

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

For New Ocmulgee River Boat Ramp in Macon-Bibb County, Georgia

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) requests United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Office of Conservation Investment (CI) grant funding to build a public boating access facility on the Ocmulgee River in Macon-Bibb County, Georgia. This Proposed Action (PA) would be completed near the consolidated City of Macon on property currently owned by the Service but operated and maintained by the GADNR through a lease agreement (32.773020°N, -83.586084°W). Specific activities would include constructing a concrete boat ramp and a gravel parking area. The total project area is identified as 0.9 acres.

The facility will offer a single-lane concrete boat ramp into the Ocmulgee River. The ramp is to be approximately 20-ft. wide and 124-ft. long including the approach. The GADNR plans six trailer parking spots, three standard parking spots, and an ADA-compliant parking spot next to the approach. The parking area will feature a gravel surface.

The purpose of the PA is in keeping with GADNR goals by providing quality river fishing access that is distributed evenly around the state. The need for this particular action is to provide greater access along the Ocmulgee River, a major waterway. Once developed, the PA will provide an intermediate public access point along the approximately 31-mile reach between the existing public access points.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) titled “New Ocmulgee River Boat Ramp, Bonds Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Macon-Bibb County,” dated “1 June 2025” and submitted to the Service/CI on 20 June 2025, was prepared by GADNR. The EA explored a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives, evaluated potential issues and impacts, and identified mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts.

Historic and cultural resources were also considered in coordination with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and through Federal Tribal Consultation. The SHPO included in their review a Phase I archaeological survey of the project area and recommended in their response letter dated 5 July 2023, that “no historic properties that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by this undertaking” and that cultural/archaeological resources “will not be impacted by the above-referenced project.” In addition, seven Native American Tribes, which have identified interest in that area of Georgia, were invited by The Service/CI to consult on the PA and its potential impact to significant archaeological sites and other historic properties of religious and cultural significance. One request for clarification regarding a statement within the Phase I archaeological report was received and that clarification was provided. No other responses were received.

Based on the EA, SHPO review, and Federal Tribal Consultation, implementation of the PA would be expected to result in the following environmental, social, and economic effects:

- No long-term, adverse impacts to the physical environment.
- No adverse impact to biological resources including threatened or endangered species.
- Long-term, beneficial impacts to recreation and public health and safety.

- No adverse impacts to cultural or historic resources including National Register of Historic Places listed or eligible properties.

The Service/CI program believes the following reasonable and prudent measures are necessary and appropriate to minimize impacts. As part of this approval, the GADNR must commit to implement the reasonable, prudent measures described below:

- Best Management Practices (BMP) will be utilized to minimize any potential short-term impacts to water resources and other elements of the physical environment during and immediately following construction.
- Erosion control measures will be implemented prior to construction to minimize impacts to adjacent wetlands and/or fishery resources.
- Pursuant to Section 106, NHPA, if archaeological deposits (including but not limited to pottery or ceramics, stone tools, projectile points, dugout canoes, metal implements, historical building material that could be associated with Native American, early European, or American settlements), bones, or human remains are encountered during implementation of the proposed project, the applicant will stop all work immediately in the vicinity of the discovery and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The GADNR will inform CI immediately, and the SHPO will be consulted. Any construction plans and work orders must stipulate that work be stopped immediately, and the Agency and the CI be contacted immediately, if any archaeological deposits are uncovered. Work in any areas identified will not resume until consultation is completed, and appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with the NHPA. Additional conditions may apply.

Provided that all the recommended reasonable and prudent measures described above are followed, the Service/CI accepts the EA dated "1 June 2025" and submitted 20 June 2025, that was prepared in accordance with relevant provisions under NEPA and other relevant Federal, State, and local regulations. I conclude that the PA is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA of 1969, as amended. Consequently, no Environmental Impact Statement is required. I hereby certify that the Service has considered all relevant information raised in the NEPA process and that the NEPA process has concluded.

APPROVAL:

Paul Wilkes
Regional Manager-Southeast Region
USFWS-Office of Conservation Investment