

Lease Action at Various Parks on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Arkansas

Real Estate Action

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT Expansion of Russellville City Park Lease (98 Acres), Dardanelle Lake, McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Arkansas

City of Russellville
Lease No. DACW03-1-87-211
Proposed Expansion --- Lake Dardanelle



October 2011



**US Army Corps
Of Engineers**

Little Rock District

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 Introduction

In 2007, the Little Rock District Corps of Engineers prepared an environmental assessment titled **“Lease Action at Various Parks on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Arkansas, Real Estate Action, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, March 2007”** to assess the environmental effects from the proposed lease of the parks and associated improvements to the existing facilities at Lee Creek, Vache Grasse, White Oak, Bluff Hole, Vine Prairie, O’Kane, Flatrock, Horse Head, Cabin Creek, Delaware, Bigelow, Cadron Settlement, Sequoia, Illinois Bayou and Point Remove parks.

The City of Russellville is requesting 98 acres, to include an area identified as Dike View Future Park in the Lake Dardanelle Master Plan, be added to their existing lease. Their request directly relates to their effort to expand municipal recreational opportunities around Lake Dardanelle by extending/connecting the “Russellville Connected Trail System” from adjoining leased project lands through the subject area.

ES.2 Project Description and Alternatives

The 98 acres can be described as having multiple stands of various tree species (mixed hardwood /pine, pine plantation, cedar stands) and slope exposure creating natural drainages and ponds. Pre-acquisition use of the land included a small area of strip coal mining on the southern portion of the area. The subject area is a narrow strip of “land locked” project lands bisected by Interstate 40 and bounded by a 2.15 mile long shoreline with Lake Dardanelle. The City currently leases project lands adjoining the western end of the subject area which has no other land access. Interstate 40 runs through the lease area resulting in an 80 acre segment south of I-40 (Dike View Future Park) and an 18 acre segment north of I-40. A developed dirt bike trail, to include small drainage bridges currently exists on site, having been constructed by multiple volunteers over the years. A concrete boat ramp is also present, having been constructed prior to the loss of access due to the construction of I-40. Future development by the city of Russellville includes such activities as the placement of a pedestrian bridge over a narrow neck of water north of I-40 and construction of a trail adjacent to the I-40 Illinois Bayou bridge abutment berm to connect current lease lands to the requested area. This EA only analyzes the affects from the leasing of the property and does not include any future improvements. Future improvements by the lessee will be subject to environmental review and approval by the Little Rock District, Corps of Engineers. Additional NEPA documentation preparation (i.e. EA, EIS, etc.) may be required depending on the scope of the future proposed action.

The purpose of this environmental assessment is to assess the environmental effects from the proposed lease to the city of Russellville, Arkansas. This document has been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and USACE Procedures for Implementing NEPA 1988 (ER 200-2-2).

Alternative 1 Under Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative) the existing Dike View lands would not be added to the City of Russellville’s existing lease.

Alternative 2 Alternative 2 (Proposed Action Alternative) involves adding the 98 acres of the Dike View area (see figures 1 & 2) to the existing land lease of the city of Russellville, Arkansas.

Future development by the city of Russellville such as the placement of a pedestrian bridge over a narrow neck of water north of I-40 and construction of a trail adjacent to the I-40 Illinois Bayou bridge abutment berm to connect current lease lands to the requested area are not included in the proposed action. Future improvements by the lessee will be subject to environmental review and approval by the Little Rock District, Corps of Engineers. Additional NEPA documentation preparation (i.e. EA, EIS, etc.) may be required depending on the scope of the future proposed action.

ES.3 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1

Implementation of Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative) would result in no adverse or beneficial impacts to the resources identified in this SEA such as Topography and Physiography, Soils, Archeological and Historic, Water Quality, Wetlands, Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Threatened and Endangered.

Adverse and beneficial impacts to the aesthetic and recreational resources in the proposed action area depending on one's point of view (i.e., keep the land natural or develop for park use). Minor adverse impacts to local economy due to unrealized recreational opportunities. Cumulatively, there would be a continued loss of public use of project "public" lands on a regional and national level due to Federal cutbacks.

Alternative 2

Implementation of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action Alternative) would have no adverse or beneficial impacts to the following resources: Topography and Physiography, Soils, Archeological and Historic, Water Quality, Wetlands, Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Threatened and Endangered.

Minor, long term beneficial impacts would accrue to Aesthetics and Recreational Resources given the operation and maintenance by the city of Russellville as part of the Russellville City Park System and to the continued use of public lands as they were envisioned in the Lake Master Plan.

Minor, long-term localized beneficial impacts would accrue to Socioeconomic Resources due to the increased expenditures associated with the users of the Russellville City Park System.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Expansion of Russellville City Park Lease (98 Acres), McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River
Navigation System, Arkansas

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Little Rock District Corps of Engineers prepared an environmental assessment titled **“Lease Action at Various Parks on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Arkansas, Real Estate Action, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, March 2007”** to assess the environmental effects from the proposed lease of the parks and associated improvements to the existing facilities at Lee Creek, Vache Grasse, White Oak, Bluff Hole, Vine Prairie, O’Kane, Flatrock, Horse Head, Cabin Creek, Delaware, Bigelow, Cadron Settlement, Sequoia, Illinois Bayou and Point Remove parks. This EA can be examined at the following Web address: http://www.swl.usace.army.mil/planning/MKARNSParkLeaseAction/FEA_MKARNS_Russellville-ea1.pdf

The original EA and this Supplement to the EA have been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and USACE Procedures for Implementing NEPA 1988 (ER 200-2-2).

This Supplemental EA (SEA) is being prepared to include the addition of approximately 98 acres of Corps project land (Dike View) designated as “recreation intensive” and “recreation low density” in the Dardanelle Lake Master Plan (see figure 1) to the existing project land lease DACW03-1-87-211 leased to the City of Russellville, Arkansas for park purposes.

