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40 CFR Ch. I (7–1–13 Edition)

(2) The amount of the required financial assurances must be determined by the district engineer, in consultation with the project sponsor, and must be based on the size and complexity of the compensatory mitigation project, the degree of completion of the project at the time of project approval, the likelihood of success, the past performance of the project sponsor, and any other factors the district engineer deems appropriate. Financial assurances may be in the form of performance bonds, escrow accounts, casualty insurance, letters of credit, legislative appropriations for government sponsored projects, or other appropriate instruments, subject to the approval of the district engineer. The rationale for determining the amount of the required financial assurances must be documented in the administrative record for either the DA permit or the instrument. In determining the assurance amount, the district engineer shall consider the cost of providing replacement mitigation, including costs for land acquisition, planning and engineering, legal fees, mobilization, construction, and monitoring.

(3) If financial assurances are required, the DA permit must include a special condition requiring the financial assurances to be in place prior to commencing the permitted activity.

(4) Financial assurances shall be phased out once the compensatory mitigation project has been determined by the district engineer to be successful in accordance with its performance standards. The DA permit or instrument must clearly specify the conditions under which the financial assurances are to be released to the permittee, sponsor, and/or other financial assurance provider, including, as appropriate, linkage to achievement of performance standards, adaptive management, or compliance with special conditions.

(5) A financial assurance must be in a form that ensures that the district engineer will receive notification at least 120 days in advance of any termination or revocation. For third-party assurance providers, this may take the form of a contractual requirement for the assurance provider to notify the district engineer at least 120 days before

the assurance is revoked or terminated.

(6) Financial assurances shall be payable at the direction of the district engineer to his designee or to a standby trust agreement. When a standby trust is used (e.g., with performance bonds or letters of credit) all amounts paid by the financial assurance provider shall be deposited directly into the standby trust fund for distribution by the trustee in accordance with the district engineer's instructions.

(o) *Compliance with applicable law.* The compensatory mitigation project must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. The DA permit, mitigation banking instrument, or in-lieu fee program instrument must not require participation by the Corps or any other federal agency in project management, including receipt or management of financial assurances or long-term financing mechanisms, except as determined by the Corps or other agency to be consistent with its statutory authority, mission, and priorities.

§ 230.94 Planning and documentation.

(a) *Pre-application consultations.* Potential applicants for standard permits are encouraged to participate in pre-application meetings with the Corps and appropriate agencies to discuss potential mitigation requirements and information needs.

(b) *Public review and comment.* (1) For an activity that requires a standard DA permit pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the public notice for the proposed activity must contain a statement explaining how impacts associated with the proposed activity are to be avoided, minimized, and compensated for. This explanation shall address, to the extent that such information is provided in the mitigation statement required by 33 CFR 325.1(d)(7), the proposed avoidance and minimization and the amount, type, and location of any proposed compensatory mitigation, including any out-of-kind compensation, or indicate an intention to use an approved mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program. The level of detail provided in the public notice must be commensurate with the

scope and scale of the impacts. The notice shall not include information that the district engineer and the permittee believe should be kept confidential for business purposes, such as the exact location of a proposed mitigation site that has not yet been secured. The permittee must clearly identify any information being claimed as confidential in the mitigation statement when submitted. In such cases, the notice must still provide enough information to enable the public to provide meaningful comment on the proposed mitigation.

(2) For individual permits, district engineers must consider any timely comments and recommendations from other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; and the public.

(3) For activities authorized by letters of permission or general permits, the review and approval process for compensatory mitigation proposals and plans must be conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions of those permits and applicable regulations including the applicable provisions of this part.

