

APPENDIX M: COOPERATING AGENCY COORDINATION

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

April 12, 2004

Mr. Randal Looney
Federal Highway Administration
Arkansas Division Office
3128 Federal Office Building
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Mr. Looney:

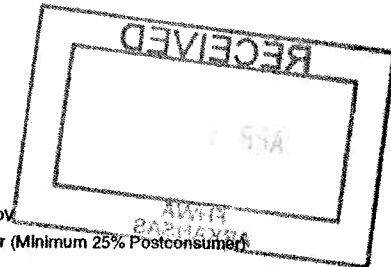
In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas, has completed its review of the Federal Highway Administration Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Conway Western Arterial Loop, Faulkner County, Arkansas.

The EPA rates your DEIS as "LO," i.e., EPA has "Lack of Objections" to the lead agency's proposed action to construct a western arterial loop on the south and west sides of Conway, Arkansas. The alternatives considered appear to have similar impacts on the environment and none appear to be significantly better than another. Our classification will be published in the Federal Register according to our responsibility under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, to inform the public of our views on proposed Federal actions.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS. We request that you send our office one copy of the Final EIS at the same time that it is sent to the Office of Federal Activities, (2251A), EPA, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20044.

Sincerely yours,

Michael P. Jansky, P.E.
Regional Environmental Review
Coordinator



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The Department of Arkansas Heritage

Mike Huckabee, Governor
Cathie Matthews, Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program

Historic Arkansas Museum

Delta Cultural Center

Old State House Museum



Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

1500 Tower Building

323 Center Street

Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9619

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e-mail: info@arkansasheritage.org

website:

<http://naturalheritage.com>

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Date: March 31, 2004
Subject: Conway Western Arterial Loop
Faulkner County, Arkansas
ANHC No.: P-CF..-04-012

Mr. Michael D. Lynch
Garver Engineers, LLC
1010 Battery Street
P.O. Box 50
Little Rock, AR 72203-0050

Dear Mr. Lynch:

Staff members of the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Conway Western Arterial Loop in Faulkner County, Arkansas. The study was initiated by the City of Conway and proposes the development of alternatives for an arterial route to be constructed in the vicinity of western Conway and the southwest corner of Faulkner County. Four alignments were developed for consideration in the study. The purpose of the project is to relieve congestion on the existing arterial routes through central Conway by providing two alternate routes connecting the western side of Conway with Interstate 40.

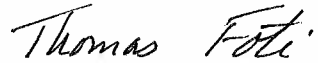
Our agency provided information on known locations of sensitive species within the study area to CH2M Hill in May of 2000. At that time our records indicated the possible occurrence of twelve species of state concern within the study area. A copy of our letter is included in the DEIS, as well as a map depicting approximate locations of sensitive species. The discussion in the DEIS related to state species only considers four plants. These appear to be plants known to occur in Faulkner County that our agency has given the administrative designation of "threatened." Although it is appropriate to consider these in the review process, the other state concern species reported for the project area should also have been evaluated. Of the species provided, we feel there is the potential for one of the plants, a twistflower (*Streptanthus maculatus* ssp. *obtusifolius*) to be present on hillsides along Gold Creek. This twistflower is endemic to Arkansas and Oklahoma. Since alternatives A, B, and D share the corridor along Gold Creek, this area should be evaluated if any of these alternatives are selected. If the species is found, measures should be taken to avoid and minimize adverse impacts.

One additional species of state concern has been recorded in the vicinity of the project area since our 2000 review. Bird-voiced treefrog (*Hyla avivoca*) has been reported from Flag Pond located south of Round Mountain in the Mayflower vicinity (T4N/R14W/S21). This species was reported from a "swampy floodplain surrounded by agricultural fields." This treefrog could

be present in similar areas along proposed Alternative C. Should this be the selected route efforts should be made to avoid and minimize impacts to this species.

The opportunity to comment is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Foti".

