



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

Albuquerque District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application Number: SPA-2012-00442-ABQ

Date: November 20, 2012

Comments Due: December 19, 2012

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), San Ildefonso Pueblo, Rio Grande, Bendway Weirs, Point Bar Removal Project in Santa Fe County, NM, which would result in impacts between approximately 1.2 to 1.8 acres (maximum) or approximately 850 linear feet of waters of the United States and/or navigable waters of the United States in or adjacent to Rio Grande. In addition, approximately 0.248 acre of wetlands will be permanently impacted by the proposed project. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments.

AUTHORITY: This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States (U.S.).

APPLICANT: Mr. Mike Hamman
Bureau of Reclamation
Albuquerque Area Office
555 Broadway Blvd. NE, Suite 100
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

AGENT: Ms. Lori Walton
Bureau of Reclamation
Albuquerque Area Office
555 Broadway Blvd. NE, Suite 100
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

LOCATION: The project site is located on or near Rio Grande, Section 7, Township 19 N, Range 8 E, Latitude 35.89408°N, Longitude -106.12833°W, San Ildefonso Pueblo, Santa Fe County, New Mexico (see Sheets 1 and 2 of 7).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to construct seven rock riprap bendway weirs for bank stabilization and the removal of the west bank point bar to alter existing channel flows (see Sheet 3 of 7). Based on the available information, the overall project purpose is to stop ongoing bank erosion that threatens the San Ildefonso Pueblo's fishing pond and the berm access road. The applicant states that Pueblo wishes to protect the existing fishing pond and to prevent the eventual erosion of the 2007 bendway weirs which would make them

News Release

ineffective to protect the pueblo's fishing pond.

Installation of additional bendway weirs is the primary erosion protection aspect of the project and includes the following: excavation from the west point bar, installation of seven additional bendway weirs along the east bank to extend bank protection along the entire length of the river bend, creation of a floodplain bench along the east bank, and willow pole planting on the new floodplain bench surface.

The goal of the new bendway weirs is to move the deepest part of channel (thalweg) away from the east bank and thereby removing the most severe hydraulic forces away from the eroding east bank. Scour at the weir tips will move the thalweg to this alignment toward the west bank while flow velocities are greatly reduced near the east eroding bank. New bendway weirs will also encourage a less abrupt bend alignment to counteract the lateral migration trend and promote long term stability at the site.

In conjunction with the bendway weir placement, material excavated from the existing point bar will be used as fill along the toe of the east bank (see Sheets 4 and 5 of 7). The excavation will widen the main channel to the west, offsetting any narrowing caused by the bendway weirs. The east floodplain has become disconnected from the river in the area of the project due to channel incision, so the fill material will provide an inner floodplain surface to be inundated during typical spring runoff flows (above 3,500 cfs).

Site Access

Access to the project site will be from Highway NM-502 along existing dirt roads, currently maintained by the Pueblo de San Ildefonso. The primary access points will be via the roads that run along the top of the berm and near the east bank. If necessary to ensure safe and convenient access, road improvements (e.g. blading, widening, gravel cap placement, etc.) may be made to the access route. It may also be necessary to trim adjacent and overhead vegetation along roads to ensure vehicle clearance and address safety concerns.

Construction equipment will access the river channel by construction of two temporary earthen ramps may be constructed from the top of bank to the riverbed at wetlands W1 and W5 (see Sheet 6 of 7). Ramps will be located to minimize impacts to existing bank vegetation. The ramps will be created by excavating or pulling back the banks. Equipment will cross the river to travel from the east bank to the west point bar.

Approximately one third of the total riprap volume used for bendway weir installation will come from the existing windrow stockpile on site. The remaining quantity will be obtained from BOR's Velarde stockpile site. Riprap used in the project may be temporarily stockpiled near the project site while construction activities are occurring. An area for staging construction equipment will also be required and may be located adjacent to the temporary riprap stockpile or at a separate location. Staging areas will be located to minimize disturbance to existing vegetation. All ramps, crossings, staging areas, and other potential disturbance will be limited to the area labeled "Construction Footprint" in Sheet 2 of 7). The total maximum construction footprint area is 12 acres; however, not all of this area will be disturbed.

News Release

Adaptive Management of 2007 Project

Seven bendway weirs were installed as part of the 2007 project. As seen in Sheet 3 of 7, the two upstream weirs have been partially exposed due to bank erosion. Some of the rock has been displaced from these two weirs creating gaps in the structures and a lowered crest elevation. BOR may add additional riprap to restore the damaged bendway weirs. The total quantity of rock that may be added to the 2007 bendway weirs is estimated to be 50-100 cubic yards.

Bar Excavation

As the river bend at this site has migrated southeast over the last several years, the point bar has grown in the same direction. Approximately 1.9 acres (450 ft. long x 180 ft. wide) of earthen material will be excavated from the west point bar to accommodate bendway weir placement while maintaining the existing main channel width. The bar material mostly consists of coarse gravel, with particle sizes ranging from fine gravel to small cobbles. Excavated material will be used in creating the floodplain bench on the east bank.

