

PUBLIC NOTICE



**US Army Corps of Engineers
Kansas City District**

NEPA ID: EAXX-202-00-G5P-1727859961

Issue Date: 2025-09-22

Close Date: 2025-10-22

INTRODUCTION: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District (USACE-NWK), has prepared a Draft Feasibility Study and Integrated Environmental Assessment (EA) and associated unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1968, as amended, for the Smoky Hill Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project (Project). The Draft Study and Integrated EA was prepared to assess and document potential effects to the human and natural environment of the project's Proposed Action. The USACE has made a preliminary determination that the proposed action would not result in significant degradation to the environment and therefore supports preparation of a Draft FONSI. The Draft Study and Integrated EA, Draft FONSI, and supporting information are provided with issuance of this Public Notice to initiate a 30-day public review and comment period.

This Public Notice and project related information are being provided to solicit public input on the Proposed Action. Any interested party is invited to submit to this office written facts or objections relative to the proposed project, both favorable and unfavorable in nature. All comments will be accepted and made part of the public record. The USACE will consider all pertinent comments in preparing final documentation for completion of the NEPA process through signature of the FONSI by the USACE Kansas City District Commander.

A public meeting will be held on October 7, 2025, 5:50 – 7:30, at the Salina, Annex, 218 N. 7th Street, Salina, Kansas.

CONTACT INFORMATION: For additional information or to submit written comments via email, contact Katharine Lynch, Environmental Resources Specialist, at email Katharine.E.Lynch@usace.army.mil. Written comments or requests may be mailed to: U.S Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, ATTN: Planning Branch Environmental Resources Section (PMP-R), 601 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. Written comments will be accepted by mail and email.

PROJECT LOCATION: The location of the proposed action is in Salina, Kansas, focusing on the Old Channel of the Smoky Hill River and Lakewood Lake Park (see attached figure).

AUTHORITY: The Smoky Hill River Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project (Project) is being conducted under the authority of Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970, Public Law (P.L.) 91-611, (33 U.S.C. § 549a).

ACTIVITY: The USACE-NWK, in cooperation with the City of Salina, propose an ecosystem restoration project on the Old Channel corridor in Salina, Kansas, which is the original Smoky Hill River channel that was bypassed with construction of a Flood Risk Management (FRM) project in 1961. The purpose of this project is to restore degraded aquatic habitat functions and features within and near the Old Channel that were lost due to the previous FRM project. With restoration of the aquatic habitat functions and features, there are also opportunities to restore the limited extent of existing riparian forest along the Old Channel, create new off-channel emergent wetland habitat, and enhance deep-water habitat availability in Lakewood Lake. Restored habitats are intended to benefit native plants and animals to the greatest extent practicable within an urbanized watershed.

The proposed action includes:

- Construction of a sediment forebay located at the confluence of the upstream end of the Old Channel and the Smoky Hill main channel to remove coarse sediment as water enters the Old Channel
- Dredging of Reaches 1 and 2 of the Old Channel, which would remove channel sediment to a depth of approximately 7 feet, resulting in approximately 105,000 cubic yards of sediment removal.
- Reconstruction of Reaches 1 and 2 with a variable depth profile including riffles, pools, runs, and glides. Additionally, 1.7 acres of wetland shelves would be constructed along Reach 1 of the Old Channel, providing additional habitat and water quality benefits like nutrient and phosphorus removal.
- Re-use of the dredged materials from the Old Channel to construct variable depth wetland habitat around Lakewood Lake. An existing culvert would be excavated to hydrologically reconnect the Lakewood Lake wetlands with the Old Channel, raising the water level of Lakewood Lake approximately 6 feet. This would help to reestablish wetland hydrology and support the creation of approximately 35 acres of emergent wetland habitat.
- Removal of the Western Star Mill Weir and replace with five step pools to restore aquatic connectivity in the Old Channel.
- Two habitat weir structures would be installed to enable additional management of water depth in the channel to support pool habitat and manage water levels in Lakewood Lake. One would be located near the upstream end of the Old Channel and the other would be located near the downstream end of the Old

Channel (at Walker Road). The weirs would be approximately 2-feet high and be comprised of a stoplog structure.

- Improvement of existing trails in the Lakewood Lake wetland creation area.

WETLANDS and WATERS OF THE US: The proposed restoration activities would result in long-term beneficial impacts to the aquatic habitat in the project area. Beneficial impacts would include restored water flow and natural channel features in the Old Channel and restored wetlands in the Lakewood Lake area. Short-term adverse impacts to the existing degraded habitats would occur during construction, with the use of construction equipment in and adjacent to the project area causing temporary disturbance of the soils, plants and wildlife of the terrestrial and aquatic areas. The project would result in the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. (the dredged material from the Old Channel would be used to restore the Lakewood Lake wetland area).

The project will be conducted under Nationwide Permit 27 (NWP 27), which provides for aquatic habitat restoration, enhancement and establishment activities. In accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, the State of Kansas has issued Section 401 Water Quality Certification for all NWPs, including NWP 27. The project would comply with NWP 27 requirements and State of Kansas regional permit conditions.