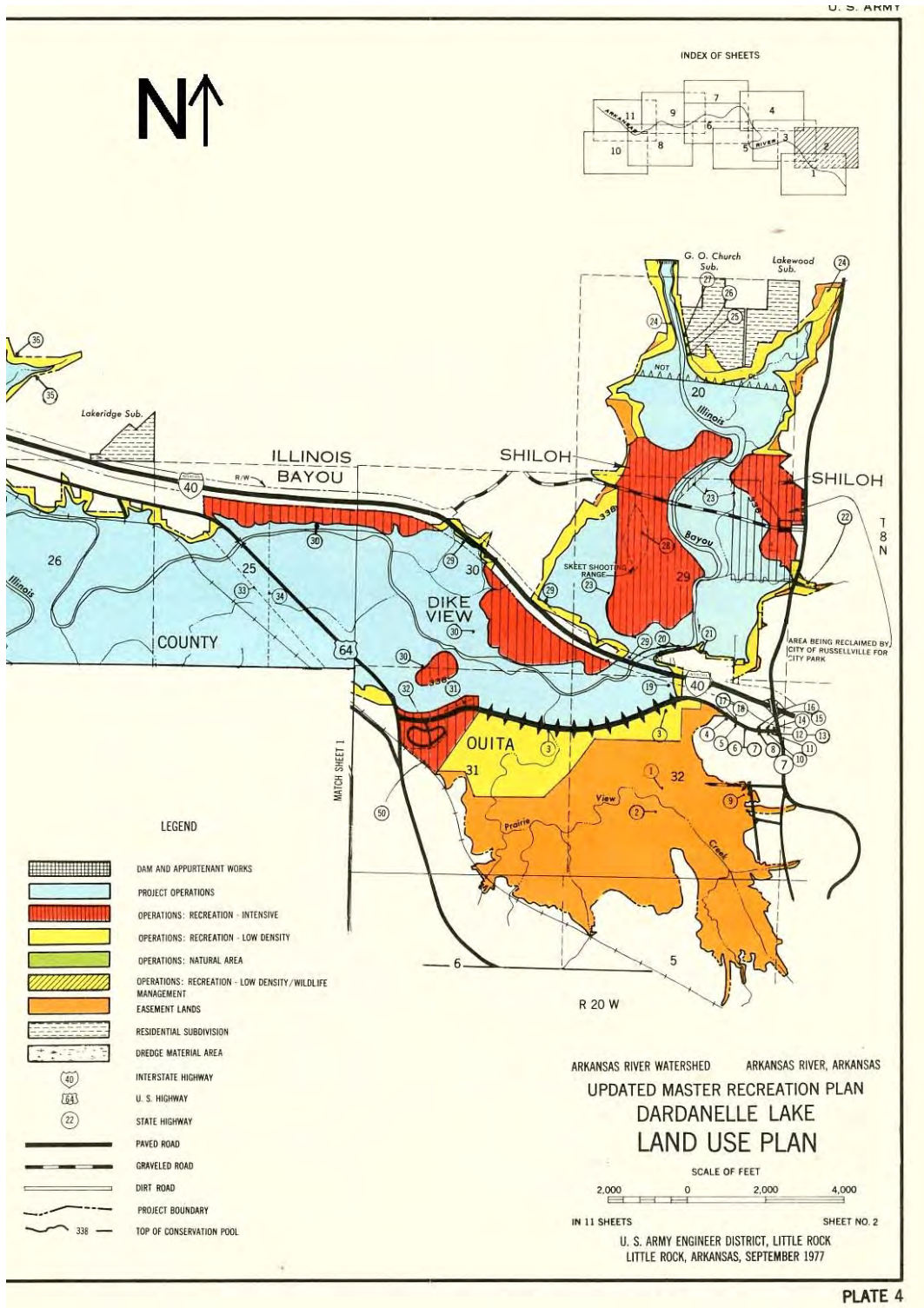


Figure 1. - Dardanelle Lake Master Plan, Land Use Plan

2.0 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The Russellville Project is charged with the responsibility for operating and maintaining the recreation areas on Lake Dardanelle. The parks were constructed and are managed to provide a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities in a clean, safe park environment that will give

equal opportunity and access to the water resources. The objective of the parks is to conserve and improve natural resources and the environment while enhancing the recreation facilities to the most cost effective and efficient manner considering present and future visitors' safety and enjoyment as the two most important factors. Due to Federal budget cutbacks various parks have been identified for closure. The purpose of the original action was to continue public use of these parks through leasing them to various local sponsors. The intent was to restore currently closed/partially closed parks to an operational status for the good of the public users by cooperating with the local communities when possible. This SEA will supplement the original EA by including the current proposed action of expanding the city of Russellville's lease to include 98 acres know as "Dike View".

The City of Russellville is requesting 98 acres, to include an area identified as Dike View Future Park in the Lake Dardanelle Master Plan, be added to their existing lease. Their request directly relates to their effort to expand municipal recreational opportunities around Lake Dardanelle by extending/connecting the "Russellville Connected Trail System" from adjoining leased project lands through the subject area. A developed dirt bike (bicycle) trail currently exists on the requested area south of I-40 and is accessed from adjoining project lands currently under lease to the City of Russellville.

Potential future activities by the city of Russellville may include placement of a pedestrian bridge over a narrow neck of water north of I-40 and construction of a trail adjacent to the I-40 Illinois Bayou bridge abutment berm to connect current lease lands to the requested area. The City's plans will tie all project lands surrounding the Illinois Bayou arm of Lake Dardanelle into a publicly accessible trails system. Additional activities such as these are not part of this EA assessment and must be environmentally reviewed by the Corps when more detailed plans are submitted by the city of Russellville.

USACE will not develop the area in consideration of current policy, limiting development of new recreation areas without a public partner and due to budget constraints which are currently driving a reduction in USACE recreation programming throughout the Little Rock District. The Russellville Project Office is making the land available through a lease agreement to the City of Russellville to further public recreation opportunities consistent with project purposes consistent with EP1130-2-550, Chapter 2

2.2 Alternative Formulation Process

The alternatives to be considered in the SEA were developed by the Little Rock District, USACE and Russellville Project Office to further public recreation opportunities consistent with project purposes and EP1130-2-550, Chapter 2.

3.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Proposed Action

The Little Rock District of the US Army Corps of Engineers proposes to lease approximately 98 acres of project land known as “Dike View” to the City of Russellville as part of a lease expansion of the city’s existing lease (see figure 1).