Thomas Foti
Chief of Research



ARKANSAS
Department of Environmental Quality

March 29, 2004

Michael D. Lynch, P.E.
Garver Engineers, LLC
P.O. Box 50
Little Rock, AR 72203-0050

RE: Conway Western Arterial Loop Draft EIS, Faulkner County, FHWA-AR-02-01-0

Dear Mr. Lynch:

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has reviewed the information submitted on the referenced highway project. The following agency Divisions have provided comments to us on the report:

Air The long term impact that the Conway Loop will have on local air quality will be the emissions from motor vehicles. The emissions are in direct proportion to vehicle miles traveled (VMT). All four of the alternate routes are 1 to 2 miles longer than the portion of I-40 that they circumvent. Vehicle emissions will increase approximately 15 to 20% for traffic traveling the loop. However, this increase should not significantly impact Conway's NAAQS 1-hour ozone standard attainment status.

Water The Water Division recommends that a route be selected with the minimum amount of impact to the environment. Once the route has been chosen, the City of Conway will need to apply for a NPDES General Storm Water Construction Permit. Contact Kim Fuller at 501-682-0621.

A review of the referenced information was also made by Environmental Preservation Division staff.

We have no additional comments on the project.

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Michael D. Lynch, P.E.
RE: Conway Western Arterial Loop Draft EIS
Page 2

If you have any questions, please contact Audree Miller at 501-682-0015.

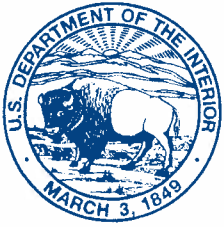
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sandi Formica", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Sandi Formica
Chief, Environmental Preservation Division

SF:MVE:AM:am

cc: Mary Leath, Chief Deputy Director
Martin Maner, Water Division
Dennis Green, Air Division



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

1500 Museum Road, Suite 105

Conway, Arkansas 72032

Tel.: 501/513-4470 Fax: 501/513-4480

IN REPLY REFER TO:

March 23, 2004

Mr. Michael Lynch, PE
Project Manager
Garver Engineers, LLC
P.O. Box 50
Little Rock, AR 72203-0050

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Conway Western Arterial Loop

Dear Mr. Lynch:

This responds to your letter dated February 12, 2004 soliciting our comments on the above referenced project. The primary concern of the Service at this time is the potential impacts to wetland areas which may not have been thoroughly inventoried during initial field surveys or which may be impacted by interchanges or service roads that were not included in initial plans for the Conway bypass. Field surveys by members of our staff identified potential jurisdictional wetlands within proposed alignments that were not identified in the draft EIS. However, after speaking with representatives from your company the Service feels confident that most wetland impacts can be avoided through further cooperative efforts once a more detailed alignment is chosen.

Alternatives A, B and D are much less likely to impact a large number of wetland areas and are therefore preferable to alternative C. Alternative C is a much longer alignment which has a greater potential to impact wetlands within the Lollie Bottoms area southwest of the city of Conway.

Thank you for allowing our agency the opportunity to provide comments and we look forward to future interaction on the proposed project. For future correspondence on this matter, please contact Mitch Wine of this office at (501) 513-4488.

Sincerely,

Margaret Harney
Acting Field Supervisor

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MAR 29 2004

GARVER ENGINEERS

cc:

Robert Leonard, AGFC

Randal Looney, FHWA

Cindy Osborne, ANHC

Wanda Boyd, EPA



FEMA

March 19, 2004

Garver Engineers, LLC
Mr. Michael Lynch P.E.
P.O. Box 50
Little Rock, AR 72203-0050

Re: Conway Western Arterial Loop – Faulkner County, FHWA-AR-02-01-0

Dear Mr. Lynch:

We have received your letters, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above-proposed project. The concerns of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are directed towards the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the possible negative impact upon identified flood hazard areas and wetlands within the outlined project boundaries. We suggest that when any new development or construction is being considered that you consult with the local Flood plain Administrator (FPA) for counties and communities that may be affected.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at (940) 898-5279.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Delamare".

