DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 60267
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160-0267

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

January 7, 2008

Planning, Programs, and
Project Management Division
Environmental Planning
and Compliance Branch
Attn: CEMVN-PM-RN

Gregory E. Pyle, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box Drawer 1210
Durant, OK 74701

RE: Request to Continue Consultation Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for the Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project, Jefferson East Bank, Individual Environmental Report #2, St. Charles and Jefferson Parishes, Louisiana.

Dear Chief Pyle:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, New Orleans District (CEMVN), is planning to replace approximately 3.4 miles of existing floodwall with a new T-wall alignment, floodgate, and rock breakwaters in the Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity (LPV) Hurricane Protection Project, Jefferson East Bank, St. Charles and Jefferson Parishes, Louisiana.

This improvement project is currently being studied under the emergency alternative arrangements approved by the Council on Environmental Quality for the Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project, Individual Environmental Report (IER) #2. Additional information on the Emergency Alternative Arrangements and IER's can be found on the District's web page (HTTP://www.nolaenvironmental.gov).

In a letter dated April 9, 2007, CEMVN initiated Section 106 consultation for the Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project. A copy of this letter is attached herein. Upon the request of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, CEMVN initiated the development of a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to tailor Section 106 consultation for the IERs. CEMVN is following standard Section 106 consultation procedures for the IERs until the PA is executed.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the District, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Indian Tribes, will determine if the area of potential effects (APE) established for the IER #2 project area contains historic properties. The APE measures approximately 3.4 miles in length and extends 1000 feet on the flood side and 500 feet on the protected side from the floodwall centerline. This area contains approximately 766 acres. Proposed activities in the APE will include the construction of a new floodgate, rock breakwaters, and a T-wall placed along a new alignment down the center of the Parish Line Canal. The existing floodwall and floodgate will be demolished. The APE boundaries are shown in the Management Summary attached herein.

In accordance with the scopes of work provided as an attachment to our April 9, 2007 letter, the District contracted R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. to conduct reconnaissance, Phase 1 terrestrial, and submerged remote sensing surveys of the IER #2 APE (Heller et al. 2007). In this study, researchers utilized background research, previous cultural resource investigations review, soil and topographic analyses, field reconnaissance and survey data, and submerged remote sensing data to identify and investigate high potential areas for archaeological resources, assess historic structures and identify targets exhibiting cultural resources characteristics in the submerged Lake Ponchartrain portion of the APE. The results of this research are summarized below.

Two previous cultural resources investigations have been conducted within the IER #2 APE. In the first study by Coastal Environments, Inc., researchers examined a proposed levee closure location at the intersection of the Parish Line Canal and Interstate 10 (Weinstein 1980). No cultural resources were identified. In the second study, archaeologists conducted a cultural resources survey of the Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project, which included a terrestrial survey of the proposed project corridor and an off-shore survey of two proposed borrow pit locations (New World Research 1983). Segment E of this investigation generally corresponds to IER #2, although the survey only covered a 36 foot wide area on either side of the levee. No cultural resources were identified.

Researchers evaluated the results from the previous cultural resources investigations noted above, along with soil data and field reconnaissance information, and identified sixteen land parcels that exhibited a high potential for cultural resources – fourteen on the Jefferson Parish side and two on the St. Charles Parish side of the canal (Heller et al. 2007). Subsequent to the identification of these high probability areas, the USACE determined that nine high probability areas in Jefferson Parish would become five work staging areas. The remaining five Jefferson Parish parcels would not be impacted by proposed construction.

Phase 1b field investigations were conducted at five Jefferson Parish staging locations and two St. Charles Parish high probability areas. No cultural resources were identified. Researchers conclude that extensive disturbance was apparent throughout the APE, including lot

grading, floodwall construction, canal excavation, and residential development. The potential for cultural resources in the flat, low-lying, often flooded bayou/swamp areas through out the project area on the St. Charles Parish side of the canal is considered extremely minimal. Initial evaluations of residential structures in the APE indicate relatively modern structures not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. No submerged targets exhibiting cultural resources characteristics were identified in the analysis of remote sensing data. No further cultural resources investigations are recommended for the IER #2 APE.

Based on a review of the information summarized above, it is our view that the proposed project will not impact any significant cultural resources. However, in the event that cultural resources are encountered during construction activities, work will be halted and your office will be contacted for further consultation. Any resources encountered will be recorded and documented, and state archaeological site forms will be provided.

Please review the enclosed project documentation and provide this office with your opinion regarding our "no historic properties affected" finding within 30 days of receipt of this letter. If you have any questions and/or concerns, please contact Mr. Michael Swanda at (504) 862-2036.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Wiggins
Chief, Environmental Planning
and Compliance Branch

Enclosures

CF: Terry D. Cole, Director/THPO

References Cited

Heller, Nathanael, Troy Nowack, Robert Lackowicz, and Alice Ivas
2007 *Management Summary: Phase 1 Cultural Resources Survey and Inventory Performed for Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity Project, Individual Environmental Report Area 2 (IER #2): Jefferson and St. Charles Parishes, Louisiana.* R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc., New Orleans. Prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District under Contract W91P8-07-D-0042, Delivery Orders 002/003.

New World Research, Inc.
1983 *Cultural Resources Survey of Terrestrial and Off-Shore Locations, Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project, Louisiana.* Report on file, Louisiana Division of Archaeology, Baton Rouge.

Weinstein, Richard A.
1980 *Cultural Resources Survey of Six Proposed Levee Closures, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana.* Report on file at the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Archaeology, Baton Rouge.