(c) *Mitigation plan.* (1) *Preparation and Approval.* (i) For individual permits, the permittee must prepare a draft mitigation plan and submit it to the district engineer for review. After addressing any comments provided by the district engineer, the permittee must prepare a final mitigation plan, which must be approved by the district engineer prior to issuing the individual permit. The approved final mitigation plan must be incorporated into the individual permit by reference. The final mitigation plan must include the items described in paragraphs (c)(2) through (c)(14) of this section, but the level of detail of the mitigation plan should be commensurate with the scale and scope of the impacts. As an alternative, the district engineer may determine that it would be more appropriate to address any of the items described in paragraphs (c)(2) through (c)(14) of this section as permit conditions, instead of components of a compensatory mitigation plan. For permittees who intend to fulfill their compensatory mitigation obligations by securing credits from approved mitigation banks or in-lieu fee programs, their mitigation plans need include only the items de-

scribed in paragraphs (c)(5) and (c)(6) of this section, and the name of the specific mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program to be used.

(ii) For general permits, if compensatory mitigation is required, the district engineer may approve a conceptual or detailed compensatory mitigation plan to meet required time frames for general permit verifications, but a final mitigation plan incorporating the elements in paragraphs (c)(2) through (c)(14) of this section, at a level of detail commensurate with the scale and scope of the impacts, must be approved by the district engineer before the permittee commences work in waters of the United States. As an alternative, the district engineer may determine that it would be more appropriate to address any of the items described in paragraphs (c)(2) through (c)(14) of this section as permit conditions, instead of components of a compensatory mitigation plan. For permittees who intend to fulfill their compensatory mitigation obligations by securing credits from approved mitigation banks or in-lieu fee programs, their mitigation plans need include only the items described in paragraphs (c)(5) and (c)(6) of this section, and either the name of the specific mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program to be used or a statement indicating that a mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program will be used (contingent upon approval by the district engineer).

(iii) Mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs must prepare a mitigation plan including the items in paragraphs (c)(2) through (c)(14) of this section for each separate compensatory mitigation project site. For mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs, the preparation and approval process for mitigation plans is described in § 230.98.

(2) *Objectives.* A description of the resource type(s) and amount(s) that will be provided, the method of compensation (i.e., restoration, establishment, enhancement, and/or preservation), and the manner in which the resource functions of the compensatory mitigation project will address the needs of the watershed, ecoregion, physiographic province, or other geographic area of interest.

(3) *Site selection.* A description of the factors considered during the site selection process. This should include consideration of watershed needs, on-site alternatives where applicable, and the practicability of accomplishing ecologically self-sustaining aquatic resource restoration, establishment, enhancement, and/or preservation at the compensatory mitigation project site. (See § 230.93(d).)

(4) *Site protection instrument.* A description of the legal arrangements and instrument, including site ownership, that will be used to ensure the long-term protection of the compensatory mitigation project site (see § 230.97(a)).

(5) *Baseline information.* A description of the ecological characteristics of the proposed compensatory mitigation project site and, in the case of an application for a DA permit, the impact site. This may include descriptions of historic and existing plant communities, historic and existing hydrology, soil conditions, a map showing the locations of the impact and mitigation site(s) or the geographic coordinates for those site(s), and other site characteristics appropriate to the type of resource proposed as compensation. The baseline information should also include a delineation of waters of the United States on the proposed compensatory mitigation project site. A prospective permittee planning to secure credits from an approved mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program only needs to provide baseline information about the impact site, not the mitigation bank or in-lieu fee project site.

(6) *Determination of credits.* A description of the number of credits to be provided, including a brief explanation of the rationale for this determination. (See § 230.93(f).)

(i) For permittee-responsible mitigation, this should include an explanation of how the compensatory mitigation project will provide the required compensation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources resulting from the permitted activity.

(ii) For permittees intending to secure credits from an approved mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program, it should include the number and resource type of credits to be secured and how these were determined.

(7) *Mitigation work plan.* Detailed written specifications and work descriptions for the compensatory mitigation project, including, but not limited to, the geographic boundaries of the project; construction methods, timing, and sequence; source(s) of water, including connections to existing waters and uplands; methods for establishing the desired plant community; plans to control invasive plant species; the proposed grading plan, including elevations and slopes of the substrate; soil management; and erosion control measures. For stream compensatory mitigation projects, the mitigation work plan may also include other relevant information, such as planform geometry, channel form (e.g., typical channel cross-sections), watershed size, design discharge, and riparian area plantings.

