



CRANSTON

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May 28, 2025

Mr. Wes Byne
Augusta Utilities Department
452 Walker Street Department
Augusta, Georgia 30901

RE: New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam
Proposal for Completing the USGS
Gaging Station Datums Surveys and
Establishing an "Institutional Memory"
of the Lock and Dam Preservation
Process and Findings for Post-WRDA
2024 Purposes.
Cranston File No. 2019-0543(Q)

Dear Mr. Byne:

This letter is a follow-up from the undersigned's meeting with you and Chad Hendrix on April 8, 2025, in which we reviewed a variety of topics related to the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam and how to wrap up and memorialize several important related subjects.

Accordingly, we are pleased to offer the following proposal for completing the USGS Gaging Station Datums Surveys to finalize the documentation of the elevation results and to provide services to preserve the vast amounts of background information, technical analyses, and expert opinions that have been developed throughout the last decade-long timeframe of controversy surrounding the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam and its future under the purview of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

BACKGROUND

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has conducted several studies for the future or the replacement of the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam and the pool that it impounds, which have extended for a long period of time – at least since the turn of this century. These actions have led to controversies among residents of the

Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). More recently in the past ten years or so, the planning process employed by the USACE produced a so-called “rock weir” design that evoked widespread objections – even anger – within the cities of Augusta and North Augusta, and the surrounding communities, including leaders, stakeholders, and citizens of both public and private sector interests, along with the States of South Carolina and Georgia. These matters came to a head when a lawsuit against the United States was filed by South Carolina and joined by Augusta about five years ago, with associated protracted efforts at record research, maneuvering, mediation, and motions on both sides, ultimately leading to no solution.

In the fall of 2024, the United States Congress passed the *Water Resources Act of 2024*, which President Biden signed in December 2024. That act set out new criteria directing the repair of the Lock and Dam and the maintenance of its historical pool as directions for the USACE to follow.

As a result, the lawsuit has been dismissed, but the USACE’s specific design details and the long process that they will likely employ to prepare plans for the repair project are yet to come and are unknown. Moreover, the federal funding appropriation by Congress for rehabilitating the structure is still in question.

Therefore, it seems prudent to assemble the vast amounts of background information, technical analyses, and expert opinions that have been uncovered in the past ten years or so, to organize the documentation, and preserve it for those city leaders and citizens who may yet have to fight another day for the Lock and Dam, which is critically essential to the river and the region.

Cranston LLC proposes to facilitate such an assemblage of documents and work products. The work will begin with completing the U. S. Geological Survey gaging stations datum surveys, with final measurements of the reference points at the principal gaging stations and with an updated final written report; and assembling and preserving the Cranston firm’s records. Optional tasks may extend to assembling and memorializing the findings of the City’s other subject matter experts, outside of Cranston; and facilitating planning for possible future follow-up actions by the City. These steps are more specifically described in the following paragraphs.

SCOPE OF WORK

We propose to accomplish services to complete the City’s institutional record of technical documents, forensic processes, reports, public input to the Corps of Engineers’ review processes, community activities records, and other documents related to the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam and its past and possible future alterations. These services will begin with the final completion of precisely measuring the water level datums used by agencies to record the Savannah River stages at various locations near Augusta. More specifically, the scope of work will be comprised of the following main aspects:

TASK A: USGS GAGE SURVEYS AND REPORTING

Providing complementary work to expand and amend the detailed report titled, *Benchmarks on the Savannah*, that was recently submitted, including the following tasks:

