

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

LEASE TO THE HANNIBAL BASEBALL ASSOCIATION FOR PARK AND RECREATIONAL PURPOSES AT HANNIBAL LOCKS AND DAM

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District, is proposing to lease to the Hannibal Baseball Association (Association), a non-profit community group in partnership with the Ohio Township Trustees, a ten acre parcel of land located at the Hannibal Locks and Dam (Hannibal) facility for park and recreational purposes. The project is located in the community of Hannibal, Monroe County, Ohio, along State Route 7.

Area residents currently depend on a single baseball field located at a local elementary school for all T-ball and girls' softball league play for children up to 12 years of age. Due to size restrictions, this field is not appropriate for use in Pony or Babe Ruth leagues. In addition, the elementary school's field is not handicapped accessible.

The Association proposes to construct on available Government owned land at Hannibal two little league baseball fields and a soccer/football field combination. Possible future phases of development at the site could include lighting, permanent restroom facilities, basketball courts, a walking trail, a tot play area and a gravel parking area suitable for parking up to twenty cars. The site is relatively flat and primarily supports a rough grass cover. Some clean topsoil will be brought in to re-grade the site and make the soil base suitable for the type of turf grass needed on playing fields. Traffic will increase at the site during periods when the fields are in use. If the need should arise, the County Sheriff's Department will be utilized to control traffic. This slight seasonal increase in visitors to the site will not have any adverse impact on other public uses of the site or the Hannibal facility.

To satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Association prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) that evaluated the impacts of the proposed plan and some alternatives on environmental and cultural resources within the project area. The Association coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in order to comply with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act to identify potential impacts of this project on endangered and threatened species and their habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified three potential species known to exist within the general project area. Two of the three species, the snuffbox mussel, a Federal species of concern, and the sheepsnose mussel, a Federal candidate species, are both located within the river itself, and therefore will not be impacted by construction of the sports complex. The third species, the Indiana Bat, a Federally listed endangered species, is found within the region. However, the proposed project would not impact this species because mature trees having exfoliating bark required by the bats for nesting and cover are not located within the site.

The available Government land which will be used for the ball fields is composed entirely of previously disturbed fill placed on site during the original locks and dam construction. As a consequence, no cultural resources were discovered and further screening of the site was determined to be unnecessary.

Alternatives addressed within the EA included a "No Action" alternative and three different site alternatives. The "No Action" alternative would not provide the community ball fields it needs for children of all ages and was therefore rejected. The first site alternative would consist of locating the fields at a public school. However, no public school sites of sufficient size and with handicapped accessibility were available. Furthermore, funding constraints prevent the local community from making any of the public school sites acceptable. Two privately owned sites were considered; but were determined to be unfeasible due to their lack of a central location, insufficient size, and unacceptably high acquisition costs.

Based upon the analysis contained in the EA, I have reasonably determined that the construction of the proposed sports complex by the Association will not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, as defined in the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing NEPA. Public use of the fields for recreation will not impact or interfere with the operation and maintenance of the Hannibal facility. Moreover, there are no unresolved safety issues related to the use of the available Government land for recreation. The preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is therefore unwarranted. The public interest will be best served by the implementation of the proposed action. Furthermore, the proposed work is in compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. There are no unresolved environmental issues. It should also be noted that there are no unresolved issues relating to environmental compliance and coordination. This determination precedes the Corps of Engineers' final decision concerning this proposed action. A copy of this FONSI will be placed on the District's website (<http://www.lrp.usace.army.mil>).

31 OCT 08

Date



Michael P. Crall
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer