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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Pine Barren Creek Watershed, Escambia County, AL

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Alabama, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: The Pine Barren Creek Watershed is a federally assisted action authorized for planning under Public Law 83-566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act. An environmental assessment was undertaken in conjunction with the development of a watershed plan that outlines alternatives for flood reduction within the City of Atmore, Alabama.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shannon Weaver, Assistant State Conservationist for Natural Resources. (334) 887-4533 or e-mail: shannon.weaver@al.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Supplemental Watershed Plan describes a plan for reduction of flooding at Atmore, Alabama. The plan will be implemented by providing financial and technical assistance through a local sponsor. The project measures described within the plan will reduce the potential for flooding within the watershed and will also reduce the potential risk to human health and safety. The Environmental Assessment indicates that this Federal action will not cause significant adverse local, regional, or national impacts on the environment.

Dated: February 19, 2008.

Gary Kobylski,
State Conservationist.

Finding of No Significant Impact for Pine Barren Creek Watershed, Escambia County, Alabama, January 2008

Introduction

The Pine Barren Creek Watershed is a federally assisted action authorized for planning under Public Law 83-566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act. An environmental assessment was undertaken in conjunction with the development of the supplemental watershed plan. This assessment was conducted in consultation with local, State, and Federal agencies as well as with interested organizations and individuals. The Supplemental Watershed Plan and Environmental Assessment are available for public review at the following locations:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 175 Ag Science Drive, Suite A, Brewton, Alabama.	Altmore Public Library, 700 E. Church Street, Atmore, Alabama
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 3381 Skyway Drive, Auburn, Alabama.	City Hall, City of Atmore, 201 East Louisville Ave., Atmore, Alabama.
Brewton Public Library, 206 West Jackson Street, Brewton, Alabama.	

Recommended Action

The Supplemental Watershed Plan describes a plan for reduction of flooding in Atmore, Alabama. The plan will be implemented by providing financial and technical assistance through a local sponsor.

The principal project measures are to:

1. Deepen an existing channel located in the headwaters of Pine Barren Creek.
2. Install a grade stabilization structure.
3. Modify an existing weir structure.
4. Install reinforced concrete pipe laterals within the residential area of Atmore.

Effects of Recommended Action

The project measures will reduce the potential for flooding within the

watershed and will also reduce the potential risk to human health and safety. The modified weir structure will be designed to release no more water than that which was released prior to project implementation. Thus, the creation of additional flow downstream during storm events will be avoided.

Wildlife habitat will not be disturbed during installation of the structural work of this project. No wetlands, wildlife habitat, fisheries, prime farmland, or cultural resources will be destroyed or threatened by this project. The value of woodland habitat will not decline. Fishery habitats will also be maintained.

No endangered or threatened plant or animal species will be adversely affected by the project.

There are no wilderness areas in the watershed.

Alternatives

Five alternative plans were considered in project planning. No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated from installation of the selected alternative. Also, the planned action is the most practical and cost effective means of reducing flooding in the watershed.

Consultation—Public Participation

Flooding and water quality concerns in the Pine Barren Creek Watershed were expressed by local citizens, City of Atmore officials, Escambia County Soil and Water Conservation District, and other regional residents. NRCS personnel in partnership with the City of Atmore, explored alternatives to relieve flooding problems, while maintaining water quality in Pine Barren Creek. Two interagency meetings were held to gather input from local, state, and federal government agencies. In addition, two public meetings were held in Atmore to gather public input and concerns.

At the initiation of the planning process, meetings were held between NRCS and the City of Atmore to discuss problem identification and PL-566 requirements. A public meeting was held in June 26, 2003 to scope the problems and concerns and to explain impacts of the PL-566 program initiatives relative to a watershed project and discuss possible solutions.

In order to further publicize this planning effort, a public announcement

was made to State and Federal agencies by letter and to local landowners through local newspapers to announce the change in project purpose.

Evaluations and alternative solutions were developed with the Sponsor and other officials. The Recommended Plan was agreed upon.

Another public meeting was on May 31, 2007. The results of surveys, studies, field investigations and the Alternatives Plans were presented to the public. The Selected Plan was shared with those in attendance.

