

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The US Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District (USACE) is currently reviewing an application, submitted on June 10, 2011 by the Hall County Board of Commissioners, Hall County, Georgia (the Applicant), for a Department of the Army permit for a proposed water supply reservoir project to be located in Hall County, Georgia (SAS-2007-00388). USACE is processing the application pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act which regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. To fully evaluate the Applicant's proposal, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared to determine the effects of the proposal on the human and natural environment.

According to the Applicant, the purpose of the proposed project is to meet a projected deficit in the County's water supply need for the year 2060. The Applicant has indicated that the projected 2060 Hall County population is 833,333. The corresponding 2060 water demand is projected to be 100 million gallons per day (mgd). By 2060, approximately 72.5 mgd of water supply would be needed in addition to the currently available supply of 27.5 mgd.

The Applicant initially proposed a water supply project that included construction of a new flow augmentation reservoir (Glades Reservoir), as well as pipelines and pumping stations for withdrawing water from the Chattahoochee River and pumping to the Glades Reservoir and to the existing Cedar Creek Reservoir. As a result of the US Army Corps of Engineers' June 25, 2012 legal opinion regarding withdrawal of water from Lake Lanier for water supply, the Applicant subsequently requested modification of their preferred project.

The Applicant's current preferred project is to use Glades Reservoir to store water pumped from the Chattahoochee River (pumped-storage reservoir), release the stored water directly into Lake Lanier via Flat Creek, and withdraw the same volume of water at the existing Gainseville raw water intakes. The Applicant's original preferred project and its current preferred project are both 72.5-mgd water supply projects that involve construction of the Glades Reservoir and a pumping station on the Chattahoochee River, and pumping water from the Chattahoochee River to Glades Reservoir. All structural components of the Applicant's current project are part of the original project, with the piping and pumping connection to the existing Cedar Creek Reservoir eliminated in its current preferred project. A full description of the Applicant's current preferred project is located in Section 1.1.4 of this report.

The USACE conducted scoping of the Applicant's original preferred project prior to the issuance of the June 25, 2012, legal opinion. The Applicant's current preferred project eliminates the need for many of the structural components included in the original project, without changing the purpose and need for 72.5 mgd of water supply. Therefore, the USACE has determined that the project scoping adequately addressed the Applicant's current preferred project, and that additional project scoping is not needed.

Scoping Period

The 60-day scoping period for the Glades Reservoir project occurred from February 17 to April 17, 2012. The EIS scoping process solicits feedback from the public, governmental agencies, organizations that may have an interest in the project, and property owners adjacent to the proposed project to ensure that substantive issues, concerns, alternatives and impacts are adequately addressed in the EIS.

To announce the initiation of the project and the scoping period, USACE prepared a Notice of Intent (NOI), a project website, and other notifications. Three public open house meetings and three state agency meetings were held between March 20–23, 2012 in Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

