

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS ROAD,
SECTION 14 STREAMBANK PROTECTION PROJECT
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH, LOUISIANA

DRAFT EA #431

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN), has prepared this Environmental Assessment #431 (EA #431) to evaluate the potential impacts associated with a proposed stream bank erosion protection project. The proposed project is located on Southern University's Campus in East Baton Rouge Parish, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (see Figure 1.) EA #431 has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), as reflected in the USACE Engineering Regulation, ER 200-2-2.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the proposed project is to maintain the integrity of a main road (F Street, also known as Jesse N. Stone Avenue) on the Southern University Campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. F Street becomes Helen M. Barron Avenue to the north. This road is located adjacent to a ravine that meanders through the campus and transports floodwaters from the campus and surrounding areas to the Mississippi River. The ravine generally holds less than three feet of water during most of the year, excluding high water events. The severe erosion of the south slope of the ravine is due to several factors, including: The increased volume of floodwater that drains through the existing culvert during storm events, increased flow velocities during storm events, and the existing alignment of the ravine.

AUTHORITY FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is authorized under Section 14 of the 1946 Flood Control Act (PL 79-526), as amended. Work under this authority allows emergency stream bank and shoreline protection for public facilities, such as endangered roadways, bridge approaches, public works facilities such as water and sewer lines, and public and private non-profit schools and hospitals, which are in imminent danger of failing. The Act states that:

“The Secretary of the Army is hereby authorized to allot from any appropriations heretofore or hereinafter made for flood control for the construction, repair, restoration, and modification of emergency stream bank and shoreline protection works to prevent damage to: highways, bridge approaches, public works, churches, hospitals, schools, and

other non-profit public services when in the opinion of the Chief of Engineers such work is advisable.”

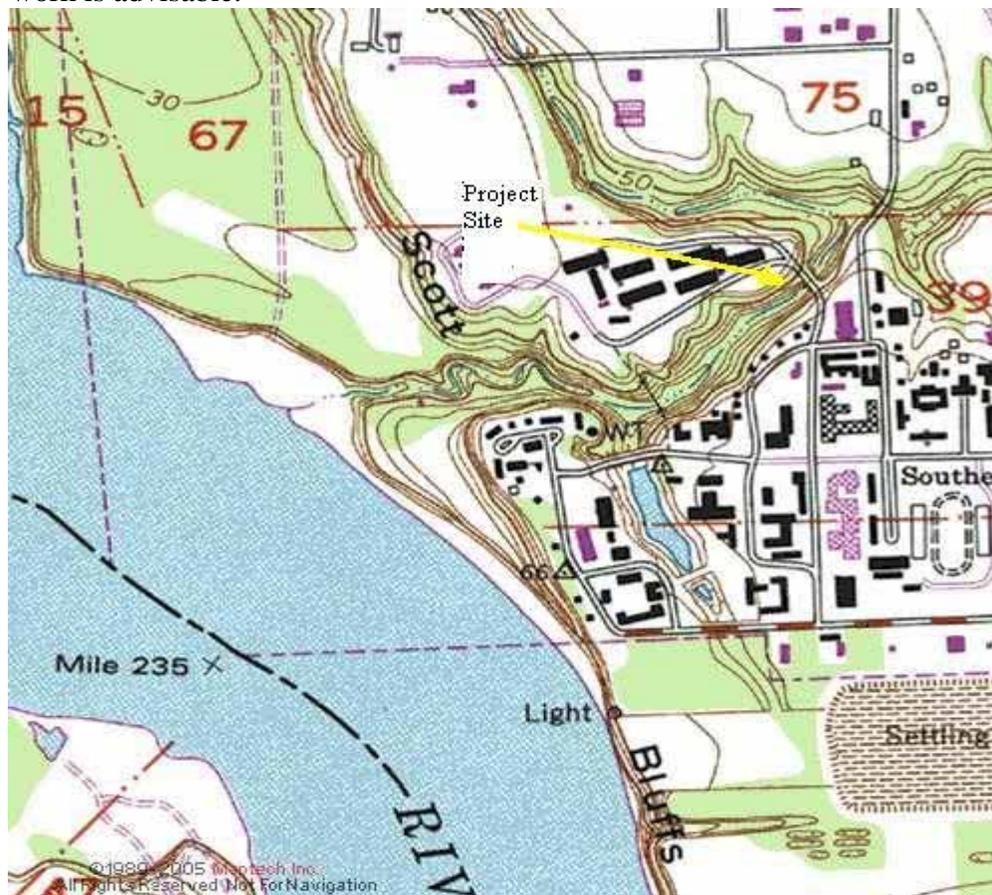


Figure 1. Vicinity Map of the Project Site.

PRIOR REPORTS

In April 1976, the USACE filed the Mississippi River and Tributaries, Mississippi River Levees and Channel Improvement EIS with the CEQ. The EIS described two other construction projects that would take place in the general vicinity. Those projects include a protective stone dike which was built off the shoreline on the downstream edge of the bluff in September 1991, and a concrete mattress revetment (Scotlandville, Louisiana) placed on the eroding riverbank in September 1991.

