Media Release

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Heath Hall, 601-842-2291 or
hhall@smgllc.com

NRCS Approves Major Madison County Flood Mitigation Project
Federal approval advances Bear Creek improvements into final design and implementation

The Madison County Board of today Supervisors announced a major milestone in the County's effort to reduce repetitive flooding following approval of the Upper Bear Creek Watershed Plan by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

NRCS has completed its Environmental Assessment and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact, clearing a major federal planning and environmental milestone and allowing the approved Canton-area improvements to advance into final engineering design, permitting, property coordination, and implementation.

*"This project is about protecting people," said **Supervisor Karl M. Banks**, whose district includes the project area. "It means fewer homes threatened by floodwater, safer roads during major storms, better access for emergency responders, protection for businesses and public infrastructure, and greater confidence for residents who have experienced repeated flooding."*

***Supervisor Paul Griffin**, stated "This is an important day for the families and businesses that have lived with flooding for far too long. "The Board made a commitment to address these flooding issues by developing and implementing a comprehensive, long-term solution rather than continuing to repair the same damage after every major storm. NRCS approval brings us a major step closer to putting those solutions on the ground."*

A Watershed-Scale Solution

The Bear Creek Watershed covers nearly 104,000 acres in central Madison County, extending generally from northern Madison, through Gluckstadt and Canton, and toward the Big Black River. The plan evaluates flooding as a connected watershed problem rather than a collection of isolated drainage issues.

The approved improvements focus on areas with severe and repetitive flooding in Canton, including Batchelor Creek, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive area, and South Canton near Dinkins Street. The plan combines approximately 2,274 feet of floodwall and 3,895 feet of earthen levee along Batchelor Creek; an upstream dry detention and flood-control structure; approximately 7,870 feet of flood-protection levee in South Canton; clearing along approximately 6,000 feet of Batchelor Creek; and a voluntary acquisition program for approximately 14 properties that would remain at significant flood risk.

The improvements are designed to slow and temporarily store stormwater upstream, improve the ability of the drainage system to move water, and provide physical protection between rising floodwaters and existing neighborhoods.

Protecting Residents and Strengthening the Watershed

According to the final NRCS Environmental Assessment, the approved improvements are expected to directly protect approximately 138 residences and 308 residents from the 100-year flood event and reduce average annual flood damage by approximately $1.6 million to $1.7 million, while also providing public-safety, economic, and environmental benefits.

While the most direct flood-reduction benefits are concentrated in Canton, the project operates within a connected watershed. The planned detention structure will temporarily store stormwater and release it more gradually, helping reduce peak flows and flood stages downstream and lessen erosion along creek banks, drainage channels, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. Upstream, additional storage can help slow and spread stormwater, reduce concentrated flows, improve system stability, and lessen erosion.

Because Bear Creek and its tributaries drain a large portion of central Madison County before ultimately reaching the Big Black River, these improvements can strengthen the performance and resilience of the broader watershed. Reducing repetitive flooding also helps keep roads open, improves emergency access, protects public infrastructure, supports businesses and employers, and reduces recurring public costs associated with flood damage and recovery.

Supporting Growth and Economic Development
Madison County's investment in drainage, stormwater management, and flood protection is also an investment in the County's economic competitiveness. Reliable infrastructure and reduced flood risk help protect existing economic activity and support continued residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

> *"Good infrastructure is fundamental to economic growth," stated* ***Gerald Steen, Madison County Board of Supervisors President.*** *"When companies consider investing in Madison County, they need confidence that the roads, utilities, drainage systems, and communities around them are resilient and dependable. Our work to improve stormwater management and reduce flooding is about protecting the people who are already here, but it is also about creating the conditions for new industry, new investment, and continued growth in Madison County."*

Rigorous Review, Strong Partnership
Madison County began pursuing the effort after adopting a comprehensive Watershed-Based Stormwater Management Plan and identifying Bear Creek as one of the County's areas of greatest flood risk. The NRCS planning process included hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, alternatives analysis, economic analysis, preliminary engineering, geotechnical investigations, wetlands analysis, cultural-resource coordination, public involvement, and state and federal review. NRCS selected the combined structural and nonstructural approach because it provides the greatest overall public benefit while balancing flood-risk reduction, cost-effectiveness, and environmental and social considerations.

> *"This approval validates years of careful work by the County and its partners," said* ***Nick Ivy, Executive Director of the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission****. "The goal has been to develop a project that provides meaningful flood protection while meeting the rigorous engineering, environmental, and economic requirements necessary for federal assistance. We now have an approved path forward."*

Madison County serves as the local sponsor. NRCS provides federal technical oversight and assistance; the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission serves as the state contracting and administrative partner; and Waggoner Engineering serves as the technical engineering consultant, having led preparation of the watershed plan and Environmental Assessment, flood modeling, alternatives analysis, preliminary engineering, and coordination through the federal review process.

Moving Toward Construction
The project team will now advance final engineering of the levees, floodwall, and detention structure. Final design is anticipated to take approximately eight to twelve months, with an approximate two-year construction timeframe.

> *"This announcement represents a transition from planning to implementation,"* ***Supervisor Banks*** *added. "There are still important engineering and coordination ahead of us, but we are moving forward. We intend to see this project through to make for a stronger, more resilient Madison County."*

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