Scoping Comments

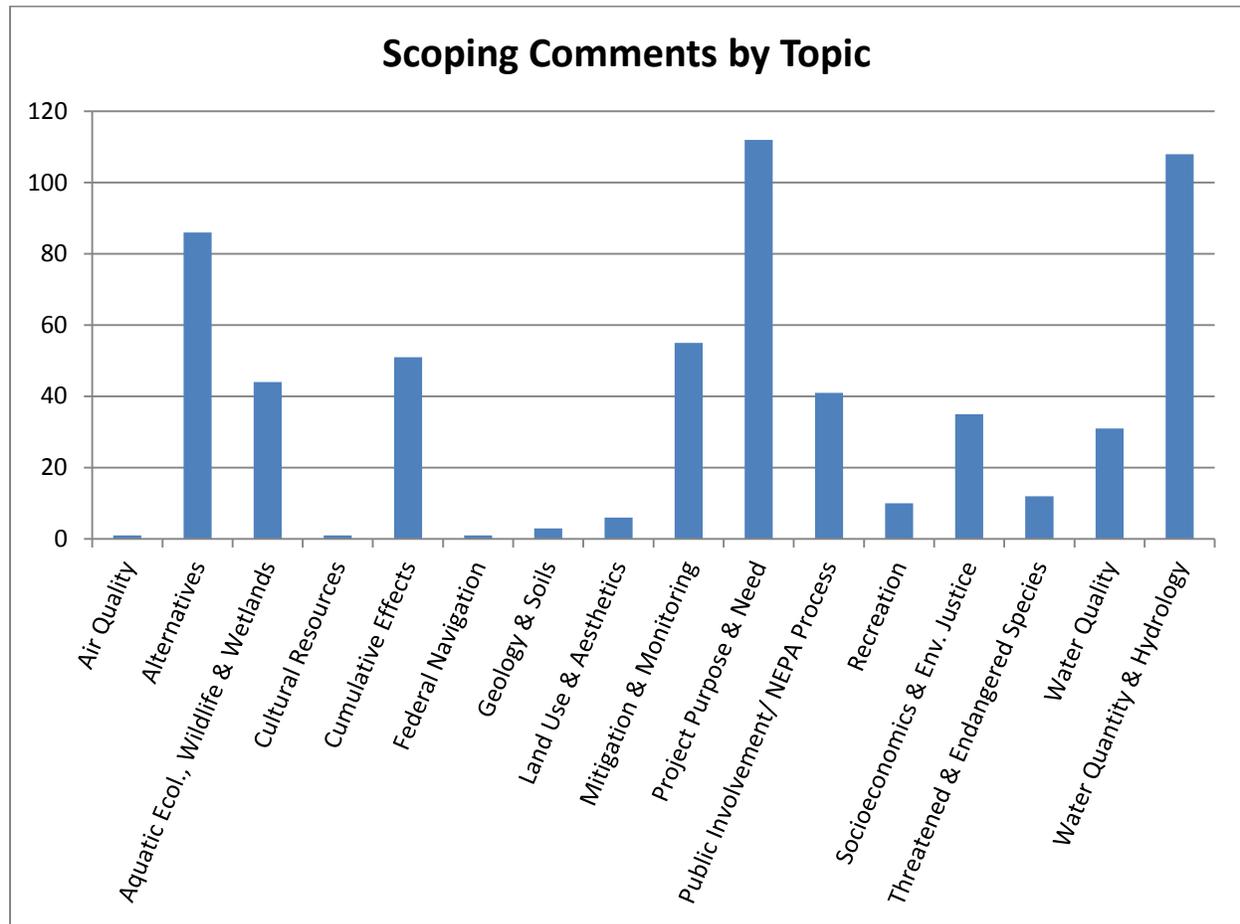
USACE received 114 letters, emails, comment sheets, verbal comments and website submissions during the comment period. Within these submissions, nearly 600 individual comments were identified. Comments were entered into a database and categorized by topic, format, and group or agency affiliation (if any). The following report details the scoping process and the issues identified in comments that will affect the scope of the Glades Reservoir EIS.

Nearly all comments received during the scoping period are applicable to the scope of analysis for the EIS. The highest number of comments were received on topics related to:

- Purpose and need for the proposed project (19 percent)
- Water quantity and hydrology (18 percent)
- Alternatives to the Applicant's proposal (14 percent)
- Cumulative effects of the proposed project (9 percent)
- Mitigation and monitoring of impacts (9 percent)
- Impacts to aquatic ecology, wildlife and habitat (7 percent)

The number of comments received on these topics indicate that these areas are of greater significance to stakeholders and should receive detailed analysis in the EIS. The following figure demonstrates the number of scoping comments received by topic.

Figure ES-1. Number of Comments by Topic



Next Steps

Following scoping, an USACE approved Purpose and Need Statement will be developed, followed by identification and screening of project alternatives. The USACE will prepare the Draft EIS, which will then be available for public review and comment. After comments on the Draft EIS have been reviewed and addressed, a Final EIS will be prepared and released for public review. The public may submit comments on the final document and comments related to the agency decision.