In February 1999, the USACE completed EA #290 entitled, “Scott’s Bluff at Southern University Erosion Protection, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana,” and the associated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on April 21, 1999. The EA evaluated the impacts associated with a project to reduce erosion along Scott’s Bluff by the construction of a raised area, along approximately 1,600 linear feet of the upper edge of the bluff, diverting rainfall

runoff away from the bluff. The runoff was channeled into drainage catch basins and associated pipes, which carry the water down the side of the bluff and away from its base.

In March 2000, the USACE completed Supplemental (S) EA #290-A entitled, “Scott’s Bluff at Southern University Erosion Protection, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana,” and the associated FONSI was signed on June 14, 2000. The SEA evaluated potential impacts associated with clearing, grading, grubbing, and placing fill along 1,627 linear feet of Scott’s Bluff. The SEA evaluated the removal of trees from 0.7 acres of forested land and the excavation of 27,470 cubic yards of sand from nearby Wilkerson Point in the Mississippi River for placement on the face of the bluff to bring the slope to project grade.

In May 2003, the USACE completed EA #386 entitled, “Scott’s Bluff Sand Berm, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana,” and the associated FONSI was signed on June 30, 2003. The EA evaluated the impacts of a plan to create a 2,250 linear foot sand berm at Scott’s Bluff by placing dredged material from maintenance of Devil’s Swamp (Baton Rouge Harbor) to fill in a pocket behind an existing foreshore rock dike.

PUBLIC CONCERNS

The public is concerned that a main university campus road could fail due to bank line erosion, potentially affecting accessibility of the student dormitories. Public safety issues are also a concern, as life and property could be jeopardized should the erosion cause a road failure.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed project consists of excavating to align approximately 150 feet of the meandering ravine immediately south of the existing culvert, installing a new 150-foot section of matching-sized culvert to extend the existing culvert, placing earthen fill around the culvert, compacting and grading the fill for proper drainage, and installing rip-rap (rocks) for erosion protection near the end of the new culvert (see Figure 2.) The proposed action includes excavating approximately 1,500 cubic yards (cy) of earthen material to be redistributed as backfill, hauling in an additional 4,500 cy of material, and installing about 60 cy of rip-rap.



Figure 2. Aerial view of proposed project location.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

In addition to the proposed action, three alternatives were considered; they include: No-Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2.

No-Action. Under the no-action alternative, the proposed action would not be constructed by the MVN. Erosion would continue, potentially causing road failure and/or injury to life and/or property in the immediate area.

Alternative 1. Under Alternative 1, sheet piling would be installed to stabilize the banks hence preventing future erosion. This alternative would be the most effective means of correcting the problem, but was ruled out due to the high costs involved for materials and labor.

Alternative 2. Under Alternative 2, the drainage ravine would be re-aligned and the bank slope would be protected by the placement of earthen fill and rip-rap along the entire graded and sloped area. This alternative was ruled out due to the high costs of the additional rip-rap needed to complete this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

GENERAL

The project is located on the Southern University Campus in Scotlandville, Louisiana, in East Baton Rouge Parish. The project site is comprised of upland habitat in a park-like setting, with a steep-sloped drainage ravine meandering through the campus and under the existing intersection near F Street and Helen M. Barron Avenue. The ravine generally maintains low water levels and functions as a drainage channel to the Mississippi River, except during high water events when the River rises and causes backwater flows into the ravine.

Southern University is a public university offering many different degree programs. It is the only historically black Land Grant university system in the United States. In 2005-2006, Southern University had an enrollment of 10,421 students (www.brchamber.org). East Baton Rouge Parish is located along the left descending bank of the Mississippi River in the southeast section of the state, about 65 miles inland from the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico. Elevations in East Baton Rouge Parish range from near 25 feet to more than 100 feet above mean sea level.

CLIMATE

The general climate of Baton Rouge is humid subtropical. Rainfall is heavy and amounts are substantial in all seasons. The winter months are normally mild with short cold spells. The summer months are consistently warm, with high temperatures rarely exceeding 100 degrees. Summer relative humidity exceeds 80 percent for about 12 hours per day. Thunderstorms occur each month, most frequently in July and August. Severe local storms, including hailstorms, tornadoes, and local wind storms, are most frequent during the spring months. Large damaging hail rarely occurs and tornadoes are unusual. Tropical storms and hurricanes have occasionally passed very near the city of Baton Rouge (www.weather.com).

The average daily maximum temperature recorded for the summer months (Jun.-Aug.) ranges from 89°F to 91°F, and the average daily minimum temperature ranges from 70°F to 73°F. The average daily maximum temperature recorded for the winter months (Dec.-Feb.) ranges from 60°F to 64°F, and the average daily minimum temperature ranges from 40°F to 43°F. The average annual precipitation recorded is 63.08 inches (www.weather.com).

