

Appendix B:

Public Involvement and Pertinent Correspondence

Okeechobee Waterway Master Plan Update and Environmental Assessment

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 San Marco Boulevard
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8175

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AUG 28 2017

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

The Honorable Billy Cypress
Chairman, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
P.O. Box 440021, Tamiami Station
Miami, Florida 33144

Dear Chairman Cypress:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you and/or your representatives to participate in updating the Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee Master Plan (LOMP) and to formally initiate Government-to-Government consultation between the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Corps is beginning preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for updating the 1986 OWW and LOMP. A Master Plan is required for each civil works project for which the Corps has administrative responsibility. It serves as a planning document that anticipates what could and should happen at a Corps project, but is flexible enough to address changing conditions. The primary goals of this Master Plan are to update the overall land and water management plan, resource objectives, and associated design and management concepts, which:

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Features considered to be (but not limited to) changed from the current Master Plan are:

a. Conversion of the abandoned campground at Moore Haven West to a Wildlife Management Area with access to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail and day use area. This area could potentially include a new canoe/kayak launching facility and repair or upgrading of the existing boat ramp.

b. Closure of the WP Franklin swim beach. This would entail removing buoys and swimming signs, and the discontinuance of sand re-nourishment. The area could be planted with selected native vegetation, providing additional access paths for shore fishermen and potentially expanding the fishing shoreline. This site could include a canoe/kayak launch.

We intend to pursue an open and public process and recognize the obligations that the Corps has to the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma including consultation under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Pursuant to Executive Order 13175, Section 106 of the NHPA (16 USC 470) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800), and in consideration of the Corps' Trust Responsibilities, we would like to invite the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida to participate in Government-to-Government consultation and initiate coordination with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office regarding potential effects to cultural resources as part of our obligation for continued coordination. Additionally, the Corps would also like to invite you or your designated staff to participate on the Project Delivery Team (PDT) that will be conducting the technical analyses and evaluations in support of the OWW and LOMP. If you elect to attend, please identify the Tribal member(s) or person(s) who would represent the Tribe on the PDT.

If you have any questions regarding information in the Master Plan update, please feel free to contact me or you may contact Stacie Auvenshine at (904) 232-3694 or Stacie.j.auvenshine@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



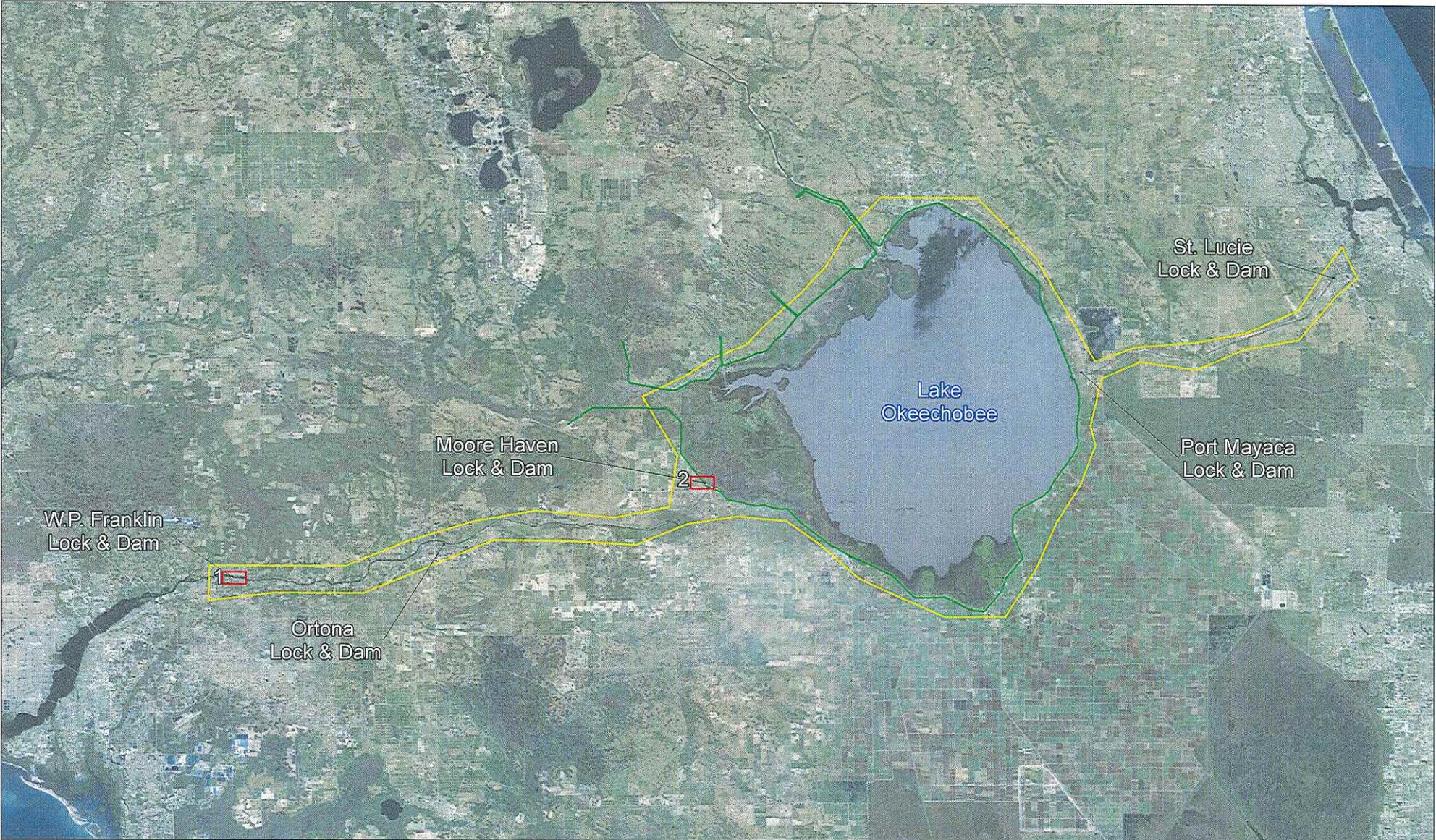
Jason A. Kirk, P.E.
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

Enclosure

cc:

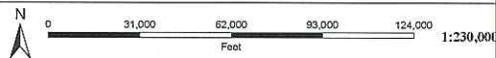
Fred Dayhoff, NAGPRA Representative, Consultant to Miccosukee Tribe,
HC 61 SR 68 Old Loop Road, Ochopee, FL 34141

Kevin Donaldson, Real Estate Services, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida,
P.O. Box 440021, Tamiami Station, Miami, FL 33144
Gene Duncan, Director Water Resources Department, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of
Florida, P.O. Box 440021, Tamiami Station, Miami, FL 33144



Index Map
 Map Author: E. Butler
 Map Reviewer: J. Yearwood
 Date Created: 7/14/2017
 Document Name: Lake Okeechobee PMP Scope Title
 Imagery: ESRI Maps
 Basemap: ESRI Imagery 2013
Doc Path: P:\OMVC_PMP\ARC/Lake Okeechobee PMP Scope Title.mxd

Central and South Florida Project Okeechobee Waterway



- Legend**
- Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail
 - Focus Areas
 - Project Area





W.P. Franklin Beach

Park Way

Pine Ave

Franklin Lock Rd

Driveway

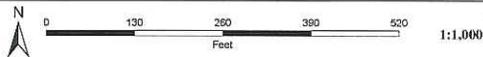
Sessler Rd



US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT

Page 1 of 2
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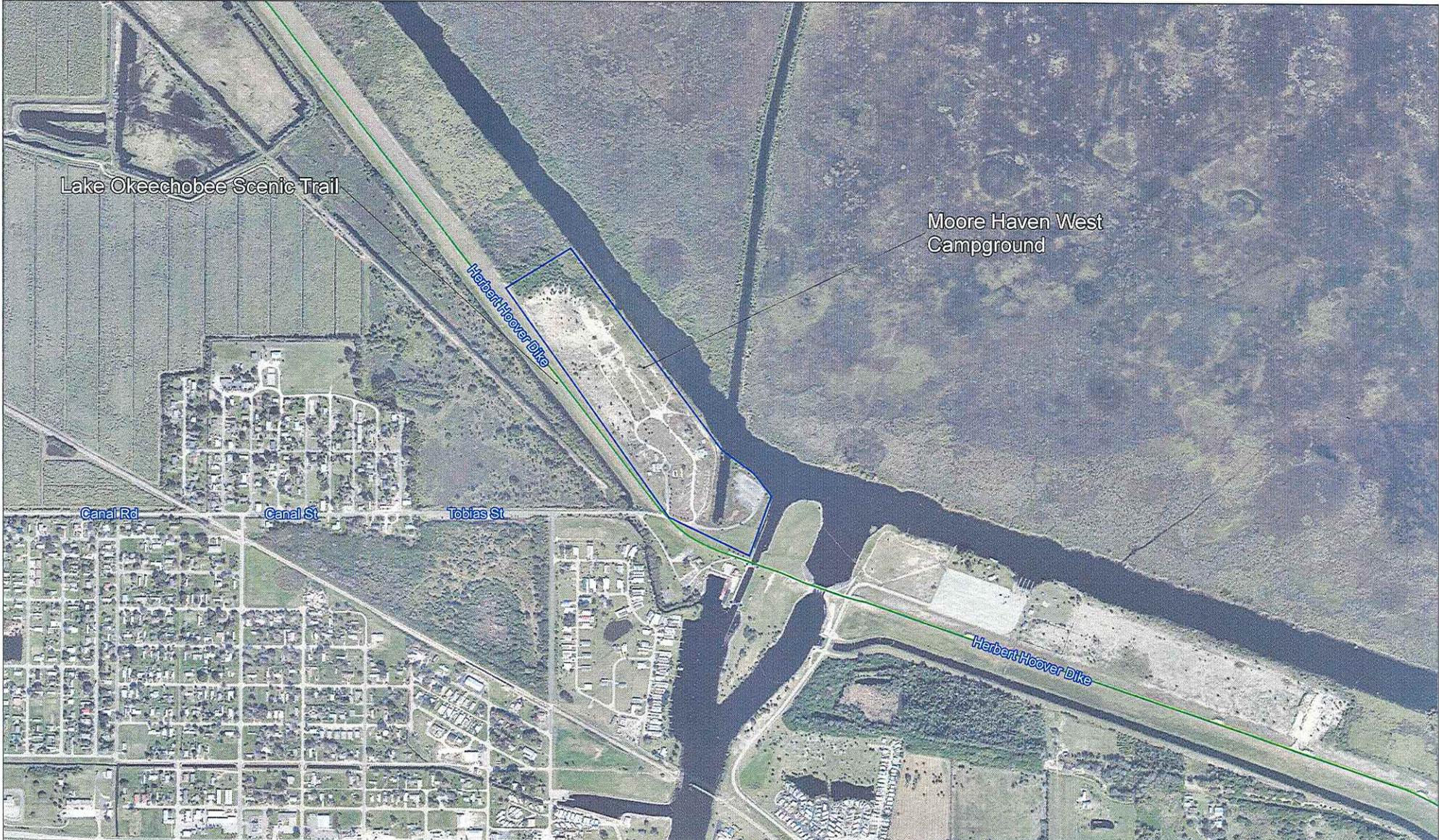
Central and South Florida Project
 Okeechobee Waterway



Legend

- Swimming Beach





Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail

Moore Haven West
Campground

Herbert Hoover Dike

Herbert Hoover Dike

Canal Rd

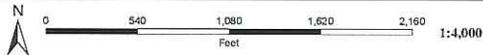
Canal St

Tobias St

Central and South Florida Project
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Page 2 of 2
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- Legend**
- Moore Haven Campground
 - Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 San Marco Boulevard
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8175

AUG 28 2017

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

The Honorable Leonard M. Harjo
Chairman, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 1498
Wewoka, OK 74884

Dear Chairman Harjo:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you and/or your representatives to participate in updating the Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee Master Plan (LOMP) and to formally initiate Government-to-Government consultation between the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Corps is beginning preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for updating the 1986 OWW and LOMP. A Master Plan is required for each civil works project for which the Corps has administrative responsibility. It serves as a planning document that anticipates what could and should happen at a Corps project, but is flexible enough to address changing conditions. The primary goals of this Master Plan are to update the overall land and water management plan, resource objectives, and associated design and management concepts, which:

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Sincerely,



Jason A. Kirk, P.E.
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

Enclosure

cc:

Theodore Isham, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Historic Preservation Officer,
P.O. Box 1498 Wewoka, OK 74884

Mickey Douglas, Environmental Protection Office, Director, P.O. Box 1498,
Wewoka, OK 74884



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701 San Marco Boulevard
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8175

AUG 28 2017

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

The Honorable Marcellus Osceola Jr.
Chairman, Seminole Tribe of Florida
6300 Sterling Road
Hollywood, FL 33024

Dear Chairman Osceola:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you and/or your representatives to participate in updating the Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee Master Plan (LOMP) and to formally initiate Government-to-Government consultation between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Corps is beginning preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for updating the 1986 OWW and LOMP. A Master Plan is required for each civil works project for which the Corps has administrative responsibility. It serves as a planning document that anticipates what could and should happen at a Corps project, but is flexible enough to address changing conditions. The primary goals of this Master Plan are to update the overall land and water management plan, resource objectives, and associated design and management concepts, which:

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Sincerely,


Jason A. Kirk, P.E.
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

Enclosure

cc:

Paul N. Backhouse, Ph.D., Seminole Tribe of Florida, Tribal Historic Preservation
Officer, Ah Tha Thi Ki Museum, 30290 Josie Billie Hwy, PMB 1004, Clewiston, FL 33440

Cherise Maples, Director, Environmental Resource Management, Seminole Tribe of Florida, 6300 Stirling Road, Hollywood, FL 33024

Manuel Tiger, Big Cypress General Council Office, Seminole Tribe of Florida, Council Representative, 31000 Josie Billie Highway, Clewiston, FL 33440

Joe Frank, Big Cypress Board Representative, Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc., Big Cypress Board Office, 31000 Josie Billie Hwy., Clewiston, FL 33440

Jim Shore, General Counsel, Seminole Tribe of Florida, 6300 Stirling Road, Hollywood, FL 33024

Michelle Diffenderfer, Lewis, Longman and Walker, 515 N Flagler Drive, Suite 1500, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Patricia Powers, Bose Public Affairs Group, 2000 M Street, N.W., Suite 520, Washington, D.C. 20036

Stephen A. Walker, Outside Counsel, Lewis, Longman and Walker, 515 North Flagler Drive, Suite 1500, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

From: Auvenshine, Stacie J CIV USARMY CESAJ (US)
To: ["timothy_breen@fws.gov"](mailto:timothy_breen@fws.gov)
Cc: [LoSchiavo, Andrew J CIV USARMY CESAJ \(US\)](#)
Subject: Okeechobee Waterway Master Plan Update USFWS Coordination
Date: Monday, February 12, 2018 2:16:00 PM
Attachments: [OWW Master Plan Update Maps.pdf](#)

Hi Tim,

The Corps is updating the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee (LO) Master Plan (see attached figure for the location). Updating the Master Plan requires a NEPA analysis and coordination with the USFWS.

The Master Plan serves as a planning document that anticipates what could and should happen at a Corps project with respect to land use and in particular, recreation uses. The plan is flexible enough to address changing conditions. The primary goals of this Master Plan are to update the overall land and water management plan, resource objectives, and associated design and management concepts, which (1) provide the best possible combination of responses to regional needs; (2) contribute toward providing a high degree of recreation diversity within the region; (3) emphasize the particular qualities, characteristics, and potentials of the project; and (4) exhibit consistency and compatibility with national objectives and other state and regional goals and programs.

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Because there are no significant construction or operational changes within this update, the Corps does not think any of the alternatives or updating of the features within the master plan would negatively affect any listed species, and therefore is determining No Effect. Conversion of the abandoned campground into a wildlife management area might lead to beneficial effects to listed and non-listed species. Please let me know how you would like to proceed, if you have any questions, and/or would like to discuss, I am available at 904-314-7614.

Thanks!
Stacie

Stacie Auvenshine
US Army Corps of Engineers
Restoration and Resources Section
Environmental Branch, Planning Division
Cell: 904-314-7614
stacie.j.auvenshine@usace.army.mil
Schedule:
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday out of the Gainesville office



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 San Marco Boulevard
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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AUG 31 2017

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

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We invite the participation of federal and state agencies, Native American Tribes, local agencies, interested parties, and individuals interested in providing comments and identifying any issues or concerns. Please share this notice with any interested party. Please send any comments you may have to the attention of Stacie Auvenshine at the letterhead address or email OWW MasterPlan@usace.army.mil within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter. All individuals who respond with comments will be included in future mailings. Others may be added to the mailing list by making a written request to the same address or by email.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gina Paduano Ralph".

Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Encl

Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee (LO) Master Plan
NEPA Scoping Comments
US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
September 25 2017

Tribal Coordination: Upon review of the scoping package (dated August 31, 2017), the EPA acknowledges that the Jacksonville District, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has requested consultation with the appropriate tribes (Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and Seminole Tribe of Florida). For NEPA disclosure, the EPA recommends the USACE include feedback and input provided by the tribes within the NEPA document. Additionally, the EPA works closely with both the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida on environmental matters and is committed to working with other federal partners to prioritize the Tribes' water quality and water management concerns. EPA encourages consultation and coordination with the Tribes at all levels of decision-making.

Water Quality: The EPA understands that the updated Master Plan will include alternatives to construct canoe/boat launching facilities. The EPA recommends the USACE consult with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to determine these alternative's potential impacts to waterbodies listed on the 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies. The EPA also recommends any water quality impacts be disclosed within the NEPA document.

Wetlands: The EPA recommends the USACE identify all jurisdictional wetlands that will be potentially impacted and disclose these impacts in the NEPA document. Additionally, the EPA encourages the USACE to avoid and minimize wetland impacts when appropriate and mitigate wetland impacts as necessary.

Environmental Justice: The EPA recommends the USACE consider the proposed project's impacts to low income, minority populations as described in "Executive Order 12898 -Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" (February 16, 1994). The EPA notes that recreational uses associated with the closure of the WP Franklin swim beach might have negative impacts to EJ communities while addition of canoe/boat launching facilities and other facilities might have positive impacts to EJ communities. Additionally, the EPA encourages the USACE to outreach to low income, minority communities with meaningful engagement to solicit their input regarding changes to the LO and OWW.

Fish and Wildlife: As described in the public notice, the USACE proposes to evaluate the conversion of the abandoned Moore Haven West campground to a Wildlife Management Area. The EPA encourages the USACE to outreach to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other appropriate local governmental and non-governmental organizations and academia to ensure the most beneficial, scientifically based techniques and methodology for this conversion process.

Recreation: The public notice describes the addition and/or alteration of several recreational features of LO and OWW. As previously described, the EPA recommends that USACE

collaborate closely with the FWC, USFWS and other wildlife experts to ensure these new recreational facilities are with the proposed Wildlife Management Area. The EPA also recommends the USACE consult with recreational user groups such as fishermen, paddlers, etc. and organizations that represent these user groups to ensure potential recreational facilities will be of most use to the targeted users.



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1989 I HAVE WARNED YOU OF TOO MUCH TRAFFIC OF PUBLIC CONTACT WITH BAD WATER QUALITY FOR PUBLIC

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CHANGES NEED TO BE MORE LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ACTIONS ON OUR WATERWAYS SIR

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AGAIN TO MUCH PEOPLE TRAFFIC WITH OUT ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT DAMAGE TO WILD LIFE SIR

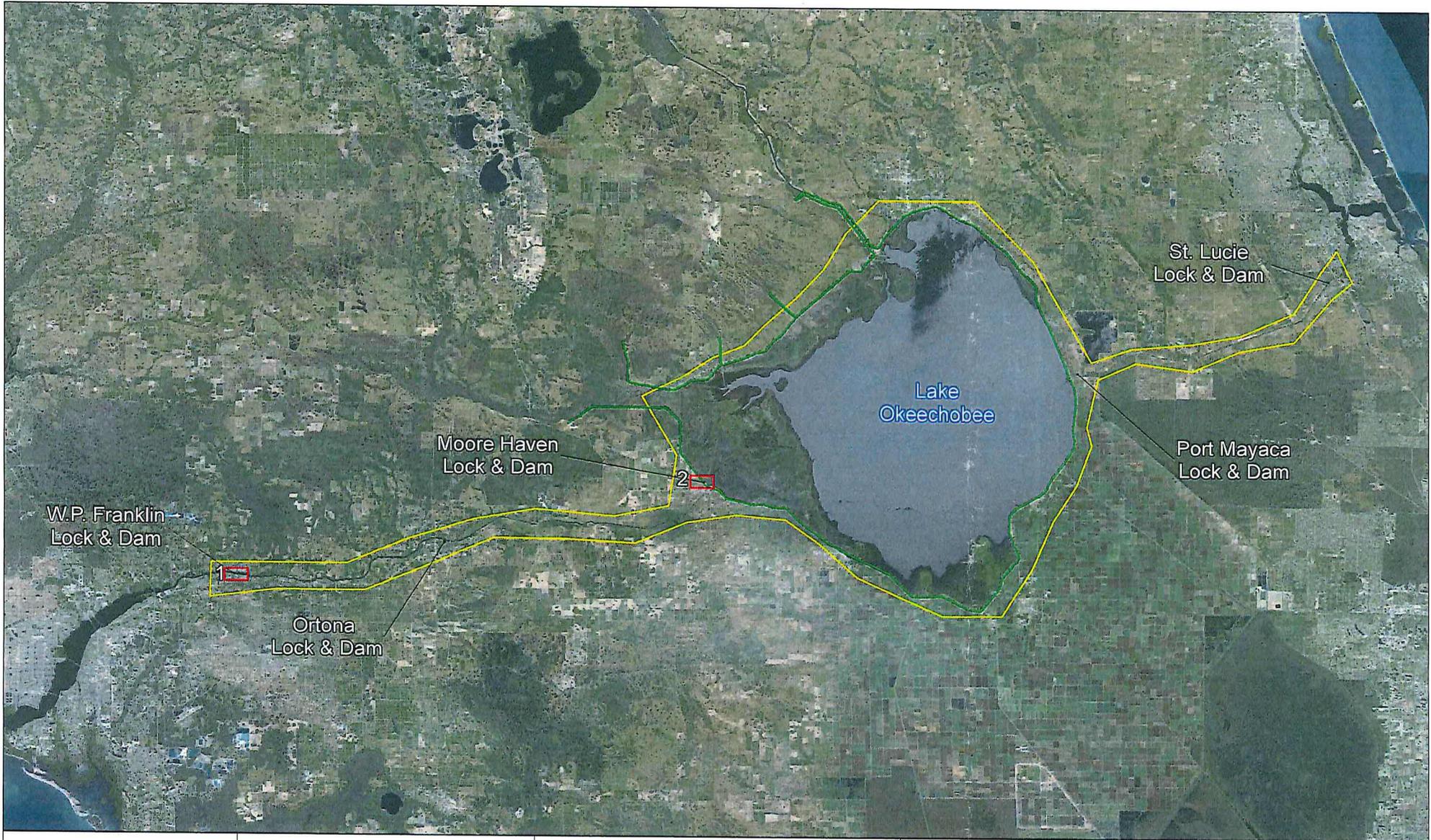
PLEASE WAKE UP SOON DRUGIES OUT TO DAMAGE OUR WILD LIFE SIR NO LAW ENFORCEMENT ON OUR LAKE OKEECHOBEE SIR.

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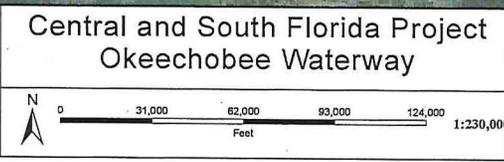
my concern is that we do not
have any law enforcement to protect our
wild life in these areas
Sincerely,
Gina

Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Encl



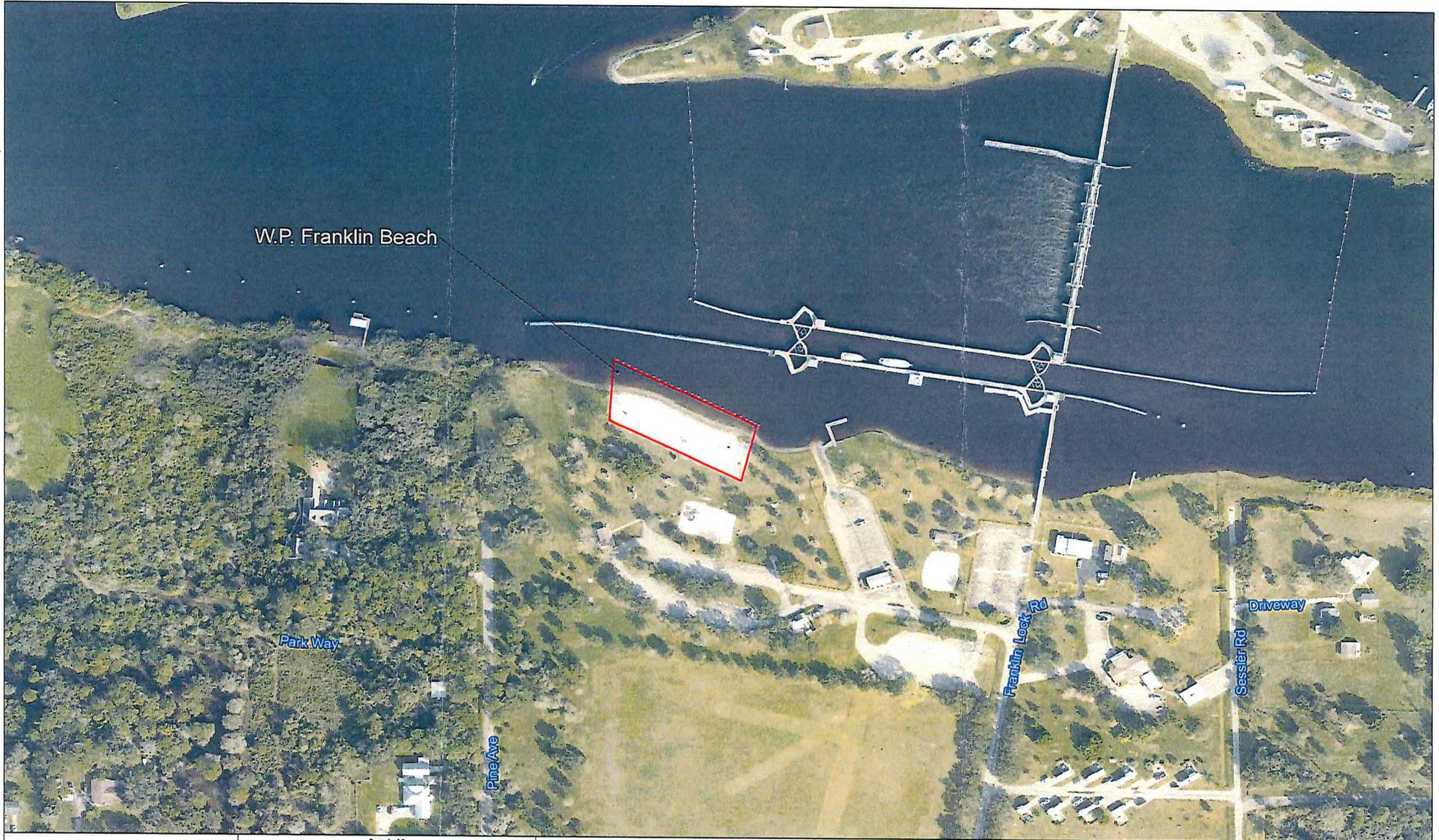
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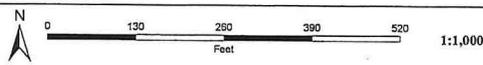
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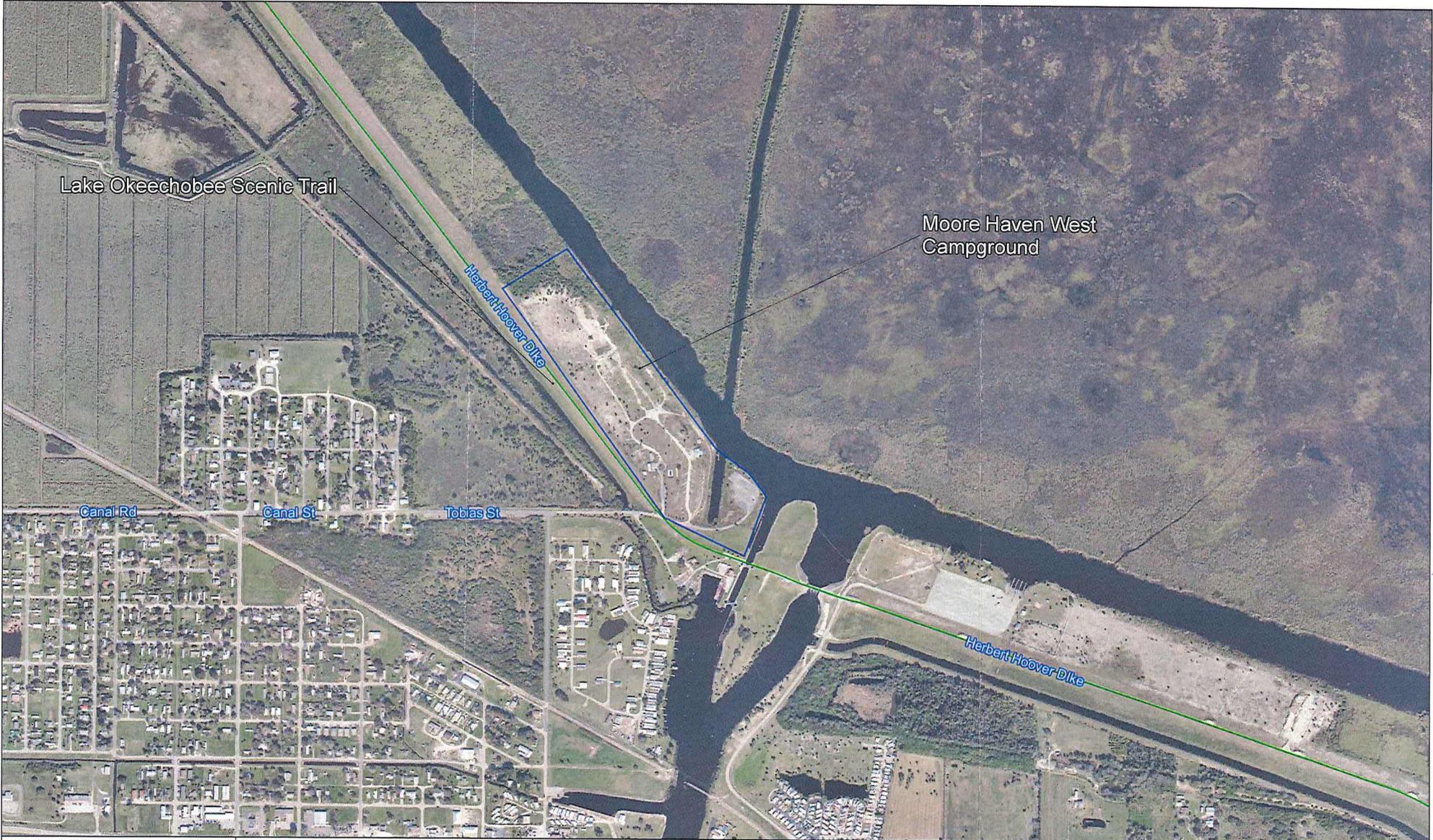
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Herbert Hoover Dike

Canal Rd

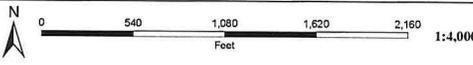
Canal St

Tobias St



Page 2 of 2
 W.P. Franklin Beach
 Map Author: E. Butler
 Map Reviewer: J. Yearwood
 Date Created: 7/19/2017
 Document Name: Lake Okeechobee PMP Scope pages
 Imagery: ESRI Maps
 Basemap: ESRI Imagery 2013
 Doc Path: P:\DMW\FMP\MED\Lake Okeechobee PMP Scope pages.mxd

Central and South Florida Project
 Okeechobee Waterway



Legend

- Moore Haven Campground
- Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Avenue South

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

September 21, 2017 F/SER46:MS/RS

Colonel Jason A. Kirk
District Commander, Jacksonville District
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
P. O. Box 4970
Planning and Policy Division, Environmental Branch
Jacksonville, Florida 32207-8175

Dear Colonel Kirk:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Habitat Conservation Division has reviewed your staff's scoping letter dated August 31, 2017, indicating the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is preparing a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for updating the 1986 Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee (LO) Master Plan. The project is located in south central Florida within Glades, Hendry, Lee, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and Martin Counties. This Master Plan update will include current and projected future land use and recreational sites adjacent to the OWW and LO Project, and does not include Lake Okeechobee operations or Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation components.

