



PUBLIC NOTICE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT**

BUILDING STRONG®

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT SR 260: Thousand Trails to I-17 Widening

Public Notice/Application No. SPL-2002-01449-KAT

Project: SR 260: Thousand Trails to I-17 (TRACS No. 260 YV 209 H8699
01C)

Comment Period: January 30, 2015 through March 2, 2015

Project Manager: Kathleen Tucker; 602.230.6956; Kathleen.A.Tucker@usace.army.mil

Applicant

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Contact

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Location

The project is located on State Route (SR) 260 between milepost (MP) 209.08 and MP 218.43, within the City of Cottonwood and the Town of Camp Verde, Yavapai County, Arizona. It is within ADOT-owned right-of-way and ADOT easement from the Prescott National Forest and the Arizona State Land Department. U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Middle Verde, AZ (1971) and Cornville, AZ (1971) 7.5' topographic quadrangles. The project midpoint is 34.631960°N, -111.937127°W (NAD83).

Activity

ADOT's proposed project would involve the permanent discharge of dredged and/or fill material into Hayfield Draw, Cherry Creek, Grief Hill Wash, and 19 unnamed washes, consisting of 3.78 acres (Permanent fill) and 5.14 acres (temporary impact), within the ephemeral tributaries of Verde River to widen SR 260 from two to four lanes (see attached drawings). For more information see page 3 of this notice.

Interested parties are hereby notified that an application has been received for a Department of the Army permit for the activity described herein and shown on the attached drawing(s). We invite you to review today's public notice and provide views on the proposed work. By providing substantive, site-specific comments to the Corps Regulatory Division, you provide information that supports the Corps' decision-making process. All comments received during the comment period become part of the record and will be considered in the decision. This permit will be issued, issued with special conditions, or denied under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Comments should be mailed to:

U.S Army Corps of Engineers
3636 North Central Avenue, Suite 900
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: Kathleen.A.Tucker@usace.army.mil.

The mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Program is to protect the Nation's aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions. The Corps evaluates permit applications for essentially all construction activities that occur in the Nation's waters, including wetlands. The Regulatory Program in the Los Angeles District is executed to protect aquatic resources by developing and implementing short- and long-term initiatives to improve regulatory products, processes, program transparency, and customer feedback considering current staffing levels and historical funding trends.

Corps permits are necessary for any work, including construction and dredging, in the Nation's navigable water and their tributary waters. The Corps balances the reasonably foreseeable benefits and detriments of proposed projects, and makes permit decisions that recognize the essential values of the Nation's aquatic ecosystems to the general public, as well as the property rights of private citizens who want to use their land. The Corps strives to make its permit decisions in a timely manner that minimizes impacts to the regulated public.

During the permit process, the Corps considers the views of other Federal, state and local agencies, interest groups, and the general public. The results of this careful public interest review are fair and equitable decisions that allow reasonable use of private property, infrastructure development, and growth of the economy, while offsetting the authorized impacts to the waters of the United States (WUS). The permit review process serves to first avoid and then minimize adverse effects of projects on aquatic resources to the maximum practicable extent. Any remaining unavoidable adverse impacts to the aquatic environment are offset by compensatory mitigation requirements, which may include restoration, enhancement, establishment, and/or preservation of aquatic ecosystem system functions and services.

Evaluation Factors

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Factors that will be considered include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, if the proposal would discharge dredged or fill material, the evaluation of the activity will include application of the EPA Guidelines (40 CFR Part 230) as required by Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to

determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Preliminary Review of Selected Factors

EIS Determination- A preliminary determination has been made that an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed work.

Water Quality- The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. Section 401 requires that any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance. For any proposed activity on Tribal land that is subject to Section 404 jurisdiction, the applicant will be required to obtain water quality certification from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Cultural Resources- Preliminary determinations indicate that the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on any sites listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places, or otherwise of national, state, or local significance.

Endangered Species- Preliminary determinations indicate that the proposed activity would not affect any federally-listed endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat. Therefore, consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required.

Public Hearing- Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state with particularity the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Proposed Activity for Which a Permit is Required

Basic Project Purpose- The basic project purpose comprises the fundamental, essential, or irreducible purpose of the proposed project, and is used by the Corps to determine whether the applicant's project is water dependent (i.e., requires access or proximity to or siting within the special aquatic site to fulfill its basic purpose). Establishment of the basic project purpose is necessary only when the proposed activity would discharge dredged or fill material into a special aquatic site (e.g., wetlands, pool and riffle complex, mudflats, coral reefs). Because no special aquatic sites would be impacted, identification of the basic project purpose is not necessary. The project is not water dependent.