GEOLOGY/SOIL

The soils within the project boundaries are confined to the boundaries of the ravine, which are made up of the soil "Terrace Escarpments." Found between terraces and flood plains in the western and southern parts of the parish, Terrace Escarpments are mostly narrow and steep. The soil material ranges from sandy loam to silty clay, but is mainly silt or silt loam. Most of the pasture plants commonly grown in the parish can be grown on these escarpments, but management is difficult. Erosion is a major hazard in areas left bare. Pasture, woodland, wildlife, and recreation are suitable uses (USDA, Soil Conservation Service, 1968.)

RESOURCES NOT IMPACTED

There are no wetlands in the immediate project area, but they can be found in adjacent areas. There would be no effect on wetlands from the proposed action. On 21 May 2009 the Hydraulics and Hydrology experts at the USACE concurred with the opinion that due to the absence of wetlands in the project area a 404(b) (1) evaluation is not needed.

The ravine that will be altered by the project is not considered a “Waters of the State” and therefore does not require a 401 certification. In an e-mail dated 24 April 2009, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LADEQ) concurred with this opinion.

The proposed project area is outside of the Coastal Zone area, therefore does not require a Coastal Zone Consistency Determination nor will there be any impacts on Essential Fish Habitat.

No Prime and Unique Farmlands are present in the project area hence will not be impacted by the proposed action.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

This section contains a description of important resources and the impacts of the proposed action on these resources. The important resources described in this section are those recognized by: laws, executive orders, regulations, and other standards of national, state, or regional agencies and organizations; technical or scientific agencies, groups, or individuals; and the general public.

LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Existing Conditions

This resource is institutionally important because of the Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended. The Lower Mississippi River is technically important because it provides primarily navigation resources and habitat for various species of wildlife, finfish, and shellfish. The Lower Mississippi River resources are publicly important because of the high priority that the public places on aesthetic, recreational, and commercial values. The Lower Mississippi River has a hydrologic connection to both freshwater and saltwater ecosystems. In addition, the Lower Mississippi River and its adjacent forests and wetlands provide important breeding habitat for fish and wildlife resources, and contains the largest continuous system of wetlands in North America.

The Lower Mississippi River periodically rises, causing backwater flows into a drainage ravine on the Southern University Campus. During high water and storm events, the ravine may become a backwater storage area. Poor underlying soil structures have contributed to a

continuing erosion problem on the south bank of the ravine at F Street and Helen M. Barron Avenue.

Future Conditions with No-Action

Without implementation of the proposed action, erosion is expected to continue and worsen over time, possibly causing road failure of the main vehicular access to the student dormitories.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

With implementation of the proposed action, the ravine would be realigned and erosion protection measures would prevent future road damage providing University students with safe access to their dormitories. The banks of the ravine would be stabilized, minimizing sediment introduction and turbidity during storm events to the Lower Mississippi River. Minimal, if any, direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts are anticipated to the Lower Mississippi River.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1 or 2

With implementation of alternatives 1 or 2, the impacts would be the same as the proposed action.

FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Existing Conditions

Fisheries resources are institutionally important because of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended. Fisheries resources are technically important because: they are a critical element of many valuable freshwater and marine habitats; they are an indicator of the health of these habitats; and many species are important commercial resources. Fisheries resources are publicly important because of the high priority that the public places on their aesthetic, recreational, and commercial value.

Wildlife resources are institutionally important because of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Wildlife resources are technically important because: they are a critical element of many valuable aquatic and terrestrial habitats; they are an indicator of the health of these habitats; and many species are important commercial resources. Wildlife resources are publicly important because of the high priority that the public places on their aesthetic, recreational, and commercial value.

The project area (includes several hundred feet of the ravine east and west of the project site and to the Mississippi River) may provide habitat for various songbirds and neotropical migrant birds. Some migrant birds expected in the project area include warblers, vireos, wrens, flycatchers, and other species. Resident species include the blue jay, cardinal, and mourning dove. Woodpeckers, such as the red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, and yellow-bellied sapsucker, may also reside in the project area. Small game mammals that may be present

include the gray squirrel, eastern cottontail, and raccoon, and common furbearers include the raccoon, mink, nutria, and muskrat. Reptiles include the common snapping turtle, red-eared turtle, various water snakes, five-lined skink, and green anole. Representative amphibians include the green tree frog, southern leopard frog, and northern spring peeper. Fish represented in the project area are those species tolerant to low dissolved oxygen levels, such as mosquito fish and killifish.

Future Conditions with No-Action

Without implementation of the proposed action, existing conditions would be expected to continue and fish and wildlife would not be affected.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

With implementation of the proposed action, fish or wildlife located within the project vicinity would be expected to relocate until construction activities are completed. However, sessile organisms, such as benthic organisms or ground burrowers, would most likely perish due to construction activities. Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts are anticipated to be minor.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1 or 2

With implementation of alternatives 1 or 2, the impacts would be the same as the proposed action.

UPLAND HARDWOOD FORESTS

Existing Conditions

This resource is institutionally important because of Section 906 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended. Upland hardwood forests are technically important because: they provide necessary habitat for a variety of species of plants, fish, and wildlife; they are a source of lumber and other commercial forest products; and they provide various consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities. Upland hardwood forests are publicly important because of the high priority that the public places on aesthetic, recreational, and commercial values.