Based on Field Inspections to determine the quality and quantity of resources that would be impacted by selected practices and to consider possible mitigation measures, it has been determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not needed for this project. Based on the type of practices and systems that are planned, installation on previously disturbed land, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared.

Upon review of the Pine Barren Creek Watershed Plan—EA, this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared. These documents are being distributed to all concerned agencies, groups, and interested individuals. A Notice of Availability of the FONSI is being published in the **Federal Register**. Agency consultations and public participation to date has shown no conflicts with the implementation of the selected plan.

Conclusion

The Environmental Assessment summarized above indicates that this Federal action will not cause significant adverse local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. Therefore, based on the above findings, I have determined that an environmental impact statement for the recommended Pine Barren Creek Supplemental Watershed Plan is not required.

Dated: February 19, 2008.

Gary Kobylski,

State Conservationist.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration Mission Statement

AGENCY: Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

Mission Statement; Assistant Secretarial Trade Mission to Vietnam; June 16–20, 2008

I. Mission Description

The United States Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, U.S. Commercial Service is organizing a Trade Mission to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, June 16–20, 2008, to be led by Assistant Secretary for Trade Promotion and Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service Israel Hernandez.

The mission will focus on helping U.S. companies launch or increase their export business in the Vietnamese market. The mission will help participating firms gain market information, make business and government contacts, solidify business strategies, and advance specific projects, towards the goal of increasing U.S. exports to Vietnam. The mission will include business-to-business matchmaking appointments with local companies, as well as meetings with key government officials, and American and local chambers of commerce. The delegation will be comprised of U.S. firms representing a cross section of U.S. industries with commercial interests in Vietnam.

II. Commercial Setting

With a GDP of \$61 billion and a young population of 84 million, Vietnam is one of the fastest growing economies in Asia (8.4% growth in 2006) and a new member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (January 11, 2007). Since the signing of the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement in 2001, two-way trade has increased from about \$1.5 billion (2001) to \$9.7 billion (2006). Total U.S. merchandise exports to Vietnam in 2006 reached \$1.1 billion, and in 2007, U.S. exports grew by an estimated 65.1% over the previous year.

Industrial production continues to grow at 14–15% per annum, as the country follows an increasingly sophisticated foreign investment- and export-led growth strategy in such industries as agriculture and aquaculture, furniture, textiles and now consumer electronics. Over the past five years, multilateral development banks have expanded loan portfolios to fund aggressive infrastructure (transportation, energy, telecommunications) growth and will continue to do so into the foreseeable future. New WTO market-opening commitments will continue to be phased in through 2015, making it easier for U.S. companies to open businesses and sell and distribute products in most major sectors. The telecommunications, power production,

and oil and gas equipment markets are well above \$2.0 billion each and growing significantly each year. IT infrastructure, financial services, environmental products, aviation and airport equipment, security, mining, medical devices and franchising present further lucrative selling opportunities for U.S. exporters. Also, industrial inputs ranging from raw materials to sophisticated manufacturing technology are needed to fuel the Vietnam government's export-led growth strategy. Rising incomes in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, which tend to be four times the national average, are opening visible new selling opportunities for consumer goods producers and service-sector providers.

Vietnam's government has successfully privatized a few small State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and will continue to do so. However, in major economic sectors such as energy, banking, telecommunications, oil and gas, and shipping, the government will "equitize" (offer shares of large state corporations to investors while maintaining a majority stake) SOEs over the next five to ten years. While challenges remain for U.S. companies doing business in Vietnam, evolving and improving regulatory and commercial law regimes are beginning to address business corruption, weak intellectual property rights enforcement and a lack of transparency and consistency. The mission is designed to assist U.S. companies to identify and capture these opportunities.

III. Mission Goals

The Business Development Mission to Vietnam will help U.S. firms initiate or expand their exports to Vietnam's leading industry sectors by providing business-to-business introductions, market access information, and information on U.S. Government trade financing programs.

IV. Mission Scenario

The Business Development Mission to Vietnam will include stops in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In each city, participants will:

- Meet with government officials.
- Meet with potential buyers, agents/distributors and partners.
- Attend briefings by Embassy officials on the economic and commercial climates.

Receptions and other business events will be organized to provide mission participants with further opportunities to speak with local business and government representatives, as well as U.S. business executives living and working in the region.