



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT
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CHARLESTON SC 29403

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

LETTER REPORT AND INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SANTEE COOPER PARTNERSHIP INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANT CONTROL FOR LAKES MOULTRIE AND MARION

BERKELEY, CALHOUN, CLARENDON, ORANGEBURG, AND SUMMTER COUNTIES, SOUTH CAROLINA

August 2024

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The final *Letter Report and Integrated Programmatic Environmental Assessment, Santee Cooper Partnership Invasive Aquatic Plant Control for Lake Moultrie and Marion*, (LR/PEA) dated August 2024, considers the effects of cost-sharing an ongoing State-managed program for the control and treatment of invasive aquatic plants on the Santee Cooper Lake System, in Berkeley, Calhoun, Clarendon, Orangeburg, and Sumter Counties, South Carolina. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) summarizes the results of the USACE evaluation and documents the USACE's conclusions.

The LR/PEA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated alternatives that would address the threat of aquatic invasive species in the study area. The recommended plan consists of the Federal government and the South Carolina Public Service Authority (Santee Cooper) sharing in the cost of the aquatic invasive plant control program at Lakes Marion and Moultrie. By sharing the costs, Santee Cooper would treat up to double the acreage they currently treat. Under this alternative, USACE anticipates entering into a cost-share agreement with Santee Cooper.

In addition to the Action Alternative (Recommended Plan), the LR/PEA, evaluated the No Action Alternative (also referred to as Alternative 1). The No Action Alternative represents the continuation of Santee Cooper's current control program, in which USACE would not partner with Santee Cooper.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS:

A summary assessment of the potential effects of the proposed plan is listed and described below.

Table 1. Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Unaffected by action
Water Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wetlands and Native Vegetation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fisheries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered Species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural and Historic Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Aesthetics and Visual Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>*Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation: For any resources that fall in this category, a description of the required mitigation is included in the paragraphs following this table</i>			

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan for the modifications. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed throughout the EA will be implemented, as appropriate, to minimize impacts.

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the recommended plan.

Public review of the draft LR/EA and FONSI was completed on July 24, 2024. All comments submitted during the public review period were responded to in the final LR/EA and FONSI.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, USACE has determined that impacts to threatened and endangered species from the proposed partnership would range from “no effect” to “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect.” On November 8th 2023, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service generated a letter and concurred with USACE’s determination of “may affect but is not likely to adversely affect” Canby’s Dropwort and the West Indian manatee. In addition, USACE determined that the Recommended Alternative would result in no take of species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.


Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, USACE has determined that historic properties would not be adversely affected by the recommended plan. In an email dated August 6, 2024, the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office stated that they have no additional comments or concerns given that the currently proposed action is following all stipulations as outlined within the existing Historic Properties Management Plan.

Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, pertains to discharge of pollutants. Aquatic pesticide application would require approval for use under a NPDES permit. Santee Cooper will continue to operate under the former South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's NPDES General Permit for the Application of Pesticides.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered, and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials has been completed.

Since USACE has determined that the proposed action of the Federal government and Santee Cooper sharing the cost of the aquatic invasive plant control program at Lakes Marion and Moultrie would not result in significant adverse individual or cumulative effects on environmental resources or human health, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted. Therefore, the issuance of a FONSI is appropriate.

Date 31 AUG 24



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