

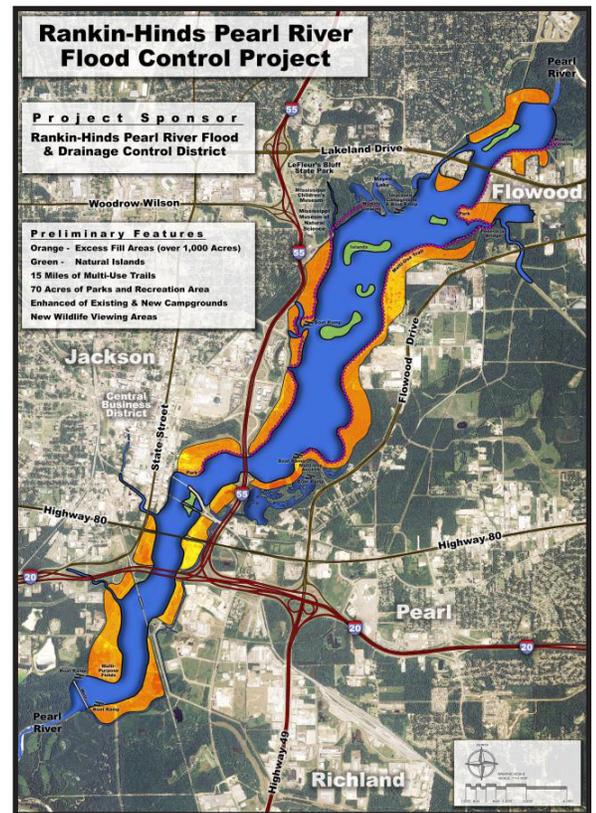
ONE LAKE: MANY ISSUES

After the devastating Easter flood of 1979, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was charged with developing a comprehensive flood control plan for Metro Jackson. Several Pearl River plans were introduced, focusing on flood control and environmental impact. They were never implemented due to public opposition and concerns over funding and downstream impacts. In 1996, a local businessman proposed the first of several plans to dam the river in Jackson below Ross Barnett Reservoir Dam to develop an urban waterfront with questionable flood control benefits. The proposal changed over the years in response to ineffective flood control designs, exorbitant costs, and environmental concerns. Local sponsors, The Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District (Drainage District) and the non-profit Pearl River Vision Foundation published an incomplete Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Feasibility Study on June 23rd.

BAD for Our Community & the Pearl River

The Drainage District is required to host a fair and open public notice process: The Drainage District has spent 4 years and \$8 million of taxpayers' money to release a grossly incomplete and biased document, giving the public 45 days to review this incomplete DEIS. Twenty-six citizens' groups and the Louisiana Senate petitioned for an extension on the comment period. The comment period has been extended, but the Biological assessment, essential to the DEIS, took an extra month to finish and be published for public comment.

- The One Lake project would bulldoze riverside forests, dredge and dig 25 million cubic yards of riverbanks and river bottom to elevate 1861 acres and get them ready for lakeshore development. These wetlands along the river provide natural flood protection for our community. This plan goes against the national trend of dam removal and wetland protection.
- Eliminating 10 miles of river habitat for two federally-protected species, (Gulf sturgeon and the Ringed sawback turtle) will harm many types of wildlife and slow these species' recovery. This much habitat destruction also adds needless expense to this flood control project.
- The Pearl River is the fourth largest source of **fresh water flowing to the Gulf** east of the Mississippi River.
 - * Its flow is integral at balancing salinities for healthy and productive oyster reefs and marshes in the estuaries along the coast.
 - * The Pearl's discharge from the Ross Barnett Reservoir has reached critical low flow levels over the years with surprising frequency. Another lake can only complicate this problem.
 - * The Drainage District's DEIS analyzed the effect of mean evaporation on total annual river discharge (Appendix C Water Quantity p. 10.) Scoping comments (2013) asked the District for a hard look at Pearl River low flows June-October, which they avoided here. Their analysis conveniently hides monthly variability, and obscures a lake's real impact to the river.
 - * Before another lake is allowed to be built on the Pearl, more sophisticated modeling should be run to see exactly how sensitive the lower Pearl River's swamps, marshes and the western Mississippi Sound are to damming and to more complicated water management demands from a second major lake.



BAD for Our Economy & Pocketbooks

- Metro Jackson deserves real flood control, not costly economic development:
 - * “The plans incorporating economic development cost more than levees.” (Miss. 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. The Drainage District’s DEIS now claims levees cost more than a lake alternative. The river hasn’t changed since 2010 and construction prices haven’t changed that much, so what gives?
 - * 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 finance the project. Miss. House Bill 1585 (2017) gave the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood Control and Drainage District authority to tax property owners who are “directly or indirectly benefitted by the project.”
 - * The Drainage District’s cost projections appear to oversimplify and undercut the expense of removing old hazardous waste sites and landfills along the river. There are many unknown costs associated with the project, such as costs to relocate infrastructure (i.e. roads, bridges, railroad lines, utilities, landfills) that would be impacted, or costs to operate, manage and maintain the dam and lake. A detailed wetland mitigation plan is absent from the DEIS and so those costs are not final.
- One Lake affects more than just Metro Jackson. The Drainage District’s DEIS has an economic analysis that concentrates its cost/benefit analysis on Hinds and Rankin Counties. Downriver Counties and Parishes need cost/benefit analyses too. Here are a few industries that may be affected by low flow:
 - * Mississippi’s annual \$891 million seafood industry supports 9,491 jobs. (MSU Extension, 2/13/2018)
 - * Hundreds of millions of dollars in restoration projects are underway or planned for coastal Mississippi and Louisiana, such as a NRDA \$50 million marsh, oyster and living shoreline project in Hancock County near the mouth of the Pearl River.
 - * Anticipated increased water treatment costs to nearly 100 downstream Pearl River businesses and municipalities that rely on the Pearl for adequate dilution of their discharges, such as International Paper and Georgia-Pacific.

What’s Next

- NO state or federal permits have been approved for this project. (Clarion Ledger, 3/6/2018). No Congressional Water Resources Development money has been awarded to this project.
- 12 downstream stakeholders have resolutions against 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.

Learn more and take action
www.onerivernolake.com