



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For Immediate Release: NR10-018
February 24, 2010

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U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct public hearing on proposed Lake Columbia

FORT WORTH, Texas – The Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will hold public meetings to record input on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Lake Columbia in Cherokee and Smith Counties, Texas. Both meetings will be held at the Norman Activity Center, 526 East Commerce Street, Jacksonville, Texas. The first meeting on March 1 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. is a public information meeting (open house format), to allow interested parties the opportunity to engage in a dialog with the USACE regarding the EIS process and the analyses performed to date. The second meeting will be a formal public hearing from 5 to 7:30 p.m. on March 2. The hearing will allow participants the opportunity to comment on the DEIS prepared for the proposed Lake Columbia.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Angelina and Neches River Authority has applied to the USACE for a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 to discharge dredged and fill material into approximately 220 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, in conjunction with the construction and operation of the proposed reservoir. This work would result in adverse impacts to approximately 5,746.5 acres of waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires the USACE to conduct a public interest review to determine the potential impacts of our decision on the public interest. In addition, the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, requires all Federal agencies undertaking an action that might significantly impact the quality of the human environment to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed project and document these potential impacts in an Environmental Impact Statement. A public notice on the proposed project was issued on January 29, 2010. The USACE is neither a proponent nor an opponent of this project. ANRA proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a dam and reservoir known as Lake Columbia on Mud Creek, a tributary of the Angelina River, in Cherokee and Smith Counties, Texas. The dam would be located approximately three miles downstream from the U.S. Highway 79 bridge over Mud Creek and would impound 195,500 acre-feet of water extending approximately 14 miles upstream and would inundate 10,133 acres at the conservation pool elevation. Construction of Lake Columbia is proposed as a water supply reservoir to provide additional water supply for Angelina, Cherokee, Nacogdoches, Rusk, and Smith counties in east Texas.

AVAILABILITY OF DEIS: Electronic copies of the DEIS may be obtained by contacting the Fort Worth District at (817)886-1731 or by printing copies from the USACE Internet homepage at <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/pubdata/environ/regulatory/permitting/lakecolumbia.asp>.

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to the DEIS must reach the Corps on or before April 3, 2010, which is the close of the comment period. Comments and requests for additional information should be submitted to Mr. Brent Jasper, Regulatory Branch, CESWF-PER-R; U. S. Army Corps of Engineers; Post Office Box 17300; Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300 or via E-mail: brent.j.jasper@usace.army.mil. Please note that names and addresses of those who submit comments in response to the public notice will be publicly available.

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