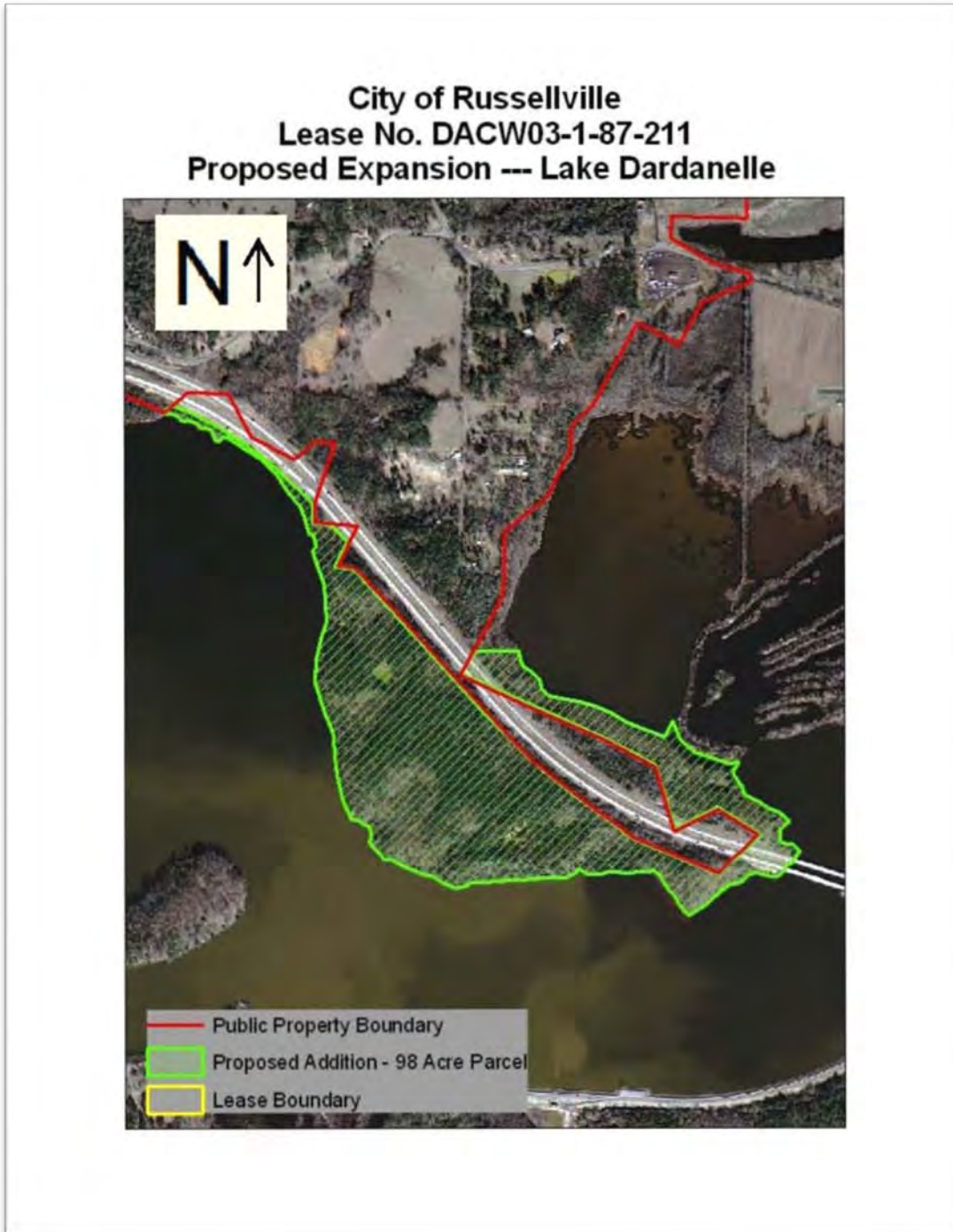


Figure 2. - 98 Acre Lease Area

3.2 Alternatives

Alternative 1. Under Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative) the “Dike View” acreage would not be leased to the city of Russellville. Failure to lease the requested 98 acres to City of Russellville would result in continued underutilization of project lands for recreation and would conflict with current USACE policy, guidance and the USACE Recreation Strategic Plan, published in April 2011. If not leased, project lands would not meet their intended purpose, i.e. development of a designated Future Park Area, continued access restriction to public lands, lost recreational opportunity, and potential abuse of public lands due to the absence of active management.

Alternative 2. Alternative 2 (Proposed Action Alternative) involves leasing the 98 acres of the “Dike View” property to the city of Russellville. The 98 acres can be described as having multiple stands of various tree species (mixed hardwood /pine, pine plantation, cedar stands) and slope exposure creating natural drainages and ponds. Pre-acquisition use of the land included a small area of strip coal mining located in the southern portion of the area. The subject area is a narrow strip of “land locked” project lands bisected by Interstate 40 and bounded by a 2.15 mile long shoreline with Lake Dardanelle. The City currently leases project lands adjoining the western end of the subject area which has no other land access. Interstate 40 runs through the lease area resulting in an 80 acre segment south of I-40 (Dike View Future Park) and an 18 acre segment north of I-40. A developed dirt bike (bicycle) trail, including small drainage bridges currently exists on site, having been constructed by multiple volunteers over the years. A concrete boat ramp is also present, having been constructed prior to the loss of access due to the construction of I-40.

Table 3-1 includes the comparative impacts from the proposed action and the No Action alternatives.

Resource Area	Proposed Action	No Action
Physical Resources	No beneficial or adverse effect	No beneficial or adverse effect
Cultural Resources	No beneficial or adverse effect	No beneficial or adverse effect
Water Quality	No beneficial or adverse effect	No beneficial or adverse effect
Wetlands	No beneficial or adverse effect	No beneficial or adverse effect
Aquatic Resources	No beneficial or adverse effect	No beneficial or adverse effect
Terrestrial Resources	No beneficial or adverse effect.	No beneficial or adverse effect
Threatened and Endangered Species	No beneficial or adverse effect	No beneficial or adverse effect
Aesthetics	Minor, long term beneficial impacts given the operation and maintenance by the city of Russellville of project lands designated for recreational use. Long term adverse impacts from not leaving project lands in a more “natural” condition.	Long term adverse impacts from under utilization of project lands designated for recreational use. Long term beneficial impacts from leaving project lands in a more “natural” condition.
Recreation	Minor, long-term localized beneficial impacts to those who would use the area as part of the Russellville city park system.	Long term adverse impacts from under utilization of project lands designated for recreational use.
Socio-Economic Resources	Minor, long-term localized beneficial impacts due to the increased expenditures associated with the users of the Russellville City Park System.	Minor adverse impact to local economy due to unrealized recreational opportunities.
Cumulative	Beneficial impacts due to continued use of public lands as they were envisioned in the Lake Master Plan.	Continued loss of public use of project “public” lands on a regional and national level due to Federal cutbacks.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Physical Resources

4.1.1 Topography/Physiography

The lands currently leased and proposed for leasing (Dike View) to the City of Russellville are part of Lake Dardanelle and are bordered by the Ozark Mountains on the North and the Ouachita Mountains on the south. The lower one-third of Lake Dardanelle is surrounded by tree-covered, rocky slopes including several clear water tributary streams.

The Arkansas River channel, within the Arkansas River Valley, varies from one-half up to several miles in width around the large bay areas. Two types of tributary streams feed the river in this stretch. Tributary streams are either narrow and confined by adjacent ridges of are gradual in slope and are associated with minor bottom ecosystems. Rocks exposed in the lake areas are of sedimentary origin and consist predominately of shale and sandstone.

