



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

April 25, 2023

TO: Master Files

FROM:  John Fleming, Division Head, Environmental Division 

SUBJECT: Job 020802
FAP HSIP-0035(72)
Hwys. 15/31 Y-Inters. Safety Impvts. (S)
Route 15, Section 8
Route 31, Section 1
Jefferson County
Tier 1 Categorical Exclusion

After appropriate environmental review, it has been determined that the subject job is a Tier 1 Categorical Exclusion as described by the ARDOT/FHWA Programmatic Agreement on Categorical Exclusion Documentation and Processing. A public hearing will not be offered for this project.

The purpose of this project is to improve the intersection of Highway 15 and 31 in Jefferson County. Improvements include a realignment of the intersection from the former Y-intersection style to an alignment that improves traffic safety. The project will involve signing and striping upgrades along with the replacement of cross drains and box culverts where necessary. Approximately 3.8 acres of additional right of way would be required for this project, and 2.0 acres of Important Farmland will be impacted. A project location map and NRCS-CPA-106 form are attached.

The project will not involve relocations, noise impacts, underground storage tanks, hazardous materials, environmental justice issues, or cultural resources. A Phase I Virtual Public Involvement meeting will be held for this project at a later date. This project has been determined to generate minimal air quality impacts for Clean Air Act criteria pollutants and has not been linked with any special mobile source air toxic concerns. The State Historic Preservation Officer's clearance is attached.

The official species lists obtained through US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation identified the following species as potentially

occurring within the project area: Eastern Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. jamaicensis*), Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*), and Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). This project will have “no effect” on the aforementioned species due to the limited scope of the action, lack of suitable habitat, and distance to known species locations.

The monarch butterfly is a candidate species and as such is not federally protected under the Endangered Species Act. However, the USFWS recommends agencies implement conservation measures for candidate species in action areas as these are species, by definition, that may warrant future protection under the Act. ARDOT will plant native wildflowers after construction as a conservation measure. Additionally, the Alligator Snapping Turtle is currently a proposed threatened species; however, the proposed project will not jeopardize the continued existence of the species.

The total wetland impacts associated with construction activities on this project are estimated at 0.19 acre; therefore, a Section 404 permit will be required. An estimated 1.46 wetland mitigation credits from ARDOT’s Ink Bayou Mitigation Bank will be offered as compensatory mitigation to offset the wetland impacts. The project should be authorized by Nationwide Permit 14 for Linear Transportation Projects as defined in Federal Register 86(245): 73522-73583.

