

“ONE LAKE” : *Protect the Pearl River and Your Pocketbook*

What is “One Lake”?

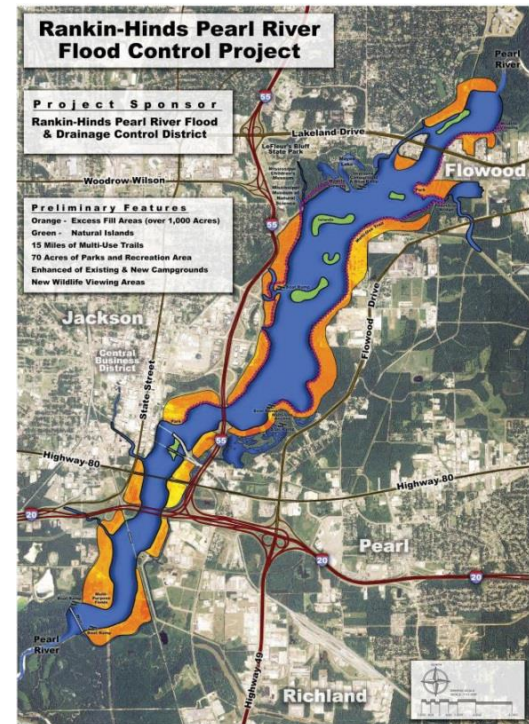
After the devastating Easter flood of 1979, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was charged with developing a comprehensive flood control plan for the Jackson metropolitan area. Several Pearl River plans were introduced, which focused on flood control and their environmental impact. These plans were never implemented due to public opposition, concern about increased flooding south of Jackson, and lack of support for a local source of public funding.

In 1996, a local real estate developer proposed the first of several plans to dam the Pearl River south of the Ross Barnett Reservoir Dam in order to create new developable waterfront property along with questionable flood control benefits. The proposal has morphed over the years in response to ineffective flood control designs, exorbitant costs, and environmental concerns.

The Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District and the Pearl River Vision Foundation are the main proponents of this current proposal. **“One Lake” includes dredging 10-miles of the Pearl River and building a dam to create a 1,900-acre lake from north of Lakeland Drive to south of I-20 near Richland.**

The proponents have released a *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* on the project and **the public comment period ends on September 6th. But the DEIS is incomplete – it’s missing crucial sections required by federal law for adequate public and scientific review:** Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report, Independent External Peer Review Report, and Biological Opinion, as well as an official public notice in the Federal Register.

These major deficiencies send a signal that the project sponsors are not taking this environmental review process very seriously. **Learn more and make your voice heard at www.onerivernolake.com.**



BAD for Our Community & the Pearl River

- **It will directly destroy over 2,500 acres of wildlife habitat**, much of which provides natural flood protection for local communities. The DEIS’s ‘Study Area’ only looks at the project footprint and should include the entire Pearl River watershed downstream - from the Ross Barnett Reservoir to Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf.
- **It eliminates or alters critical habitat for federally-protected species** (*Gulf sturgeon, Ringed sawback turtle, Wood stork, Northern long-eared bat*) as well as important habitat for birds like the Bald eagle, Barred owl, and Eastern meadowlark, fish and other wildlife.
- **The Pearl River is the fourth largest source of freshwater into the Gulf**, east of the mouth of the Mississippi River. Reductions to downstream freshwater flows would jeopardize water quality, our seafood industry, and hundreds of millions of dollars in coastal restoration projects underway - or planned - for Mississippi and Louisiana. For example, a \$50 million marsh-oyster project in Hancock County.
- Reduced downstream flows not only could change water levels in the lower Pearl but alter coastal salinities, affect sediment transport, impact wildlife habitat, and increase saltwater intrusion upriver. **Hydrologic modeling presented in the project’s DEIS is not rigorous enough** to shed light on these issues; more detailed analyses are crucial to assessing the project’s impacts both immediate (footprint) and downstream to Mississippi Sound, the Pearl River Delta, and the Northern Gulf of Mexico.

BAD for Our Economy & Pocketbooks

“One Lake” would reduce the amount of freshwater flowing downstream, putting key pillars of our state economy at risk.

- **Our annual \$891 million seafood industry that supports 9,491 jobs.** (*MSU Extension, 2/13/2018*)
- **Hundreds of millions of dollars in restoration projects** underway or planned for coastal Mississippi and Louisiana, such as a \$50 million marsh-oyster project in Hancock County.
- Anticipated **increased costs to nearly 100 downstream Pearl River industrial users and municipalities** that rely on stable freshwater flow and adequate dilution of their discharges, such as International Paper, Georgia-Pacific, and the towns of Bogalusa and Pearl River.
- **Project proponents have been passing their upfront costs onto taxpayers** – to date taxpayers have already paid \$8 million for feasibility studies. (*MS Legislature PEER Committee Report #545, p.9, 12/14/2010*)
- **Increased property taxes in and around Jackson.** Passed in the 2017 state legislative session, House Bill 1585 gave the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood Control and Drainage District authority to raise property taxes for owners they determine are “*directly or indirectly benefited by the project.*”
- The DEIS Appendix C (p. 220) presents project cost estimates, such as to relocate infrastructure that would be impacted (i.e. roads, bridges, railroad lines, utilities, landfills, hazardous waste sites), design/construction costs, or annual costs to operate, manage and maintain the dam and lake. **These estimates acknowledge they are based on multiple assumptions and unknowns, which indicate true costs may well exceed \$345 million for construction and an annual cost of \$13.9 million.** (*Northside Sun, 7/12/18*)
- **“The plans incorporating economic development cost more than levees.”** (*MS Legislature PEER Committee Report #540, p.34, 10/12/2010*) In fact, the flood control plans developed before 1996 offer less costly options that better address flooding concerns. These options include improvements to existing levees, raising buildings and homes, or buying out properties with historical flooding problems.

What’s Next

- **NO state or federal permits have been approved for this project.** (*Clarion Ledger, 3/6/2018*)
 - ✓ In addition to this incomplete Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the project will require a Water Quality Certificate, Clean Water Act wetlands permit, and a Rivers & Harbors Act Section 10 permit as well as a coastal consistency review.
- **NO federal money has been awarded to this project.**
 - ✓ The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 earmarked – not appropriated – \$133 million.
- **12 downstream stakeholders have passed resolutions OPPOSING the project:**
 - *Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources * Louisiana State House and Senate
 - * Marion, Lawrence, Pearl River and Hancock Counties * St. Tammany and Washington Parishes (LA)
 - * Town of Monticello * Town of Pearl River (LA) * City of Bogalusa (LA) * City of Slidell (LA)
- **The incomplete Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is available for public review and comment period through September 6th.** Learn more and make your voice heard at www.onerivernolake.com.

Learn more and take action:

www.onerivernolake.com