(8) *Maintenance plan.* A description and schedule of maintenance requirements to ensure the continued viability of the resource once initial construction is completed.

(9) *Performance standards.* Ecologically-based standards that will be used to determine whether the compensatory mitigation project is achieving its objectives. (See § 230.95.)

(10) *Monitoring requirements.* A description of parameters to be monitored in order to determine if the compensatory mitigation project is on track to meet performance standards and if adaptive management is needed. A schedule for monitoring and reporting on monitoring results to the district engineer must be included. (See § 230.96.)

(11) *Long-term management plan.* A description of how the compensatory mitigation project will be managed after performance standards have been achieved to ensure the long-term sustainability of the resource, including long-term financing mechanisms and the party responsible for long-term management. (See § 230.97(d).)

(12) *Adaptive management plan.* A management strategy to address unforeseen changes in site conditions or other components of the compensatory mitigation project, including the party or parties responsible for implementing adaptive management measures. The adaptive management plan will guide

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decisions for revising compensatory mitigation plans and implementing measures to address both foreseeable and unforeseen circumstances that adversely affect compensatory mitigation success. (See § 230.97(c).)

(13) *Financial assurances.* A description of financial assurances that will be provided and how they are sufficient to ensure a high level of confidence that the compensatory mitigation project will be successfully completed, in accordance with its performance standards (see § 230.93(n)).

(14) *Other information.* The district engineer may require additional information as necessary to determine the appropriateness, feasibility, and practicability of the compensatory mitigation project.

§ 230.95 Ecological performance standards.

(a) The approved mitigation plan must contain performance standards that will be used to assess whether the project is achieving its objectives. Performance standards should relate to the objectives of the compensatory mitigation project, so that the project can be objectively evaluated to determine if it is developing into the desired resource type, providing the expected functions, and attaining any other applicable metrics (e.g., acres).

(b) Performance standards must be based on attributes that are objective and verifiable. Ecological performance standards must be based on the best available science that can be measured or assessed in a practicable manner. Performance standards may be based on variables or measures of functional capacity described in functional assessment methodologies, measurements of hydrology or other aquatic resource characteristics, and/or comparisons to reference aquatic resources of similar type and landscape position. The use of reference aquatic resources to establish performance standards will help ensure that those performance standards are reasonably achievable, by reflecting the range of variability exhibited by the regional class of aquatic resources as a result of natural processes and anthropogenic disturbances. Performance standards based on measurements of hydrology should take into

consideration the hydrologic variability exhibited by reference aquatic resources, especially wetlands. Where practicable, performance standards should take into account the expected stages of the aquatic resource development process, in order to allow early identification of potential problems and appropriate adaptive management.

§ 230.96 Monitoring.

(a) *General.* (1) Monitoring the compensatory mitigation project site is necessary to determine if the project is meeting its performance standards, and to determine if measures are necessary to ensure that the compensatory mitigation project is accomplishing its objectives. The submission of monitoring reports to assess the development and condition of the compensatory mitigation project is required, but the content and level of detail for those monitoring reports must be commensurate with the scale and scope of the compensatory mitigation project, as well as the compensatory mitigation project type. The mitigation plan must address the monitoring requirements for the compensatory mitigation project, including the parameters to be monitored, the length of the monitoring period, the party responsible for conducting the monitoring, the frequency for submitting monitoring reports to the district engineer, and the party responsible for submitting those monitoring reports to the district engineer.

(2) The district engineer may conduct site inspections on a regular basis (e.g., annually) during the monitoring period to evaluate mitigation site performance.

(b) *Monitoring period.* The mitigation plan must provide for a monitoring period that is sufficient to demonstrate that the compensatory mitigation project has met performance standards, but not less than five years. A longer monitoring period must be required for aquatic resources with slow development rates (e.g., forested wetlands, bogs). Following project implementation, the district engineer may reduce or waive the remaining monitoring requirements upon a determination that the compensatory mitigation project has achieved its performance standards. Conversely the district engineer