Steps to minimize impacts to waters of the United States would include Best Management Practices (BMPs). BMPs may include, but not be limited to erosion control, proper staging of equipment and construction contractor adherence to a stormwater pollution prevention plan.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: USACE anticipates that the proposed action would result in a determination of “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect” for the Whooping Crane and monarch butterfly. The proposed action is not anticipated to jeopardize the continued existence of species listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is ongoing.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the USACE is preparing a programmatic agreement (PA) with the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the City of Salina. Other invited signatories to the PA include the Pawnee Nation, Friends of the River, the Smoky Hill Museum, and the Salina Certified Local Government. Treatment of any adverse impacts would be addressed in the process outlined in the (PA) for cultural resource compliance. The draft PA is included with the Draft Integrated EA.

FLOODPLAINS: The proposed project was reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, which discourages direct or indirect support of floodplain development whenever there is a practicable alternative. Portions of this

project would take place within the floodplain but would not directly or indirectly support floodplain development. Comments are requested from individuals and agencies that believe the proposed work will adversely impact the floodplain.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS: The Draft Feasibility Study and Integrated EA includes evaluation of effects of the proposed on the human and natural environment. All relevant factors were considered including land use, soils, prime farmland, riparian vegetation, water quality, fish, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, recreation, socioeconomics demographics, historic and cultural resources, hazardous, toxic and radioactive waste, air quality, noise, aesthetics, safety, floodplain and the general needs and welfare of the people.

PUBLIC HEARING: The USACE is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American 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 USACE to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny an authorization for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to address impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in preparation of the final Report and EA and/or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to NEPA. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

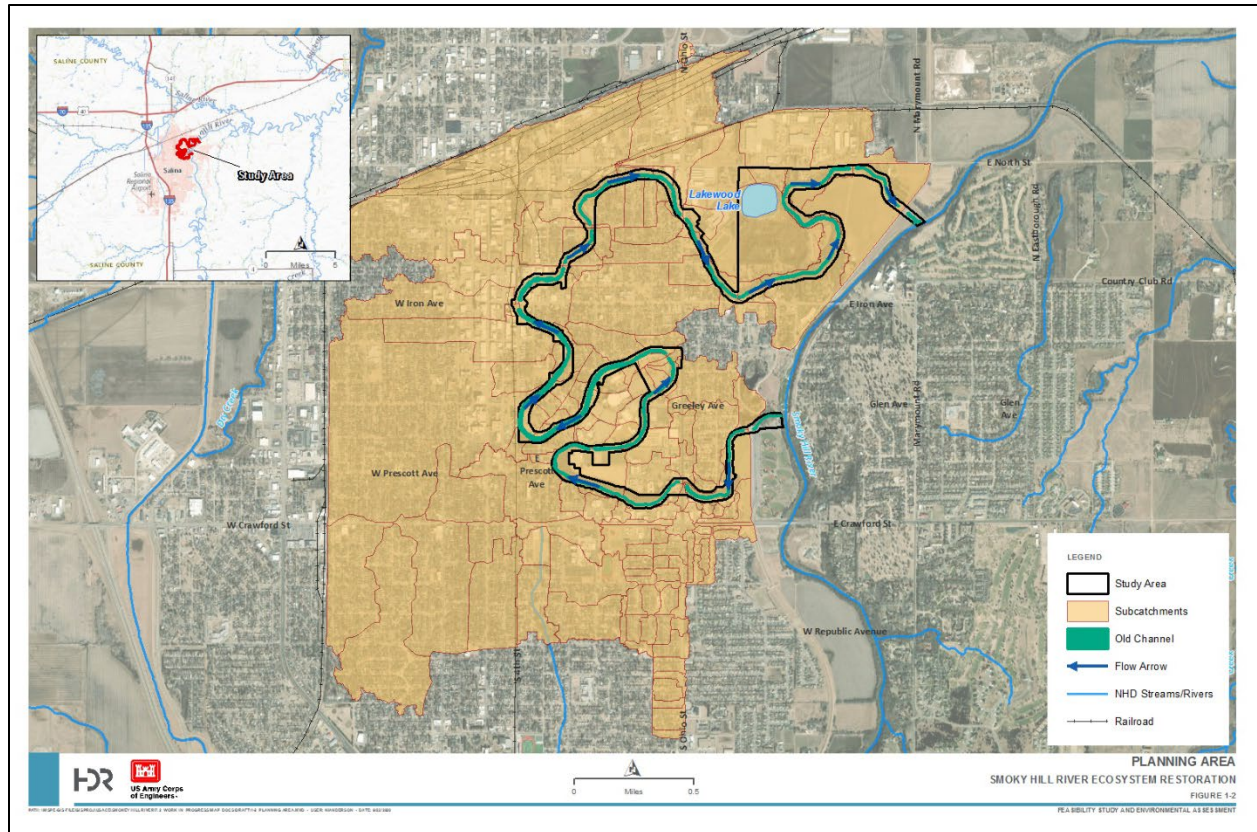


Figure 1 – Project Location. The Old Channel of the Smoky Hill River flows south to north through the City of Salina, Kansas. The Old Channel is approximately 6.8 miles long, and restoration efforts would focus on the Old Channel and Lakewood Lake area.