

WASHINGTON (February 5) - Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) announced that the City of Tarrant will receive \$5.7 million in funding for a major flood control project that will also provide environmental benefits for neighboring communities along Five Mile Creek in eastern Jefferson County.

The project will allow Tarrant to build retention ponds to control serious flooding that has repeatedly affected residents and damaged businesses in the community. Nearby communities including Fultondale, Graysville, Brookside, and Gardendale will see benefits from enhanced habitat and watershed protection.

The flood mitigation grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be released in two stages. The study and planning phase will receive federal funding in the amount of \$434,000 and the development phase will receive \$5.25 million in federal funding.

Congressman Bachus said, "This vital project is needed to solve chronic flooding problems that have caused hardship and even tragedy in the City of Tarrant. Its importance to the safety of citizens and the future economic development of the community cannot be overstated, and Mayor Tuck, Chief Hewitt, and local leaders deserve to be commended for their vision and persistence. In addition, the environmental benefits will be felt all along Five Mile Creek through habitat protection and the potential that the Five Mile Creek Greenway project holds to enhance recreational opportunities for families and the quality of life in Jefferson County."

Mayor Loxcil Tuck said, "This may be the biggest and most significant project ever for the City of Tarrant. It has been a long time coming, but we will finally be able to address the problem of repetitive flooding for our citizens and businesses. We couldn't be more thrilled about it. Congressman Bachus has been a strong advocate for the city and we thank him for all his support."

Fire Chief Billy Hewitt said, "We have had a great deal of damage to property and at least one life lost due to repetitive flooding along Five Mile Creek. This project will protect against future flooding and protect our economic base in the industrial areas along the creek. All the communities downstream will benefit in a number of ways. Of all the projects I have had the privilege to work on during my time in Tarrant, this is the most substantial."

Wendy Jackson of the Freshwater Land Trust said, "The Freshwater Land Trust is utilizing property it has acquired and is very excited about this project. Some of the property has been acquired under the Jefferson County Greenways program. There are so many benefits to this project. It is about saving lives. It will have a large economic impact on the City of Tarrant and protect the various industries and businesses along Five Mile Creek. It will also be hugely beneficial to the watershed because it will protect habitat and control floodwaters that could discharge pollutants downstream. But it is mainly about the people and protecting lives."

The City of Tarrant applied for funding from the FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Flood Program in February 2008, and has worked cooperatively with FEMA and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency on the proposal. Bachus has had a lengthy involvement of working with Tarrant and neighboring communities on Five Mile Creek improvement projects.