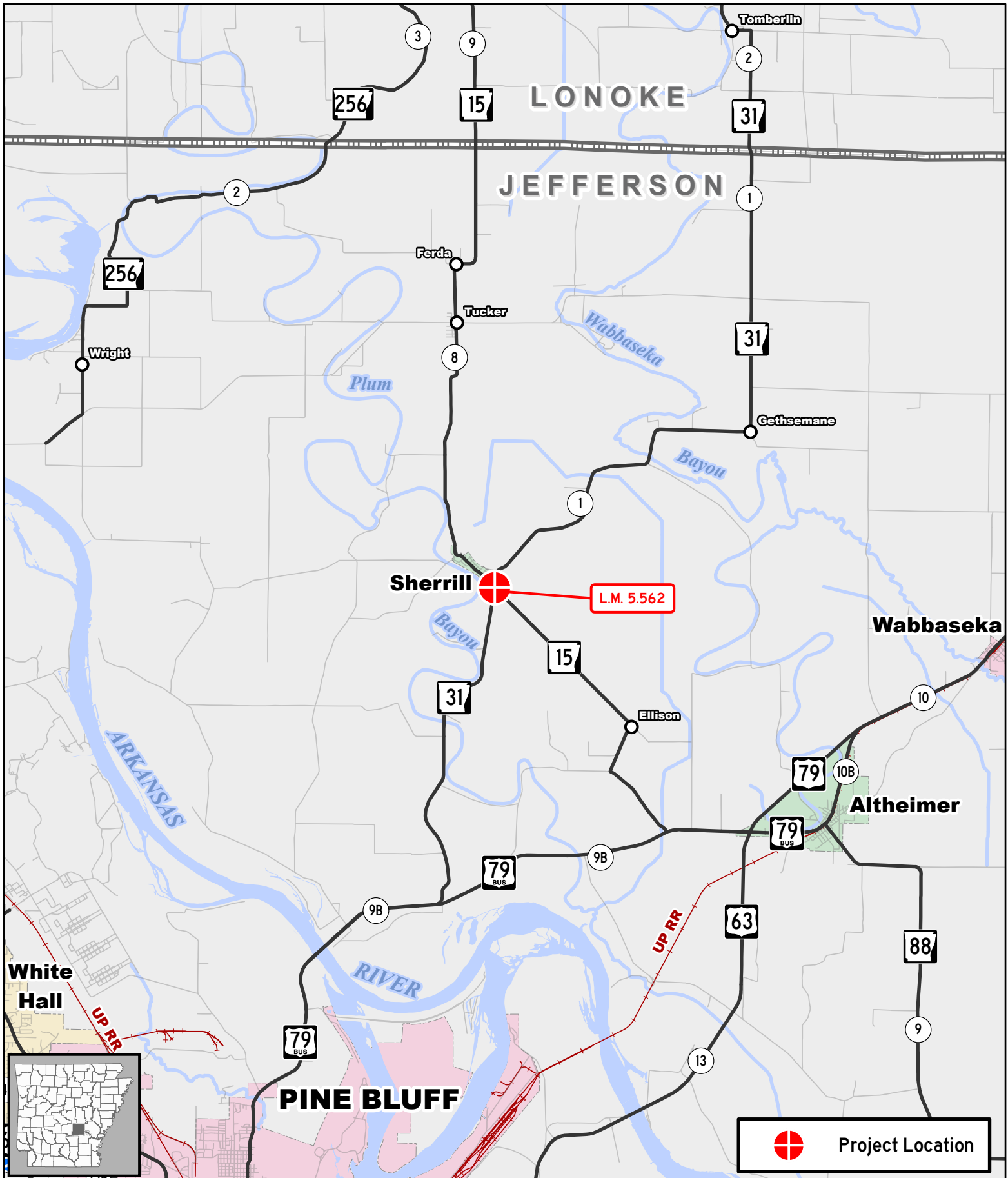
Jefferson County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. The project lies within Zone X, Area with Reduced Flood Risk Due to Levee. The final project design will be reviewed to confirm that the design is adequate and that the potential risk to life and property are minimized. Adjacent properties should not be impacted nor have a greater flood risk than existed before construction of the project. None of the encroachments will constitute a substantial floodplain encroachment or a risk to property or life.

JF:JG:sw

Attachments:

- Project Location Map
- SHPO Clearance
- NRCS-CPA-106 form
- Environmental Study Checklist

c: Program Management
Right of Way
Roadway Design
District 2
FHWA



 Project Location

Job 020802

Hwys. 15/31 Y-Inters. Safety Impvts. (S)

Hwy. 15, Sec. 8
 Hwy. 31, Sec. 1
 Jefferson County





Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor
Mike Mills
Secretary

April 21, 2023

Mr. John Fleming
Division Head
Environmental Division
Arkansas Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 2261
Little Rock, AR 72203-2261

RE: Jefferson Counties: Sherrill
Section 106 Review: FHWA
Proposed Undertaking: Hwys. 15-31 Y-Inters. Safety Impvts. (S)
Route 15, Section 8
Route 31, Section 1
ARDOT Number: 020802
AHPP Tracking Number: 111011

Dear Mr. Fleming:

The staff of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) reviewed the submitted cultural resources survey for the above referenced undertaking in Section 11, Township 4 South, Range 9 West in Jefferson County, Arkansas. The proposed project entails the construction of safety countermeasures at the intersection of Highways 15 and 31, including the reconfiguring of the intersection geometry, the installation of channelizing islands, and the installation of oversized and gated stop and yield signs with 6-inch striping. New right-of-way will be required along the length of the project.

