Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Supplemental Environmental Assessment
Bluestone Phase 5 Disposal
Hinton, West Virginia

1. Members of my staff have conducted a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) approved in September 2017. The overall public interest which has been analyzed, which considers potential impacts on the human environment from the proposed disposal method for the Bluestone Phase 5 Project, located near Hinton, West Virginia. Included in the scope of the project was approximately 100,000-250,000 cubic yards (loose) of rock spoil that would be excavated from the spillway during construction and would require a location for permanent disposal of the material. The SFEIS assumed landfill disposal would be utilized, which is generally the most expensive option however this alternative, assumes less risk and minimizes the environmental impacts. During the preconstruction engineering and design (PED) several disposal options have been formulated beyond the landfill alternative, in order to identify a more efficient and effective disposal alternative. Approximately six off-site locations and approximately seven on-site configurations were evaluated as part of the initial disposal alternative development analysis. Through multiple screening and evaluation sessions, three off-site alternatives and three on-site configurations were evaluated. Of the six alternatives in the final screening, Alternative Plan F was chosen as the Proposed Action Alternative.

Alternative Plan F is composed of an on-site disposal configuration that utilizes only the right abutment of the Dam and eastern hillside on the right descending bank downstream of Bluestone Dam. Areas utilized include the right abutment groin and the area to the east of Miller Ave where the existing stockpile sits. The alternative would not affect the currently existing recreational areas as all disposal would be placed within the current construction area. Under this option Bellepoint Park would not need to be closed due to disposal. However, this alternative would require the replacement of the operations buildings in a different location as the disposal would be placed in the current location of the existing operations buildings. The Operations buildings would be place at the elevation of 1415 which would be a benefit to USACE as it would no longer be within the tailwater of the New River at high flows.

This alternative would also require for Packs Branch, a stream that runs through the site, to be culverted by a 72” diameter culvert for approximately 300-500 linear feet. The culvert would allow for safer access to the proposed location of the new operations buildings and allow for more usable area on top of the disposal fill. The disposal area would be turned into green space that would be able to be utilized for recreational purposes unlike Alternative E that had areas would be at too high of an elevation to be used effectively. Minimal trees clearing would also be required along the eastern hillside and Miller Avenue; approximately one acre. Miller Avenue

would need to be realigned to meet the new slopes and elevations of the disposal but the road would be in the same relative location just at higher elevation. Due the restriction in the areas where the disposal can be placed, the height of the disposal would range from 1403 to 1415 in order to accommodate the full amount excavated material.

The disposal material excavated from the basin would be transported to the disposal area potentially by truck and conveyor system. By truck, the disposal from the right side stilling basin would be driven across the cofferdam/causeway directly to the disposal area thus cutting out any need from travel on Miller Avenue through the community of Bellepoint and reducing truck impacts. The material from the left side of the stilling basin would need to be trucked through the community or potentially a bridge over the stilling basin could be built to directly truck the material to the disposal site, by-passing the community altogether. However, the hauling restriction of the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday would still be upheld to mitigate for truck traffic. A conveyor system may also be utilized to convey the material from the stilling basin to the disposal site. Using the conveyor system would eliminate truck traffic through the community for disposal material transport from both the left and right side of the stilling basin.

2. The possible consequences of the proposed action have been studied for environmental, cultural, and social well-being effects.

3. The Proposed Action Alternative (PAA) and the No Action Alternative (NAA) were the only alternatives carried forward for detailed evaluation. The PAA is both environmentally and socially acceptable. The NAA would be the least cost effective option considered and would not result in the U.S Army Corps of Engineers being the best stewards of public funding.

4. An evaluation of the Recommended Plan and NAA produced the following pertinent conclusions:

> a. Environmental Considerations. The Huntington District has taken reasonable measures to assemble and present the known or foreseeable impacts of the PAA to the human and natural environment in the draft EA. All potential adverse impacts considered significant would be mitigated appropriately. The chosen disposal option would require Packs Branch, a stream that runs through the site, to be encapsulated in a 72" diameter culvert for approximately 300-500 linear feet. The culvert installation would meet the terms and conditions for a nationwide permit 14 for linear transportation projects. An individual Section 401 of the CWA is needed from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) for the total work of Phase 5 including the culvert installation in Packs Branch. Mitigation would be required in the form of payment into a stream in-lieu fee program for the impact. Mitigation costs would range from $131,400 to $219,000 (300

feet to 500 feet) depending on the stream impact length. Trees, bushes, and grasses and other vegetation would be planted in the disposal area and recreational area to help mitigate for tree removal and changes to the aesthetics of the area. All other potential adverse impacts of the PAA would be considered minor in nature and would not require mitigation.

b. Social Well-Being Considerations. No significant economic or social well-being impacts that are both adverse and unavoidable are foreseen as a result of the PAA. The PAA would result in a cost savings to the overall project and public resources. The project will not have any impact on significant archeological sites. Historic structures will be documented according to the West Virginia Historic Preservation Office standards.

c. Coordination with Resource and Other Agencies. Pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1958 as amended, coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been conducted. In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1970, as amended, the Recommended Plan would have no effect on listed species. Coordination with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resource Section under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act has been conducted. There would be no effect to any rare, threatened, or endangered species or sensitive habitats within the project area. The project would be conducted in accordance with the Clean Water Act. Coordination with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has been completed. Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office has been conducted. No historic properties would be affected by the proposed undertaking. Appropriate measures and best management practices have been identified and incorporated into the plan.

d. Other Public Interest Considerations. There has been no opposition to the PAA expressed by state or local governments, or organized environmental groups, and there are no unresolved issues regarding the implementation of the Recommended Plan.

5. I find the PAA has been planned in accordance with current authorization as described in the SEA. The PAA is consistent with national policy, statutes and administrative directives. This determination is based on thorough analysis and evaluation of the PAA and NAA. In conclusion, I find that the proposed Bluestone Phase 5 Disposal Plan near Hinton, West Virginia, would have no significant adverse effect on the quality of the human and/or natural environment once mitigation is completed and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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