Prior to acquisition of the land by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a small portion located in the southern end of the 98 acres of land was used for strip coal mining.

4.1.2 Soils

The residual soils at Lake Dardanelle are the result of weathering of underlying rock strata. In the areas where the bedrock is sandstone, the soils mantle generally consists of sandy silt containing fragments of sandstone. These deposits vary in thickness up to five feet. The shale strata being less resistant to weathering has, a soil overburden of clay containing fewer rock fragments and reaching thicknesses up to 15 feet. Soils in some of the upland areas contain varying amounts of detrital or washed-in material controlled by the drainage and topography of the area.

4.2 Cultural Resources

The Arkansas River has supported human occupation and industry from the earliest human inhabitants in the area up to modern times. This is evidenced by numerous prehistoric and historic sites that are located along the banks of the river. This project area lies in “Middle Arkansas River Valley” section of the state as described in A State Plan for the Conservation of Archeological Resources in Arkansas (Davis 1982). The State Plan does not outline study units for the Middle Arkansas River Valley but an overview of the regions prehistory and history can be found in Human Adaptation in the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains (Sabo et al 1988) and Archeology in the Arkansas River Valley: A Cultural Resources Survey in the Central Arkansas River Valley, Lake Dardanelle and Ozark Lake, Arkansas (Bennett et al. 1986), and need not be repeated here.

The District Archeologist referenced the Arkansas Archeological Survey’s archeological site database (AMASDA) and reports of surveys done within the vicinity of the project area and there have been four sites recorded within the project area. These four sites are 3PP37, 3PP600, 3PP601 and 3PP1236. Two of these sites (3PP37 and 3PP600) have a prehistoric component and the other two sites (3PP601 and 3PP1236) are historic. Sites 3PP37 and 3PP1236 were destroyed by the construction of Interstate 40. Site 3PP601 is the remnants of a historic mine and has been significantly disturbed by the construction of I-40. Site 3PP600 consisted of an

isolated artifact which was described as a groundstone metate. Further inspection of the ground surface was done but no other artifacts were identified in the area of this find.

The General Land Office (GLO) maps were also consulted and the only marked historic feature noted on the map within the project area is the field associated with 3PP1236 which is likely destroyed. There are also no historic structures within or near the project area.

One cultural resources survey covered parts of the project area and one other was done in the vicinity of Illinois Bayou. The project that covered part of the project area was carried out by Archeological Assessments (Bennett et al. 1986) in 1985 and a total of 93 sites were recorded on Lake Ozark and on the shoreline and public use areas of Lake Dardanelle. The other project was also carried out by Archeological Assessments (Northrip and Bennett 1988) and multiple archeological sites were subjected to phase II testing.

4.3 Water Quality

The surface water of tributary streams emptying into Lake Dardanelle is generally of good quality. These streams receive runoff from the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains, and typically have streambeds of sand and gravel with a low silt load. This results in clear water embayments at their confluence with the lake.

Water quality suffers in Dardanelle Lake during periods of high flow. Watershed erosion evident in tributary streams of the lake, results in high turbidity.

The primary tributary in the area of the proposed lease is Illinois Bayou which is classified as an Extraordinary Resource Water by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

4.4 Wetlands

The proposed 98 acre tract of land for lease includes one wetland in the form of a natural pond and classified as PUBHh (see figure 3) under the National Wetlands Inventory by the U.S. fish and Wildlife Service. Description for code PUBHh :

P System PALUSTRINE: The Palustrine System includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, emergents, mosses or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas where salinity due to ocean derived salts is below 0.5 ppt. Wetlands lacking such vegetation are also included if they exhibit all of the following characteristics: 1. are less than 8 hectares (20 acres); 2. do not have an active wave-formed or bedrock shoreline feature; 3. have at low water a depth less than 2 meters (6.6 feet) in the deepest part of the basin; 4. have a salinity due to ocean-derived salts of less than 0.5 ppt.

Subsystem : UB Class UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM: Includes all wetlands and deepwater habitats with at least 25% cover of particles smaller than stones (less than 6-7 cm), and a vegetative cover less than 30%.

Subclass :

Modifier(s): H WATER REGIME Permanently Flooded: Water covers the land surface throughout the year in all years. h SPECIAL MODIFIER Diked/Impounded: These wetlands have been created or modified by a man-made barrier or dam which obstructs the inflow or

outflow of water. The descriptors 'diked' and 'impounded' have been combined into a single modifier since the observed effect on wetlands is similar.

