



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 1229
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229

February 19, 2016

Public Notice of Studies and Initial Scoping Meeting for Resacas at Brownsville, Texas Restoration Project Feasibility Study

Introduction

This notice provides a summary of the ongoing feasibility study activities for the Resacas at Brownsville, Texas Restoration Project Feasibility Study and solicits public input regarding the study. The objective of a feasibility study is to investigate and recommend solutions to water resources problems. The Resacas Restoration Project Feasibility Study will identify and evaluate possible alternatives for restoring, enhancing and preserving resaca ecosystems throughout the City of Brownsville (Figure 1). The non-Federal sponsor for the project is the Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB).

Study Background

Resacas are former channels of the Rio Grande River that have been cut off from the river. Approximately 1,500 acres of resacas occur within the City of Brownsville varying in size from 5 to 200 acres with widths between 100 to 350 feet. Although urban and residential development has occurred along many of the resacas, a narrow 50- to 300-foot remnant band of riparian habitat occurs along resacas interspersed throughout the study area.

Study Process

This study is a continuation of an investigative study conducted in 2002. During the 2002 study three resacas (Resaca del Rancho Viejo, Town Resaca and Resaca de la Guerra) were investigated for ecosystem restoration, flood damage reduction and water supply. Both structural (building bridges, dredging, pipeline construction) and nonstructural (educational programs, city regulations to regulate construction, water withdrawal and land acquisition) measures were explored. A final plan was never developed but the previous data collection and research will be incorporated and updated to conduct the current study.

During the feasibility phase, detailed engineering, economic and environmental studies are performed. The goal of the feasibility phase is to find the most cost-effective solution that responds to the problem while protecting the Nation's environment. The final feasibility report documents the study results and findings, the selection process of the recommended alternative and the costs and benefits of the recommended plan. The feasibility study ends when the report is submitted to Congress for authorization.

Study Status

During August 2015, the Galveston District re-initiated the 2002 study for the Resacas at Brownsville, Texas Restoration Project. The current study will focus on Resacas de la Guerra, Resaca del Rancho Viejo and Town Resaca. Preliminary alternatives to be evaluated in the Feasibility Phase include:

- Terracing and planting to restore native vegetation and reduce erosion
- Dredging of the resacas to enhance water quality and storage capacity
- Habitat creation within the resacas
- Preservation of existing resacas
- Creating buffers;
- Installation of pipelines, culverts, sediment traps and pump stations to enhance water quality and improve the capability to move water for management purposes.

Public Participation

The Galveston District will hold the Initial Public Scoping Meeting for the Feasibility Phase on March 1, 2016 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Main Building. The purpose of the meeting will be to inform the community about the proposed restoration project, how the study will be conducted, as well as to solicit public input regarding the initial scope of potential issues/alternatives to be addressed, and to identify those issues/alternatives that should be analyzed further, or eliminated, based on their significance and effects on the environment. The information from the public meeting will be used in the development of an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. This notice serves as an invitation for the public to attend. The public will be provided an opportunity for questions and comments.

Location: Brownsville Public Utilities Board
1425 Robinhood Drive
Brownsville, Texas 78521

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm

We are soliciting comments/concerns on opportunities for resaca restoration, enhancement and potential improvement to flood protection and water supply. The primary purpose of the study is ecosystem restoration. Specifically, public input is requested concerning:

- Opportunities for habitat creation, restoration, enhancement or protection of the three resacas (Resacas de la Guerra, Resaca del Rancho Viejo, and Town Resaca)
- Preliminary alternatives

All interested parties are invited to provide input to this study. Please send your comments or questions regarding this notice or mailing list updates to the address shown on the first page of this notice. Written input can also be submitted and is requested by April 15, 2016. If we can provide further information, please contact Ms. Ellie Covington, Planning Lead, Plan Formulation Section, Regional Planning and Environmental Center, by phone at (409) 766-3853 or by email at ellie.l.covington@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric W. Verwers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eric" written in a stylized, connected manner.