1. *Placing and documenting a new monument on the site of Dominion Energy's Stevens Creek Dam* to replace the one precise benchmark that was found to have been destroyed by previous construction activities; coordinating with Dominion Energy as to the most convenient and safe location; and preparing detailed monument description, location sketches, and photographs.
2. *Coordinating with United States Geological Survey (USGS) on the four Principal Gaging Stations* to survey the actual elevations of official reference points at each, including gaining access to the station enclosures with assistance from USGS. (This effort was beyond the scope of the previous surveying project, because the physical points of reference were unknown and inaccessible at this time, and there was ongoing litigation directly related to the subject. It is assumed that the city personnel will assist in coordinating the participation of USGS staff members to facilitate this process.) These new surveys will include both the relocated Fifth Street gage and the remnant staff gage at Fifth Street Bridge if USGS has a reference there. More specifically, the work will include surveys of direct levels to the individual points, fixtures, or physical places where the elevation points are officially referenced at each gaging station. Then, the elevations of the four principal USGS gaging stations' reference points and the elevation of the "zero" of each gage will result. Then, comparisons can be made between the measured elevations and the published "zero" values to determine whether the stations are all related to the same datum or that variances may exist and by what amounts of differences, if any.
3. *Amending and re-issuing the Benchmarks on the Savannah report* to add the new surveys, benchmark records and photographs, updated maps, methodology, the actual USGS gage reference elevations, discussions of discrepancies (if any), and other editorial changes as needed. Furnishing a new GIS layer for the updated map suitable for addition to the Augusta GIS record.

TASK B: PRESERVING THE NEW SAVANNAH BLUFF LOCK AND DAM FORENSIC ENGINEERING RECORDS

Preserving and establishing an "institutional memory" of the technical details of the Lock and Dam and procedural aspects surrounding the facility and its background to the 1930s, with a concentration on the time frame of 2015 through 2025.

1. *Compiling the Cranston firm's records for the period 2015—2025* and preserving them for future reference. These materials fall into three principal types or groups: Technical and Forensic Assistance to the City of Augusta in

support of Litigation; Mediation documents {Confidential}; and Community activities records of private sector efforts to save and restore the Lock and Dam that were in addition to the measures undertaken by the public sector entities and the City. The materials are subdivided first into subject matter folders and second, chronologically within those folders.

a. Electronic. Assembling and furnishing electronic files as follows:

- i. Cranston file 2015-0209: 58 folders containing 2,955 files. 36.0 GB.
- ii. Cranston file 2019-0543: 282 folders containing 9,656 files. 66.4 GB
 1. Scanning of approximately two file drawers of documents. See 1.b.iii. below. Estimated total 25 GB.
- iii. Furnishing all electronic folders and files on a One (1) Terabyte external hard drive.

b. Physical. Assembling and furnishing physical files as follows:

- i. Cranston file 2015-0209. 2 ½ file cabinet drawers of folders.
 - ii. Cranston file 2019-0543.
 1. Two (2) file cabinet drawers of folders, organized by subject matter and chronology.
 2. Two (2) more file cabinet drawers (approximately).
Organizing materials that still need to be cataloged further into folders by subject matter and chronology.
 3. Two (2) drawing flat file drawers, including the (rare) original plans of NSBL&D {produced by USACE during Mediation}.
 - iii. Furnishing and delivering original physical files in “bankers boxes” either for the City archives; or for placing the materials in the boxed system to be retained in the Cranston archives warehouse.
2. *Memorializing Major Findings of Other New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam Subject Matter Expert Panel Members (other than Cranston).* Preserving major “lessons learned” by the City’s panel of subject matter experts (including in-house and outside consultants beyond the Cranston firm).

- a. Convening an in-person de-brief session of up to two days to assemble the major recommendations of each expert. (Arranging one supplemental on-line meeting, if and as needed.)
 - i. Recording each proceeding and preparing a transcript of each session. (These services are to be provided by in-house City personnel).
 - ii. Summarizing the principal findings of each subject matter expert.
- b. Memorializing the results in a joint summary memorandum.
- c. Assembling the Subject Matter Expert Panel Results and adding them to the Cranston files in electronic format only.

TASK C: PLANNING FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2024 (POST WRDA 2024)

1. *State Overall Goals* for Augusta and the Lock and Dam.
2. *Identify Critical Issues.* i.e., technical, engineering, biological, funding, scheduling, goals of various interests, etc. (Especially to include Known Technical Issues listed in Item 4 below.)
3. *Determine Processes* of U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Georgia Ports Authority (GPA), and South Carolina's processes to implement WRDA 2024.
4. *Consider Action on Known Technical Issues.* Consider furnishing documentation of known technical issues to USACE for their use in the new designs. Subject could include, but would not be limited to the following:
 - a. Extensive Undermining of Lock Wall. Evidence: USACE bathymetric mapping, showing deep upstream hole; and John Nestler's "oranges test." (Learned as part of Mediation).
 - b. Discrepancy on Elevation of "Zero" of 5th Street Gage, which may affect extent of "flowage easements" obtained by USACE for the original project. (Documented in *Benchmarks on the Savannah* report).
 - c. Request that the USGS stage vs. discharge rating curve for both the old and the relocated 5th Street Gage be revised or eliminated, to reflect the spurious nature of flows being reported on-line now and in the past; and that updated detailed information be published for the Relocated gage. (This problem has erroneously affected or influenced all or virtually all previous hydraulic modeling of the Savannah River water surface profiles and should