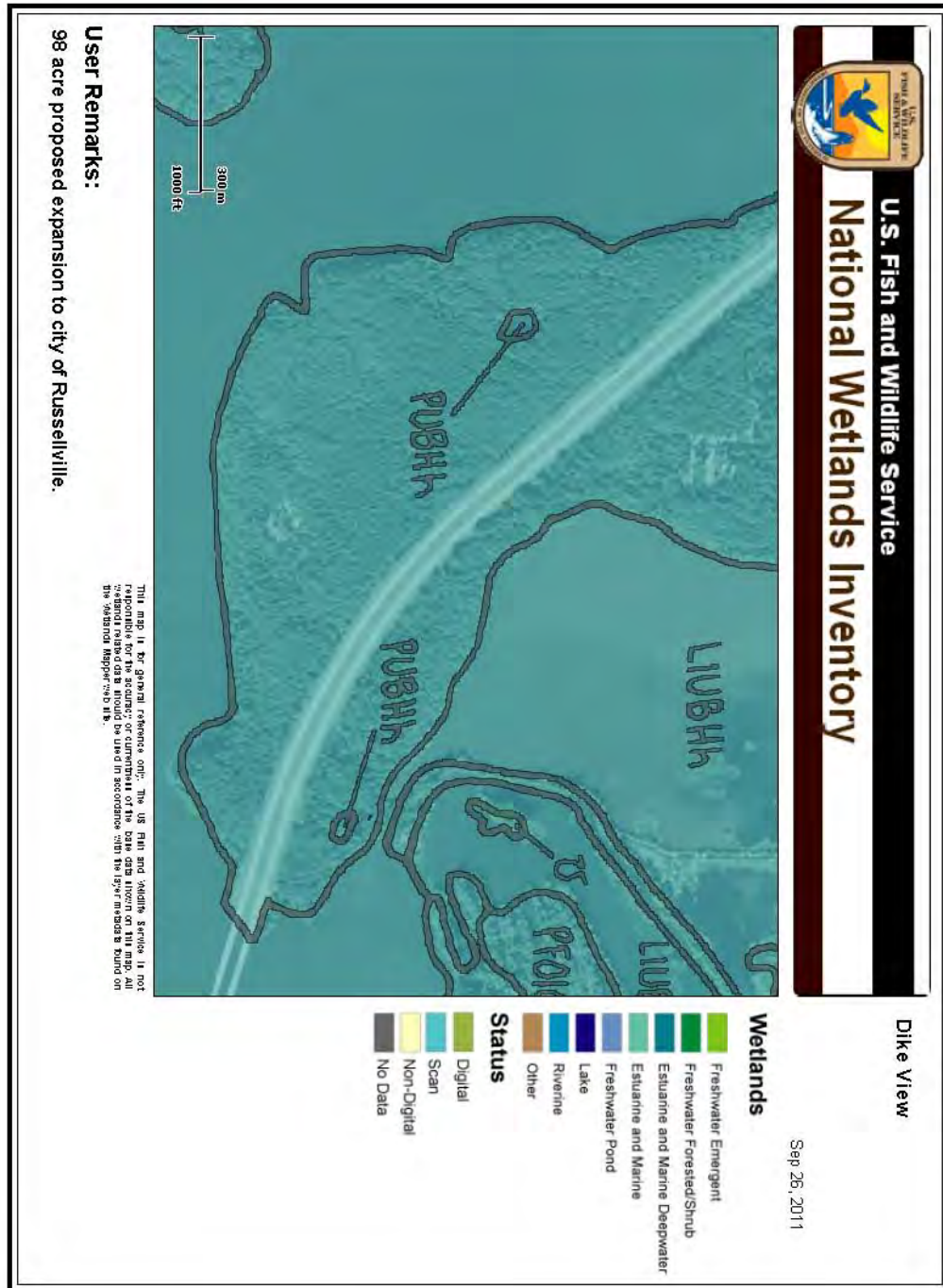


Figure 3. Wetlands within the proposed lease area.

4.5 Aquatic Resources

The Arkansas River has for many years been popular with fishermen for its large catfish. Record Flathead, Blues, and Channel are caught using many methods. White bass are native to the river, with adults traveling in schools and feeding near the surface. Bream, crappie, and largemouth bass are stocked in the lake and provide excellent sport fishing. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission studies of bass tournaments across the state revealed that Lake Dardanelle is the most productive bass fishery in the state of Arkansas. With no closed season and mild winters, fishing is good year round.

4.6 Terrestrial Resources

4.6.1 Vegetation

The minor and major bottomland ecosystem adjacent to the river valley is generally used for agriculture and the upper elevations are usually forested. Over 75 species of trees have been reported in the project area, including at least 14 oak species.

General vegetation adjacent to the Arkansas River on Dardanelle Lake are those typical of a major bottom system. Major forest vegetation types occurring in these areas include: cottonwood, ash, box elder, hackberry, sugarberry, pecan, black willow, river birch, rough-leaved dogwood, plums, mulberry, overcup oak, shumard oak, water oak, and associated midstory and understory species. These area have been disturbed previously due to past strip mining and construction of roads and highways such as Interstate 40.

The 98 acres in question, can be described as having multiple stands of various tree species (mixed hardwood /pine, pine plantation, cedar stands) and slope exposure creating natural drainages and ponds.

4.6.2 Wildlife

Located near the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests, the area has an abundance of wildlife. There is in-season hunting for deer, turkey, water fowl and other small game. The success rate of the growing Canada Goose Season is proof of the excellent breeding ground the lake and river provides. The river valley is a favorite wintering area for the American Bald Eagle. From late fall through early spring, eagle are often seen perched in large trees and on snags along the river as they hunt for their favorite prey – fish. Popular viewing areas include Old Post Road Park in Russellville and Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge, southeast of Dardanelle.

4.7 Threatened and Endangered Species

Initial screening for threatened and endangered species in the vicinity of the proposed land lease using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Web-based program “Information, Planning, and Conservation System” (IPAC) resulted in the following species being identified as possibly existing near the project area.

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Federal Status</u>
<i>Birds</i>		
Least tern	(<i>Sterna antillarum</i>)	Endangered

Piping Plover	(<i>Charadrius melodus</i>)	Threatened
<i>Clams</i>		
Speckled pocketbook	(<i>Lampsilis streckeri</i>)	Endangered
<i>Mammals</i>		
Gray bat	(<i>Myotis grisescens</i>)	Endangered

4.8 Aesthetics and Recreation

With nearly 40,000 acres of boating and fishing waters and rimmed by choice picnic and camping areas, it is the ideal leisure-time destination. Lake Dardanelle spreads westward behind Dardanelle Dam into Pope, Yell, Logan, Johnson, and Franklin Counties. Two miles wide in places, it reaches 50 miles upstream to the Ozark-Jeta Taylor Lock and Dam and has 315 miles of shoreline.

Parks on Lake Dardanelle offer many recreational opportunities. Each has drinking water, toilet facilities, and picnic tables. Several have boat launch ramps, trailer dump stations, electrical sites with water, and group picnic shelters. Public boat docks offer boat and motor rental services, fuel, food, and other supplies and services. The lease area (98 acres) however, has never been developed and does not contain any park amenities as described above.

Dardanelle Field Office – The USACE, Little Rock District’s Dardanelle Field Office maintains the area along the Arkansas River downstream of the Ozark-Jeta Taylor Lock and Dam (No. 12) to the Arthur V. Ormond Lock and Dam (No. 9). This area includes Lakes Dardanelle and Winthrop Rockefeller, which spread westward behind Dardanelle Lock and Dam (No. 10) and Arthur V. Ormond Lock and Dam, respectively. The Ozark, Dardanelle and Toad Suck Field Offices are all administratively managed by the Russellville Project Office.

4.9 Socio-Economic Resources

The region of economic impact for this action is Pope and Yell Counties in the State of Arkansas. These counties represent the area surrounding the proposed action and the city of Russellville.

Table 4-1 portrays population trends from 2000 to 2010, with comparative data for the State of Arkansas. According to U.S. Census data, this area experienced an average increase of 11 percent in population from 2000 to 2010, with the growth in Pope County greater than the growth rate for the State and the growth rate for Yell County lower than the growth rate for the State.

County	2010	2000	Change 2000-2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
Pope	61,754	54,469	7,285	13.4
Yell	22,185	21,139	1,046	4.9
Arkansas (State)	2,915,918	2,673,400	242,518	9.1

Table 4-1. Population Change, 2000-2010.				
County	2010	2000	Change 2000-2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
<i>Source: 2010 U.S. Census.</i>				

The following discussion of environmental justice issues has been developed to address three Presidential Executive Orders:

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations. On February 11, 1994, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations. The purpose of this executive order is to avoid the disproportionate placement of adverse environmental, economic, social, or health impacts from Federal actions and policies on minority and low-income populations or communities. An element emanating from this order was the creation on an Interagency Federal Working Group on Environmental Justice comprised of the heads of seventeen Federal departments and agencies, including the U.S. Army. Each department or agency is to develop a strategy and implementation plan for addressing environmental justice.