To facilitate excavation of the bar material and the movement of that material to the east bank while minimizing environment impacts, the following steps will be taken:

1. Lower the western edge of the bar to the design elevation of 5508.5. Wetlands delineated in the western section of the bar may be temporarily impacted by construction activities. Wetland vegetation from the eastern sections of the bar (identified as W4) will be transplanted to the western section to augment the existing wetlands (see Sheets 6 and 7).
2. The remaining portion of the bar to be excavated has a design elevation of 5506.5. A portion of the excavated material will also be used to create a temporary diversion berm across the active river channel. This will divert the active river away from the bendway weirs so that the weirs can be constructed. The material would be moved, primarily by bulldozers. To remove material on the edge of the diverted river channel (the former eastern edge of the point bar), excavators would be used to facilitate excavation to the final design grade.
3. Excavators would also likely be used to remove the temporary diversion berm.

The maximum quantity of excavated material will be 12,000 cubic yards. All material excavated from the point bar will be used to create the floodplain bench so that cut and fill volumes are balanced with no excess spoils material. Existing woody debris within the excavation area may also be removed and salvaged for later use at the project site.

Temporary Diversion Berm

The alignment of the temporary diversion berm will be slightly west of the bendway weir tips for a total length of about 300 ft. Dimensions for the proposed structure will be 300 ft. long x 32 ft. wide (bottom) x 3 ft. in height or 0.2 acre of temporary fills.

News Release

Bendway Weirs

A total of seven bendway weirs will be installed along the outside of the bend (see Sheet 3 to 5 of 7). The existing windrow and diagonal key will be removed, thus continuing the alignment of the 2007 bendway weirs at a spacing of about 110 ft measured along the new floodplain bench bankline. Average length of the weirs will be 130 ft, (range from 87 ft. to 141 ft. long with a width from 21 to 32 ft. and a depth from 3 ft. to 6.5 ft.) which includes the buried portion (about 90-110 ft) of the weir. Only 20-40 ft of the weirs will be exposed in the river channel after initial construction, but this distance is expected to increase over time as some erosion of the floodplain bench bankline occurs. The total area of this east terrace disturbance is estimated to be approximately 0.46 acres. It is estimated that the total riprap quantity needed to construct the bendway weirs will be 4,000 to 5,000 cubic yards.

Floodplain Bench

A floodplain bench will be created with material excavated from the west point bar so that the cut and fill volumes are equal. The floodplain bench alignment will be parallel to the bendway weir tips so that the curvature of the bend is less abrupt than the current alignment (Sheet 3 of 7). The average floodplain bench height will be about 5510.5 ft, which corresponds to the water surface elevation of a 3,500 cfs river flow. The proposed fill area is approximately 1.2 acres (850 linear ft. long x 63 ft. wide).

Vegetation Planting

After completion of the floodplain bench, a grid of approximately 1,500 coyote willow poles will be planted. The depth to groundwater at this surface should be about 2.5 ft, so it is expected that 6 ft long poles will be used. There will be two rows of pole plantings parallel to the river at an average length of 575 ft. There will be approximately 18 rows of pole plantings perpendicular to the river at an average length of 30 ft.

PROPOSED MITIGATION:

Water quality impacts would be temporary in nature, ending after the maintenance work was completed. Impacts would be limited to disturbance related issues, such as sedimentation and turbidity.

Existing roads would be utilized (with the exception of a 350 foot long section near the 2010 windrow) to avoid additional road construction. Staging areas would be located to minimize disturbance to existing vegetation and would not occur in any special aquatic sites, including wetlands. If dust becomes a safety concern at the site or while traveling along the access roads, water may be applied to control dust. Water for dust abatement will be pumped from the Rio Grande using a 0.25 inch mesh screen at the intake hose opening to minimize entrainment of aquatic organisms.

Compensatory mitigation for impacts to wetland and waters of the U.S. would include creation of new wetland on the west bank and the planting of 1500 coyote willows (*Salix exigua*) on the filled areas between the weirs on the east bank. See Sheet 7 of 7 for wetland mitigation summary. There are a total of 0.29 acres of wetlands within the

News Release

project area. Of these, 0.248 acre will be permanently impacted and 0.04 acre will be temporarily impacted.

