FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

CHACON CREEK FEASIBILITY REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
WEBB COUNTY, RIO GRANDE BASIN, LAREDO, TEXAS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District (Corps) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The Environmental Assessment (EA) dated 30 May 2025, for the Chacon Creek Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment addresses flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, and recreational opportunities and feasibility in Webb County, Rio Grande Basin, Texas. The final recommendation is contained in the EA.

The EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives that would address flood risk reduction, ecosystem restoration, and add recreational opportunities in the study area. The recommended plan is the National Economic Development/National Ecosystem Restoration (NED/NER) Plan and includes: The reduction of flood damage by evacuating and removing 62 residential structures along Chacon Creek. The Feasibility Study would restore 401 acres of riparian woodlands by removing invasive species like buffelgrass, Arundo cane, and salt cedar, and planting native species. Three wetland sites would also be restored and would total approximately 17 acres. This would be accomplished by constructing weir/riffle structures that hold a shallow pool of water upstream of the weir, to create or expand the area of existing wetlands. Vacated lands would provide use for compatible recreational opportunities.

In addition to a “no action” plan, 10 alternatives were evaluated. The alternatives included:

Alternative 1: No-Action Plan (Future Without-Project). This alternative describes the most likely future conditions if no Federal action is taken to solve the water resource problems and opportunities. No action implies acceptance of the existing and future adverse impacts caused by increased erosion, persistence of invasive species, and continued flow of non-point source pollution that result in further environmental degradation. The No-Action Plan would result in 64 AAHUs.

Alternative 2: Reach 2 Structural Plan. This channel configuration requires buyout of 31 residential structures. Benefits are estimated to be $642,300. Costs total $7,509,800, which would annualize to $450,500yielding $220,300 in net benefits and a 1.49-to-1.00 benefit/cost ratio.

Alternative 3: Reach 1 10-Year Buyout Plan with Recreation. This alternative would buy out 11 structures in the 10% ACE (10-year frequency event). Total costs would be $3,486,300annualizing to $213,900 with annual benefits of $225,100 and net benefits of $11,200 for a benefit/cost ratio of 1.05-to-1.00.

Alternative 4: Reach 2 10-Year Buyout Plan with Recreation. This alternative would buy out 42 residential structures that are mostly within the 20% ACE (5-year frequency event) in Reach 2 of the main stem of Chacon Creek. Flood risk reduction benefits are estimated at $516,800 with additional recreation benefits of $448,600 for a total of $965,400 in benefits. Total costs are $11,895,800, which annualizes to $714,100. This produces $251,300 in net benefits with a

1.35- to-1.00 benefit/cost ratio. The recreation plan associated with this alternative includes good quality, basic amenities found in most neighborhood parks, and would cover approximately three acres.

Alternative 5: Reach 2 Partial 25-Year Buyout Plan with Recreation. This alternative would buy out 62 residential structures that are mostly within the 10% ACE (10-year frequency event) in Reach 2 of the main stem of Chacon Creek. Flood risk reduction benefits are estimated at $561,500, with another $628,800 in recreation benefits for a total of $1,190,300. Costs total $16,756,900, which annualizes to $977,300. This produces $213,000 in net benefits with a 1.22- to-1.00 benefit/cost ratio. Benefits from the recreation plan for this alternative are derived from an increase in open fields for general and reserved use, as well as a large group shelter.

Alternative 6: Reach 2 "VDS Plan." This alternative is virtually the same as Alternative 5 with the only difference being the number and location of recreational amenities. This plan generates $674,900 in recreational benefits with a total project cost of $,16815,400 and total annual charges of $980,500. This plan, however, generates $255,900 in net benefits and a benefit/cost ratio of 1.26-to-1.00.

Alternative 7: Reach 2 25-Year Buyout Plan with VDS Recreation. This alternative would buy out 111 structures in the 4% ACE (25-year event) and apply the same recreational amenities as Alternative 6 - the VDS Plan. Flood risk reduction benefits are $693,200 with recreation benefits of $674,900 for a total $1,368,100. The total cost for this alternative is $23,910,000 which annualizes to $1,351,700 with net benefits of $16,300 and a benefit/cost ratio of 1.01-to-1.00.

