



Public Notice

**U.S. Army Corps
Of Engineers**

Galveston District

Permit Application No: _____

Date Issued: _____

Comments _____

Due: _____

SWG-2018-00722

13 August 2019

13 September 2019

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT
AND
TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE: To inform you of a proposal for work in which you might be interested. It is also to solicit your comments and information to better enable us to make a reasonable decision on factors affecting the public interest. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is not the entity proposing or performing the proposed work, nor has the Corps taken a position, in favor or against the proposed work.

AUTHORITY: This application will be reviewed pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

APPLICANT: City of Houston, Houston Public Works
611 Walker Street
Houston, Texas 77002

POC: Kevin Hammond
Telephone: 832-395-2275
Email: kevin.hammond@houstontx.gov

AGENT: Halff Associates, Inc.
9500 Amberglen Blvd., Building F, Suite 125
Austin, Texas 78729

POC: Brian Boe
Telephone: 512-777-4549
Email: bboe@halff.com

LOCATION: The project site is located in Fondren Diversion Channel and wetlands adjacent to Willow Waterhole Bayou, in Houston, Harris County, Texas. The project can be located on the U.S.G.S. quadrangle map titled: Alief, Texas.

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE (NAD 83):

Latitude: 29.658742° North; **Longitude:** 095.504376° West

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to discharge 193 cubic yards of rock riprap and 159 cubic yards of concrete into wetlands adjacent to Willow Waterhole Bayou permanently impacting 1.11 acres of wetlands, 0.071 acres of an intermittent stream and temporary impacting 0.022 acres of an intermittent stream to facilitate the construction of:

- Spellman Detention Basin - will have a maximum volume of 208 acre-feet
- Detention Basin Maintenance Berm - a 15-foot-wide concrete maintenance berm would encircle the entire proposed Spellman Basin
- Two 24-inch-diameter drainage pipe culverts
- Outfall structure - outfall pipe will be set at the ordinary high water mark of the Fondren Diversion Channel
- Inflow and overflow weirs with concrete components
- Placement of rock rip rap below the culvert outfall and the weir structures
- Temporary rock filter dam
- Temporary earthen coffer dam

The proposed basin is adjacent to Fondren Diversion Channel north of Belfort Road. The proposed construction of the detention basin would primarily consist of excavation and grading activities below the elevation of the existing wetlands and the grading may be considered discharge of fill material. The proposed permanent impacts to wetlands onsite would consist of loss of 0.91 acres of emergent wetland and 0.022 acres of scrub-shrub wetlands. The purpose of the proposed project is to help reduce the risk of flooding within the Willow Waterhole Bayou drainage area. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 6 sheets.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The applicant has stated that they have avoided and minimized the environmental impacts by running several hydrologic and hydraulic modeling scenarios to assess the flood reduction benefits of detention basins in the Willow Waterhole Bayou Watershed. The applicant states that several alternatives that included additional detention basins (besides Spellman) were considered. The preferred alternative was chosen based on property acquisition cost, socio-economic impact of displacement of residents, demolition costs of existing structures and calculated water surface elevation reductions. The applicant considered an additional scenario that would avoid some impact to existing wetlands on the Spellman Tract. The applicant states that while this considered alternative would avoid some impacts to wetlands, it is not practicable, since the flood risk in the area would not be reduced to desired levels with a smaller detention basin. An Alternative Analysis is enclosed in 9 sheets.

MITIGATION: The applicant proposed to mitigate for the proposed impacts by purchasing credits from the Greens Bayou Wetland Mitigation Bank.

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS: The project site is currently an undeveloped tract of land that contains emergent and scrub-shrub wetlands, surrounded by residential development and adjacent to Willow Waterhole Bayou in Houston, Texas.

NOTES: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This project information has not been verified by the Corps. As of the date of this public notice, the Corps has received but not yet verified the wetland delineation. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 6 sheets.

A preliminary review of this application indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Since permit assessment is a continuing process, this preliminary determination of EIS requirement will be changed if data or information brought forth in the coordination process is of a significant nature.

Our evaluation will also follow the guidelines published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 404 (b)(1) of the CWA.

OTHER AGENCY AUTHORIZATIONS: The project site is not located within the Texas Coastal Zone and therefore, does not require certification from the Texas Coastal Management Program.

This project incorporates the requirements necessary to comply with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Tier I project criteria. Tier I projects are those which result in a direct impact of three acres or less of waters of the state or 1,500 linear feet of streams (or a combination of the two is below the threshold) for which the applicant has incorporated best management practices and other provisions designed to safeguard water quality. The Corps has received a completed checklist and signed statement-fulfilling Tier I criteria for the project. Accordingly, a request for 401 certification is not necessary and there will be no additional TCEQ review.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES: The staff archaeologist has reviewed the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places, lists of properties determined eligible, and other sources of information. The following is current knowledge of the presence or absence of historic properties and the effects of the undertaking upon these properties:

The permit area has been so extensively impacted by previous earth moving activities that there is no potential for historic properties to exist within the permit area. Therefore, the proposed project has no potential to effect historic properties.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: Preliminary indications are that no known threatened and/or endangered species or their critical habitat will be affected by the proposed work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on Essential Fish Habitat or federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW FACTORS: This application will be reviewed in accordance with 33 CFR 320-332, the Regulatory Programs of the Corps, and other pertinent laws, regulations and executive orders. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, 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, which 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, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, 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 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 used in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or an EIS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts upon which a decision by the Corps may be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

PUBLIC HEARING: The purpose of a public hearing is to solicit additional information to assist in the evaluation of the proposed project. Prior to the close of the comment period, any person may make a written request for a public hearing, setting forth the particular reasons for the request. The District Engineer will determine if the reasons identified for holding a public hearing are sufficient to warrant that a public hearing be held. If a public hearing is warranted, all known interested persons will be notified of the time, date, and location.

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to this public notice must reach this office on or before **13 September 2019**. Extensions of the comment period may be granted for valid reasons provided a written request is received by the limiting date. **If no comments are received by that date, it will be considered that there are no objections.** Comments and requests for additional information should reference our file number, **SWG-2018-00722**, and should be submitted to:

Central Unit
Regulatory Division, CESWG-RDE
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229
409-766-3869 Phone
409-766-3931 Fax
swg_public_notice@usace.army.mil

DISTRICT ENGINEER
GALVESTON DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS