

RECORD OF DECISION

Herbert Hoover Dike Dam Safety Modification Study

Glades, Hendry, Martin, Okeechobee, and Palm Beach, Counties, Florida

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated June 2016 addresses the effects on the environment from opportunities to address the life safety level of the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) as outlined in the Dam Safety Modification Study (DSMS). Based on this report, the reviews of other Federal, State and local agencies, input from the public, and the review by my staff, I find the DSMS Recommended Plan to be technically feasible, environmentally justified, cost effective, in accordance with environmental statutes, and in the public interest. Thus, I approve the DSMS Recommended Plan.

The EIS documents the evaluation of alternatives to reduce risk to life safety in regards to the HHD. The habitat directly impacted by the Recommended Plan is located within the Federal Right of Way and within the centerline of the existing HHD. The Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS 2008) was the operating schedule used for determining impacts from the alternatives assessed in the DSMS. Impacts due to changing operations was not assessed under this EIS, but will be analyzed under future studies.

The Recommended Plan (Alternative 3) consists of a cutoff wall, which was determined to be the least costly, technically acceptable risk reduction measure for remediation of the HHD embankment in areas that have been identified as high risk due to internal erosion failure modes (erosion of the internal structure of the embankment due to seepage forces). The Recommended Plan includes a cutoff wall around the southern perimeter of HHD, extending the previously constructed cutoff wall from the end of Belle Glade to just north of Moore Haven, terminating at the intersection of HHD and interceptor Levee 41. The Recommended Plan also includes a cutoff wall along the northwest perimeter of HHD in the vicinity of Lakeport. Lastly, the Recommended Plan includes isolated areas of downstream armoring on the abutments of SR 78 Bridge over Harney Pond Canal and floodwalls around S-71 and S-72 at the northern terminus of HHD on Harney Pond Canal and Indian Prairie Canal, respectively. These areas were identified as low points in the crest of HHD that were considered excessively vulnerable to overtopping under combined loading events of elevated lake stages and tropical cyclone impact.

In addition to the No Action Alternative, the EIS fully describes and evaluates four additional alternatives. These alternatives include different combinations of cutoff wall locations, seepage barriers, or drainage options. The No Action Alternative does not address the imminent need for increasing life safety to current dam safety standards. The EIS evaluated the potential impacts of the alternatives for the following resources: geology, soils, air quality and greenhouse gases, land use, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, noise, recreation, aesthetics, public health and safety,

including hazardous, toxic, and radioactive waste, and socioeconomics and environmental justice. All practicable means to avoid and/or minimize environmental impacts were included in the selected plan and will be included in the plans and specifications. Conservation recommendations from the United State Fish and Wildlife Service are included in the report and will be considered in the plans and specifications.

The Recommended Plan is also the environmentally Preferred Alternative. Constructing a cutoff wall would significantly decrease the likelihood of failure of the embankment and therefore increase the likelihood of life safety and reduce economic, and environmental damages from breach.

All applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations and local government plans are considered in the evaluation of alternatives and the selection of the Recommended Plan. Based on review of these evaluations, I find that the public interest would be best served by implementing the Recommended Plan. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act process.

30 Aug 2016

Date



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