There are no previously recorded archeological sites or historic properties located within the area of potential effect (APE). One historic structure, a Craftsman house, was identified during a cultural resources survey. The AHPP concurs that this structure is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). A total of twenty-three shovel tests were excavated within the APE, all of which were negative for cultural materials.


Based on the provided information, the AHPP concurs with the finding of **no historic properties affected pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(d)(1)** for the proposed undertaking and that no further archeological work is needed.

Tribes that have expressed an interest in the area include the Caddo Nation, the Cherokee Nation, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Osage Nation, the Quapaw Nation, and the Shawnee Tribe. We recommend consultation in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.2(c)(2).

Thank you for the opportunity to review this undertaking. Please refer to the AHPP Tracking Number listed above in all correspondence. If you have any questions, call Kathryn Bryles at 501-324-9784 or email kathryn.bryles@arkansas.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathryn
Bryles

 Digitally signed by
Kathryn Bryles
Date: 2023.04.21
11:00:58 -05'00'

for

Scott Kaufman
AHPP Director and State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Dr. Melissa Zabecki, Arkansas Archeological Survey
Mr. Randal Looney, Federal Highway Administration

**FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING
FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS**

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) Job 020802	3. Date of Land Evaluation Request	4. Sheet 1 of _____
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1. Name of Project	5. Federal Agency Involved
2. Type of Project	6. County and State

PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		1. Date Request Received by NRCS	2. Person Completing Form
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form). YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		4. Acres Irrigated	Average Farm Size
5. Major Crop(s)	6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: _____ %	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: _____ %	
8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System	10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS	

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Alternative Corridor For Segment			
	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly				
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services				
C. Total Acres In Corridor				

PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland				
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland				
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				

PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))	Maximum Points	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15				
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10				
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20				
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20				
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10				
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25				
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5				
8. On-Farm Investments	20				
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25				
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10				
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160				

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100				
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160				
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260				

1. Corridor Selected:	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project:	3. Date Of Selection:	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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5. Reason For Selection:

Signature of Person Completing this Part: _____ DATE _____

Joshua Graham

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor

**ARDOT ENVIRONMENTAL VERIFICATION CHECKLIST
FOR CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

ARDOT Job 020802 FAP HSIP-0035(72)

Job Title Hwys. 15/31 Y-Inters. Safety Impvts. (S)

Environmental Resource	None	Minimal	Major	Comments-required for each item
Air Quality	X			No air quality/MSAT impacts
Cultural Resources	X			SHPO clearance attached
Economic	X			No adverse impacts
Endangered Species	X			A "No effect" determination made
Environmental Justice/Title VI	X			EJ populations impacts not anticipated; Phase 1 VPI will be conducted
Fish and Wildlife		X		Temporary during construction
Floodplains		X		Zone X, no impacts anticipated
Forest Service Property	X			None in project area
Hazardous Materials/Landfills	X			No sites in project area
Land Use		X		3.8 acres of new ROW
Migratory Birds	X			No impacts anticipated
Navigation/Coast Guard	X			No navigable waterways involved
Noise Levels	X			No impacts anticipated
Prime Farmland		X		1.98 acres of Prime Farmland converted; NRCS form attached
Protected Waters	X			None occur in project area
Public Recreation Lands	X			None in project area
Public Water Supply/WHPA	X			None in project area
Relocatees	X			No relocations anticipated
Section 4(f)/6(f)	X			No impacts to 4f/6f resources
Social	X			No impacts to the social environment
Underground Storage Tanks	X			No USTs in project area
Visual	X			No impacts anticipated
Streams	X			No impacts anticipated
Water Quality		X		Temporary decline during construction
Wetlands		X		Wetland impacts total 0.19 acres
Wildlife Refuges	X			None in the project area

Section 401 Water Quality Certification Required? No

Short-term Activity Authorization Required? Yes

Section 404 Permit Required? Yes Type Nationwide Permit 14

Remarks: A Phase I VPI meeting will be conducted at a later date.

Signature of Evaluator  Date 3/24/2023