

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This is to give notice that the City of Marion has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under the Community Development Block Grant Program under 4-CI-20-015. The proposed project(s) is located at 100 Collins St at The City of Marion Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) located in Marion County. CDBG funds will be used along with local funds and SC Rural Infrastructure Funds to construct an earthen berm, install a retaining wall with watertight gates, and install two pump stations at the City of Marion Wastewater Treatment Plant. These improvements will prevent future flooding of the WWTP. The total size of the site is approximately 16.14 acres with temporary wetland impacts of 0.04 acres and permanent impacts of 0.08 acres. The wetland on the southern and western sides is PF01Bd and the wetland on the eastern and northern sides is PF01F. The approximately 0.73 acres of wetland within the project area has previously been converted to a maintained herbaceous wetland and with its value considered partially impaired. Due to the location between an upland berm and fence within an industrial site, the wetland has reduced value.

The City of Marion has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: wetlands areas have natural and beneficial values and functions; including but not limited to, providing habitat to a huge number of songbirds, waterfowl, shellfish, mammals. Wetlands also function like a sponge, soaking up water that comes from periodically flooding rivers. Alternative #1: Earthen Berm- This alternative would include the construction of an earthen berm around the perimeter of the Marion WWTP. There are areas of the site which would require the berm to extend outside the property line due to a combination of the size of the berm needed and existing structures on the site. The property adjacent to the site appears to be primarily wetlands, so extending outside the property boundary is not desirable. This alternative is not considered feasible. Alternative #2: Earthen Berm and Retaining Wall (with pump stations)- This alternative includes a combination of an earthen berm and retaining wall. Where it is not possible to have an earthen berm due to existing structures proximity to the edge of the property, a retaining wall would be used. This results in approximately 1650 LF of earthen berm and 860 LF of retaining wall. A gate would be set into each section of the wall at low points to assist in draining the site after severe weather events. This alternative includes pump stations located near the two low points at each retaining wall where standing water is most likely to occur. In the case that the area outside the retaining wall is flooded during a long-lasting flood event as during Hurricane Florence, the site would be unable to drain water from excessive rainfall inside the protective berm due to the gates remaining closed. These pump stations will assist in preventing standing water during normal rain events but will especially help keep the site dry and accessible in the case of a major rain or flood event. This is the recommended alternative. Alternative #3: Earthen Berm and Retaining Wall (without pump stations). This alternative is similar to Alternative 2 in that it includes a 1650 LF earthen berm and 860 LF retaining wall. It also includes the two gates, one set in each section of the retaining wall. This alternative does not include the pump stations that will protect the plant during a storm event which includes simultaneous high levels of rainfall and flooding. This alternative is not considered feasible.

The City of Marion has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the wetland and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11990, are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the City of Marion at the following address on or before May 11, 2021: Attention: Alan Ammons, Administrator, PO Box 1190, Marion, SC 29571 and (843)423-5961. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments, 2319 Regional Road, Florence, SC 29502, Attention: Kim Ethridge, CD Director. Comments may also be submitted via email at aammons@marionsc.gov. (4/30/21)