

7.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW

An overview was conducted to determine the characteristics of the natural environment in the study area. Resources addressed in this section include: aquatic ecosystems (surface waters, wetlands, ponds, and 100-year floodplains) and terrestrial ecosystems (threatened and endangered species, floral communities, and faunal communities). Refer to Appendix D for more information and copies of agency correspondence.

7.1 Aquatic Ecosystems

Surface Water – The study area drains primarily into Cane Creek in the north, the Bayou de Chien in the south, and a small portion of Hurricane Branch in the west as shown in Figure 18 (Appendix B). All streams in the study area flow short distances into tributaries of the Mississippi River system (the Mississippi River is less than nine miles west of Clinton). Most blueline streams and tributaries in the study area flow north. However, at least five intermittent blueline streams flow laterally near downtown Clinton. Creeks and tributaries in the study area are unnamed with the exception of Cane Creek, which runs laterally along the northeast corner of the study area and Hurricane Branch, which runs laterally on the western edge of the study area.

Wetlands and Ponds – A total of 115 wetlands were indicated on National Wetland Inventory (NWI) mapping for the study area, however slightly more than half of these (60) are impounded or diked areas (i.e. farm ponds) and another 33 are the result of mining activities (see Figure 18 in Appendix B). Only 22 appear to be natural wetlands based on their type and may be considered jurisdictional by USACE. Most of these natural wetlands are located in the eastern and southern sections of the study area. The largest wetland in the study area is Bayou de Chien, located in the southeast quadrant of the study area. Bayou de Chien is a complex of 10 interlinked (natural) wetlands found in and adjacent to the study area covering over 600 acres. Eight other wetlands are significant in size ranging from one to seven acres. Four potential hydric soils areas are also found within the study area suggesting the presence of other wetlands.

Floodplains – Three 100-year floodplains cover 8.4 percent of the study area (728 acres), with the largest floodplain being the Bayou de Chien floodplain (see Figure 18 in Appendix B). The other two floodplains are from unnamed tributaries of Cane Creek, one covering 287 acres, the other covering 98 acres.

7.2 Terrestrial Ecosystems

Threatened and Endangered Species – Initial research indicated that a total of 11 threatened or endangered species may occur in or near the study area as listed in Table 20 (Appendix A). All of these species have been known to occur in the area.

Floral and Faunal Communities – No major issues or concerns were identified relative to plant or animal communities in the study area, other than the potential for 11 threatened or endangered species as discussed above.