The project area is located within a developed park-like setting on the Southern University Campus. The forested areas are found along the natural ravine that meanders through the campus and ends at the Mississippi River. Upland hardwood trees such as pecan, hickory, elm, sweet gum, and pine exist along the ravine. Sapling species on-site include Chinese tallow, live oak, and other oak species. Less than one acre of upland scrub-shrub habitat would be impacted by the proposed project.

Future Conditions with No-Action

Without implementation of the proposed action, existing conditions would be expected to continue and upland hardwood forests would not be affected.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

With implementation of the proposed action, minimal direct impacts to upland hardwood forests would be expected. Some sapling species may be disturbed or destroyed by construction activities. Both direct and indirect adverse impacts are expected to be minor. No cumulative effects are expected.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1

With implementation of alternative 1, the impacts would be the same as the proposed action.

Future Conditions with Alternative 2

With the implementation of alternative 2 there would be potential for removing a large portion of trees. The loss of these mature trees and other vegetation may also work to increase storm-water run off velocities, thereby creating other problems in the future. These problems may include further erosion which could result in the loss of any left over mature trees.

THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES

Existing Conditions

This resource is institutionally important because of: the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. Threatened (T) or Endangered (E) species are technically important because the status of such species provides an indication of the overall health of an ecosystem. These species are publicly important because of the desire of the public to protect them and their habitats.

In East Baton Rouge Parish, there are 4 species federally-listed as threatened or endangered. The species include the West Indian Manatee (E), the Inflated Heelsplitter Mussel (T), the Gulf Sturgeon (E), and the Pallid Sturgeon (E). Adverse impacts to these resources are not expected to occur.

Future Conditions with No-Action

Without implementation of the proposed action, existing conditions would be expected to continue and endangered and threatened species would not be affected.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

With implementation of the proposed action, we have determined that no threatened or endangered species, or their critical habitats, occur in the project area and therefore, the project would have no effect on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitats. In a letter dated August 1, 2006 which was updated on April 17, 2009, the Endangered Species representative from the USFWS, Lafayette, Louisiana office concurred with this conclusion. Protected marine mammals or fish could conceivably swim to the vicinity of the erosion project; however, since the area is an open system, these animals would not become trapped and would be able to escape any construction activities. No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts are anticipated to threatened or endangered species.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1 or 2

With implementation of alternatives 1 or 2, the impacts would be the same as the proposed action.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Existing Conditions

This resource is institutionally important because of: the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990; and the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979; as well as other statutes. Cultural resources are technically important because of: their association or linkage to past events, to historically important persons, and to design and/or construction values; and for their ability to yield important information about prehistory and history. Cultural resources are publicly important because preservation groups and private individuals support their protection, restoration, enhancement, and recovery.

Cultural resources investigations have not previously been conducted for the project area. Southern University (site 16EBR159) was the focus of a cultural resource investigation in 1999 by Earth Search, Inc., but their investigations fell outside of the area of the proposed action.

The site of the current project was visited on August 29, 2006, by MVN archeologists. A reconnaissance survey was undertaken, and random shovel tests were excavated to determine the

likelihood of impacting cultural remains. The result of the shovel tests was the determination that a large amount of fill had been introduced to the area to level the ground surface. The major component of the soil was river sand and pea-sized gravel, suggesting that this material was excavated from elsewhere and deposited at this location for use as leveling fill. Modern glass, construction material and modern pottery were all recovered from each of the shovel tests. Onsite field examination indicates that no significant historic resources are located in the project area right-of-way.

The results of the site visit were forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), along with a recommendation that no further surveys would be required. In a letter dated November 16, 2006, the SHPO concurred with the finding provided by the USACE MVN. Although there is always the potential for deeply buried prehistoric sites, the likelihood of such remains being encountered is extremely small. Consultation with Native American Tribes is underway.

Future Conditions with No-Action

In the future without the proposed action, any further erosion may possibly destroy or unearth previously unknown cultural resources.

Future Conditions With Proposed Action

The area to be impacted by the construction activities is located adjacent to the ravine which meanders through campus and threatens the adjacent roads with erosion. The area to be impacted comprises the eroded surfaces of the ravine, and a staging area where the construction materials will be temporarily housed while construction is taking place. The area to be used for stockpiling material will impact the soil to a depth of less than a meter; any cultural resources located in the upper 60 centimeters of soil in this area are likely to be impacted.

The combined review of previous studies of the project area and the field visit by MVN archaeologists strongly indicate that the proposed action would not affect any significant cultural resources. Therefore, no additional cultural resources investigations are recommended for this project. However, in the event that significant cultural resources are encountered, work in the location of the site will be halted, and the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) notified.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1 or 2

With implementation of alternatives 1 or 2, the impacts would be the same as the proposed action.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Existing Conditions

This resource is institutionally important because of the Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965, as amended, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended. Recreational resources are technically important because of the high economic value of recreational activities and their contribution to local, state, and national economies. Recreational

Resources are publicly important because of: the high value that the public places on fishing, hunting, and boating, as measured by the large number of fishing and hunting licenses sold in Louisiana; and the large per-capita number of recreational boat registrations in Louisiana.