Overall Project Purpose- The overall project purpose serves as the basis for the Corps' 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis and is determined by further defining the basic project purpose in a manner that more specifically describes the applicant's goals for the project, and which allows a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed. The overall project purpose for the proposed project is to (1) better accommodate projected increases in regional traffic volumes, (2) to provide all-weather access into the Yavapai-Apache Nation.

Additional Project Information

Baseline information- Within the project limits, SR 260 is primarily a two-lane road with 12-foot-wide travel lanes and paved shoulders of varying widths. The highway generally parallels the Verde River, approximately 0.75 mile to the east. Over 20 ephemeral WUS are conveyed via bridges and culverts beneath SR 260 and generally flow northeast toward the Verde River. Presently, the

highway includes several formal intersections that are either signalized or have designated turn lanes; however, several other intersections with unpaved roads within the project limits do not provide dedicated turn lanes. Newton Lane is an unpaved road off of SR 260 which provides access into a residential area on the Yavapai-Apache Nation. Multiple, uncontrolled points of access increase the potential for accidents as motorists turn onto SR 260 into the flow of high-speed traffic.

SR 260 is the primary route to many recreation areas in the greater Verde Valley area and the Mogollon Rim, as well as the main commercial route between I-17, Cottonwood, and Camp Verde. Due to population growth and an increase in recreational activities throughout the project area, SR 260 has become insufficient for handling daily traffic, and motorists often experience delays. Additionally, the primary access to Yavapai-Apache Nation along Tunlii Way is built across Wash No. 31 and, when flooded, the residents must use Newton Lane as a secondary access point. However, the Forest Service lease for Newton Lane ended on December 31, 2013 and a new point of access is required.

ADOT has determined the existing roadway to be deficient based on current design standards and guidelines. The roadway deficiencies are evidenced by specific physical characteristics. In some locations within the project limits, inefficient access control allows unexpected movement of traffic in and out of the right-of-way; horizontal and vertical alignments limit sight distances and passing opportunities; shoulder widths are too narrow; shoulder side slopes are too steep; and recovery areas are too narrow or contain obstructions. These conditions contribute to a relatively high accident rate in some segments of the corridor. In the vicinity of Wash No. 1 sight distances are limited and the shoulders and recovery areas are narrow.

The existing bridge crossing of SR 260 at Cherry Creek is a seven-span, 202-foot-long, continuous-slab concrete bridge originally constructed in 1967. The structural sufficiency rating of the bridge is poor, and as the bridge continues to degrade, it could reach a point where it is no longer able to support traffic. Degraded conditions could require vehicle restrictions on the bridge, precluding heavier tractor trailers and semi-trucks from using the bridge. The narrow bridge deck of 30 feet does not meet current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials design guidelines for lane and shoulder widths. In addition, historical overtopping of SR 260 during peak flows within Cherry Creek suggests that the area beneath the bridge isn't big enough to convey peak flows and the structure itself acts like a dam, allowing water to flood the roadway. This could lead to roadway closures, thereby having a dramatic operational impact.

Project description- ADOT, in association with the Federal Highway Administration, is planning to widen SR 260 from MP 209.06 to MP 218.43. The project would consist of:

- Reconstructing the inside and outside shoulders between Ogden Ranch Road/Prairie Lane (MP 209.06) and MP 210.88 to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Widening SR 260 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane divided highway from MP 210.88 and Pueblo Ridge Road (MP 218.43).
- Modifying or replacing existing culverts and other drainage structures to accommodate the wider roadway.
- Constructing seven new roundabouts at the following locations:
 - Thousand Trails Road (MP 211.22)
 - Coury Drive (MP 211.95)
 - MP 214.00
 - MP 215.00
 - Cherry Creek Road (MP 216.00)

- Horseshoe Bend Drive (MP 216.74)
- Wilshire Road (MP 218.40)
- Reconfiguring access into the Yavapai Apache Nation housing development near Newton Lane, with closures of Tall Old Man Road and Newton Lane access from SR 260.
- Constructing a new eastbound separated multi-use pathway from Cherry Creek Road (MP 216.0) to Wilshire Road (MP 218.40).
- Reconstructing access points, limited to right-in/right-out only, as necessary.