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and
Environmental Center

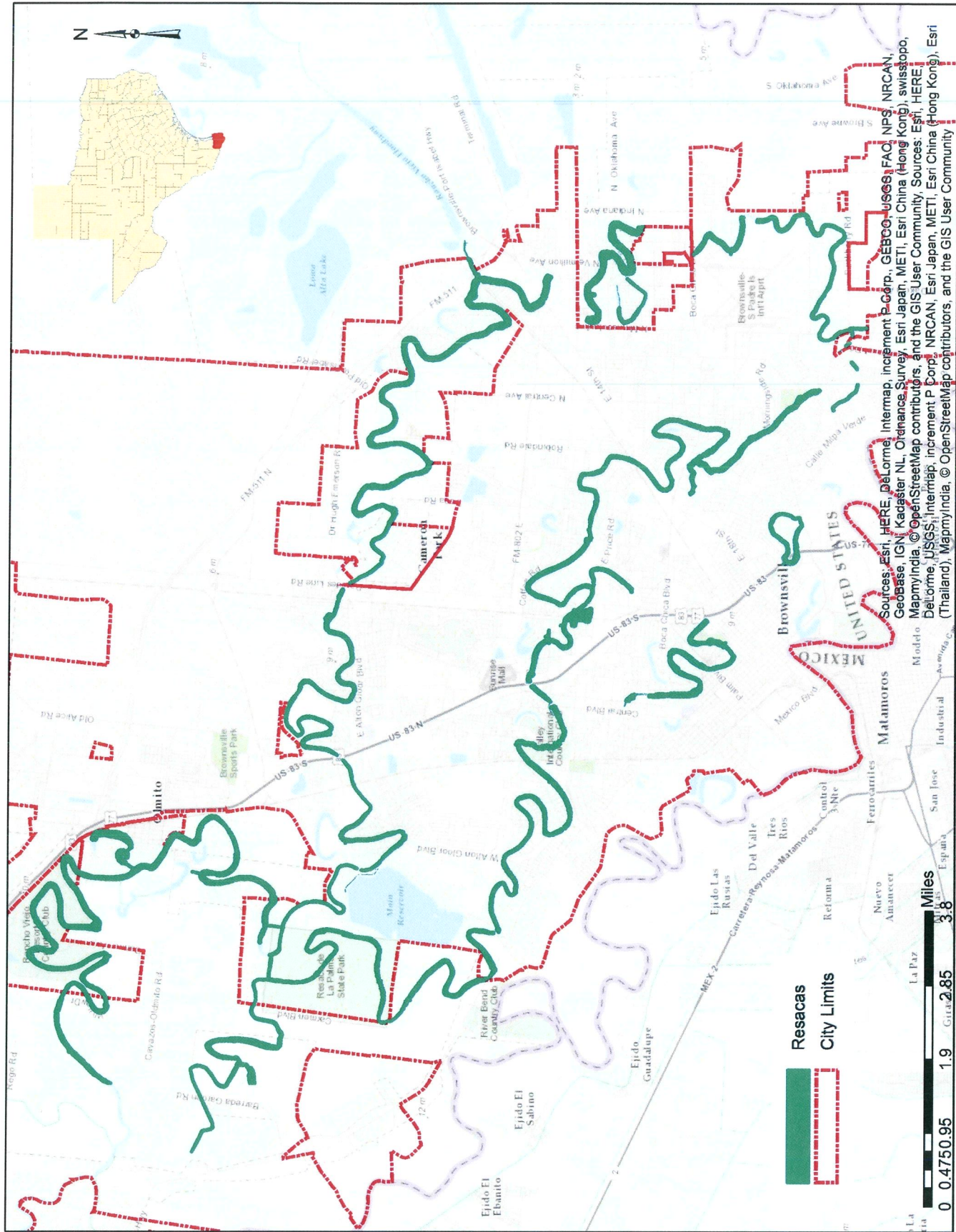


Figure 1. Study area for Resacas at Brownsville, Texas Restoration Project

STAFF COORDINATION AND ROUTER

TO: CESWG-PM-J	SUBJECT: Public Notice of Studies and Initial Scoping Meeting for Resacas at Brownsville, Texas Restoration Project Feasibility Study			
FROM: CESWF-PEC-P	DATE: 17 FEB 2016			
SUMMARY OF ACTION REQUIRED, NOTES, REMARKS, ETC: Please review and sign off on the Public Notice of Studies and Initial Scoping Meeting for Resacas at Brownsville, Texas Restoration Project Feasibility Study. The meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2016, in Brownsville, Texas, so there is a short suspense on this routing. Your prompt attention is appreciated. Original letter is being forwarded separately to Mr. Rob Thomas at SWG for signature.	ACTION POINT OF CONTACT: Ellie Covington TELEPHONE NO: X3853			
	OFFICE /STAFF COORDINATION			
	OFFICE	CONCUR	NON-CONCUR	DATE
	CESWF-PEC-COVINGTON	COVINGTON ELL E.L. 1363642434		
	CESWF-PEC-P/LAIRD			
	CESWF-PEC-TN/MURPHY	MURPHY CAROL YN E. 1230985296		
	CESWF-PEC/NEWMAN	DCS for Rob		
	CESWG-PM-J/CATANZARO			
	CESWG-PM-J/THOMAS			
	CESWF-PEC-TN/SIMS	SIMS DOUGLAS C.1249357738		
	PEC Verwers	✓		
	EXECUTIVE COORDINATION			
	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	SEE ME	
COMMANDER				
DEPUTY COMMANDER				
DEPUTY DISTRICT ENGINEER				
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT				
EXECUTIVE REMARKS:				

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		CESWF-PEC-COVINGTON	COVINGTON, ELLIE L. ELL.L1363642436		
		CESWF-PEC-P/LAIRD	<i>[Signature]</i>		
		CESWF-PEC-TN/MURPHY			
		CESWF-PEC/NEWMAN			
		CESWG-PM-J/CATANZARO			
		CESWG-PM-J/THOMAS			
		EXECUTIVE COORDINATION			
			APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	SEE ME
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		DEPUTY COMMANDER			
		DEPUTY DISTRICT ENGINEER			
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT					
EXECUTIVE REMARKS:					