- be, and can readily be, avoided in the future.)
- d. Assistance with Notification of USACE about these subjects, as well as South Carolina, North Augusta, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.
 - e. What else needs to be included?
5. *Formulate Other Alternatives for Action.* How can Augusta/North Augusta influence the process to avoid a repeat of the past ten (10) years?
- a. Designate a Peer Technical Advisory Panel (perhaps under the Consortium)? Will the USACE officially accept such a group?
 - b. Lobbying/querying the USACE project design team?
 - c. Lobbying/querying the USFWS and NMFS about the contents of the biological opinion, or a new one.
 - d. Monitor other stakeholder activities, such as Savannah Riverkeeper, private land owners, etc.
 - e. Request that the Corps' required IEPR review occur earlier in the design process, not at the very end or in addition to that timing.
 - f. Keep the federal judge in the SC/Augusta case informed periodically, as needed and as appropriate, under his retained jurisdiction role.
 - g. Get Involved in the appropriations/funding processes. How?
 - h. Political action?
 - i. Request immediate transfer of the 50-acre park to Augusta.
 - j. Other Actions. What are they?
6. *Summarize Draft Plan for Actions* for review by key stakeholders (identities yet to be determined).
7. *Prepare Final Plan and Distribute to Key Stakeholders*

FEE PROPOSAL

We propose to accomplish Tasks A-1, A-2, A-3, and B-1 at the lump sum fees indicated below, totaling \$36,280.00.

Tasks B-2 and C may be considered optional scope items, which we propose to accomplish on a time and material basis if you should so desire, and with a level of detail that accords with your specific directions. Estimated allowances for the optional services are also provided below, totaling \$25,420.00:

TASK	DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED FEE
A	USGS Gage Surveys and Reporting	
	1. Placing and documenting a new monument on the site of Dominion Energy's Stevens Creek Dam (Lump Sum)	\$ 5,200
	2. Coordinating with United States Geological Survey (USGS) on the four Principal Gaging Stations (Lump Sum)	\$ 5,100
	3. Amending and reissuing the Benchmarks on the Savannah Report (Lump Sum)	\$ 19,620
B	Preserving the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam Forensic Engineering Records	
	1. Compiling the Cranston firm's records for the period of 2015-2025 (Lump Sum)	\$ 6,360
	2. Memorializing Major Findings of Other New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam Subject Matter Expert Panel members (other than Cranston) Time and Material basis (estimated allowance)	\$ 11,320
C	Planning for Follow-up Actions to Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (Post WRDA 2024)	\$ 14,100
Total Basic Services		\$ 61,700

Payment will be expected within thirty (30) days of the completion of each item and the submittal of our invoice.

TIME OF COMPLETION

We propose to begin work immediately upon your direction and to complete the Tasks A-1, A-2, A-3, and B-1 within seventy five (75) days thereafter. Following the completions of these tasks, we propose to complete the other optional items, Tasks B-2 and C, according to a schedule to be set by you in coordination with your other consultants. We believe that a sixty (60) to ninety (90) day window should be sufficient.

Mr. Wes Byne
May 28, 2025
Page **8** of **8**

Your authorized signature in the space provided on a copy of this letter returned to us, or your approved purchase order, will be our authority to proceed.

We appreciate the opportunity of making this proposal and trust that you find it satisfactory. Should you have any question concerning the scope of the services offered, or the fees, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Sincerely,
CRANSTON LLC


Thomas H. Robertson, PE, RLS

ACCEPTED:

Augusta, Georgia
Utilities Department

BY: _____

TITLE: _____

DATE: _____