

Members of the Nature Reserve Committee attended the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) meeting at San Jac on January 11th regarding their Clear Creek drainage project. As a result of information gathered at that meeting, members of the Nature Reserve Committee, the Facilities Committee, and the Board of Directors met with USACE on Wednesday, February 1st to clarify the impact of USACE's Clear Creek project on BellaVita. In the big picture the project should provide a benefit to BellaVita by lowering the 100y floodplain 6 inches. Downstream the project lowers the floodplain by as much as 2 feet. The current concept is totally new in the history of the Clear Creek project. When complete the project will actually slow water down and meter it from the various tributaries into downstream Clear Creek. However, some wetlands will be impacted by the project and this impact must be mitigated per Federal law. There are 28 possible mitigation scenarios in the project, 12 of which were analyzed in detail for environmental payback. The mitigation plan that was adopted significantly impacts our Nature Reserve area. The mitigation plan affects 13 oxbows along the Clear Creek channel from Dixie Farm Rd to Country Club Dr, also referred to as ER-4 in the report. Five of these oxbows are in the BellaVita Nature Reserve area. The plan is to dig out these remnant oxbows down to the current level of Clear Creek to create constant flow through the oxbows. This will create steep sided trenches 20 feet deep that will be cut through the berm to Clear Creek. Note that this depth is 10-15 feet below the level of the oxbows when cutoff by channelization in the '50s. In addition the berm will be shaved down to 32' high in most areas. The concerns are many. Any changes to the oxbow that our retention lake drains into are of primary concern. Since the Nature Reserve area would be allowed to fill immediately to the level of Clear Creek, the potential of catastrophic river flow across the earthen dam is a major concern. The fact that the oxbow will convey water much closer to the housing area raises flood concerns. USACE of course does not agree with this view.

The full report is online at <http://www.swg.usace.army.mil/clearcreek/> . The report is titled 'USACE Clear Creek Draft General Reevaluation Report'. The information pertinent to BV is the mitigation portion in Vol 1 DSEIS, Sect 5 and Appendix D. USACE will accept and reply to all Comments from any and all interested persons. Comments should be mailed to:

USACE – Galveston District
Attn: Ms. Andrea Catanzaro
P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, TX 77553

Your Comments must be written on, or attached to, a form provided by USACE. This form is also posted on this website as 'USACE Comment Form'. Copies of the form will also be available at the clubhouse. Everyone is free to Comment to USACE re the project.

All Comments must be postmarked by 2/14/2012 and NO LATER.

To assist you in composing a Comment to USACE we have developed a set of possible comments that you may choose to use in your response. Please see these possible comments under the document titled 'Possible Comments' on this website. Please include photos of your adventures in the Nature Reserve area –pictures of flora, fauna, and especially PEOPLE!!

The Nature Reserve Committee appreciates your interest in our community response to this situation created by USACE.

Thank you.

Questions? Contact Larry Alvarez, Committee Chairman or David Southard, Committee member