Estuarine habitats downstream of the OWW and LO Study Areas include mangrove wetlands, estuarine emergent marsh, and submerged aquatic vegetation, identified by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council as essential fish habitat (EFH). Federal agencies that permit, authorize, or fund activities potentially impacting EFH are required to consult with NMFS and, as a part of the consultation process, prepare an EFH assessment. Based upon requirements in NMFS implementing regulations, an EFH assessment for the project should include:

1. an analysis of the effects (including direct, indirect and cumulative effects) of proposed WERP activities on EFH, associated federally managed fisheries, and their prey within portions of the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries, Ten Thousand Islands and Florida Bay;
2. management actions taken to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to EFH;
3. the USACE's views regarding the effects of these activities on EFH and managed species; and,
4. proposed compensatory mitigation and adaptive management strategies, if unavoidable adverse impacts would result to EFH from the proposed activities.



The EFH consultation can be initiated independent of other project review tasks or can be incorporated in environmental planning documents, such as the NEPA analysis. Upon review of the EFH assessment, NMFS will determine if it is necessary to provide EFH conservation recommendations on the project.

Finally, the project area is within the known distribution limits of a federally listed threatened species under purview of NMFS. In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended, it is your responsibility to review this proposal and identify actions potentially affecting endangered or threatened species, and/or their designated critical habitat. Determinations involving listed species should be reported to our Protected Resources Division at the letterhead address. If it is determined the activities may adversely affect any ESA listed species and/or their critical habitats, formal consultation must be initiated.

If you have questions regarding NMFS' review of this project, please contact Mr. Mark Sramek at the letterhead address, by telephone at (727) 824-5311, or e-mail at Mark.Sramek@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia M. Fay".

Virginia M. Fay
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee (LO) Master Plan NEPA Scoping Comment Response Matrix

Reviewer	Comment	Corps Response
Bullsugar Alliance	Bullsugar Alliance would like to be added to your mailing list	The Corps has added your organization of the mailing list for this project
USEPA	Tribal Coordination: Upon review of the scoping package (dated August 31, 2017), the EPA acknowledges that the Jacksonville District, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has requested consultation with the appropriate tribes (Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and Seminole Tribe of Florida). For NEPA disclosure, the EPA recommends the USACE include feedback and input provided by the tribes within the NEPA document. Additionally, the EPA works closely with both the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida on environmental matters and is committed to working with other federal partners to prioritize the Tribes' water quality and water management concerns. EPA encourages consultation and coordination with the Tribes at all levels of decision-making.	The Corps will provide documentation of feedback or input from government to government consultation with the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida.
USEPA	Water Quality: The EPA understands that the updated Master Plan will include alternatives to construct canoe/boat launching facilities. The EPA recommends the USACE consult with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to determine these alternative's potential impacts to waterbodies listed on the 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies. The EPA also recommends any water quality impacts be disclosed within the NEPA document.	Water quality will be discussed within the NEPA document, however, a canoe/kayak launch would not be expected to negatively impact water quality. The Corps will coordinate with FDEP through the NEPA process and also through the permitting process.

Reviewer	Comment	Corps Response
USEPA	<p>Wetlands: The EPA recommends the USACE identify all jurisdictional wetlands that will be potentially impacted and disclose these impacts in the NEPA document. Additionally, the EPA encourages the USACE to avoid and minimize wetland impacts when appropriate and mitigate wetland impacts as necessary.</p>	<p>Any impacts to wetlands will be addressed in the NEPA document</p>
USEPA	<p>Environmental Justice: The EPA recommends the USACE consider the proposed project’s impacts to low income, minority populations as described in “Executive Order 12898 -Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” (February 16, 1994). The EPA notes that recreational uses associated with the closure of the WP Franklin swim beach might have negative impacts to EJ communities while addition of canoe/boat launching facilities and other facilities might have positive impacts to EJ communities. Additionally, the EPA encourages the USACE to outreach to low income, minority communities with meaningful engagement to solicit their input regarding changes to the LO and OWW.</p>	<p>The Corps will evaluate the project’s effects on low income and minority populations. We agree that the beach closure could impact populations who use the beach for swimming. However, people will still be able to fish and would potentially benefit from a canoe/kayak launch.</p>
USEPA	<p>Fish and Wildlife: As described in the public notice, the USACE proposes to evaluate the conversion of the abandoned Moore Haven West campground to a Wildlife Management Area. The EPA encourages the USACE to outreach to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other appropriate local governmental and non-governmental organizations and academia to ensure the most beneficial, scientifically based techniques and methodology for this conversion process</p>	<p>The Corps will apply the best available science to the effects analysis, and coordinate with state and federal wildlife management agencies as applicable to proposed action.</p>

Reviewer	Comment	Corps Response
USEPA	<p>Recreation: The public notice describes the addition and/or alteration of several recreational features of LO and OWW. As previously described, the EPA recommends that USACE collaborate closely with the FWC, USFWS and other wildlife experts to ensure these new recreational facilities are with the proposed Wildlife Management Area. The EPA also recommends the USACE consult with recreational user groups such as fishermen, paddlers, etc. and organizations that represent these user groups to ensure potential recreational facilities will be of most use to the targeted users.</p>	<p>The Corps will be circulating the Master Plan and Environmental Assessment during the public review process for 60 days. We will consult with all other agencies and the public during that time.</p>
Public (Robert Norton)	<p>Highlighted last part of first paragraph (see scanned comment in Correspondence Appendix: 1989 I have warned you of to [sic] much interest of public contact with bad water quality for public.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
	<p>Features considered to be changed but not limited to: Changes need to be more law enforcement to actions on our water ways Sir.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
	<p>This area could include a new canoe/kayak launching facility and repair or upgrading of the existing boat ramp: To [sic] much people traffic without any law enforcement Sir</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
	<p>Closure of beach: Again to much people traffic without any law enforcement damage to wildlife sir. Please wake up soon druggies out to damage our wildlife sir. No law enforcement on our lake Okeechobee Sir.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
	<p>My concern is that we do not have any law enforcement to protect our wildlife in these areas Sir.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>

Reviewer	Comment	Corps Response
National Marine Fisheries Service	<p>Estuarine habitats downstream of the OWW and LO Study Areas include mangrove wetlands, estuarine emergent marsh, and submerged aquatic vegetation, identified by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council as essential fish habitat (EFH). Federal agencies that permit, authorize or fund activities potentially impacting EFH are required to consult with NMFS and, as a part of the consultation process, prepare an EFH assessment. Based upon requirements in NMFS implementing regulations, an EFH assessment for the project should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And analysis of effect (including direct, indirect, and cumulative) of proposed WERP activities on EFH, associated federally managed fisheries, and their prey within portions of the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries, Ten Thousand Islands and Florida Bay; • Management actions taken to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to EFH • The USACE’s views regarding the effects of these activities on EFH and managed species; and <i>(continued)</i> 	<p>The WERP project will evaluate effects on EFH as you described in your comment. The LO and OWW Master Plan would not affect EFH; the plan will describe recreational features of the master plan and potentially take out buoys in an existing swim area and add a canoe/kayak launch.</p>
National Marine Fisheries Service	<p><i>(continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed compensatory mitigation and adaptive management strategies, if unavoidable adverse impacts would result to EFH from the proposed activities. 	<p>The WERP project will evaluate effects on EFH as you described in your comment. The LO and OWW Master Plan would not affect EFH; the plan will describe recreational features of the master plan and potentially take out buoys in an existing swim area and add a canoe/kayak launch.</p>

Reviewer	Comment	Corps Response
National Marine Fisheries Service	The EFH consultation can be initiated independent of other project review tasks or can be incorporated in environmental planning documents, such as the NEPA analysis. Upon review of the EFH assessment, NMFS will determine if it is necessary to provide EFH conservation recommendations on the project.	EFH analysis will be included in the NEPA document.
National Marine Fisheries Service	Finally, the project area is within the known distribution limits of a federally listed threatened species under purview of NFMS. In accordance with the ESA of 1973, as amended, it is your responsibility to review this proposal and identify actions potentially affecting endangered or threatened species, and/or their designated critical habitat. Determinations involving listed species should be reported to our PRD at the letterhead address. If it is determined the activities may adversely affect any ESA listed species and/or their critical habitats, formal consultation must be initiated.	Analysis of potential effects on listed species will be described in NEPA document.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUN 04 2016

Mr. Fred Dayhoff, Tribal Representative
NAGPRA, Section 106
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
HC 61 SR 68
Ochopee, Florida 34141

Re: Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach Counties, Florida

Dear Mr. Dayhoff:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (Corps), has developed a combined Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW). The OWW Master Plan study serves as a planning document that provides a management overview of Corps project lands, facilities, and easements along 155 miles of navigable waterway between Stuart and Ft. Myers, Florida (Figure 1). In addition, this document describes several future anticipated actions at the Moore Haven Lock and Dam Complex in Glades County and the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam Complex in Lee County, Florida.

The OWW study identified 137 previously recorded cultural resources located on Corps-owned real property, Corps-maintained waterways (the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee canals), and on properties with Corps-held easements. Many of these resources are located in historic districts or are associated with the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD). These easements were primarily acquired for the construction and maintenance of the Lake Okeechobee Waterway and the HHD. One of the sites identified during this study (8PB16178) is a prehistoric site that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), six sites have not been evaluated but are potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP, (8GL33, 8GL41, 8GL55, 8HN18, 8LL772, and 8OB23), and two reportedly contain burial resources (8HN17 and 8LL73). There are no undertakings currently proposed for these sites.

In addition to the Master Plan, the Corps is considering the environmental effects of proposed future actions. These potential actions include the redevelopment of the currently abandoned Moore Haven campground and boat ramp, or the conversion of the abandoned campground into wildlife management area with a kayak launch. The Corps is also considering the closure of the swim beach, installation of native shoreline vegetation, and the installation of a floating canoe/kayak launch at the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam. These proposed recreational changes are tentative and have not been subject to planning or design; therefore, a precise area of potential effects or an assessment of effects cannot be stated at this time. If approved, each undertaking would be subject to consultation and consideration of effects once a design has been developed and prior to construction.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108), as amended and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800), and in consideration of the Corps' Trust Responsibilities to the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, the Corps kindly requests your comments on the determination of no effect within 30 days from receipt of this letter. Currently, there are no defined undertakings planned. An evaluation of historic properties and subsequent determination of effects for any future projects that are associated with this EA will be coordinated with your office prior to any Federal undertaking. If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Jason D. Moser at 904-232-3028 or e-mail at Jason.D.Moser@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gina Paduano Ralph', is written over the typed name and title.

Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure

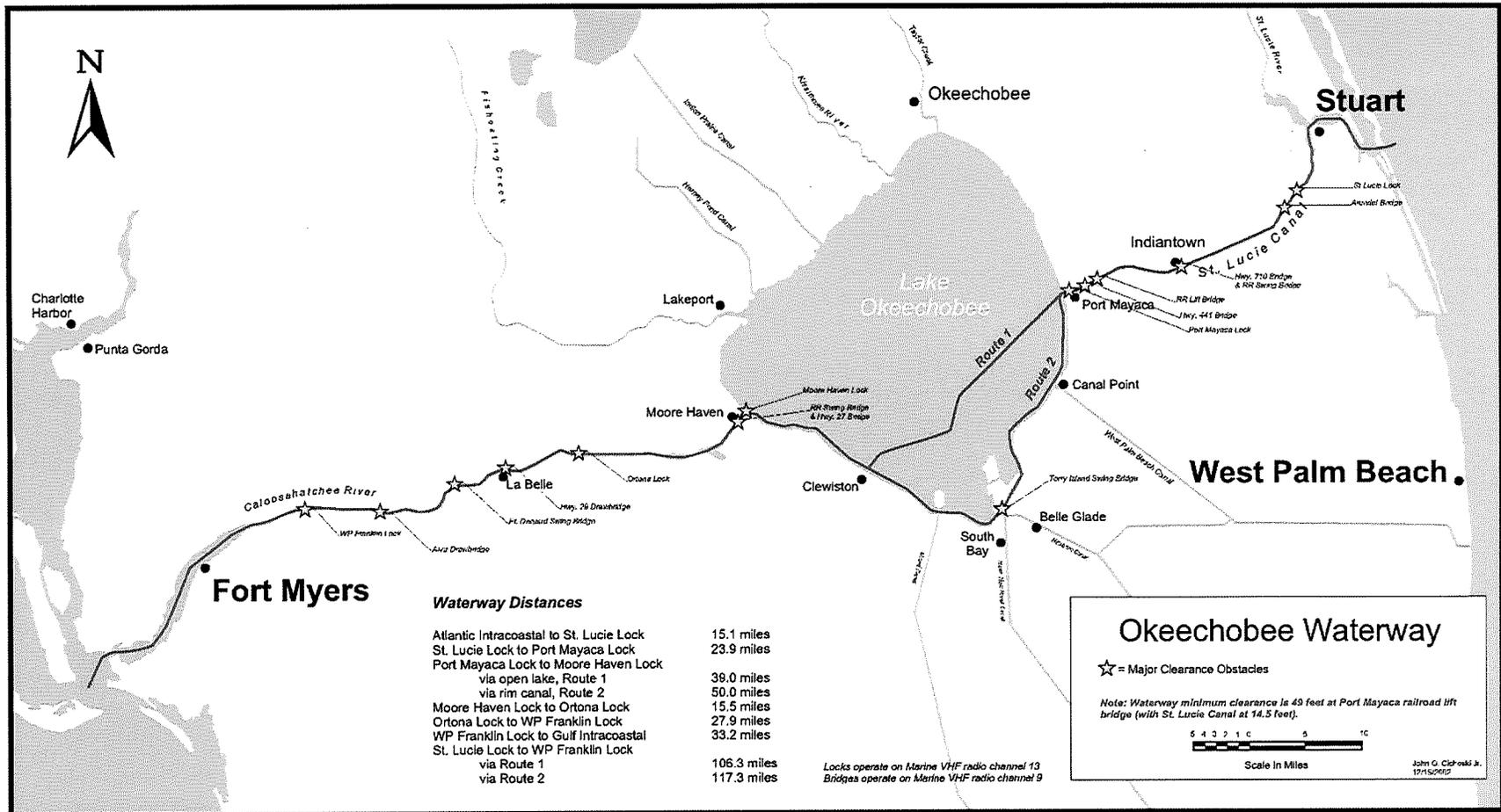


Figure 1. Recreational master plan study area.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

1 JUN 04 2018

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

Tim Parsons, Ph.D., SHPO
Division of Historical Resources
State Historic Preservation Officer
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Re: Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach Counties, Florida

Dear Dr. Parsons:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (Corps), has developed a combined Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW). The OWW Master Plan study serves as a planning document that provides a management overview of Corps project lands, facilities, and easements along 155 miles of navigable waterway between Stuart and Ft. Myers, Florida (Figure 1). In addition, this document describes several future anticipated actions at the Moore Haven Lock and Dam Complex in Glades County and the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam Complex in Lee County, Florida.

The OWW study identified 137 previously recorded cultural resources located on Corps-owned real property, Corps-maintained waterways (the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee canals), and on properties with Corps-held easements. Many of these resources are located in historic districts or are associated with the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD). These easements were primarily acquired for the construction and maintenance of the Lake Okeechobee Waterway and the HHD. One of the sites identified during this study (8PB16178) is a prehistoric site that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), six sites have not been evaluated but are potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP, (8GL33, 8GL41, 8GL55, 8HN18, 8LL772, and 8OB23), and two reportedly contain burial resources (8HN17 and 8LL73). There are no undertakings currently proposed for these sites.

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Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108), as amended and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800), the Corps kindly requests your continued consultation on this study. Currently, there are no defined undertakings planned. An evaluation of historic properties and subsequent determination of effects for any future projects that are associated with this EA will be coordinated with your office prior to any Federal undertaking. Please send any comments within 30 calendar days of receipt of this letter. If there are any questions or comments, please contact Mr. Jason Moser at 904-232-3028 or by email at Jason.D.Moser@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



Gina Paquano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure

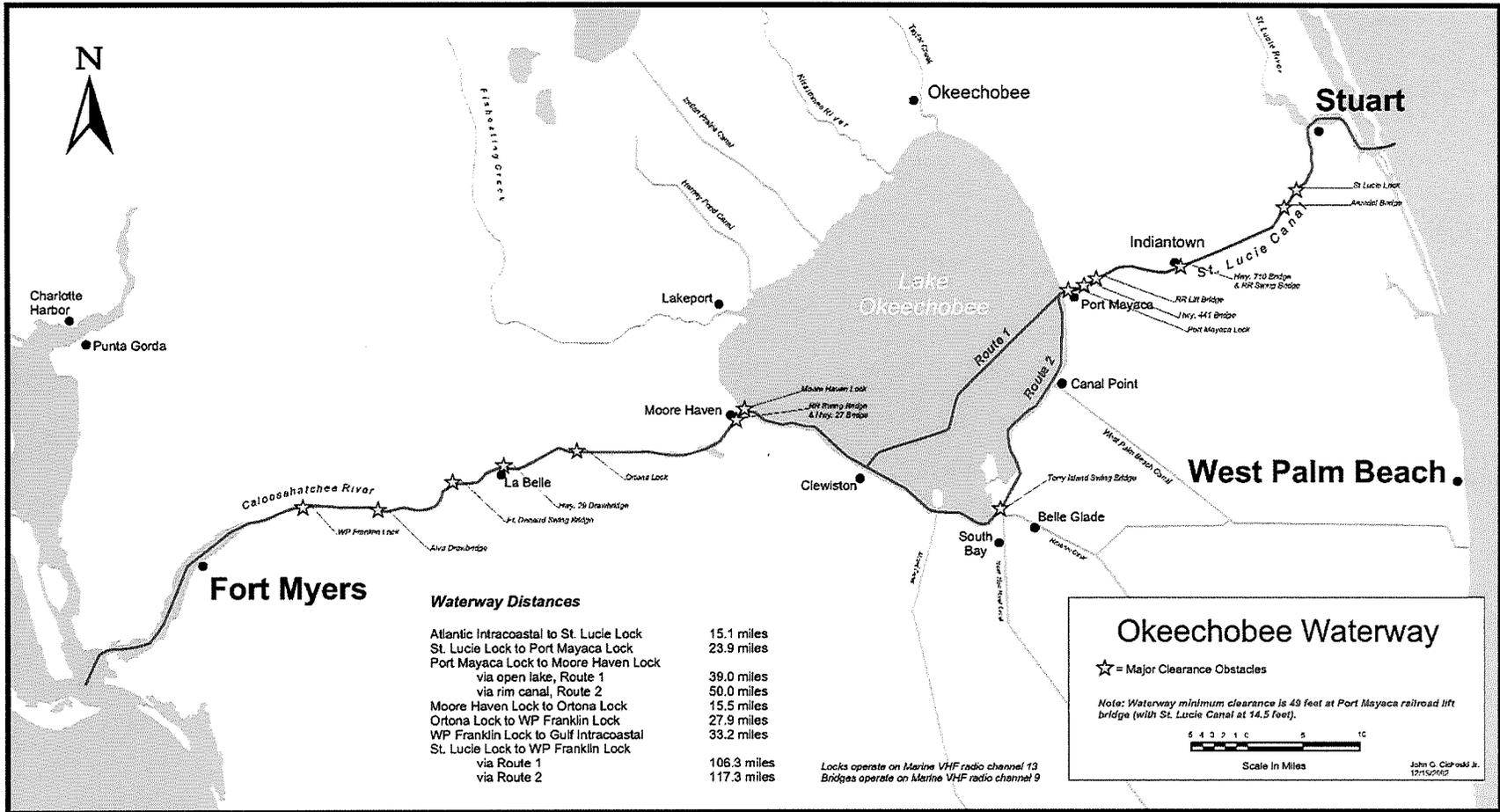


Figure 1. Recreational master plan study area.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUN 04 2018

Dr. Paul Backhouse, THPO
Seminole Tribe of Florida
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
30290 Josie Billie Highway
PMP 1004
Clewiston, FL 33440

Re: Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach Counties, Florida

Dear Dr. Backhouse:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (Corps), has developed a combined Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW). The OWW Master Plan study serves as a planning document that provides a management overview of Corps project lands, facilities, and easements along 155 miles of navigable waterway between Stuart and Ft. Myers, Florida (Figure 1). In addition, this document describes several future anticipated actions at the Moore Haven Lock and Dam Complex in Glades County and the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam Complex in Lee County, Florida.

The OWW study identified 137 previously recorded cultural resources located on Corps-owned real property, Corps-maintained waterways (the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee canals), and on properties with Corps-held easements. Many of these resources are located in historic districts or are associated with the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD). These easements were primarily acquired for the construction and maintenance of the Lake Okeechobee Waterway and the HHD. One of the sites identified during this study (8PB16178) is a prehistoric site that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), six sites have not been evaluated but are potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP, (8GL33, 8GL41, 8GL55, 8HN18, 8LL772, and 8OB23), and two reportedly contain burial resources (8HN17 and 8LL73). There are no undertakings currently proposed for these sites.