Existing recreational opportunities in the vicinity of the project area include scenic walks, photography, and picnics, enjoyed primarily by students at the university.

Future Conditions with No-Action

Without implementation of the proposed action, existing conditions would be expected to continue and recreational resources would not be affected.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

With implementation of the proposed action, no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts are anticipated to recreational resources, because these resources are outside of the construction zone.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1 or 2

With implementation of alternatives 1 or 2, the impacts would be the same as for the proposed action.

AESTHETIC RESOURCES

Existing Conditions

This resource's institutional importance is derived from laws and policies that affect visual resources, most notably the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA.) The 1988 USACE Visual Resources Assessment Procedure (VRAP) provides a technical basis for identifying a project's important impacts. Public importance is based on public perception and professional analysis of a project's visual impacts.

The project area offers a pleasant scenic view with various species of trees, plants, and shrubs, along with occasional birds, wildlife, and fish, in a serene setting. View sheds are offered from Helen M. Barron Avenue, Elton C. Harrison Drive and Jesse N. Stone Avenue, along with other view sheds from buildings and dormitories throughout the project area.

Future Conditions with No-Action

Without implementation of the proposed action, aesthetic resources would be similar to present site conditions.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

With implementation of the proposed action, beneficial impacts to aesthetic resources would result by improving the visual beauty of the area. The current eroded bank slopes appear untidy and in need of maintenance work. Temporary adverse aesthetic impacts would occur during construction activities, but they are expected to be minor. The proposed project would cause minimal direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to aesthetic values.

It is important to note that every possible step should be taken to preserve and protect the mature trees located within the project area during construction. This will preserve the scenic qualities of the ravine.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1

The implementation of Alternative 1 would directly impact the visual quality of this scenic ravine by introducing an un-natural manmade element to a natural scenic area. Other adverse affects would be incurred during construction, but are expected to be temporary and minor. This alternative would produce minimal indirect and/ or cumulative impacts.

Future Conditions with Alternative 2

The implementation of Alternative 2 would directly and indirectly impact the visual quality of this scenic ravine by potentially removing a large portion of trees and other natural elements that bring aesthetic character and charm to the area. The loss of these mature trees and other vegetation may also work to increase storm-water run off velocities, thereby creating other problems in the future. These problems may include further erosion which could result in the loss of any left over mature trees, thereby further degrading the scenic quality of the area. Other adverse affects would be incurred during construction, but are expected to be temporary. Other long term and cumulative impacts are unforeseen in terms of visual quality and character.

AIR QUALITY

Existing Conditions

This resource is considered institutionally important because of the Louisiana Environmental Quality Act of 1983, as amended, and the Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended. Air quality is technically important because of the status of regional ambient air quality in relation to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS.) NAAQS are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to protect public health, public welfare, and the environment. It is publicly important because of the desire for clean air expressed by virtually all citizens.

Effective June 15, 2004, East Baton Rouge Parish was designated by the Environmental Protection Agency as an ozone non-attainment parish under the 8-hour standard. As part of the Baton Rouge ozone non-attainment area, federal activities proposed in East Baton Rouge Parish may be subject to the State's general conformity regulations as promulgated under LAC 33:III.14.A, Determining Conformity of General Federal Actions to State or Federal Implementation Plans. A general conformity applicability determination is made by estimating the total of direct and indirect volatile organic compound (VOC) and nitrogen oxide (NOX)

emissions caused by the construction of the project. Prescribed de minimus levels of 100 tons per year per pollutant are applicable in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Future Conditions with No Action

With no action, the proposed project would not be constructed, and the status of attainment of air quality for East Baton Rouge Parish would not change from current conditions.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

With the proposed action, project activities are expected to produce less than five tons per year of VOC and NOX emissions. Thus, the ambient air quality in East Baton Rouge Parish would not change from current conditions, and the status of attainment for the parish would not be altered.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1 or 2

With implementation of alternatives 1 or 2, the impacts would be the same as for the proposed action.

NOISE

Existing Conditions

Noise is institutionally important because of the Noise Control Act of 1972 that declares the policy of the United States is to promote an environment for all Americans free from noise that jeopardizes their health or welfare; and the Occupational Safety and Health Standards (29 CFR Part 1910) regarding protection against the effects of noise exposure. Noise is technically important because noise can negatively affect the physiological or psychological well-being of an individual (Kryter 1994) ranging from annoyance to adverse physiological responses, including permanent or temporary loss of hearing, disruption of colonial nesting birds, and other types of disturbance to humans and animals. Noise is publicly important because of the public's concern for the potential annoyance and adverse effects of noise on animals and wildlife and humans.

Ambient noise in the study area is generated by human activities, vehicular traffic, and recreational and commercial boat traffic on the nearby Mississippi River. Estimates of the existing noise levels present in the study area vary between 50-80 decibels.