It is the Army’s policy to fully comply with Executive Order 12898 by incorporating environmental justice concerns in decision-making processes supporting Army policies, programs, projects, and activities. In this regard, the Army ensures that it would identify, disclose, and respond to potential adverse social and environmental impacts on minority and/or low-income populations within the area affected by a proposed Army action. The initial step in this process is the identification of minority and low-income population that might be affected by implementation of the proposed action or alternatives. For environmental justice considerations, these populations are defined as individuals or groups of individuals, which are subject to an actual or potential health, economic, or environmental threat arising from existing or proposed Federal actions and policies. Low income is defined as the aggregate annual mean income for a family of four in 2000 of \$17,601.

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks. On April 21, 1997, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks. This Executive Order recognizes that a growing body of scientific knowledge demonstrates that children may suffer disproportionately from environmental health risks and safety risks. These risks arise because children’s bodily systems are not fully developed; their size and weight can diminish protection from standard safety features; and because their behavior patterns can make them more susceptible to accidents. Based on these factors, President Clinton directed each Federal agency to make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that might disproportionately affect children. President Clinton also directed each Federal agency to ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health risks or safety risks.

It is the Army’s policy to fully comply with Executive Order 13045 by incorporating these concerns in decision-making processes supporting Army policies, programs, projects, and activities. In this regard, the Army ensures that it would identify, disclose, and respond to

potential adverse social and environmental impacts on children within the area affected by a proposed Army action.

The race and income demographics of the counties also differ from State averages. Table 4-2 details the race populations, per capita income, and poverty levels for Pope and Yell Counties and the State.

County	Total Race Population	White Population	% Non-white pop. (2010)	Per Capita Income (2009 \$)	% Persons in Poverty (2009 %)
Pope	61,754	56,586	8.4%	\$19,281	17.9%
Yell	22,185	19,578	11.8%	\$15,993	17.1%
Arkansas (State)	2,915,900	2,245,229	23.0%	\$20,977	17.7%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census.

General population characteristics of the area for median age, household size, and income are presented in Table 4-3. Reflective of the nature of a majority of the in-migrating population, the median age and household size for the counties is on average with the State of Arkansas. The percent of the area’s population below poverty level and median household income is approximately the same as for the State of Arkansas.

County	Median Age 2010 ¹	Average Household Size 2010 ²	Percent of Persons Below Poverty Level 2009 ²	Median Household Income, 2009 ²
Pope	35.4	2.5	17.9	\$38,511
Yell	36.5	2.78	17.1	\$36,398
<i>Arkansas</i>	<i>36.9</i>	<i>2.48</i>	<i>17.7%</i>	<i>\$38,542</i>

¹ *Source: 2010 U.S. Census.*
² *Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2005-2009.*

Table 4-4 portrays selected housing characteristics of number of housing units, median housing values and occupancy status for the study area. The median value of owner-occupied housing is lower than that of the State of Arkansas in 2010, while both the percent of owner-occupied units is higher and percent of vacant units is approximately the State average for Pope County and above the State average for Yell County..

County	Number of Units	Median Value (Owner-Occupied)	Percent Owner Occupied ¹	Percent Vacant
Pope	24,673	\$93,500	69.5	10.0
Yell	9,664	\$71,200	69.2	19.7
<i>Arkansas</i>	<i>1,286,736</i>	<i>\$97,200</i>	<i>67.5</i>	<i>13.8</i>

¹ *Represents percent of total occupied units,*
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2005-2009

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

5.1 Definition of Key Terms

The following paragraphs define key terms used throughout this section.

5.1.1 Direct Versus Indirect Impacts

The terms impact and effect, are synonymous as used in this EA. Impacts may be determined to be beneficial or adverse, and may apply to the full range of natural, aesthetic, historic, cultural, and economic resources of the project area and its surroundings. Definitions and examples of direct and indirect impacts as used in this document are as follows:

Direct Impact. A direct impact is caused by the proposed action, and occurs at the same time and place.

Indirect Impact. An indirect impact is caused by the proposed action and is later in time or farther removed in distance, but is still reasonably foreseeable.

Application of Direct versus Indirect Impacts. For direct impacts to occur, a resource must be present in a particular area. For example, if highly erodible soils were disturbed due to construction, there would be a direct impact to soils from erosion at the construction site. Sediment laden runoff would indirectly affect water quality in adjacent areas downstream from the construction site.

5.1.2 Short-Term versus Long-Term Impacts

In this context, short-term and long-term do not refer to any rigid time period and are determined on a case-by-case basis in terms of the environmental consequences of a proposed action. A summary impact matrix is presented at the end of Section 5 on Table 5.2. The summary impact matrix table illustrates the environmental impacts for each resource category associated with each of the alternatives considered in this SEA.

5.1.3 Significance

The term “significant” as used in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires consideration of both the context and intensity of the impact evaluated. Significance can vary in relation to the context of a proposed action. For a proposed action, context may include consideration of effects on a national, regional, and/or local basis. Both short-term and long-term effects may be relevant. Factors contributing to the intensity of an impact include:

The degree to which the action affects public health or safety;

The proximity of the action to resources which are legally protected by various statutes and regulations such as jurisdictional wetlands, sites and buildings listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, regulatory floodplains, and Federally-listed Threatened and Endangered species;

The degree to which the effects of the action on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly uncertain or controversial;

Whether the action is related to other actions that are individually insignificant but cumulatively significant; and

Whether the action threatens to violate federal, state, or local law imposed for the protection of the environment.

5.2 Topography/Physiography

There would be no impacts to the topography/physiography of the Dardanelle Lake area or the proposed action area as a result of implementing the No Action Alternative or the proposed action.

5.3 Soils

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no effect to soils to the 98-acre tract of land.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there would be no adverse effects to soils due to the proposed leasing action. Any future actions approved by the Corps would only result in minor temporary disturbance to the soils and would be subject to environmental review by the Corps before approval would be granted.

5.4 Cultural Resources

The proposed action alternative and the no action alternative will not have any effect on known or unknown cultural resources. Given that the undertaking is the lease agreement there will be no direct impacts to the four known cultural resources within the project area. Also, given that Corps will retain ownership of the land, any ground disturbing activities, such as the construction of trails will still have to be coordinated through the District Office. Each specific request will be reviewed by the District Archeologist and will be coordinated with the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and interested Native American tribes when appropriate. The proposed action will be coordinated with the SHPO in conjunction with the 30 day review period.

