

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1963, as amended, for any proposed undertaking the USACE must consider the impacts of that undertaking on cultural resources. Cultural resources include properties of traditional cultural significance, above ground resources such as buildings and structures, and archaeological sites. These resources must be identified, evaluated against the criteria set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.4, and determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The government must then assess the potential of the undertaking to have an adverse effect to resources meeting the criteria for inclusion in the NRHP. Because of the large size of the Leon Creek watershed, data collection to date has been limited to previously recorded sites within the vicinity of the proposed project features as an indicator of the level of effort that will be necessary to fully investigate alternative project locations. During the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) Phase of this study, a detailed cultural resources survey will be undertaken to identify and evaluate cultural resources that may be affected by the Recommended Plan.

Limited consultation has been conducted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or with Native American Tribes who historically used the region. Initial letters informing these stakeholders of USACE's plan to study the flooding issues in the region were sent in February of 2008. Now that a recommended plan is being proposed, consultation will be reinitiated to inform the SHPO and Tribes of our intent and seek their input on cultural resources investigations moving forward.

RECOMMENDED PLAN

Non Structural Elements

The Non Structural element of the Recommended Plan for the Leon Creek study consists of the buy-out of four single family residences and 32 townhomes. The buildings and structures identified in the buy-out date from between 1994 and 1995. As such, they do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the NRHP and further cultural resources evaluation will not be required for the above ground cultural resources. An archaeological survey is not likely to be necessary for this buy out. An archaeological survey seeks to discover intact soil deposits that may contain evidence of past human activity. The construction of these homes and townhouses will have disturbed any shallow deposits. The purchase and remove of the structure in turn will not disturb the ground deeper than the original construction already has. Therefore, intact soils are not likely to be encountered.

Structural Alternatives

The structural portion of the Recommended Plan consists of adding a levee along Leon Creek from cross-section 85024 to 87627. The levee would run along the east side of Leon Creek in order to prevent damages from occurring for the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) storm. The levee elevation would range from 640 feet on the downstream end to 649 feet on the upstream end. The greatest

difference between the levee elevation and the existing ground elevation is 16.87 feet. In addition, for mitigation purposes, the channel was widened upstream of the Military Highway Bridge. From its origin, a 40-foot bottom width channel would run to a point immediately downstream of this bridge, and transition to 80-foot bottom width adjacent to the levee.

Archaeological Resources: The area surrounding the portion of the channel to be improved under this alternative is relatively undisturbed. Improvements within the channel required for hydraulic mitigation will remain within the existing channel and consist of creating a uniform channel width through the removal of interior benches or shelves. However, the area should be surveyed, including an examination of the cut bank, to ensure no significant archaeological resources are present prior to modification of the channel.

Construction of the levee has a higher potential to impact buried cultural resources than the channel modification. Deep excavations will be necessary for the footer of the levee. The area should be surveyed using a backhoe to look for deeply buried archaeological sites prior to construction. In addition, if borrow material for the levee is taken from anywhere other than a commercial borrow site, the planned borrow area must be surveyed for cultural resources, as well.

Architectural Resources: Previous investigations conducted by USACE on the Leon Creek watershed indicate that two potential historic resources exist within ½ mile of the proposed Recommended Plan location. Both resources consist of domestic structures dating at least to 1903 and may date to the mid 1800s. However, neither resource will be physically impacted by the proposed construction nor should adverse impacts to watershed result from the channel modification or levee construction. No architectural surveys should be required to implement the Recommended Plan.