

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Jacksonville GRR2 Public PDT Meeting

Summary: This is a recurring public meeting between the PDT, the agencies, and the public. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the status of the study, familiarize the public with the study process, and receive public comments throughout the study path.

Meeting Attendees:

Jacksonville District PDT (Project Delivery Team): Jason Harrah, Samantha Borer, Paul Stodola, Amanda Ellison, Patrice Morey, Jason Spinning, Wendy Weaver, Dick Powell, Phil Sylvester, Mike Hollingsworth, Steve Myers, Steve Conger, Steve Bratos, Glenn Landers, Lynn Zediak, Randy Murray, Brandon Burch

Jaxport: Joe Miller

Federal Agencies: USFWS: Erin Gawera, NMFS: Karla Reece, George Getsinger, NPS: Barbara Goodman, Shauna Allen, Denesia Cheek, Anna Toline, NOAA: Kyle Ward

State Agencies: St. Johns River Water Management District: John Hendrickson, FWC: Eddie Leonard, Bonita Gorham, DEP: Roxane Dow, Tom Jacobs

City of Jacksonville: John Flowe, Betsy Deuerling, James Richardson, Jim Suber

Other Participants: NGOs and Members of the Public

Discussion:***Overview of the Study (Public Review of Draft Report Status)***

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Requirements:

- A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Jacksonville Harbor Navigation Study, Integrated General Reevaluation Report II and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement was mailed and emailed May 29/30th to stakeholders.
- An NOA was also published in the Federal Register on May 31, 2013.
- A hard copy of the draft report and CD of the appendices may be found in the following Libraries: Main, Highlands, Regency, Mandarin
- The draft report is also available on our study and district websites at the following links:
<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/Navigation/NavigationProjects/JacksonvilleHarborChannelDeepeningStudy.aspx>
<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx#Duval>
- Hard copies and/or CDs were mailed to the State and Federal Agencies May 29/30th
- An Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) coordination letter was mailed last week May 29th – acknowledgment of receipt was provided at this meeting.
- A minimum 45 day review period is required per USACE guidance for public comment. The review period will end on July 15th. All stakeholders have a right to request an

extension of this minimum standard of 45 days. Requests for an extension will be considered, please send them to Paul Stodola at Paul.E.Stodola@usace.army.mil.

- Public Meeting: June 27th at 6:30pm at the JAXPORT Cruise Terminal

Agency Comments:

- National Park Service (NPS): Discuss the status of tributary modeling and comment period.
 - In the summary of the report, tributary modeling is identified as one of the “additional investigations” currently being conducted. The tributary modeling is expected to be completed by mid-July. Conservative estimates on potential impacts to tributary wetlands were used in the report, and will be compared to model predictions. The 45 day comment period will end on July 15. However, the USACE will consider all requests for comment period extensions.
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS):
 - What tributaries are you looking at?
 - Sister’s and Clapboard Creeks, and the marsh in between these two tributaries (Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve); Ortega and Cedar Rivers; Julington and Durbin Creeks; Black Creek and Doctor’s Lake
 - Where are we in the process of developing the mitigation plan?
 - The draft mitigation plan will continue to be coordinated and discussed with agencies and other stakeholders. We encourage everyone to review the plan and provide comments.
 - The monitoring plan is for 10 years, is this sufficient?
 - The monitoring plan includes the construction duration which is estimated at 5-6 years as well as 10 years of monitoring once construction is completed. This is a total of 15-16 years. This period was previously discussed with the agencies, but we encourage all stakeholders to comment on the monitoring period. This plan includes hydrodynamic and ecological modeling, as well as monitoring, in order to determine causes of potential impacts to *Vallisneria americana* beds, wetlands, fish and macroinvertebrates. In addition to the monitoring plan, the USACE has prepared an Adaptive Management Plan which states that if future monitoring and modeling identifies an impact attributable to the deepening that exceeds our initial assessment, then this finding will be coordinated with agencies and stakeholders. Potential modification to the mitigation plan will be discussed at that time.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Where in the report can we find the mitigation costs?
 - Executive summary as well as pages 168-169.

Public Comments:

- Lisa Rinaman (St. Johns River Keeper): Expressed concern over the fast tracking of the study and requests a 60 day review period instead of 45 days.
 - If the tributary study is delayed would the public comment period be extended?
 - USACE requested that the River Keeper submits their request for an extension in writing. The results of the tributary modeling will be evaluated prior to making any decisions.

- How is salinity addressed in the mitigation plan?
 - Salinity changes potentially induced by the proposed deepening are being assessed using the EFDC hydrodynamic model for the mainstem and a MIKE hydrodynamic model for the tributaries. Ecological models are also being used to assess how these potential changes may affect submerged aquatic vegetation, wetlands, fish and macroinvertebrates. For the mainstem, the USACE has determined that salinity changes potentially induced by the proposed deepening would be relatively small in comparison to other factors that can influence salinity levels such as drought periods and predicted future sea level rise. These small effects could be mitigated by the purchase of priority conservation land purchases and/or wetland mitigation bank credits, funding of nutrient reduction projects, as well as monitoring programs. The USACE encourages all stakeholders to review the draft mitigation plan and provide comments.
- Additional comments on environmental impacts will be sent via email.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for August 5th.