



Public Notice

U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers	Permit Application No:	SWG-2015-00662
	Date Issued:	8 September 2016
Galveston District	Comments	
	Due:	11 October 2016

**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: MML SAN JAC BASIN
2557 State Highway 7 East
Center, Texas 75935
POC: Keith Webb
Phone: 936-598-3053

LOCATION: The proposed site is located adjacent to the West Fork of the San Jacinto River, north of Farm-to-Market Road 1791, southwest of Huntsville, in Walker County, Texas. It can be depicted on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map Titled: GALILEE, TX.

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE (NAD 83):
Latitude: 30.6503° North; Longitude: -95.6777° West

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to establish and operate an approximate 379-acre mitigation bank named the Gibbs Brothers Mitigation Bank (GBMB). Mitigation Management, LLC (MML) SAN JAC BASIN is proposing to serve as the Sponsor of the GBMB. The Sponsor proposes to restore, enhance and preserve riverine forested wetland communities along the West Fork of the San Jacinto River to serve as compensatory mitigation of unavoidable, permitted impacts to waters of the United States. The Bank will be established in accordance with the requirements specified in CMLAR §332.8(d)(6) in collaboration with the Corps and the Interagency Review Team.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The specific objectives of the project are to preserve the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the site.

MITIGATION: The applicant proposes to construct a compensatory mitigation bank.

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS: The proposed GBMB site currently consists of 374.3 acres of aquatic resources (wetlands and 21,862 lf tributaries) and 4.3 acres of uplands; within the floodplain of the West Fork of the San Jacinto River in the South Central Plains ecoregion. Current land use for the proposed bank is hay and cattle production/grazing. Surrounding lands are predominantly timber and cattle management, with the notable exception being the approved Spellbottom Mitigation Bank immediately to the south. The site was predominantly forested in 1952. By 1960, the vast majority of the proposed Bank was devoid of forested habitat. Between 1973 and 1983, areas with encroaching woody vegetation appear within the middle to upper portion of the site, along the West Fork of the San Jacinto River. By 1989, these areas were clearly evident. Then between 2002 and 2004, efforts to maintain open fields in the middle section were apparently discontinued as depicted in the 2004 aerial. All open areas have been utilized for cattle grazing or hay production since original clearing. Cattle are not currently restricted from the existing forested areas; however, cattle use is concentrated in the open areas with better grazing. This reach of the river is not a navigable water of the US subject to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbor Act, but it is a water of the US subject to Section 404 of the CWA.

This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This project information has not been verified by the Corps. The wetland delineation has been completed and was verified by the Corps on 17 August 2016. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 21 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.

Although this project may result in a direct impact to less than three acres of waters of the state or less than 1,500 linear feet of streams, the project would impact certain types of rare or ecologically significant wetlands. Therefore, the project is not eligible for inclusion in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Tier I project criteria and an individual water quality certification is required, even though the project is below the Tier I thresholds. Concurrent with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) processing of this application, the TCEQ is reviewing this application under Section 401 of the CWA and in accordance with Title 30, Texas Administrative Code Section 279, 1-13 to determine if the work would comply with State water quality standards. By virtue of an agreement between the Corps and the TCEQ, this public notice is also issued for the purpose of advising all known interested persons that there is pending before the TCEQ a decision on water quality certification under such act. Any comments concerning this application may be submitted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, 401 Coordinator, MSC-150, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas, 78711-3087. The public comment period extends 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. A copy of the public notice with a description of the work is made available for review in the TCEQ's Austin office. The complete application may be reviewed in the Corps office listed in this public notice. The TCEQ may conduct a public meeting to consider all comments concerning water quality if requested in writing. A request for a public meeting must contain the following information: the name, mailing address, application number, or other recognizable reference to the application; a brief description of the interest of the requester, or of persons represented by the requester; and a brief description of how the application, if granted, would adversely affect such interest.

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 proposed project, establishment of a mitigation bank primarily through preservation of existing wetlands and restoration of forested wetlands, is of such limited nature and scope that it has no potential to effect historic properties, even if present within the project area.

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.

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 **11 October 2016**. 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-2015-00662, and should be submitted to:

Policy Analysis Branch
Regulatory Division, CESWG-RD-P
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229
409-766-3869 Phone
409-766-6301 Fax
swg_public_notice@usace.army.mil

DISTRICT ENGINEER
GALVESTON DISTRICT
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