

1. Administrative Details

Proposal Name: Savannah River Below Augusta Restoration Study

by Agency: Phinizy Center for Water Sciences

Locations: GA,SC

POC Name:

POC Phone:

POC Email:

Date Submitted: 09/21/2015

Confirmation N umber: 53ea03e2-37d4-47ca-a31a-e54f91542deb

Supporting Documents

File Name	Date Uploaded
PCWS Letter of Intent 050815.pdf	09/17/2015

2. Provide the name of the primary sponsor and all non-Federal interests that have contributed or are expected to contribute toward the non-Federal share of the proposed feasibility study or modification.

Sponsor	Letter of Support
Phinizy Center for Water Sciences(Primary)	Attached

3. State if this proposal is for a feasibility study, a modification to an authorized USACE feasibility study or a modification to an authorized USACE project. If it is a proposal for a modification, provide the authorized water resources development feasibility study or project name.

Feasibility Study

4. Clearly articulate the specific project purpose(s) of the proposed study or modification. Demonstrate that the proposal is related to USACE mission and authorities and specifically address why additional or new authorization is needed.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, the United States Army Corps of Engineers maintained the river below Augusta, GA for navigation to support the transport of goods between Savannah, GA and Augusta, GA. As part of that effort, tight bends within the river were removed in order to allow cargo vessels to navigate the river course, thereby creating sections of river that were cutoff from the main flow channel. Over 30 cutoffs were developed which equates to nearly 40 miles of total river length reduced. There has not been a public interest in transporting goods between Augusta and Savannah via the Savannah River in over 40 years and there has not been a need to maintain the river since the 1970s. Since regular commercial navigation no longer exists for the Savannah River between Augusta and Savannah, other federal project purposes for the river below Augusta should be prioritized above commercial navigation. Those priorities include increased fish and wildlife habitat, water supply during drought, recreation, decreased sediment transport (minimizing future costs of dredging in the Savannah Harbor), and additional flood control. All of these could be achieved through reconnection of the cutoff river segments. The goal of this study is to determine the feasibility of reconnecting the cutoff river sections to optimize more federal priorities for the river between Augusta and Savannah than just commercial navigation. The goal of this study will be accomplished through the development of an oxbow reconnection prioritization matrix which will be based upon multiple ecological, financial, methodological, and practical parameters for restoring each cutoff.

5. To the extent practicable, provide an estimate of the total cost, and the Federal and non-Federal share of those costs, of the proposed study and, separately, an estimate of the cost of construction or modification.

	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
Study	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0

Explanation (if necessary)

6. To the extent practicable, describe the anticipated monetary and nonmonetary benefits of the proposal including benefits to the protection of human life and property; improvement to transportation; the national economy; the environment; or the national security interests of the United States.

Through the prioritization matrix, this study will include, but not be limited to, evaluation of the following benefits for each of the following interests: increased wildlife habitat, increased recreational fishing opportunities, additional flood control assessment, an evaluation on decreased sediment transport to the Savannah Harbor, and evaluation of potential benefits for increased water supply to the river during drought conditions.

One of the significant nonmonetary benefits of this project is that it has support from a wide-range of stakeholders, including advocacy groups, NGO's, universities, regulators, municipalities, industries, and state and federal wildlife management organizations.

7. Does local support exist? If ‘Yes’, describe the local support for the proposal.

Yes

Local Support Description

Advocacy groups (Savannah Riverkeeper, NGO’s (Phinzy Center for Water Sciences, The Nature Conservancy), universities (University of Georgia, Augusta University, Clemson University, Georgia Southern University), regulators (Georgia Environmental Protection Division, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control), municipalities (Augusta-Richmond County Utilities, Columbia County Water Department, and others within the basin), industries (PCS Nitrogen, International Paper, DSM Chemical), and state (Georgia and South Carolina Departments of Natural Resources) and federal (United States Fish and Wildlife Service) wildlife management organizations.

8. Does the primary sponsor named in (2.) above have the financial ability to provide for the required cost share?

Yes

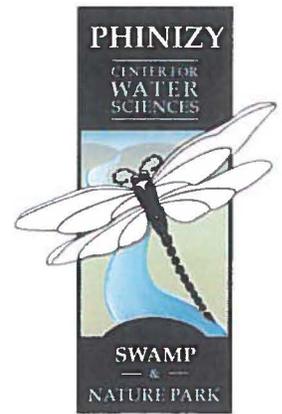
Primary Sponsor Letter of Support

(As uploaded)

PCWS Letter of Intent 050815.pdf

May 7, 2015

Colonel Thomas J. Tickner
Commander, Savannah District
100 West Oglethorpe Avenue
Savannah, Georgia 31401



Dear Colonel Tickner:

Phinizy Center for Water Sciences is willing and able to participate as the Sponsor for the Savannah River Below Augusta Restoration Study, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), to cooperatively investigate restoring flows to oxbows that were cut off to support historic commercial navigation on the Savannah River between Augusta and Savannah, Georgia.

Our organization understands that a study cannot be initiated unless it is selected as a new start study with associated allocation of Federal funds provided through the annual Congressional appropriations process. If selected, we intend to sign a Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) to initiate the study with USACE. It is our understanding the FCSA targets completion of the feasibility study within 3 years at a total cost of no more than \$3 million. After signing the FCSA, a Project Management Plan will be developed and agreed upon by our organization and USACE. The study will be conducted and managed by USACE. The cost-sharing for the study is based upon a 50% contribution by the Federal government, with our agency's 50% contribution provided in cash, or by a portion or all of the contribution provided through in-kind non-monetary services.

Phinizy Center for Water Sciences is aware that this letter constitutes as expression of intent to initiate a study partnership to address the specified water resources problems and is not a contractual obligation. It is understood that we or USACE may opt to discontinue the study at any time after the FCSA is signed but will commit to work together as partners from the scoping phase, and subsequent decision points throughout the feasibility study, on providing the necessary support to risk-informed decision making. If it is determined that additional time or funding is necessary to support decisions to be made in order to complete the study, our agency will work with USACE to determine the appropriate course of action.

If you require additional information, please contact Dr. Oscar Flite by either email or phone (shown below).

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Oscar P. Flite III, Ph.D.
CEO and Senior Scientist
Phinizy Center for Water Sciences
oscar.flite@phinizycenter.org
706-396-1425 (office)

"The purpose of Phinizy Center for Water Sciences is to provide leadership to balance sustainable watersheds and economic vitality through solutions-based research, education and public involvement."

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