Future Conditions with No Action

Without implementation of the proposed action, noise would remain as it is presently.

Future Conditions with the Proposed Action

The proposed project would be expected to temporarily increase noise levels near construction activities. Construction would take place during daylight hours, thereby minimizing potential interference with human sleep. However, noise would be expected to be annoying to workers in the immediate vicinity of construction and to those inhabitants in the nearby student dormitories. Construction workers would be required to use protective hearing devices to minimize impacts. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set a limit of 85 decibels on the A scale (the most widely used sound level filter) for eight hours of continuous exposure to protect against permanent hearing loss. Based upon similar construction activities conducted by the USACE MVN in the past, noise above this level would not be expected to occur for periods longer than eight hours.

Future Conditions with Alternative 1 or 2

With implementation of alternatives 1 or 2, the impacts would be the same as for the proposed action.

HAZARDOUS, TOXIC, AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE

The MVN is obligated under Engineer Regulation 1165-02-132 to assume responsibility for the reasonable identification and evaluation of all Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste (HTRW) contamination within the vicinity of the proposed project. Personnel from CEMVN-PM-RP made a field inspection on 1 June 2009 of the Southern University Bank Protection Project area. The area was inspected for the presence of pipes, containers, tanks or drums, ponds or lagoons, car bodies, tires, refrigerators, trash dumps, electrical equipment, oil drilling equipment, gas or oil wells, discoloration of vegetation or water sheens, discoloration of soils, out-of-place dirt mounds or depressions in the landscape, evidence of fire, stressed soils with lack of vegetation, discoloration of vegetation, animal remains, unusual animal behavior, biota indicative of a disturbed environment, and odors indicative of poor water quality or chemical presence. No evidence of HTRW was found.

A search of government environmental databases did not show any evidence of Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs). The probability of encountering HTRW during the course of this project is low, and no further HTRW investigation is recommended. If the project area changes HTRW may need to be re-investigated.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) is being prepared and will be on file at CEMVN-PM-RP. The conclusions of the ESA will not differ from the conclusions stated in this summary.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The CEQ's Regulations define cumulative impacts as the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes other such actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor

but collectively important actions taking place over time.

The cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project include continued erosion of the banks of the ravine, resulting in major foundation problems to adjacent roadways and associated lands. Future projects in the drainage ravine area would further deplete the overall productivity of this type of ecosystem within this region of Louisiana. Minor secondary impacts, such as disrupted sheet flow patterns, would be expected as a result of removing the project site from the existing landscape via the placement of fill and subsurface culverts.

The immediate project area is highly urbanized; therefore, the area has already been impacted by construction of the existing structures. The lawn is well-maintained and students frequently cross the area to access the main campus. The project impacts would consist of minor, adverse effects on fisheries and wildlife and upland hardwood forests.

COORDINATION

Preparation of this EA has been coordinated with appropriate Congressional, federal, state, and local interests, as well as environmental groups and other interested parties. The following agencies, as well as other interested parties, are receiving copies of this EA:

U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Conservationist
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Management Division
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Restoration Division
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, PER-REGC
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, EP-SIP
Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures are used to avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse impacts to environmental resources. The appropriate application of mitigation is to formulate a project that first avoids adverse impacts, then minimizes adverse impacts, and lastly, compensates for unavoidable impacts.

No adverse impacts have been identified that would require compensatory mitigation. The USFWS has not made any recommendations regarding mitigation.

COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Environmental compliance for the proposed action would be achieved upon: coordination of this EA with appropriate agencies, organizations, and individuals for their review and comments; USFWS confirmation that the proposed action would not be likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species; receipt of the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office's Determination of No Affect on cultural resources; receipt and acceptance or resolution of all USFWS' Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act recommendations; and receipt and acceptance or resolution of all Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's comments on the air quality impact analysis documented in the EA. The FONSI will not be signed until the proposed action achieves environmental compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as described above.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project consists of excavating to align approximately 150 feet of the meandering ravine immediately south of the existing culvert, installing a new 150-foot section of matching-sized culvert to extend the existing culvert, placing earthen fill around the culvert, compacting and grading the fill for proper drainage, and installing rip-rap (rocks) for erosion protection near the end of the new culvert. The proposed action includes excavating approximately 1,500 cy of earthen material to be redistributed as backfill, hauling in an additional 4,500 cy of material, and installing about 60 cy of rip-rap.

This office has assessed the environmental impacts of the proposed project and has determined that the proposed project would have no impacts on cultural resources. Other parameters evaluated include: the Lower Mississippi River, fisheries and wildlife, upland hardwood forests, threatened or endangered species, recreational resources, aesthetic resources, air quality, and noise. After a 30-day public review of this EA, a determination will be made on the degree of the impacts of each parameter. The results of this determination will be noted in the FONSI. The risk of encountering HTRW on this project is low.

