

**Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed
Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain**

To: All interested Agencies include all Federal, State, and Local, Groups and Individuals

The Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana (Tribe), with Federal assistance from the U.S. Indian Health Service (IHS), proposes to commission the Heritage Center Wastewater Treatment Plant located at 1940 CC Bel Road, Elton, Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana, within a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain.

The IHS seeks to assist in the proposed action and, as the responsible Federal agency, is subject to Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana intends to commission the Heritage Center Wastewater Treatment Plant located within the FFRMS floodplain. The proposed project, constructed in 2008 but never commissioned, is being promoted by the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. The project's location is 1940 CC Bel Road, Elton, Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana, 70532. The project site encompasses approximately 85 acres of land, parcel #0200033567, and the facility's footprint is approximately 5,585 square feet. The wastewater treatment plant has a capacity of 42,500 gallons per day and is located on Tribal Trust Land. The Climate-Informed Science Approach (CISA) was not available for assessment; therefore, an insurance rate map from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was used. The map shows that the existing wastewater treatment facility is located in the 100-year floodplain (or 1% annual chance). A Floodplain Analysis Report was created in December 2025 to provide a detailed analysis of the established flood zone and a comparison of the model-calculated base flood elevation (BFE). The report concluded that the existing wastewater treatment facility is constructed at an acceptable elevation to avoid flood impacts from the 100-year flood event.

The Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana (Tribe), with Federal assistance from the U.S. Indian Health Service (IHS), proposes to refurbish and commission an existing offline wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) located on Tribal Trust Land by redirecting community wastewater from an existing deficient WWTP that currently serves approximately 33 homes and 7 non-residential units.

The WWTP was constructed in 2008 as part of a larger development initiative intended to support new tribal facilities; however, the overall development was abandoned prior to completion, and the WWTP was never placed into service. The WWTP site was selected based on its proximity to the discharge location and its separation from other planned but abandoned development, at the limit of the Tribal Trust Land boundary. The facility was constructed within the floodplain in accordance with applicable FEMA floodplain maps. The existing WWTP is aging and has experienced a significant decline in overall condition. The facility has a maximum treatment capacity of approximately 32,500 gallons per day and no longer provides a reliable or sustainable long-term solution. Rather than continuing to invest in repairs to a deficient system, the Tribe has determined that, bringing the newly constructed WWTP online represents the most feasible and effective alternative to meet current and future wastewater treatment needs and ensure long-term operational reliability.

Alternatives considered included refurbishing and bringing the existing Heritage Center WWTP online, constructing a new wastewater treatment plant, or taking no action. Refurbishing the Heritage Center WWTP was determined to be the most favorable alternative because it addresses the deficiencies of the existing WWTP at a lower capital cost while achieving an equivalent operational outcome to constructing a new facility. The No Action alternative would result in the continued operation of the deficient existing

WWTP and would leave current capacity and reliability concerns unaddressed. Refurbishing and commissioning the existing Heritage Center WWTP will also result in less ground disturbance and will utilize an existing structure within the established project footprint.

The proposed action will benefit the community by increasing wastewater treatment capacity and improving long-term system reliability. The existing wastewater treatment plant has a maximum capacity of 32,500 gallons per day (gpd), while the plant proposed to be brought online has a higher maximum capacity of 42,500 gpd, allowing the system to better accommodate current and future needs. Refurbishing and placing an existing, unused WWTP into service has been reviewed and approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the applicable National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting process. (NPDES Permit No. LA0127737).

These efforts align with FEMA's floodplain management requirements and ensure compliance with the 8-Step Decision-Making Process under 44 CFR Part 9 and Executive Order 11988 to minimize adverse impacts while maximizing benefits for both the site and the community.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in the floodplain 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. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the floodplain, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate project impacts on the floodplain. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains 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, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Pursuant to Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), the IHS, as the Federal agency responsible, will complete the applicable floodplain decision-making process and issue the final floodplain determination for the proposed action.

Written comments must be received within fifteen (15) days of the publication of this notice.

Written comments must be received by the Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana at the following address on or before Wednesday, March 18th, 2026, by mailing: Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana, 1940 CC Bel Road, Elton, LA 70532; Attention: Steve Manuel, Infrastructure Manager. Comments may also be submitted via email at smanuel@coshatta.org. A full description of the project may also be viewed from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm at the abovementioned address. Comments may also be submitted by phone at (337) 584-1595.