In the vicinity of Wash No. 1, which crosses beneath SR 260 twice between MP 212.69 and MP 213.11, the proposed construction would permanently affect a total of 2,204 linear feet within the jurisdictional limits of the wash. Construction would consist of:

- Backfilling, grading, and paving portions of the existing wash southwest of and parallel to SR 260 between MP 212.69 and MP 213.0 that lie within the footprint of the new westbound travel lanes and shoulder embankment.
- Constructing a new 610-foot-long riprap-lined ditch southwest of the existing wash.
- Extending the existing corrugated metal pipe (CMP) at MP 212.80, in line with the existing CMP, to accommodate the widened roadway. This will require backfill and grading of the channel downstream of existing CMP inlet, east of the proposed extension.
- Constructing two new riprap-lined ditches between MP 212.80 and MP 213.00 to carry flows from the extended CMP to the existing new concrete box culvert (CBC).
- Extending the CBC at MP 213.11 to accommodate the widened roadway.

In the vicinity of Cherry Creek, the proposed construction would permanently affect a total of 868 linear feet within the jurisdictional limits of the main channel and four side channels. Construction would consist of:

- Removing all components (abutments, piers, etc.) of the existing bridge.
- Grading the area beneath and adjacent to the existing bridge to match the existing topography of the wash.
- Constructing two new, three-span precast concrete girder bridges, one for each direction of travel. The length of each bridge would be approximately 287 feet.
- Excavating an area extending approximately 50 feet from the bridge abutments and installing a wire-tied riprap mattress as scour protection to the original ground line. Excavated material would be placed on top of the riprap mattress.
- Backfilling, grading, and paving portions of the upstream braided wash channel that lie within the footprint of the widened roadway and shoulder embankment.

Approximately 108.01 acres of new easement or right-of-way (ROW) would be required from the Prescott National Forest (PNF), the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), and private landowners to widen the highway and construct new roundabouts and drainage structures. Approximately 11.20 acres of new easement would be obtained from PNF for construction within Wash No. 1 and approximately 2.40 acres of new ROW would be acquired from private landowners for construction within Cherry Creek.

Proposed Mitigation– The proposed mitigation may change as a result of comments received in response to this public notice, the applicant's response to those comments, and/or the need for the project to comply with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines. In consideration of the above, the proposed mitigation

sequence (avoidance/minimization/compensation), as applied to the proposed project is summarized below:

Avoidance: The alternatives analysis for this project indicated that it would not be practicable to avoid WUS during project construction.

Minimization: Impacts to WUS would be minimized through the following restrictions and requirements:

- Side slopes would be steepened to the maximum extent practicable to minimize the footprint of the permanent infrastructure.
- Bank stabilization and bridge abutments would be located outside of the jurisdictional areas of Cherry Creek to the maximum extent practicable.
- Grading would be limited to the areas required for equipment access and maneuvering. While vegetation will still be removed from the majority of Cherry Creek Wash within the ADOT ROW, only areas beneath and adjacent to the existing bridge, and around the piers of the new bridge, will be graded or otherwise actively backfilled.
- Where possible, bank and main channel crossings would be avoided in order to prevent damage to the existing bank establishment and vegetation.
- Other efforts to minimize impacts within the OHWM include BMPs to minimize sedimentation and debris within the river and the reclamation of all disturbed areas to their pre-construction elevations and topography. Flows would be maintained during and after construction to ensure that functions and values of the downstream WUS are maintained.
- Construction activities between Ogden Ranch Road (milepost 209.08) and milepost 210.88 (near Thousand Trails Road) will be restricted to existing paved and disturbed upland areas.
- The contractor would fence, stake, or flag the construction limits for all work within WUS.
- Material would be stored or stockpiled outside of the 100-year floodplain, if possible. Any material stored or stockpiled within the 100-year floodplain would be protected using BMPs to prevent it from entering WUS.
- Containment measures would be used to prevent inadvertent spills of uncured concrete.
- No construction would occur if flows are present in any of the jurisdictional washes.

Compensation: The Applicant proposes compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to WUS through contribution to an in-lieu fee program. The Corps will include the payment of in-lieu fees as a special condition of the permit.

Proposed Special Conditions

To be developed.

For additional information please call Kathleen Tucker of my staff at 602-230-6956 or via e-mail at Kathleen.A.Tucker@usace.army.mil. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Division.



Regulatory Program Goals:

- To provide strong protection of the nation's aquatic environment, including wetlands.
- To ensure the Corps provides the regulated public with fair and reasonable decisions.
- To enhance the efficiency of the Corps' administration of its regulatory program.

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – LOS ANGELES
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