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Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108), as amended and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800), and in consideration of the Corps' Trust Responsibilities to the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Corps kindly requests your comments on the determination of no effect within 30 days from receipt of this letter. Currently, there are no defined undertakings planned. An evaluation of historic properties and subsequent determination of effects for any future projects that are associated with this EA will be coordinated with your office prior to any Federal undertaking. If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Jason D. Moser at 904-232-3028 or e-mail at Jason.D.Moser@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure

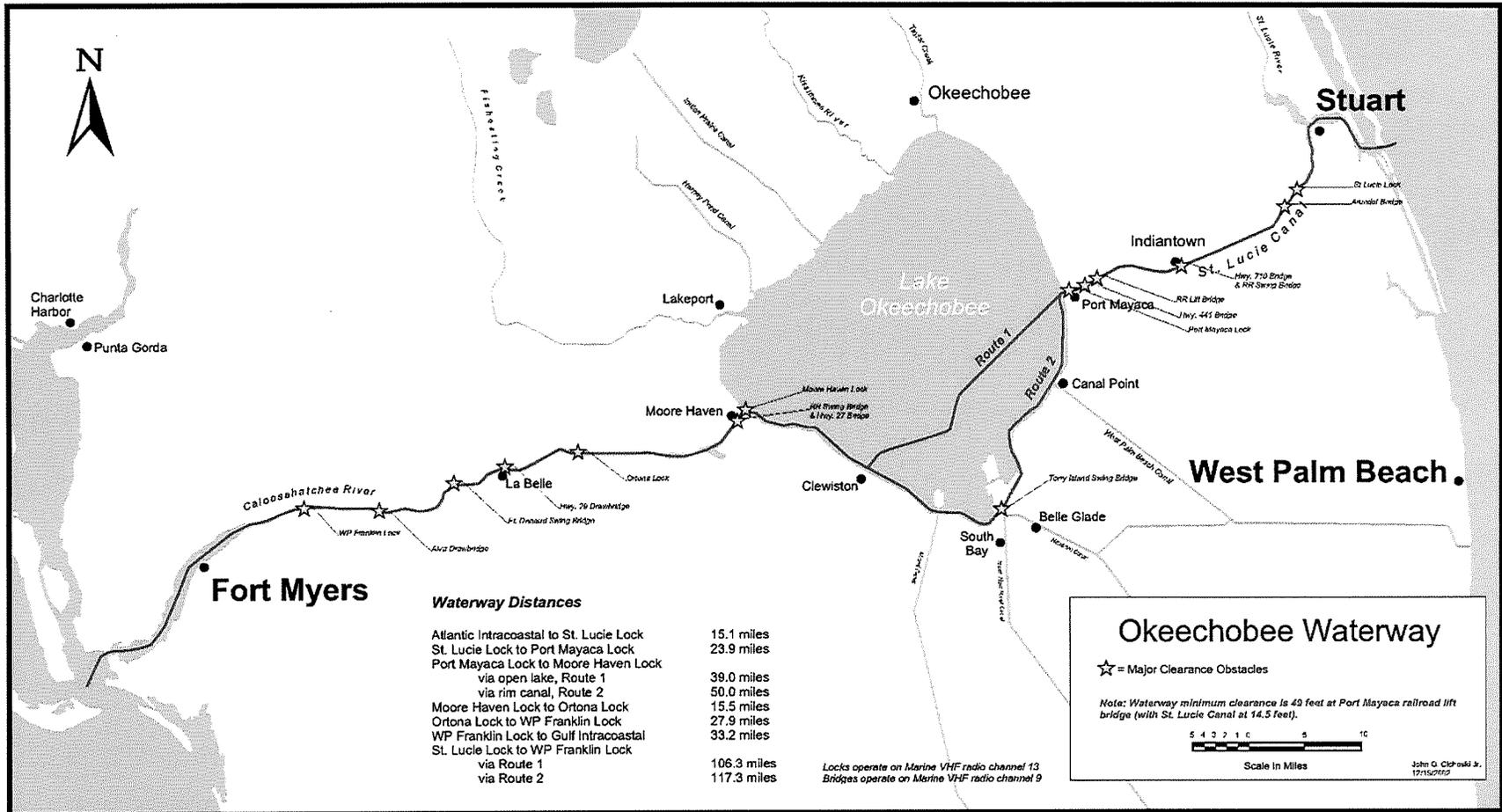


Figure 1. Recreational master plan study area.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUN 04 2018

Mr. Theodore Isham
Historic Preservation Officer
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
PO Box 1498
Wewoka, Ok 74884

Re: Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach Counties, Florida

Dear Mr. Isham:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (Corps), has developed a combined Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW). The OWW Master Plan study serves as a planning document that provides a management overview of Corps project lands, facilities, and easements along 155 miles of navigable waterway between Stuart and Ft. Myers, Florida (Figure 1). In addition, this document describes several future anticipated actions at the Moore Haven Lock and Dam Complex in Glades County and the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam Complex in Lee County, Florida.

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Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108), as amended and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800), and in consideration of the Corps' Trust Responsibilities to the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, the Corps kindly requests your comments on the determination of no effect within 30 days from receipt of this letter. Currently, there are no defined undertakings planned. An evaluation of historic properties and subsequent determination of effects for any future projects that are associated with this EA will be coordinated with your office prior to any Federal undertaking. If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Jason D. Moser at 904-232-3028 or e-mail at Jason.D.Moser@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure

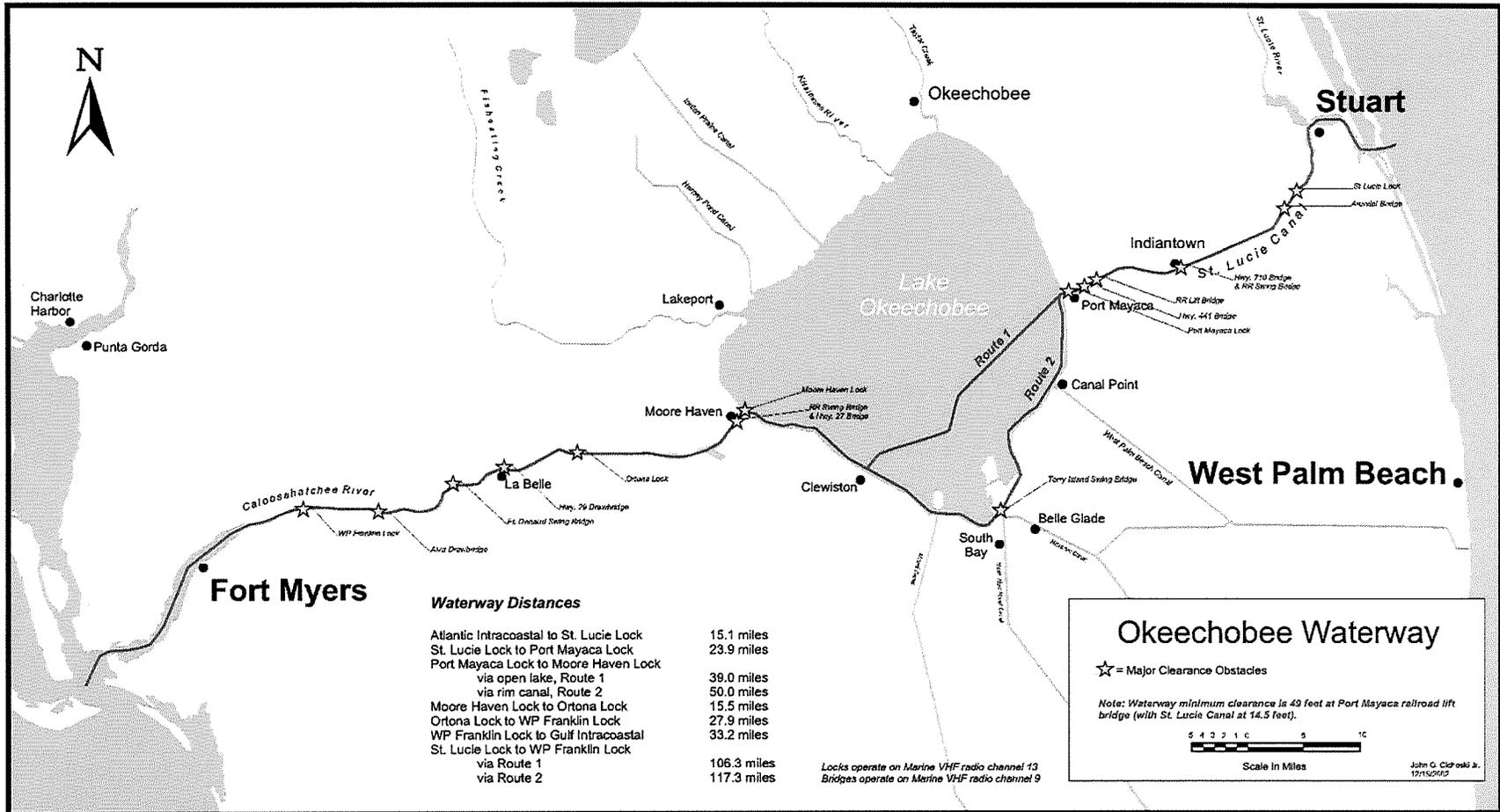


Figure 1. Recreational master plan study area.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUN 04 2018

Mr. Terry Clouthier
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
PO Box 188
Okemah, Ok 74859

Re: Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach Counties, Florida

Dear Mr. Clouthier:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (Corps), has developed a combined Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW). The OWW Master Plan study serves as a planning document that provides a management overview of Corps project lands, facilities, and easements along 155 miles of navigable waterway between Stuart and Ft. Myers, Florida (Figure 1). In addition, this document describes several future anticipated actions at the Moore Haven Lock and Dam Complex in Glades County and the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam Complex in Lee County, Florida.

The OWW study identified 137 previously recorded cultural resources located on Corps-owned real property, Corps-maintained waterways (the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee canals), and on properties with Corps-held easements. Many of these resources are located in historic districts or are associated with the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD). These easements were primarily acquired for the construction and maintenance of the Lake Okeechobee Waterway and the HHD. One of the sites identified during this study (8PB16178) is a prehistoric site that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), six sites have not been evaluated but are potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP, (8GL33, 8GL41, 8GL55, 8HN18, 8LL772, and 8OB23), and two reportedly contain burial resources (8HN17 and 8LL73). There are no undertakings currently proposed for these sites.