Of these impacts, the BOR has offered a conceptual mitigation plan to transplant 0.241 acre of existing wetland to adjacent former channel areas on the west bank, 0.212 acre of potential wetland will be created by excavation of the remaining point bar to an elevation similar to the existing wetlands, and 0.487 acre of coyote willow plants will be placed between the bendway weirs on the east bank.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be used during construction as described below:

1. *Management of local site water runoff* – Dirt berms, straw bales, silt fences, silt curtains or other appropriate material will be placed at strategic locations to manage water runoff
2. *Minimize impact of hydrocarbons* – To minimize potential for spills into or contamination of aquatic habitat:
 - a. Hydraulic lines will be checked each morning for leaks and periodically throughout each work day.
 - b. All fueling will take place outside the active flood plain. Fuel will be stored onsite overnight but not near the river or any location where a spill could affect the river.
 - c. All equipment will undergo high-pressure spray cleaning and inspection prior to initial operation in the project area.
 - d. Equipment will be parked on predetermined locations on high ground, away from the project area overnight, on weekends, and holidays.
 - e. Spill protection kits including spill containment booms will be kept onsite, and operators will be trained in the correct deployment of the kits.
3. *Visual monitoring of water quality* – BOR will visually monitor for water quality for turbidity at and below areas of river work before and during the work day.
4. *Vegetation clearing* – Vegetation clearing will be completed after August 15 and before April 15. Work after April 1 would be accompanied by appropriate surveys. Reclamation coordinates monitoring and work activities with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as appropriate, if migratory bird nests are found. .
5. *Clean material* – Riprap and other material to be placed in the water will be reasonably clean, to the extent possible. If there are large clumps of soil bigger than 1 foot within the material, those clumps will be set aside during the loading or placing operations.
6. *Implementation waste* – All project spoils and waste are disposed of offsite at approved locations. All river maintenance projects have a contract in place for the rental of portable toilets during the duration of the project.

News Release

7. *Revegetation* – A variety of revegetation techniques may be used on river maintenance projects. Actual planting techniques may vary from site to site, using buckets, augers, stingers, water jets, etc., mounted on construction equipment to provide a hole for stem and pole plantings and long stem transplants. A trench may be constructed to facilitate the placement of a significant number of plants, specifically stem and pole cuttings.

OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS:

State Water Quality Certification: The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, Dallas, Texas. Section 401 requires that any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance. For any proposed activity on Tribal land that is subject to Section 404 jurisdiction, where the tribe does not have water quality certifying authority, the applicant will be required to obtain water quality certification from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Environmental Setting. The project area is located on the Rio Grande near the San Ildefonso Fishing Pond, on San Ildefonso Pueblo, Santa Fe County, New Mexico. The site elevation is approximately 5548 feet. There are approximately 0.29 acres of emergent wetlands that are waters of the U.S. within the proposed project area and there are approximately 1,305 linear feet of perennial stream that are waters of the U.S. within the proposed project area. The site is characterized by one vegetation type, Floodplains-Plains Riparian (Dick-Peddie 1993). Vegetation varies by elevation, from cottonwood bosque on the east bank of the river to a sparsely vegetated point bar of mixed open, unvegetated areas and wetlands in old abandoned channel on the west bank. Arid uplands are dominated by Russian olive, Russian thistle, sand dropseed, fourwing saltbush, and Apache plume. Riparian and wetland species include Rio Grande cottonwood coyote willow, three square sedge and clocklebur. Soils in the project area are Jaralos very fine sandy loam and Scogg very fine sandy loam.

Alternatives. The applicant has provided information concerning project alternatives. Alternatives proposed by the applicant include: No Action, Bendway Weirs, High Flow Channel and Bar Clearing, Bioengineering Bankline with Stone Toe Protection, Longitudinal Fill Stone Toe Protection (LFSTP), Large Woody Debris with LFSTP, Bendway Weirs for High Flow Channel, Bendway Weirs, Bendway Weirs with Side Channel and Bank Shaping and Buried Self-Launching Riprap. Bendway Weirs is the applicant's preferred alternative. Other alternatives may develop during the review process for this permit application

EVALUATION FACTORS: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described

News Release

activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

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 other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement 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.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: The BOR is the lead Federal agency. According to the BOR, the project is located in the active floodplain and the area has been surveyed for cultural remains. No cultural remains were found and San Ildefonso Pueblo has informed BOR that there are no Traditional Cultural Properties in the project area. Based upon these findings, BOR has completed its Section 106 determination.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The Bureau of Reclamation is the lead Federal agency. According to the BOR, designated or proposed critical habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher does not occur in the project area. Also, there is no suitable habitat in the project area. Construction will not occur between April 15 to August 15 during the breeding/migration period for the southwestern willow flycatchers. Therefore, the proposed action will have no effect on the southwestern willow flycatcher or designated or proposed critical habitat. The Rio Grande silvery minnow is extirpated from this reach. No formal or informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is anticipated.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT: The Corps is sending a copy of this public notice to the local floodplain administrator. In accordance with 44 CFR part 60 (Flood Plain Management Regulations Criteria for Land Management and Use), the floodplain administrators of participating communities are required to review all proposed development to determine if a floodplain development permit is required and maintain records of such review.

News Release

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to this Public Notice must reach this office on or before **December 19, 2012**, which is the close of the comment period. 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. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Comments and requests for additional information should be submitted to:

William Oberle, Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109-3435
505-342-3284
FAX 505-344-1514
E-mail: William.M.Oberle@usace.army.mil

Please note that names and addresses of those who submit comments in response to this public notice may be made publicly available through the Freedom of Information Act.

DISTRICT ENGINEER
ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Enclosures

News Release