



**US Army Corps
of Engineers
Fort Worth District**

News Release

Release No. CESWF-PA-05-034 Contact: Judy Marsicano

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Corps of Engineers Announces Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Conduct a Public Scoping Meeting for the Proposed Lake Columbia in Jacksonville, Texas

FORT WORTH, Texas – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District (USACE) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) from the Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA) for the construction and operation of Lake Columbia, a proposed 10,000-surface-acre reservoir in Smith and Cherokee Counties, Texas. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide water for a five-county region of East Texas, including Angelina, Cherokee, Nacogdoches, Rusk, and Smith counties. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the USACE has determined that issuance of such a permit may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The USACE intends to prepare an EIS with the assistance of a third party contractor to assess the environmental, social, and economic effects of issuance of a Department of the Army permit under Section 404 of the CWA for discharges of dredged and fill material into waters of the United States (U.S.) associated with the construction and operation of the proposed water supply reservoir. In the EIS, the USACE will assess potential impacts associated with a range of alternatives.

The USACE will hold a public scoping meeting to gather information and solicit comments on the scope of the EIS. The public meeting will be held Thursday, Aug. 18, 2005, from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Norman Activity Center, 526 East Commerce Street, Jacksonville, Texas, 75766.

The proposed project would involve the discharge of dredged and fill material into approximately 220 acres of waters of the U.S. associated with the construction of Lake Columbia. Proposed filling activities would occur in conjunction with the construction of the dam, spillway, and staging areas. The project would impound approximately 14 miles of Mud Creek and its tributaries, and would inundate approximately 10,000 surface acres at a conservation pool elevation of 315 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD). The project would adversely impact approximately 5,747 acres of waters of the U.S. associated with clearing, excavation, filling, and inundation.

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Proposed Lake Columbia

Issues to be given significant analysis in the EIS are likely to include, but will not be limited to: the effects of the lake on the immediate and adjacent property owners and nearby communities, downstream hydraulics and hydrology, streams, wetlands, surface water quantity and quality, groundwater quantity and quality, geologic resources, vegetation, fish and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, soils, prime farmland, noise, light, aesthetics, historic and pre-historic cultural resources, socioeconomics, land use, public roads, and air quality.

All comments pertaining to the scope of the EIS must reach the USACE on or before September 18, 2005. Comments on the scope of the EIS, requests for additional information, and requests to be added to the mailing list for receipt of the draft EIS should be submitted to Brent Jasper, Regulatory Branch, CESWF-PER-R, P.O. Box 17300, Fort Worth, Texas, 76102-0300. Comments may also be made on the scope of the EIS by accessing the Fort Worth District website at <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/pubdata/notices/lakecolumbia/index.asp> .

The draft EIS is projected to be available by June 2006. A public hearing will be conducted following the release of the Draft EIS.

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Visit the Fort Worth website at: www.swf.usace.army.mil .