

consultation. Written comments were received by this office from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in response to the pre-application meeting and documents provided by the applicant to these agencies.

This office issued an Aquatic Resource Delineation Concurrence letter on December 18, 2018 for the Loncala and Keystone tracts, and on January 24, 2020 for the Adirondack and TIAA tracts. The Loncala tract is 1,012-acres and contains 405.11 acres of wetland and 3,020 linear feet of tributary. The Keystone tract is 1,034-acres and contains 544 acres of wetland and 297 linear feet of tributary. The Adirondack tract is 551-acres and contains 149.6 acres of wetland and 11,840 linear feet of tributary. The TIAA tract is 1,143-acres and contains 662.2 acres of wetland.

The initial proposal for Phase I of the overall mine was submitted to Savannah District on July 5, 2019, and a joint public notice (JPN) was published on July 12, 2019. The JPN was extended on July 19, 2019 and closed on September 12, 2019. Over 22,000 comments from resource agencies, politicians, environmental groups, students, and members of the public were received. Copies of the comments were provided to the applicant and their consultant on October 7, 2019. The application was withdrawn on February 7, 2020. The current proposal was received on March 6, 2020. The proposed mining operation would be within the proposed project area for Phase I. However, as a result of discussions between the Corps and applicant, the scope of the proposed project has been reduced and the project purpose has been modified to utilize this project specifically as a demonstration project to validate groundwater models for the purpose of better understanding the effects of mining activities along Trail Ridge. The mine is still proposed to function as an economically viable stand-alone project that does not rely on future mining activities to be practicable to the applicant.

This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the Corps and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval.

STATE OF GEORGIA

Water Quality Certification: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division will review the proposed project for Water Quality Certification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Prior to issuance of a Department of the Army Permit for a project located in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia, review for Water Quality Certification is required. A reasonable period of time, which shall not exceed one year, is established under the Clean Water Act for the State to act on a request for Water Quality Certification, after which, issuance of such a Department of the Army Permit may proceed.

State-owned Property and Resources: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or other appropriate instrument.