PREPARED BY

EA # 431 was prepared by Ms. Bonnie Obiol, Biologist, and Ms. Tammy Gilmore, Biologist, with relevant sections prepared by: Mr. Christopher Brown - HTRW; Mr. Baxter Mann and Mr. Crorey Lawton - Cultural Resources; Mr. Andrew Perez – Recreation and Aesthetic Resources; Mr. Lamar Hale – Project Manager; Mr. Nick Sims- Project Manager. The address of the preparers is: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District; Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division, CEMVN-PM-R, P.O. Box 60267; New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267.

LITERATURE CITED

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service
1968 Soil Survey of East Baton Rouge Parish

Maygarden, Benjamin, Aubra Lee, Jill-Karen Yakubik, and Pauline Barrow
1999 Historical Research and Archaeological Survey of the Historic Portion of Southern
University, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. Report submitted to the
USACE MVN.

USGS, Baton Rouge, LA. 1:62,500. 1965 MVN files.

USGS, Scotlandville, LA. 1:24,000. 1980 MVN files.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Public Comments and Responses (Not included in Draft EA)
- Appendix B: Members of Interagency Environmental Team
- Appendix C: USFWS T&E Concurrence
- Appendix D: USFWS Letter
- Appendix E: LASHPO
- Appendix F: Air quality Emission Analysis

Appendix B

Appendix B: Members of Interagency Environmental Team

Tammy Gilmore	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVN
Bonnie Obiol	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVN
Jamie Phillipe	Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
David Walther	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Paul Bellocq	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVN
Paul Hughbanks	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVN
Christopher Brown	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVN
Kelly Mccaffrey	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVN

Appendix C



"Gilmore, Tammy H MVN"
<Tammy.H.Gilmore@usace.army.mil>

04/17/2009 12:29 PM

OPTIONAL FORM 88 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages ▶

To <i>Tammy Gilmore</i>	From
Dept./Agency	Phone #
Fax #	Fax #

NSM 7540-01-317-7388

5089-101

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Subject Southern University T&E

Dave,

Reference is made to a section 14 project, Southern University Campus Road, Section 14, Stream bank Protection Project, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA. The proposed action consists of dredging to align the existing drainage ravine, installing a new 150-foot section of matching-sized culvert adjacent to the existing culvert, placing fill around the culvert with earthen material, compacting and sloping the fill for proper drainage, and installing rocks for erosion protection at the end of the new culvert. The proposed action includes excavating approximately 1,500 cubic yards (cy) of earthen material to be redistributed as backfill, hauling in an additional 4,500 cy of material, and installing about 60 cy of rocks (rip rap). We have attached a map of the area for your use in locating the work.

We believe the project, as planned, would not adversely affect any threatened or endangered (T&E) species or their critical habitat, as there are no critical habitats within the project areas. We are not aware of any T&E Species that inhabited the area since your last T&E Species concurrence on August 1, 2006.

Please review the map and inform us whether or not you agree with our determination.

Since it has been over one year since our last coordination, we are requesting that you re-evaluate this project and provide your concurrence by 15 May 09.

If you have any questions about the project or need additional information, please telephone me at 504-862-1002.

Thanks

Tammy Gilmore <<So. Univ. Campus infrared map.bmp>>



USACE-PM-RS <<So. Univ. topo map with arrow.JPG>> So. Univ. Campus infrared map.bmp



So. Univ. topo map with arrow.JPG

This project has been reviewed for effects to Federal trust resources under our jurisdiction and currently protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act). The project, as proposed,
 Will have no effect on those resources
 Is not likely to adversely affect those resources.
 This finding fulfills the requirements under Section 7(e)(2) of the Act.
Debra A. ...
 Acting Supervisor
 Louisiana Field Office
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Date: *April 20, 2009*



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
646 Cajundome Blvd.
Suite 400
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506

June 4, 2009

Colonel Alvin B. Lee
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Lee:

Please refer to the proposed Southern University Campus Road, Stream Bank Protection Project in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. That project is authorized by Section 14 of the Flood Control Act of 1926 (Public Law 79-526), which allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to construct emergency streambank and shoreline erosion protection for public facilities and services. As proposed, that project would address bank erosion that threatens the integrity of F Street (also known as Jesse N. Stone Avenue), a main road on the campus, by aligning the existing tributary and installing a new 150-foot section of matching-sized culvert. This letter constitutes the draft report of the Secretary of the Interior as required by Section 2(b) of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.). A copy of this letter has been provided to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and their comments, if any, will be forwarded under separate cover.

The project area is located in south-east Louisiana, immediately east of the Mississippi River on Southern University's campus in Baton Rouge. Proposed project activities would extend along a small tributary of the Mississippi River which parallels F Street, a main road of the University. The tributary is a deep ravine which transports floodwaters from the campus and surrounding areas into the Mississippi River. Because of the volume of floodwater that drains through the existing culvert, increased flow velocities during rain events, and the alignment of the ravine, the south slope of the ravine has been eroded, thereby compromising the integrity of F Street. The proposed action would be to straighten 150 feet of the meandering ravine immediately south of the existing culvert, extend the existing culvert 150 feet, place earthen fill around the culvert, compact and slope the fill for proper drainage, and install rip rap for erosion protection at the end of the new culvert. Approximately 1,500 cubic yards (cy) of on-site earthen material would be redistributed as backfill, 4,500 cy of additional earthen material would be hauled in, and approximately 60 cy of rip rap would be installed.