Linda Delamare
Natural Hazards
Program Specialist

cc: Jason Donham, State NFIP Coordinator

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MAR 22 2004

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Arkansas Soil & Water Conservation Commission



J. Randy Young, PE
Executive Director

101 East Capitol, Suite 350
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
www.accessarkansas.org/aswcc

Phone: (501) 682-1611
Fax: (501) 682-3991
E-mail: aswcc@mail.state.ar.us

Mike Huckabee
Governor

March 16, 2004

Mr. Michael D. Lynch, P.E., Project Manager
Garver Engineers, LLC
P.O. Box 50
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

Re: Conway Western Arterial Loop, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Lynch:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EIS regarding the proposed Western Arterial Loop around Conway, Arkansas in Faulkner County. The City of Conway is proposing to construct a western arterial loop on the south and west sides of Conway. The arterial, referred to as the "Conway Western Arterial Loop", will connect to Interstate 40 on the northwest side of Conway and extend to the south through the west side of Conway. Finally, it will turn east across the south side of Conway and reconnect to Interstate 40 on the south side of Conway.

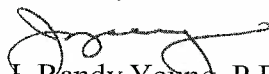
The proposed project would provide additional arterial route capacity within the vicinity of western Conway and the southwest corner of Faulkner County to meet current and future traffic needs. This would result in a reduction in traffic congestion and improvement in safety conditions in the area. Traffic diversion would also relieve traffic congestion at the existing interchanges to Interstate 40 in Conway.

My staff has reviewed the proposal, and based on a) project miles, b) new cuts through Cadron Ridge, c) cost, d) new interchanges to be constructed, e) floodplain impacts, f) forest conversion, and g) wetland impacts, it appears as if Alternative D has the least cumulative impacts. Therefore, I recommend Alternative D as the preferred alternative.

If you need further assistance, please contact Kenneth Colbert of my staff at 501-682-1608.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above referenced proposal.

Sincerely,


J. Randy Young, P.E.
Executive Director

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MAR 29 2004

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JRY/kc



Arkansas Department of Health

4815 West Markham Street • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205-3867 • Telephone (501) 661-2000

Fay W. Boozman, MD, MPH, Director

Mike Huckabee, Governor

February 19, 2004

Michael D. Lynch, PE
Garver Engineers, LLC
1010 Battery Street
P.O. Box 50
Little Rock, AR 72203-0050

RE: Conway Western Arterial Loop – Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Faulkner County
FHWA-AR-02-01-0
ADH Project # 04-46653

Dear Mr. Lynch:

We have reviewed the above referenced report and do not have any objections to the project. However, we do have the following comments:

- 1) Design of Alternative B and Alternative C should minimize adverse impacts to the existing drinking water treatment plant for the City of Conway.
- 2) Construction plans and specifications for any water & sewer improvement/replacement must be reviewed and approved by this office.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact this office at 501-661-2623.

Sincerely,

Lance A. Jones, P.E.
Engineer Supervisor
Division of Engineering

RHEA:my

cc. Conway Corporation
Faulkner County Sanitarian

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Arkansas GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

VARDELLE PARHAM GEOLOGY CENTER • 3815 WEST ROOSEVELT ROAD • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204

Mike Huckabee
Governor

Mac B. Woodward
Director and State Geologist

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February 18 2004

FEB 24 2004

GARVER ENGINEERS

Michael D. Lynch
Garver Engineers
P.O. Box 50
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

Dear Mr. Lynch:

This letter is a response to your request for comments about the proposed routes for the Conway Western Arterial Loop. The following comments pertain to the geology of what I will refer to the shorter eastern route and the longer western route.

Eastern Route

1. This route will have to cross the east to west Cadron Ridge north of Conway. This ridge is composed of sandstone of the Middle Atoka Formation.
2. The parts of the eastern route southwest and south of the city will have to cross sandstone ridges in Upper Atoka Formation. These hills are Donald Ridge, Sturgis Hill and some of the northern sections of Reynolds Mountain.
3. The rest of the route would be on the relative board flat valleys of shale in the Upper Atoka Formation,

Western Route

1. This route will have to cross the east to west Cadron Ridge north of Conway. This ridge is composed of sandstone of the Middle Atoka Formation.
2. The western side of this route crosses a long distance in the alluvial valley of the Arkansas River. The river sediments of clay and sand are 55-70 feet thick before reaching solid bedrock.

3. The southern portion of this route will encounter sandstone ridges along the south side of Reynolds Mountain. The sandstone is in the Upper Atoka Formation.

If you have any questions about these comments please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


William Lee Prior
Geologist Supervisor