

be placed in a way that mimics natural processes and the project would be monitored annually to minimize negative impacts and maximize benefits of the project. A small amount of sand, on the order of 20,000 cy, may also be "back-passed" to Ocean City as needed for highly erosive sections of the beach. The estimated annual cost for the long-term restoration is \$1,100,000. The Federal and local sponsor cost shares for this component are still being determined.

(c) Navigation improvements to the harbor and inlet include deepening the harbor channel from 10 feet to a depth of 14 feet and deepening the inlet channel from 10 feet to a depth of 16 feet. Material dredged from the channels during construction and maintenance of the channel will be used in the long-term sand management component of the project, and may be used in the environmental restoration component of the project, described below. The estimated cost for the navigation improvements component is \$1,672,200. The Federal and local sponsor cost shares for this component are 80 percent Federal and 20 percent local.

(d) The recommended environmental restoration plan includes restoring salt marsh at the Isle of Wight Wildlife Management Area, located along Route 90, and restoring 8.5 acres of salt marsh at Ocean Pines, located on the mainland shore of Isle of Wight Bay. The eroding South Point Island, located in the northern end of Chincoteague Bay, would be stabilized to its 3-acre size in 1997, and a vegetated 3-acre island created in proximity to the existing South Point Island. A 6-acre island, of which 3 acres will be planted salt marsh, would be constructed in the vicinity of Dog Island Shoals, located at the southern end of Isle of Wight Bay. The estimated cost for the environmental restoration component is \$5,418,200. This project is being pursued under the authority of Section 206 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. Cost shares for Section 206 Environmental Restoration projects are 65 percent Federal and 35 percent local.

3. The DEIS describes the impacts of the proposed project on environmental and cultural resources in the study area. The DEIS also applies guidelines issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL 95-217). An evaluation of the proposed actions on the waters of the United States was performed pursuant to the guidelines of the Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The

proposed dredging, construction, and placement of dredged material are in compliance with Section 404(b)(1) guidelines. This project will help restore one of the few remaining functioning barrier islands on the Atlantic coast, which includes the Assateague Island National Seashore; restore lost salt marsh and island habitat for aquatic creatures and colonial waterbirds; and protect habitat for Brown Pelicans. It will also improve navigation through the Ocean City harbor and inlet and will help alleviate the shoaling problems in the coastal bays.

4. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public and from Federal, state, and local agencies and officials, as well as other interested parties. Any comments received will be considered in the decision to implement the project. To make this decision, comments are considered to assess impacts on endangered species, historic projects, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above.

5. A public meeting will be held on April 8, 1998, at 6:30 p.m. at the Ocean City Elementary School. The purpose of the meeting will be to give individuals and groups the opportunity to comment, orally and/or in writing, on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the proposed actions (recommended plan) as presented in the DEIS. The DEIS findings will be reviewed at the public meeting, and comments regarding the proposed project will be incorporated into the Full Environmental Impact Statement. The 45-day public review and comment period for the draft feasibility study and DEIS will be from March 13, 1998, to April 27, 1998 and written comments received during that time will be incorporated into the Final EIS as required by NEPA.

6. This Notice of Availability is being sent to organizations and individuals known to have an interest in the proposed restoration. Please bring this notice to the attention of any other individuals with an interest in this matter. Copies of the Draft Interim and Feasibility Reports and the Environmental Impact Statements are available for review at the following locations:

- (a) Eastern Shore Area Library, 122 So. Division St., Salisbury, MD
- (b) Worcester County Library, Snow Hill Branch, 207 No. Washington St., Snow Hill, MD
- (c) Eastern Shore Public Library, 23610 Front St., Accomac, VA

- (d) Worcester County Library, Ocean City Branch, 14th St. and Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD
- (e) Enoch Pratt Free Library, 400 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD
- (f) Assateague Island National Seashore, Route 611, 7206 National Seashore Lane, Berlin, MD

7. Requests for copies of the DEIS may be mailed to the following address: District Engineer, ATTN: CENAB-PL-PR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, PO Box 1715, Baltimore, MD 21203-1715. Telephone 410-962-4934, or 1-800-295-1610. E-mail address: michele.a.bistany@usace.army.mil

**James F. Johnson,**

*Chief, Planning Division.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army

#### Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Alligator Lake Chain & Lake Gentry Habitat Enhancement Project in Osceola County, FL

**AGENCY:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Alligator Lake Chain & Lake Gentry Habitat Enhancement Project in Osceola County, Florida.