Alternative 8: VDS Plan with Small Channel. This alternative would take Alternative 6, the VDS Plan, and apply the small channel alternative investigated in the preliminary round of alternatives. Flood risk reduction benefits would be $685,500 with recreation benefits of $674,900 for a total of $1,360,400 in combined benefits. Total costs would be $19,406,800 which would annualize to $1,144,100. Net benefits would be $216,300 for a benefit/cost ratio of 1.19-to-1.00.

Alternative 9: NER Plan. This alternative is the recommended National Ecosystem Restoration plan with no flood risk management measures. The plan includes restoration of three wetland sites totaling 16.75 acres to create a net increase of 12.3 AAHUs, and restoration of 401 acres of riparian habitat by removal of salt cedar, buffelgrass control, reforestation of non-forested area, planting, and irrigation, producing another 151.6 AAHUs. This produces a net increase of 163.9 AAHUs. The total NER Plan restores 418 acres of aquatic habitat with a total first cost of $25,982,000 and an average annual cost of $979,500. The average annual cost per AAHU is $5,975.

Alternative 10: Tentatively Selected Plan (Alternatives 3, 6, and 9 combined). The flood risk management component includes permanent evacuation of 60 residential structures with recreation facilities built on the vacated lands to generate net benefits of $859,700 with a benefit/cost ratio of 1.35-to-1.00. The total first cost of the flood risk management component is $25,071,600. The ecosystem restoration component would restore 401 acres of aquatic habitat to produce 248 AAHUs at an average annual cost per AAHU of $4,600.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS:

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the recommended plan are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Aesthetics	☒	☐	☐
Air quality	☒	☐	☐
Aquatic resources/wetlands	☒	☐	☐
Invasive species	☒	☐	☐
Fish and wildlife habitat	☒	☐	☐
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	☐	☐	☒
Historic properties	☐	☐	☒
Other cultural resources	☐	☐	☒
Floodplains	☒	☐	☐
Hazardous, toxic & radioactive waste	☐	☐	☒
Hydrology	☒	☐	☐
Land use	☒	☐	☐
Navigation	☐	☐	☒
Noise levels	☒	☐	☐
Public infrastructure	☐	☐	☒
Socio-economics	☒	☐	☐
Soils	☒	☐	☐
Tribal trust resources	☐	☐	☒
Water quality	☒	☐	☐
Climate	☐	☐	☒

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed in the IFR/EA will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts. The following conservation measures would be implemented on the wetland construction:

- A freshwater mussel survey and relocation will be conducted within the weir construction footprint prior to construction to reduce any direct impacts to any present freshwater mussel species.

- Erosion and sediment controls would be implemented, maintained, and monitored for the duration of the project. A notice of intent and notice of termination will be provided to Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for any activity impacting an acre or greater. All construction will follow best managements from TCEQ in the USACE water quality certification.

- Disposal of wastes and garbage would be done in designated areas far from wetlands and follow all local, state, and federal regulation.

- If application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers in or near wetlands is necessary, the contractor will carefully follow all label directions of wildlife and wetland friendly herbicides and pesticides. All herbicides will be applied in the presence of an herbicide applicator licensed in the State of Texas.

- Materials such as sand would be obtained, whenever possible, from existing developed or previously used sources. All sediment sources must be evaluated for contaminants by USACE environmental engineers prior to use.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION:

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the recommended plan.
Public review of the draft IFR/EA and FONSI was completed on 10 June 2024. All comments submitted during the public review period were responded to in the Final IFR/EA and FONSI.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS:

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that the recommended plan may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the following federally listed species or their designated critical habitat: Tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), Piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), Red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), Cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum*), Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), Mexican fawnsfoot (*Truncilla cognata*), Salina mucket (*Potamilus metnecktayi* Texas hornshell (*Popenaias popeii*), and Ashy dogweed (*Thymophylla tephroleuca*). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concurred with the Corps' determination on 26 July 2024

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that the recommended plan has no effect on historic properties.

CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 404(B)(1) COMPLIANCE

401 WQC Conditionally Certified:

A water quality was conditionally certified pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act was obtained from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. All conditions of the water quality certification shall be implemented in order to minimize adverse impacts to water quality.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

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

FINDING

Technical, environmental, and economic criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the recommended plan would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

06/25/2025

Date

Joshua M. Haynes, PMP
Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Acting Commander