DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
P.L. 84-88 Ridgway Local Protection Plan (RLPP)
Ridgway Borough, Elk County, Pennsylvania
March 2016

The United States, acting by and through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Pittsburgh District, is proposing to restore Elk Creek to pre-flood conditions through rehabilitation of degraded bank protection after a flood event of May 21, 2014, created potentially hazardous conditions that could adversely impact local infrastructure, the environment, and public safety.

The preferred action alternative will involve removal, sampling, and disposal of approximately 2,100 cubic yards of sediment in the streambed of Elk Creek, followed by emplacement and grading of 890 cubic yards of structural fill with geotextile fabric and stone protection along 400 linear feet for streambank protection. Approximately 100 linear feet of a segmental block wall will be demolished and replaced with a precast concrete block retaining wall. Abutment protection would also be installed to correct the Tanner Bridge.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District, prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate project alternatives before selecting a course of action. These alternatives included the proposed action, no-action, and non-structural relocation.

The no-action alternative was determined infeasible as it would allow the conditions on Elk Creek to exacerbate, thereby increasing adverse effects to the local infrastructure, the environment, and public safety.

The non-structural relocation alternative is similar to the no-action alternative, except that 23 residential and 12 non-residential structures would be razed and their occupants moved from the vicinity of Elk Creek. In addition to the worsening conditions outlined in the no-action alternative, this would also have significant adverse social impacts requiring additional NEPA evaluation and adverse effects to the local economy and tax base.

Potential impacts were addressed with regard to floodplains, vegetation, fish and wildlife, water quality, air quality, wetlands, endangered species, cultural resources, regulated hazardous contaminants, transportation, noise, aesthetics, wild and scenic rivers, land use, and socioeconomic resources. Coordination was made with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, and the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission and the results determined that the proposed project will have no adverse impacts to cultural or natural resources within the area of effect. The project will comply with all applicable environmental laws and all necessary permits and approvals will be approved prior the start of construction.

After having carefully evaluated and balanced all beneficial and detrimental aspects of the action proposed in the RLPP EA, including all regulatory agency input, I have reasonably

concluded that the proposed project would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and is in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 1508.13. Consequently, the preparation of an environmental impact statement under NEPA for this action is not warranted. The public interest will be best served by the implementation of the proposed action. Further, the proposed work is in compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. A draft of this document is being circulated for a minimum 30-day review to concerned agencies, organizations and the interested public and there are no unresolved issues regarding environmental compliance and coordination and there are no unresolved environmental issues. This FONSI precedes the Corps of Engineers' final decision on the proposed action. A copy of this document will be placed on the District's website (http://www.lrp.usace.army.mil).

Bernard R. Lindstrom
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer