slough from the island's edge. The road would be 20 feet wide, and consist of 12-inch thick crushed stone on geotextile fabric. Placement of fill materials associated with this road would occur in wetlands subject to Section 404 jurisdiction. The crushed stone would be

placed in 0.25-acre of herbaceous and forested wetland. The road would be sited to minimize the clearing of desirable trees, and would be removed upon completion of the project.

Dardenne Island (P-2572, Pool 26)

1. Planting of native tree and shrub seedlings. Planting of tree and shrub seedlings at Dardenne Island would follow the same procedure to be used at Westport Island, except that planting sites in abandoned cropland would be in areas above 428 feet NGVD. Fifty-two acres of plantings are proposed on this 790-acre island. This is the only proposed activity on the island. Placement of fill materials associated with seedling planting would occur in wetlands subject to Section 404 jurisdiction, and would be limited to the side casting of small amounts of earthen material obtained from digging holes for planting.

Westport Island (P-2573, Pool 25)

1. Planting of native tree and shrub seedlings. Reforestation of 59 acres of abandoned cropland at sites with ground elevations exceeding 440 feet NGVD is proposed on this 625-acre island. Tree seedlings to be planted would consist of hard mast species such as pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), and Schuette oak (*Quercus x schuettii*, a hybrid between swamp white and bur oak). Native shrub species such as deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) and green hawthorne (*Crataegus viridis*) would be planted also. Plant materials would consist of seedlings produced using a root-pruned method, placed on a 30 by 30 foot spacing (49 per acre).

Existing hard mast tree species such as oaks and pecans currently occur on the island at higher elevations but are scarce. Converting old agricultural fields to hard mast tree species at the appropriate elevation would provide habitat for many species of wildlife including deer, squirrel, turkey, and neo-tropical migrant birds. Placement of fill materials associated with seedling planting would occur in wetlands subject to Section 404 jurisdiction, and would be limited to the side casting of small amounts of earthen material obtained from digging holes for planting.

2. Removal of sediment from island channel. Mechanical dredging of sediment is proposed in a portion of an existing 2,000-foot-long natural channel at the lower end of Westport Island. Sediments totaling 1,535 cubic yards would be removed from 1,000 feet of the channel to provide an additional three feet of channel depth across a channel bottom width of five feet. Dredge material would be side cast within a 0.7-acre disposal area (30 feet wide by 1,000 feet long) sited along the existing channel. Dredging would enhance the existing connection between the main river and a complex of sloughs in the interior of the island, thus providing ingress and egress for fish species over a wider range of river stages. Fish would better utilize the interior slough habitat for spawning, rearing, and over-wintering. Placement of fill materials associated with dredging would occur in 0.7 acre of forested wetlands subject to Section 404 jurisdiction. An average depth of 1.5 feet of sediments would be placed around existing larger trees. Tree clearing to create the disposal area would be limited to smaller trees.

3. Placement of water control structure in island channel. A water control structure consisting of stop logs would be installed in the excavated channel. It is expected that this structure would be constructed off-site. The structure would be operated once every two to three years, and would be closed to temporarily hold water in the interior sloughs when the river is falling to

benefit fish species and wetland wildlife. Placement of fill materials associated with this structure would occur in the excavated channel, which is subject to Section 404 jurisdiction, and would be limited to a small amount of earthen material used as backfill around the structure.

4. Permanent access road. A 1,265-foot long road would be constructed to provide access to the water control structure from the island's edge. The road would be 20 feet wide, and consist of 12-inch thick crushed stone on geotextile fabric. Placement of fill materials associated with this road would occur in wetlands subject to Section 404 jurisdiction. The crushed stone would be placed in 0.6 acre of forested wetland. The road would be permanent and would be sited to minimize the clearing of desirable trees.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: The St. Louis District's Environmental Branch announces the availability of the "Pools 25 & 26 Islands, Lincoln and St. Charles Counties, Missouri, Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, Upper Mississippi River Environmental Management Program, Environmental Assessment with Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)". The purpose of this document, prepared in compliance of the National Environmental Policy Act, is to present a detailed description of potential environmental, economic, and social impacts associated with this proposed project. This document is available for electronic viewing on the St. Louis District's web page at <http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/pm/pm-reports.html>. A hard copy of the document is available for viewing in the Environmental Branch, St. Louis District Office, Robert A. Young Federal Building, 1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, Missouri, by contacting Tim George at 314-331-8459.

LOCATION MAPS AND DRAWINGS: This information is available for viewing in the above mentioned environmental assessment, which is located at: <http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/pm/pm-reports.html>

SECTION 404 (b) (1) EVALUATION: The impact of the activity on the public interest has been evaluated in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's guidelines pursuant to Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. The evaluation has been conducted by the St. Louis District's Environmental Branch, and is appended to the project's Environmental Assessment (availability described above).

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request that a public hearing be held to consider the applicant's proposal, provided such request identifies significant issues that would warrant additional public review and comment.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: In compliance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the St. Louis District's Environmental Branch requested the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provide a listing of Federally threatened or endangered species, currently classified or proposed for classification, that may occur in the vicinity of the Pools 25 and 26 Islands project. The USFWS provided the following list of species, and added that there is no designated critical habitat in the project areas at this time.

Lincoln County: Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - threatened, Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) - endangered, Spectaclecase mussel (*Cumberlandia monodonta*) - candidate.

St. Charles County: Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - threatened, Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) - endangered, Eastern massasaugua (*Sistrurus catenatus*) - candidate, Pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) - endangered, Decurrent false aster (*Boltonia decurrens*) - threatened
Running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*) - endangered.

The St. Louis District's Environmental Branch has evaluated potential impacts of this project on these species, and has determined that none of these species are likely to be adversely affected. This determination is provided in the Environmental Assessment, referenced in Number 2, above.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The St. Louis District will evaluate information provided by the State Historic Preservation Officer and the public in response to this public notice and to the District's Environmental Assessment, and we may conduct or require a reconnaissance survey of the project area.

EVALUATION: 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 benefits that 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; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. A permit will be issued only if it is found not contrary to the public interest. Based on our initial processing of the applicant's proposal, the action is not expected to result in any significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment. However, a final determination of the need for an environmental impact statement will not be made until the St. Louis District has completed its full review of this application. The review will include our evaluation of any written responses received as a result of this public notice.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS: Any interested parties, particularly navigation interests, Federal and state agencies for the protection of environmental and cultural resources, and the officials of any state, town, or local associations whose interest may be affected by this work, are invited to submit to this office written facts, arguments, or objections on or before the closing date of this public notice. The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; 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 of Engineers 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 also used to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

All replies to this public notice must be submitted in writing and sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, 1222 Spruce Street, Attn: OD-F (Frerker), St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2833, or by electronic mail to *charles.f.frerker@mvs02.usace.army.mil*, on or before the close of the public notice comment period.

Danny D. McClendon
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Attachments

NOTICE TO POSTMASTERS:

It is requested that this notice be conspicuously and continually placed for 21 days from the date of the issuance of this public notice.

VICINITY MAP



Pools 25 & 26 Islands