This action will address modifications to the regulation schedules for the Alligator Lake Chain (Alligator; Brick; Lizzie; Center; Coon and Trout Lakes), Lake Gentry; as well as Lakes Joel, Myrtle, and Preston, for the purpose of facilitating an extreme drawdown resulting in habitat enhancement. Muck removal, extensive burning and treatment of hydrilla are to be considered as complementary actions to the extreme drawdown. This intense level of lake management is needed because of heavy buildup of organic sediments on the lake bottoms, tussock formation, and dense growth of aquatic vegetation.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions about the proposed action and EIS can be answered by: William Porter, Planning Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019, Telephone 904-232-2259; or Elmar

Kurzbach at (904) 232-2325; Fax 904-232-3442.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

a. *Authorization:* The Flood Control Act, approved by Congress on 30 June 1948, authorized flood protection and other water control benefits in central and south Florida. Specific reports which relate to Alligator Lake Chain & Lake Gentry Habitat Enhancement Project portion of the Central and Southern Florida project are as follows:

(1) Public Law 858, 80th Congress, 2d Session, 30 June 1948. (The Flood Control Act of 1948 authorized project works in the Central and Southern Florida).

(2) Public Law 780, 83rd Congress, 2d Session, 3 September 1954. (The Flood Control Act of 1954 authorized the remainder of the comprehensive plan project features as specified in house Document 643.)

(3) Public Law 85-500, 85th Congress, S. 3910, 3 July 1958. (The Flood Control Act of 1958 authorized project features as specified in House Document 186.)

(4) The Kissimmee River Basin and Related Areas General Design Memorandum, Part II—Kissimmee River Comprehensive Plan.

b. *Study Area:* Located in Osceola County, as a subset of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, the Alligator Lake Chain and Lake Gentry are connected by a series of canals allowing water flow and navigation between the lakes. The South Florida Water Management District operates control structures to the north and south of the Alligator Chain to maintain flood protection around the lakes. Water from these lakes is discharged south to Lake Gentry, although more limited flow can be sent north towards Lake Joel. Parts of both Osceola and Orange Counties, Florida are affected by these lakes.

c. *Project Features and Scope:* The EIS intends to address the modification of the existing water regulation schedule for the Alligator Chain of Lakes and Lake Gentry to allow an extreme drawdown in November of 1998. The Alligator Chain of Lakes and Lake Gentry presently fluctuate over a narrower range than they did prior to the construction of the Central and South Florida project. Lake level stabilization has contributed to the rapid growth of dense nuisance vegetation in lakeshore aquatic habitat, which normally supports numerous species of fish, waterfowl, wading birds and other wildlife. The density of this vegetation continues to degrade the quality of this aquatic habitat in an atmosphere of ever increasing demand for it as a resource. The proposed

extreme drawdown for Alligator Lake Chain and Lake Gentry is required to improve the aquatic habitat. During the drawdown, approximately 4,245 acres of bottom sediment would dry and compact stimulating growth of desirable aquatic vegetation and increasing overall habitat productivity. To enhance these natural processes heavy equipment would be used by Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission to remove, burn, and disc the muck and nuisance vegetation from areas where long-term lake level stabilization has resulted in aquatic habitat deterioration.

The EIS will evaluate alternative plans, including the selected alternative plan and the no-action alternative, and determine if, and to what extent, implementation of these various plans may affect the surrounding environment. Alternative plans will be developed and evaluated based on economic, engineering, and environmental considerations. Preliminary alternatives may include, but are not limited to, several water regulation schedule modifications and their effects on: Protection of adjacent lands from flooding; water supply for agricultural and commercial tropical fish farm uses; and maintenance of the resource as a quality habitat for wildlife.

d. *Scoping:* The scoping process as outlined by the Council on Environmental Quality is being utilized to involve Federal, State, and local agencies, affected Indian Tribes, and other interested private organizations and parties.

A Scoping Letter will be sent to interested Federal, State and local agencies, interested organizations and the public, to request their comments and concerns regarding issues they feel should be addressed in the EIS. Interested persons and organizations wishing to participate in the scoping process should contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the address above. Significant issues anticipated include: Potential impacts to commercial tropical fish farming; flood protection and water supply for the project area; effects on water based recreation activity; impacts to avian, amphibian, and/or reptilian habitat; possible species or critical habitat listed under the Endangered Species Act. Public meetings held over the course of the study will be announced in public notices and local newspapers with exact locations, dates, and times.

e. It is estimated that the EIS will be available to the public late spring 1998.

**George M. Strain,**

*Chief, Plan Formulation Branch.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests

**AGENCY:** Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comment request.

**SUMMARY:** The Acting Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before May 11, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments and requests for copies of the proposed information collection requests should be addressed to Patrick J. Sherrill, Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 5624, Regional Office Building 3, Washington, DC 20202-4651.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patrick J. Sherrill (202) 708-8196. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Acting Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes this notice containing proposed information collection requests prior to submission of these requests to OMB. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g., new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary