

## **Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Floodplain and Wetland**

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups, Tribes, and Individuals

This is to give notice that Orange County has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and/or Executive Order 11990 and in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under under Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation Contract No. 24-065-061-E571. The proposed project(s) is located in Orange County, Texas within the 100-year floodplain according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map and areas denoted and delineated as wetlands according to the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map and on-site analysis by Hydrex Environmental (Hydrex).

The Orange County Drainage District (OCDD) proposes to build detention ponds with approximately 3,600 ac-ft capacity in total at the upper reaches of Tiger Creek in Orange County, Texas. The purpose of this project is for flood mitigation to alleviate flooding in Vidor, Texas and northwestern Orange County. The project site consists of an approximate 500-acre project boundary (delineation area), which encompasses two (2) areas for proposed off-channel detention ponds, totaling +/-350 acres, and drainage easement rights-of-way (ROWS) along Tiger Creek and Cole Road Ditch. The approximate acreages of the proposed detention ponds are listed below.

- West Pond: 31 Acres
- East Pond: 318 Acres

In addition to the proposed off-channel detention ponds, this project includes the installation of storm water control features including intake weirs, one outfall, one siphon, pump station, and utility line along Cole Road Ditch.

Approximately 470 acres of the 500-acre project area are located within the federal flood risk management standard (FFRMS) floodplain. The freeboard value approach (FVA) was utilized to calculate the FFRMS floodplain for the project area. The FVA added an additional 2 feet to the estimated base flood elevation (24.5 MSL), provided by FEMA's Flood Risk Information Report, to calculate the FFRMS (26.5 MSL).

Portions of the project ROWs cross through areas designated on the National Wetlands Inventory Map as wetland (PFO, PSS, and PEM) and riverine (R4SBC and R4SBCx). These areas are not typically ground truthed, therefore a delineation of waters of the U.S., including wetlands, was performed. During the delineation, 118 acres of wetlands were identified within the project area.

Orange County has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain/wetland:

### **Alternative 1: No Action Alternative:**

A no action alternative results in no construction of the detention ponds, and no discharges of dredged or fill material into wetlands. The current condition of the property would remain and in the event of a major flood the flooding in the area would continue to impact residents of Vidor, Texas and northwestern Orange County. If the no action alternative would have been selected the risk of flooding, property loss or damage, and threat to public health and safety will continue. The continued risk to residents of northwestern Orange County would remain, and therefore the no action alternative was rejected.

### **Alternative 2: Locate the Project Outside of the Floodplain and Wetlands:**

This alternative would prohibit construction within areas identified as wetlands. While this would still alleviate minor flooding, it would result in inconsistent drainage and continued risk for the surrounding

area. The majority of the project area (470 acres) are within the floodplain. The remaining 30 acres within the property would not provide the necessary acreage to construct an appropriately sized and effective detention pond. In the event of flooding, the surrounding residents would remain at risk. Locating the pond outside of the floodplain and wetlands would alleviate some flooding risk but risk of flooding, property loss or damage, and threat to public health and safety will continue. This alternative does not sufficiently address the threats to the surrounding area and is not a practicable solution and therefore was rejected.

**Alternative 3: Construct the Project as Proposed:**

Constructing the project as proposed is the preferred option as it would result in improvements to drainage in Vidor, Texas and northwestern Orange County. The proposed location was selected due to its strategic location in the floodplain of Tiger Creek. Construction of the detention pond in this area will mitigate risk of flooding, property loss or damage, and threats to public health and safety. This is one of the only areas along Tiger Creek with the acreage available to the Orange County Drainage District for an appropriately sized and effective detention pond. Due to the nature of the proposed project and the acreage needed to construct an appropriately sized and effective detention pond, there are no alternative locations for the detention pond that would sufficiently alleviate flooding in this area.

\*\*\*Orange County has reevaluated the alternatives to construction of the detention pond and has determined that it has no practicable alternative.\*\*\*

Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988, and/or Executive Order 11990, and 24 CFR 55, are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplain and/ or wetland and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about activities in a floodplain and/ or wetland can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in a floodplain and/ or wetland it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by Orange County at the following address on or before April 17, 2026:

Orange County Judge John Gothia at Orange County Courthouse, 123 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Orange, Texas 77630 and (409) 882-7070. Attention: The Honorable Judge John Gothia, Orange County Judge

A full description of the project may also be reviewed from Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 5:00pm at the above listed address and on the Orange County Official Website <https://www.co.orange.tx.us/>. Comments may also be submitted via email at [jgothia@co.orange.tx.us](mailto:jgothia@co.orange.tx.us).

April 10, 2026