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Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108), as amended and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800), and in consideration of the Corps' Trust Responsibilities to the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town of Oklahoma, the Corps kindly requests your comments on the determination of no effect within 30 days from receipt of this letter. Currently, there are no defined undertakings planned. An evaluation of historic properties and subsequent determination of effects for any future projects that are associated with this EA will be coordinated with your office prior to any Federal undertaking. If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Jason D. Moser at 904-232-3028 or e-mail at Jason.D.Moser@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure

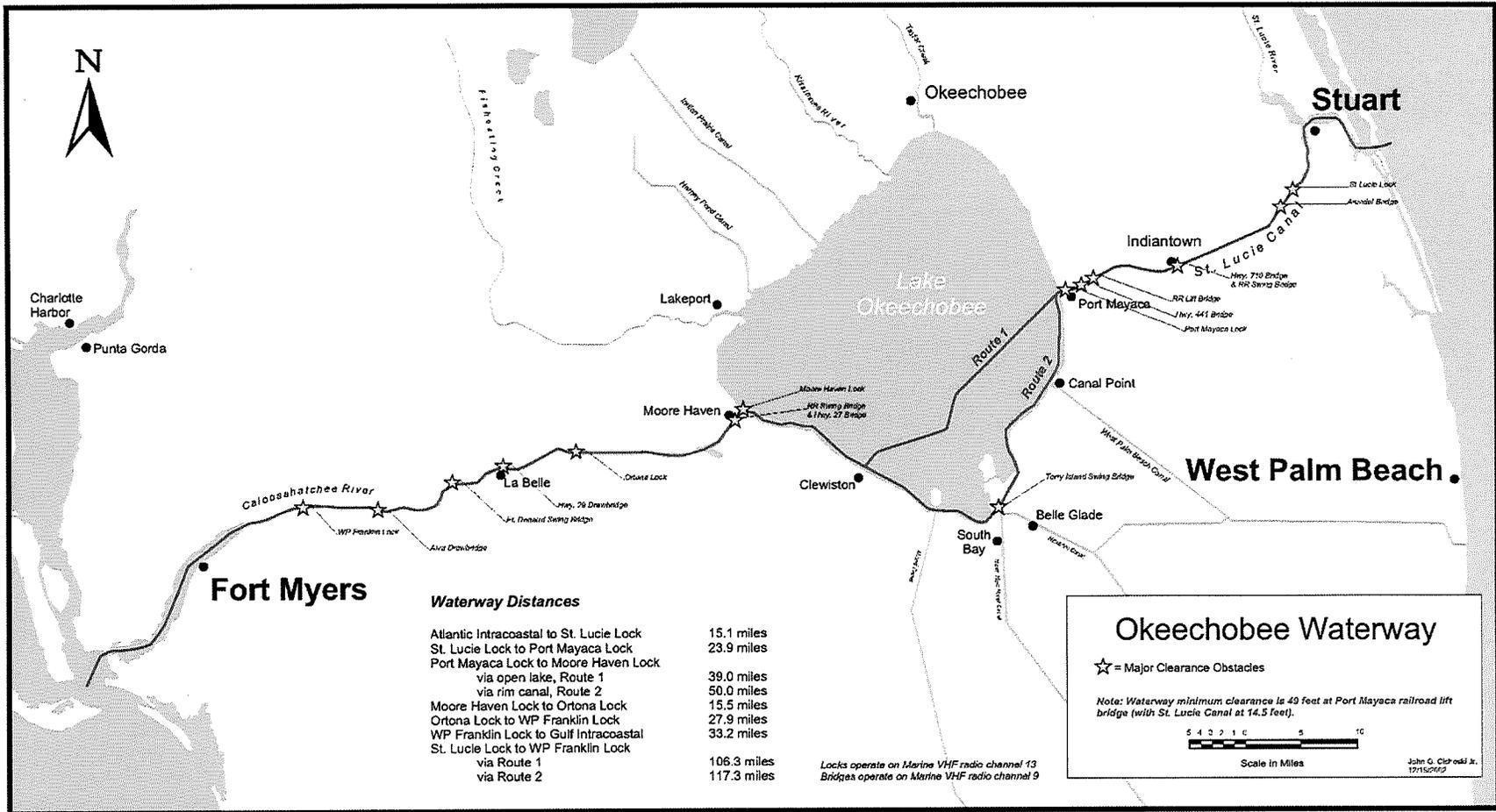


Figure 1. Recreational master plan study area.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8915

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUL 23 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Regulation 33 CFR 230.11, this letter constitutes the Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for updating the 1986 Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee (LO) Master Plan. A Master Plan is required for each civil works project which the Corps has administrative responsibility. It serves as a planning document that anticipates what could and should happen at a Corps project, but is flexible enough to address changing conditions. The primary goals of this Master Plan are to update the overall land and water management plan, resource objectives, and associated design and management concepts, which (1) provide the best possible combination of responses to regional needs; (2) contribute toward providing a high degree of recreation diversity within the region; (3) emphasize the particular qualities, characteristics, and potentials of the project; and (4) exhibit consistency and compatibility with national objectives and other state and regional goals and programs.

The project is located in south central Florida within Glades, Hendry, Lee, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and Martin Counties (Attachment 1). This master plan update includes current and projected future land use and recreational sites adjacent to the OWW and LO Project. This update of the OWW and LO Master Plan does not include operations of Lake Okeechobee or components of Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation. Items related to those projects are or will be covered under separate studies and future NEPA assessments.

Features considered to be replaced from the current Master Plan are:

- a. Conversion of the abandoned campground at Moore Haven West to a Wildlife Management Area with access to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail and day use area. This area could potentially include a new canoe/kayak launching facility and repair or upgrading of the existing boat ramp.
- b. Closure of the WP Franklin swim beach, while maintaining the picnic and fishing areas. Closing the beach would entail removing buoys and swimming signs, and the discontinuance of sand re-nourishment due to safety concerns. This site could include a canoe/kayak launch.

The EA and Proposed FONSI are available for your review on the Corps Environmental planning website under multiple counties:

<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx>

A copy of the report is also available at the following libraries:

Glades County Library	201 Riverside Drive	Moore Haven	FL	33471
Hendry County Barron Library	461 North Main Street	LaBelle	FL	33935
Hendry County Harry T. Vaughn	120 West Osceola Avenue	Clewiston	FL	33440
Martin County Elisabeth Lahti Library	15200 SW Adams Avenue	Indiantown	FL	34956
Okeechobee County Public Library	206 SW 16th Street	Okeechobee	FL	34974
Palm Beach County Library, Main Branch	3650 Summit Blvd.	West Palm Beach	FL	33406
Palm Beach County Library, Belle Glade Branch	725 NW 4th Street	Belle Glade	FL	33430
Palm Beach County Library, Loula V. York Branch	525 Bacom Point Road	Pahokee	FL	33476
Palm Beach County Library, Clarence E. Anthony Branch	375 SW 2nd Avenue	South Bay	FL	33493

We invite the participation of federal and state agencies, Native American Tribes, local agencies, interested parties, and individuals interested in providing comments and identifying any issues or concerns. Please share this notice with any interested party. Please send any comments you may have to the attention of Stacie Auvenshine at the letterhead address or email OWWMasterPlan@usace.army.mil within sixty (60) days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8915

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUL 23 2018

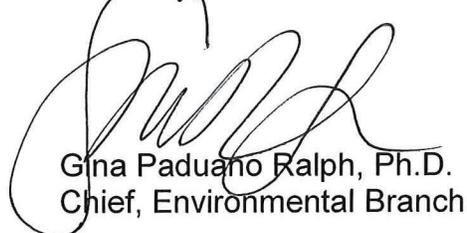
Dear Librarian:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact for updating the 1986 Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee (LO) Master Plan. A Master Plan is required for each civil works project which the Corps has administrative responsibility. It serves as a planning document that anticipates what could and should happen at a Corps project, but is flexible enough to address changing conditions. The primary goals of this Master Plan are to update the overall land and water management plan, resource objectives, and associated design and management concepts, which (1) provide the best possible combination of responses to regional needs; (2) contribute toward providing a high degree of recreation diversity within the region; (3) emphasize the particular qualities, characteristics, and potentials of the project; and (4) exhibit consistency and compatibility with national objectives and other state and regional goals and programs.

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This EA is being provided for public review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulation 33 CFR 230.11. We request that you make the copy available for public viewing in the reference section of your library for a period of 60 days, after which the copy of the report may be disposed. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Mrs. Stacie Auvenshine at 904-314-7614.

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8915

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning and Policy Division
Environmental Branch

JUL 23 2018

Chris Stahl, Coordinator
Florida State Clearinghouse
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
2600 Blair Stone Road, M.S. 47
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400

Dear Mr. Stahl:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Regulation 33 CFR 230.11, this letter constitutes the Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for updating the 1986 Okeechobee Water Way (OWW) and Lake Okeechobee (LO) Master Plan. A Master Plan is required for each civil works project for which the Corps has administrative responsibility. It serves as a planning document that anticipates what could and should happen at a Corps project, but is flexible enough to address changing conditions. The primary goals of this Master Plan are to update the overall land and water management plan, resource objectives, and associated design and management concepts, which (1) provide the best possible combination of responses to regional needs; (2) contribute toward providing a high degree of recreation diversity within the region; (3) emphasize the particular qualities, characteristics, and potentials of the project; and (4) exhibit consistency and compatibility with national objectives and other state and regional goals and programs.

The project is located in south central Florida within Glades, Hendry, Lee, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and Martin Counties (Attachment 1). This master plan update includes current and projected future land use and recreational sites adjacent to the OWW and LO Project. This update of the OWW and LO Master Plan does not include operations of Lake Okeechobee or components of Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation. Items related to those projects are or will be covered under separate studies and future NEPA assessments.

Features considered for replacement from the current Master Plan are:

a. Conversion of the abandoned campground at Moore Haven West to a Wildlife Management Area with access to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail and day use area. This area could potentially include a new canoe/kayak launching facility and repair or upgrading of the existing boat ramp.

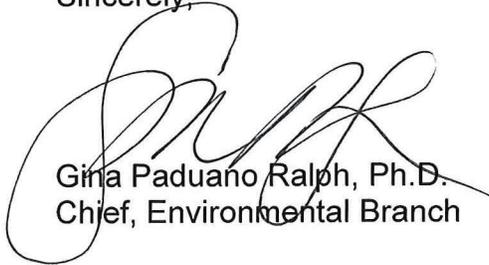
b. Closure of the WP Franklin swim beach, while retaining the picnic and fishing area. This would entail removing buoys and swimming signs, and the discontinuance of sand re-nourishment. This site could include a canoe/kayak launch.

The Corps is requesting a consistency determination pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act through the circulation of this EA. The EA and Proposed FONSI are available on the Corps Environmental planning website under multiple counties:

<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx>

Please share this notice with any interested party. Please send any comments you may have to the attention of Stacie Auvenshine at the letterhead address or email OWWMasterPlan@usace.army.mil within sixty (60) days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

From: Silvia Womack [mailto:silvia.womack1@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, July 23, 2018 7:05 PM
To: OWWMAsterPlan <OWWMAsterPlan@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment on OWW Master Plan Update

Would ask for you to include repairing the fishing pier on the south side of the Ortona Locks. It has been closed since Hurricane Irma.

Thank you

Silvia Womack
4502 Ida Ct.
LaBelle, FL 33935

**US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District
Draft Okeechobee Waterway Master Plan Update and
Integrated Environmental Assessment (EA)
US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Comments
September 18, 2018**

Background: The USACE proposes to update the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) Master Plan, which documents current improvements and stewardship of natural resources in the project area. The OWW Master Plan Update and EA documents changes by: 1) converting an abandoned campground at Moore Haven West to a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) with access to Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) and add a canoe/kayak boat launch with a day use area and 2) close the W. P. Franklin swim beach, while maintaining the picnic and fishing recreational area and potentially adding canoe/kayak access. The EPA notes that on September 25, 2017, we provided scoping comments to the USACE.

Overall, the EPA supports the proposed changes to the OWW Master Plan Update. However, we have the following technical comments for your consideration when preparing the Final EA.

Environmental Justice (EJ): The EPA notes that there is no EJ discussion in Section 6.1 *Evaluation of Alternatives/Environmental Effects*. On page 2-33, the USACE states, “*The overall study area’s racial/ethnic population distribution is similar to that of the State of Florida except that the Hispanic population is significantly higher for Hendry County (51/1%)...*”. Additionally, Table 2-9 (on page 2-37) indicates that Glades, Hendry and Okeechobee County have populations that are below the state’s poverty line. These demographic statistics indicate that EJ communities do exist in and near the project area and could potentially be impacted by the proposed changes. The EPA does acknowledge that on page 7-4 in the Environmental Compliance section the USACE briefly states that the project is not expected to have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority of low-income populations, but as previously stated there is no accompanying analysis in Section 6.1 to support this conclusion. **Recommendation:** For a complete NEPA analysis, the EPA recommends the USACE better describe potential EJ impacts (especially related to low income communities in Glades Hendry and Okeechobee Counties and Hispanic communities in Hendry County) in Section 6.1.

Wetlands: On page 6-2, the USACE discusses wetland impacts and states that none of the alternatives will have any wetlands impacts. The EPA notes that the preferred alternatives for both the Moore Haven Recreation Area West Site (Alternative 3.2.3) and the W.P. Franklin site (Alternative 3.3.3) proposes to convert the current uses to include a canoe/kayak boat launch. The EPA acknowledges that the boat launch could have de minimus impacts on wetlands. However, depending on the design, the boat launch could potentially impact wetlands.

Recommendation: The EPA recommends the USACE better describe the design of the canoe/kayak boat launch that is planned to be added and discuss any wetlands impacts related to the boat launch.

From: Stahl, Chris [mailto:Chris.Stahl@dep.state.fl.us]
Sent: Friday, September 21, 2018 1:53 PM
To: Auvenshine, Stacie J CIV USARMY CESAJ (US) <Stacie.J.Auvenshine@usace.army.mil>
Cc: State_Clearinghouse <State.Clearinghouse@dep.state.fl.us>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] State_Clearance_Letter_For_FL201807248354C_Draft Okeechobee Waterway Master Plan Update and Integrated Environmental Assessment, Glades, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee & Palm Beach Counties

September 21, 2018

Stacie J. Auvenshine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
P. O. BOX 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

RE: Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, General Army Corps of Engineers Activities, Draft Okeechobee Waterway Master Plan Update and Integrated Environmental Assessment, Glades, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee & Palm Beach Counties, Florida

SAI# FL201807248354C

Dear Stacie:

Florida State Clearinghouse staff has reviewed the proposal under the following authorities: Presidential Executive Order 12372; § 403.061(42), Florida Statutes; the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1451-1464, as amended; and the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347, as amended.

The South Florida Water Management District has reviewed the proposed action and provided the following comments. 1. A new canoe/kayak launch and improvements to the existing boat ramp at the Moore Haven West location may require an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) in accordance with Rule 62-330.054, Florida Administrative Code (FAC). Please contact the SFWMD Center at (561) 682-6937 or email erpreapp@sfwmd.gov to schedule a pre-application meeting with staff. 2. A new canoe/kayak launch at the WP Franklin location may require an Environmental Resource Permit from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, in accordance with Rule 62-330.054, Florida Administrative Code (FAC). Please contact the SFWMD Center at (561) 682-6937 or email erpreapp@sfwmd.gov to schedule a pre-application meeting with staff. 3. If an ERP is required, reasonable assurance is required to be provided which demonstrates that the project has been designed and would be constructed in a manner to reduce or eliminate wetlands and other surface water resources direct and secondary impacts, in accordance with the Environmental Resource Permit Applicant's Handbook Volume I, subsection 10.2.1 (AH I, 10.2.1). 4. If an ERP is required, reasonable assurance is required to be provided which demonstrates that the construction and operation of the project would not cause adverse impacts to the abundance and diversity of wetland dependent listed species (e.g. manatees), and would not cause adverse impacts to the habitat of fish, wildlife and listed species, in accordance with AH I, 10.2.2. 5. If an ERP is required, the project may require authorization for the use of state owned sovereign submerged lands, in accordance with Chapter 18-21, FAC. 6. If an ERP is required, reasonable assurance is required to be provided which demonstrates that the project

would not adversely affect significant historical and archaeological resources, in accordance with AH I, 10.2.3.6.

Based on the information submitted and minimal project impacts, the state has no objections to the subject project and, therefore, it is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program. Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed project and look forward to future collaborative efforts on this project. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at (850) 717-9076.

Sincerely,

Chris Stahl

Chris Stahl, Coordinator
Florida State Clearinghouse
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
2600 Blair Stone Road, M.S. 47
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400
ph. (850) 717-9076
State.Clearinghouse@dep.state.fl.us <mailto:State.Clearinghouse@dep.state.fl.us>

A NOA letter dated July 23, 2018 was mailed to stakeholders soliciting comments on the Draft Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) Recreational Master Plan and Environmental Assessment. The NOA was used to invite comments from Federal, State, and local agencies, affected Indian Tribes, and other interested private organizations and individuals. Comments were accepted through September 21, 2018. A public Master Plan Workshop was held August 13, 2018 in LaBelle, Florida.

Table 1. NEPA / Workshop Comment Response Matrix for letters and emails received.

PUBLIC COMMENT	AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENT OWW WORKSHOP	CORPS RESPONSE
<p>Florida Public Archaeologist Network, SE Sara Ayers-Rigsby,</p>	<p>Did the Corps coordinate in accordance with Section 106, NHPA, with the State Historic Preservation Officer on potential effects of the Master Plan on historic properties or resources?</p>	<p>Thank you for attending the Corps of Engineers Workshop (Corps), on August 13, 2018, for the Okeechobee Waterway Recreational Master Plan (OWW Master Plan). A letter dated July 6, 2018, DHR Project File No: 2018-2808, the State Historic Preservation Officer responded to the Corps that they appreciated the Corps updating their office on June 4, 2018, regarding the OWW Recreational Master Plan and look forward to completing Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act consultation as project plans develop.</p>
<p>Silvia Womack</p>	<p>Would ask for the Corps to include repairing the fishing pier on the south side of the Ortona Locks and dam. It has been closed since Hurricane Irma.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Specific maintenance to facilities is not detailed in the Master Plan and instead is addressed in the Operational Management Plan. The shoreline south of Ortona spillway is eroding as a result of strong currents caused by the reconfiguration of the dam in the 1960s. The Corps has conducted a study below the waterline and requested funding for repairs of the shoreline and facilities. At this time, the erosion and destabilization are extensive and conditions are unsafe for pier replacement until the shoreline can be stabilized.</p>

PUBLIC COMMENT	AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENT OWW WORKSHOP	CORPS RESPONSE
Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental Justice (EJ): The EPA notes that there is no EJ discussion in Section 6.1 <i>Evaluation of Alternatives/Environmental Effects</i> . On page 2-33, the USACE states, “ <i>The overall study area’s racial/ethnic population distribution..., but Hispanic population is significantly higher for Hendry County (51/1%)</i> ”. Additionally, Table 2-9 (on page 2-37) indicates that Glades, Hendry and Okeechobee County have populations that are below the state’s poverty line. This indicates that EJ communities could be impacted by the Plan. The EPA acknowledged that in the Environmental Compliance section, USACE states the Plan is not expected to have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority of low-income populations, but there is no accompanying analysis in Section 6.1 to support this conclusion. Recommendation: The EPA recommends the USACE better describe potential EJ impacts in Section 6.1.	The justification for closure of the swimming beach is discussed within Section 6 of the Master Plan, to protect the public from potential safety concerns. Algal blooms, dangerous animals, no life guards and adjacency to an active boat ramp can endanger recreational visitors. Swimming will not be prohibited, but will no longer be a developed amenity at this location. There are no plans for excluding swimming as a potential recreational use at the W.P. Franklin Recreation Area. Other forms of recreation for impoverished populations will continue to be available and will be expanded, including sustenance fishing that currently occurs there. Fees are no longer charged for access to the recreation areas other than camping.
Environmental Protection Agency	Wetlands: On page 6-2, the USACE discusses wetland impacts and states that none of the alternatives will have any wetlands impacts. The EPA notes that the preferred alternatives for both the Moore Haven Recreation Area West Site (Alternative 3.2.3) and the W.P. Franklin site (Alternative 3.3.3) proposes to convert the current uses to include a	We have revised the alternatives analysis section to remove development of a boat launch. Both sites already have boat ramps and aside from repair or maintenance, the Corps Recreation program have no plans for additional ramps. The intent of the discussion in the alternative is to provide a list of potential future uses, for example: at Moore Haven West, addition of a floating kayak loading platform (in place of removed floating docks) pilings and shoreline attachment points

PUBLIC COMMENT	AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENT OWW WORKSHOP	CORPS RESPONSE
	<p>canoe/kayak boat launch. The EPA acknowledges that the boat launch could have de minimus impacts on wetlands. However, depending on the design, the boat launch could potentially impact wetlands.</p> <p>Recommendation: The EPA recommends the USACE better describe the design of the canoe/kayak boat launch that is planned to be added and discuss any wetlands impacts related to the boat launch.</p>	<p>still exist. At either site, eventual construction of a floating loading pier for kayaks would require future consideration of potential conflicts of use, environmental effects, ERP permits, safety and congestion. Consultation for any impacts to essential fish habitat, ESA species or cultural resources would be conducted during planning of any future Federal action.</p>
<p>Florida DEP, State Clearinghouse</p>	<p>The action was reviewed under: Presidential Executive Order 12372; § 403.061(42), Florida Statutes; the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1451-1464, and the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347, and assigned file SAI# - FL201807248354. The state has no objections to the subject project and, therefore, it is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program.</p> <p>The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) provided comments: A new kayak launch and improvements to the existing boat ramp at the Moore Haven West or W. P. Franklin location may require an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP), 62-330.054, FAC and provided contact information. If an ERP is required: Provide reasonable assurance is required which demonstrates that the project has been designed/ constructed to reduce or</p>	<p>The Corps revised the alternatives analysis section to remove development of a boat launch. Both sites already have boat ramps and aside from maintenance, the Corps Recreation program have no plans for additional ramps. The intent of the discussion in the alternative is to provide a list of potential future uses, to examine when preparing Operational Management Plans. For example, at Moore Haven, a floating kayak loading platform (in place of removed floating docks) pilings and shoreline attachment points still exist. At either site, eventual construction of a floating loading pier for kayaks would require future consideration of potential conflicts of use, environmental effects, ERP permits, safety and congestion. Consultation for any impacts to essential fish habitat, ESA species or cultural resources would be conducted during planning. W.P. Franklin is in close proximity to a manatee warm water aggregation site (Corps Manatee Key), so requires consultation for any in-water work.</p>

PUBLIC COMMENT	AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENT OWW WORKSHOP	CORPS RESPONSE
	<p>eliminate wetlands and surface water resources impacts; and that the construction and operation of the project would not cause adverse impacts to the abundance and diversity of listed species (e.g. manatees), and would not cause adverse impacts to the fish and wildlife habitat and listed species, consistent with AH I, 10.2.2. 5; the project may require state owned sovereign submerged lands permits; and demonstrate that the project would not adversely affect historical and archaeological resources.</p>	

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