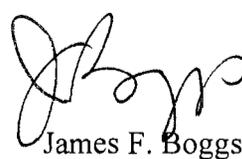
The project area consists of a ravine which lies between F Street and Helen M. Barrow Avenue. The upper portion of the side slopes of the ravine are maintained (i.e., mowed), and are sparsely vegetated with mature sweet gum, American elm, hickory, pecan, and species of pine creating a park-like environment. The vegetation directly adjacent to the channel is not frequently maintained and consists of ragweed and saplings of the adjacent mature trees. There are also traces of sapling Chinese tallow, live oak, and other oak species. Less than one acre of scrub shrub habitat would be impacted by the proposed project.

The project area provides habitat for a number of songbirds. Neotropical migrants expected in the project area include warblers, vireos, wrens, flycatchers, and many other species. Resident species include the blue jay, cardinal, and mourning dove. Woodpeckers, such as red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, and yellow-bellied sapsucker, are also typical in the project area forested habitat. Small game mammals that may be present in the project area include gray squirrel, eastern cottontail, and raccoon; and common furbearers include the raccoon, mink, nutria, and muskrat. Reptiles include the common snapping turtle, red-eared turtle, various water snakes, five-lined skink, and green anole. Representative amphibians include the green treefrog, southern leopard frog, and northern spring peeper.

On August 1, 2006, and April 17, 2009, the Service concurred with the Corps determination that the proposed activities would not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species. Our concurrence is based on information that indicates no known threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat are within the project area. Therefore, no further consultation will be required unless there are changes in the scope or location of the project, or construction has not been initiated within one year. If the project has not been initiated within one year, follow-up consultation should be accomplished with this office prior to making expenditures for construction. If the scope or location of the proposed work is changed, consultation should occur as soon as such changes are made.

In conclusion, the Service does not object to implementation of the proposed Southern University Campus Road, stream bank protection project as currently described. The proposed project would not significantly impact Federal trust fish and wildlife resources. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If your staff has any questions regarding our comments, please have them contact David Walther of this office at (337) 291-3122

Sincerely,



James F. Boggs
Supervisor
Louisiana Field Office

cc: EPA, Dallas, TX
NOAA-Fisheries, Baton Rouge, LA
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVN-PM-R, New Orleans, LA
LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, Baton Rouge, LA



MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF ARCHAEOLOGY

ANGÈLE DAVIS
SECRETARY

PAM BREUX
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

November 16, 2006

Ms. Elizabeth Wiggins
Department of the Army
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

Re: Stream Channel on Southern University Campus
Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Dear Ms. Wiggins:

This is in response to your letter dated September 8, 2006, concerning the above-referenced project. We agree with your findings that there are no intact cultural deposits within the Area of Potential Effects. Therefore we have no objections to the implementation of this project.

However, we will need two copies of a draft reconnaissance report for review. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Watson in the Division of Archaeology at (225) 342-8170.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pam Breux".

Pam Breux
State Historic Preservation Officer

PB:RW:s

Appendix F

Table A
Air Quality Emission Analysis for Volatile Organic Compounds

Units	Equipment Item	Total Work Hours	per unit	Fuel Type Gas Dsel	hp	Multiplying Factor % hp Time		Total hp hours	Annual hp hours
CY	Dozer	208		x	200	0.7	0.83		24,170
CY	Excavator	16		x	200	0.7	0.83		1,859
CY	Dump Truck	208		x	300	0.7	0.83		36,254
SY	Front end loader	8		x	250	0.7	0.83		1,162

TOTAL GASOLINE (hp hours) 0 0
 TOTAL DIESEL (hp hours) 0 63,445

VOC Emission Factors		Gas	Diesel	Emissions		Tons
Exhaust		0.015	0.00247			
Evaporation		0.00066	0			
Crankcase		0.00485	0.0000441			0.00
Refueling		0.00108	0			0.08
Total		0.02159	0.0025141	Subtotal		<u>0.08</u>

Table A
Air Quality Emission Analysis for Nitrous Oxide

Units	Equipment Item	Total Work Hours	per unit	Fuel Type Gas Dsel	hp	Multiplying Factor % hp Time	Total hp hours	Annual hp hours	
	Dozer	208		x	200	0.7 0.83		24,170	
	Excabator	16		x	200	0.7 0.83		1,859	
	Dump Truck	208		x	300	0.7 0.83		36,254	
	Front End Loader	8		x	250	0.7 0.83		1,162	
TOTAL GASOLINE (hp hours)								0	0
TOTAL DIESEL (hp hours)								0	63,445
Nox Emission Factors		Gas	Diesel						
		0.011	0.031						
						Emissions		Tons	
						Gas		0.00	
						Diesel		<u>0.98</u>	
						Subtotal		<u>0.98</u>	