5.5 Water Quality

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change in the surface water quality at the project area.

With the implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative no adverse impacts on the water quality of the Arkansas River System are expected. As stated throughout this SEA, any proposed future activities are subject to environmental review before approval will be granted.

5.6 Wetlands

Under the No Action Alternative, no wetlands in the vicinity of the proposed lease would be affected.

No wetlands will be adversely impacted by the proposed lease action. Any future actions will be subject to environmental review and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act as applicable.

5.7 Aquatic Resources

Under the No Action Alternative or the proposed action, no aquatic resources in the vicinity of the project area would be affected.

5.8 Terrestrial Resources

5.8.1 Vegetation

Under the No Action Alternative or the proposed action, no vegetation in the vicinity of the proposed action area would be affected. Any future actions resulting in the cutting or vegetation would be insignificant and would fall under normal environmental review processes.

5.8.2 Wildlife

Under the No Action Alternative or the proposed action, no wildlife species in the vicinity of the proposed action area would be affected. Any future actions resulting in wildlife habitat disturbance would be insignificant and would fall under normal environmental review processes.

5.9 Threatened and Endangered Species

There would be no reasonable foreseeable adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species as a result of implementing the No Action Alternative or the proposed action.

5.10 Aesthetics

The No Action Alternative would leave the 98-acre tract of land unmanaged and would not fulfill the land use purposes proposed in the Corps Master Plan for this area.

With the implementation of the proposed action, a beneficial impact to the Aesthetics of the area should be expected by continual maintenance operations by the city of Russellville.

5.11 Recreation Resources

The No Action Alternative would leave the 98-acre tract of land unmanaged and would not fulfill the land use purposes proposed in the Corps Master Plan for this area.

Long-term recreational benefits are expected to accrue to those who would use the 98-acre leased lands as part of the city of Russellville's Park area. With the upkeep of the area, locals and visitors would have greater access to the lake and expanded recreation opportunities.

5.12 Socio-Economic Resources

The No Action Alternative could have a minor adverse impact to local economy due to unrealized recreational opportunities.

Under the proposed action alternative, there would be minor beneficial impacts to the socio-economic environment. These localized impacts would be related to the increased expenditures associated with boats, boat maintenance, fuel, and other recreational purchases.

5.13 Cumulative Impacts

Under the No Action Alternative, Corps plans for recreational use of project lands as proposed in the Dardanelle Lake Master Plan would not occur. This increasing trend due to Federal budget cutbacks would cause cumulative negative impacts to recreational use of public lands.

Leasing park lands allow for the continued use by the public as they were envisioned while maintaining environmental stewardship by the Corps for natural resource protection of the same lands. The beneficial cumulative effect is that public lands can still be utilized at near the same rate as they were before Federal cutbacks occurred.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Alternative 1

Implementation of Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative) would result in adverse and beneficial impacts to the aesthetic and recreational resources in the proposed action area depending on ones point of view (keep the land natural or develop for park use). As stated before, due to Federal cutbacks, the Corps can no longer maintain or provide ideal public use of many project parks and lands thereby resulting in under usage of public lands for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

Alternative 2

Implementation of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action Alternative) would result in long-term beneficial impacts to aesthetic and recreational resources, primarily for those individuals that would use the lands as part of the Russellville City Park system. Public usage of project lands as envisioned in the Dardanelle Lake Master Plan would continue to be fulfilled for the betterment of the public.

No environmental or socioeconomic effects that were considered likely to occur under the proposed action were determined to be significant. Unless explicitly stated, one cannot construe it to mean that any combination of effects can equate to a determination of significance. Significant impacts were determined based on the criteria established in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.27.

Therefore, the implementation of the proposed action (leasing the 98-acre tract of land to the city of Russellville) would not have a significant adverse impact on the quality of the environment and an environmental impact statement is not required.

7.0 RELATIONSHIP OF PROJECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS

<u>Guidance</u>	<u>*Degree of Compliance</u>
Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act, as Amended, 16 U.S.C. 469, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
National Historic Preservation Act, as Amended, 16 U.S.C. 470A, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-601; 104 Stat. 3048; 25 USC 3001-13)	NA
Clean Water Act, as Amended, 33 U.S.C. 466 <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Endangered Species Act, as Amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Farmland Protection Policy Act, 7 U.S.C. 4201, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as Amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as Amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, as Amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
National Environmental Policy Act, as Amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Rivers and Harbors Act, 33 U.S.C. 401, <u>et seq.</u>	FC
Floodplain Management, E.O. 11988	FC
Protection of Wetlands, E.O. 11990	FC
Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, E.O. 11593	FC
Prime or Unique Agricultural Lands NEPA, CEQ Memorandum August 11, 1980	FC

*Definitions: FC = Full Compliance PC = Partial Compliance NA- Not Applicable;
Full compliance will be attained after review and comment on the Environmental Assessment by the agencies listed in Appendix B - 30-Day Public Review Comments.

The draft FONSI will not be signed and become Final until the proposed action achieves environmental compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as described above.

8.0 LIST OF REFERENCES AND PREPARERS

8.1 References

USACE, 2007	Lease Action at Various Parks on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Arkansas, Real Estate Action, March 2007.
Arkansas Employment Security Department (AESD), 2001	Arkansas Labor Force Statistics, 2001
BEA, 1997	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. 1997 Regional Economic Information System. Employment by Industry Sector.
Haley, 1993	Haley, B.R. 1993 Geologic Map of Arkansas. Arkansas Geological Commission and U.S. Geological Survey.
USACE, 2001a	Draft, Environmental Impact Statement, Dardanelle Field Office, Ozark Field Office and Toad Suck Ferry Field Office Operational Management Plan, 2001. Prepared by Tetra Tech, Inc. Submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District.
USACE, 2001b	Recreation Carrying Capacity, 2001. Prepared by Tetra Tech, Inc. Submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District.

8.2 Preparers

Jim Ellis, NEPA Specialist, Environmental Branch, Planning and Environmental Division, Little Rock District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Cherilyn Gibbs, Economist, Planning Branch, Planning and Environmental Division, Little Rock District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Chris Page, Archeologist, Environmental Branch, Planning and Environmental Division, Little Rock District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Appendix A – Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

NAME OF PROPOSED ACTION: Lease of “Dike View” area to the city of Russellville, Arkansas.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION. The City of Russellville is requesting 98 acres, to include an area identified as Dike View Future Park in the Lake Dardanelle Master Plan, be added to their existing lease. Their request directly relates to their effort to expand municipal recreational opportunities around Lake Dardanelle by extending/connecting the “Russellville Connected Trail System” from adjoining leased project lands through the subject area.

USACE will not develop the area in consideration of current policy limiting development of new recreation areas without a public partner and due to budget constraints which are currently driving a reduction in USACE recreation programming throughout the Little Rock District. The Russellville Project Office is making the land available through a lease agreement to the City of Russellville to further public recreation opportunities consistent with project purposes consistent with EP1130-2-550, Chapter 2.

ALTERNATIVES. In addition to the proposed action (land lease), a No Action alternative was evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.

Proposed Action. - The proposed action involves leasing the 98 acres of the “Dike View” property to the city of Russellville. The 98 acres can be described as having multiple stands of various tree species (mixed hardwood /pine, pine plantation, cedar stands) and slope exposure creating natural drainages and ponds. Pre-acquisition use of the land included a small area located on the southern portion of the tract that was used for strip coal mining. The subject area is a narrow strip of “land locked” project lands bisected by Interstate 40 and bounded by a 2.15 mile long shoreline with Lake Dardanelle. The City currently leases project lands adjoining the western end of the subject area which has no other land access. Interstate 40 runs through the lease area resulting in an 80 acre segment south of I-40 (Dike View Future Park) and an 18 acre segment north of I-40. The land currently includes a developed dirt bike (bicycle) trail including small drainage bridges which were constructed by multiple volunteers over the years. A concrete boat ramp is also present, having been constructed prior to the loss of access due to the construction of I-40. Future development by the city of Russellville includes placement of a pedestrian bridge over a narrow neck of water north of I-40 and construction of a trail adjacent to the I-40 Illinois Bayou bridge abutment berm to connect current lease lands to the requested area. *Future improvements by the lessee such as mentioned above will be subject to environmental review and approval by the Little Rock District, Corps of Engineers. Additional NEPA documentation preparation (i.e. EA, EIS, etc.) may be required depending on the scope of the future proposed action.*

No Action Alternative. - The “No Action” alternative would not allow for the “Dike View” acreage to be leased to the city of Russellville. Failure to lease the requested 98 acres to City of Russellville would result in continued underutilization of project lands for recreation and would conflict with current USACE policy, guidance and the USACE Recreation Strategic Plan, published in April 2011. If not leased, project lands would not meet their intended purpose, i.e. development of a designated Future Park Area, as well as continued access restriction to public lands, lost recreational opportunity, and potential abuse of public lands due to the absence of active management.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.

Consideration of the effects disclosed in the EA, and a finding that they are not significant, is necessary to prepare a FONSI. This determination of significance is required by 40 CFR 1508.13. Additionally, 40 CFR 1508.27 defines significance at it relates to consideration of environmental effects of a direct,

indirect or cumulative nature.

Criteria that must be considered in making this finding are addressed below, in terms of both context and intensity. The significance of both short and long term effects must be viewed in several contexts: society as a whole (human, national); the affected region; the affected interests; and the locality. The context for this determination is primarily local. The context for this action is not highly significant geographically, nor is it controversial in any significant way. Consideration of intensity refers to the magnitude and intensity of impact, where impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. Within this context, the magnitude and intensity of impacts resulting from this decision are not significant. The determination for each impact topic is listed below.

- 1. The degree to which the action results in both beneficial and adverse effects. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.** The EA indicates that there will be beneficial effects to the leased land as part of the city of Russellville Park system. No significant impacts to any resources have been identified.
- 2. The degree to which the action affects public health or safety.** No adverse effects to public health or safety will result from the Proposed Action and implementation will provide a reliable recreation opportunity for the public.
- 3. The degree to which the action affects unique characteristics of the potentially affected area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** The proposed action will not affect any unique characteristics or resources in the project area.
- 4. The degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The project will benefit the public and provide for recreational opportunities that are currently being reduced due to Federal budget cutbacks. Therefore the Little Rock District; Corps of Engineers does not regard this activity as controversial.
- 5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment is highly uncertain or involves unique or unknown risks.** The uncertainty of the impacts of this action is low since land leasing is a common real estate action and has been accomplished by the Corps without problems in the past.
- 6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts.** Because the proposed action involves Federal interests in property, it is considered a Federal action and as such requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. As with other federal actions the NEPA process must be followed prior to implementation of future actions.
- 7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** There are no individually or cumulatively significant impacts identified in this action.
- 8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect items listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other significant scientific, cultural or historic resources.** No effect to cultural resources has been identified and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurs with this finding.
- 9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its**

critical habitat. The proposed action is not expected to have any effect on Threatened & Endangered species as none exist in the project area.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, state or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. No such violations will occur. All applicable Federal, state or local laws and regulations will be complied with during the implementation of the action and the Federal government (Corps) will still maintain primary jurisdiction over the leased lands.

CONCLUSIONS:

The impacts identified in the prepared EA have been thoroughly discussed and assessed. No impacts identified in the EA would cause any significant adverse effects to the human environment. Therefore, due to the analysis presented in the EA and comments received from a 30-day public review period that began on October 21, 2011 and ended on November 21, 2011, it is my decision that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is unwarranted and a "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) is appropriate. The signing of this document indicates the Corps final decision of the proposed action as it relates to NEPA. The EA and FONSI will be held on file in the Environmental Branch, Planning and Environmental Division of the Little Rock District, Corps of Engineers for future reference. Consultation with regulatory agencies will be ongoing to ensure compliance with all federal, state, regional, and local regulations and guidelines.

Date

Glen A. Masset
Colonel, US Army
District Engineer

Appendix B 30 Day Public Review Period Comments and Responses

(Will be included in the Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment)



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
LITTLE ROCK DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
POST OFFICE BOX 867
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72203-0867

(501) 324-5751 □ FAX: 501-324-5605 □ <http://www.swl.usace.army.mil>

October 21, 2011

Planning and Environmental Division
Environmental Branch

«fn» «ln»
«title»
«agency»
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«add1»
«add2»
«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «salutation» «ln»:

Enclosed for your review is a compact disc containing a copy of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (DEA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (DFONSI) for the leasing of a 98-acre tract of project lands on Dardanelle Lake to the city of Russellville, Arkansas to be managed as part of the city's park system. The documents have been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineer Regulation ER-200-2-2. The documents can also be reviewed on the internet at <http://www.swl.usace.army.mil/planning/index.html>

Your comments are requested as part of a 30-day public review period and should be received no later than November 21, 2011. Written comments should be provided to Mr. Jim Ellis at the Little Rock District Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Planning and Environmental Division, P.O. Box 867, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-0867 or by e-mail to jim.d.ellis@usace.army.mil. For more information, you may contact Mr. Ellis at 501-324-5629.

Sincerely,

Jon Hiser
Acting Chief
Environmental Branch

Enclosure

Review Agencies during the 30-Day Public Review Period

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