



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Regional Planning and
Environment Division South
Environmental Compliance Branch

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 60267
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160-0267

April 14, 2014

**CLEAN WATER ACT, SECTION 404
PUBLIC NOTICE**

DRAFT TIERED INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

**PREPARED TO COMPLEMENT:
PROGRAMMATIC INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 36**

**MILTON ISLAND MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT
SAINT TAMMANY PARISH, LOUISIANA**

PIER 36, TIER 1, MILTON ISLAND

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, New Orleans District, is evaluating the potential impacts associated with the proposed restoration of intermediate marsh at Milton Island. The marsh restoration project is located near Madisonville, Louisiana on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, west of the Causeway Bridge in Saint Tammany Parish as shown in the attached figure. The proposed intermediate marsh restoration has been designed to partially compensate for unavoidable fresh and intermediate marsh impacts resulting from the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity component of the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS).

PROJECT AUTHORITY: The authority for the HSDRRS and its associated compensatory mitigation was provided as part of a number of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction supplemental appropriations. These authorizations and appropriations included funding for modifications and improvements to several existing USACE projects in southeastern Louisiana, including the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project, which is located on the east bank of the Mississippi River in Saint Charles, Jefferson, Orleans, and Saint Bernard Parishes.

The Department of Defense, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations to Address Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, and Pandemic Influenza Act of 2006 (3rd Supplemental - P.L. 109-148, Chapter 3, Construction, and Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies) authorized accelerated completion of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project and restoration of project features to design elevations at 100 percent Federal cost. The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery of 2006 (4th Supplemental - P.L. 109-234, Title II, Chapter 3, Construction, and Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies)

authorizes construction of authorized a 100-year level of protection; the replacement or reinforcement of floodwalls; and the construction of levee armoring at critical locations.

PROJECT PURPOSE: The purpose of the proposed action is to compensate for habitat losses to non-refuge, fresh and intermediate marsh incurred during construction of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity component of the HSDRRS. The proposed mitigation would replace the lost functions and services of the impacted habitat through restoration activities designed to create, increase, and improve the habitat functions or services at the specific mitigation site.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION: The proposed action (Milton Island Marsh Restoration project) is to restore an intermediate marsh designed to partially compensate for unavoidable fresh and intermediate marsh impacts resulting from the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity component of the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). The HSDRRS provides hurricane storm surge risk reduction to heavily populated areas of Greater New Orleans. This would involve the restoration of an intermediate marsh located in a shallow lake immediately adjacent to Lake Pontchartrain that was historically separated from Lake Pontchartrain. The shallow lake recently became connected to Lake Pontchartrain when the land separating the two water bodies breached. The approximate 1,000-foot wide breach would be closed by construction of a berm protected by an earthen-filled bag system which would accommodate planting of shoreline vegetation. The proposed intermediate marsh restoration area north of the breach would encompass 152 acres, not including the 115-acre borrow source for fill material in Lake Pontchartrain. Within the 152-acre project area, 7 acres are existing dikes partially surrounding the perimeter and 2 acres where the southern shoreline protection feature is proposed. The remaining 143 acres are currently shallow open water that would be filled with dredged material to develop into marsh. Up to approximately 15 acres of interior borrow ditches would be excavated to provide material to build and improve dikes to contain the dredged material. Only about 4.5 acres of the 15 acres of borrow ditches are expected to become marsh, leaving about 10.5 acres un-vegetated. Therefore, the calculated amount of marsh that would be developed is 132.5 acres.

A hydraulic cutterhead dredge would be used to remove approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of dredged material to the proposed marsh creation site. A primary borrow site of 60 acres should accommodate this requirement. However, to assure adequate borrow material is available, a 55-acre secondary borrow pit adjacent to the primary area is proposed. Borrow excavation would not be allowed greater than 10 feet below the existing lake bottom, which currently ranges from 9 to 10 feet in depth, except that a tolerance of 1-foot below target elevation would be allowed to account for inaccuracies in the dredging process. A pipeline corridor has been designated from the borrow area to the shoreline, with no allowances for excavation. The dredge pipeline would be floated and/or submerged within this corridor. A second access corridor with allowable flotation excavation would be used to offload and on-load equipment as necessary, and transport personnel to and from the worksite.

The initial elevation for dredge fill would be to approximate elevation +2.25 feet NAVD88, to ultimately result in a target marsh elevation of between +1.5 and +1.0 feet NAVD88. Total perimeter retention would be required to retain dredged material and to allow for vertical accretion. Existing retention features (old dikes) exist along the east, west, and south perimeters

of the project footprint, except for the 1,000 foot reach described above. Rehabilitation of these existing dikes would be accomplished as necessary to retain the dredge material slurry. Approximately 5,600 linear feet of new retention dike would be required along the northern limit of the project footprint. The dike would be built with borrow material obtained within the marsh creation footprint to an elevation +4.5 feet NAVD88 and with a 5-foot crown width. Spill boxes and/or weirs would be constructed at locations along the northern and western retention dikes as necessary to allow for effluent water release from within the marsh creation area for approximately one year after construction, when the perimeter dikes are breached and degraded. The dike along the north side of the marsh creation area would be degraded approximately one year after project construction, upon settlement and dewatering of the created marsh platform. The existing western dike would be gapped approximately one year after project construction to allow interaction with the existing marsh and scrub/shrub wetlands to the west of the project area. The gaps would be spaced with care being taken to locate gaps at existing natural bayous, canals, or other openings. Two to three gaps would be placed in the eastern dike to allow water exchange with the existing canal located to the east of the project area. The southern dike would remain to provide protection from Lake Pontchartrain waves and water intrusion. The marsh footprint would be planted upon satisfactory settlement and dewatering of the dredged material, approximately 1 year after initial construction. A detailed monitoring and adaptive management plan has been developed to insure project success.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT DOCUMENTATION: The draft TIER has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations (40 CFR §1500-1508), as reflected in the USACE Engineering Regulation (ER) 200-2-2, Procedures for Implementing NEPA. These regulations allow Federal agencies, in consultation with the Council on Environmental Quality, to implement alternative arrangements for complying with NEPA in lieu of a traditional Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The CEMVN implemented alternative arrangements on March 13, 2007, under the provisions of the applicable regulations. This process was implemented in order to expeditiously complete the environmental analyses for the HSDRRS. The alternative arrangements can be found at www.nolaenvironmental.gov.

The general impacts of the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action were analyzed and disclosed in Programmatic Individual Environmental Report # 36 which can be found at www.nolaenvironmental.gov. The draft TIER analyzed the specific impacts resulting from the action described above.

STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: The proposed action would impact Waters of the U.S. thus requiring a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Louisiana Department of Environmental. An application has been prepared for submission to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. The proposed action would not be initiated until coordination has been completed.

SECTION 404(b)(1) GUIDELINES: The above project is being reviewed through preparation of a Section 404 (b)(1) evaluation. The evaluation includes application of the Section 404(b)(1)

guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through 40 CFR 230 in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army.

COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION: The proposed action is located within the Louisiana Coastal Zone, and has been determined to be consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the State of Louisiana's Coastal Resources Program. Our determination has been forwarded to LADNR for their concurrence. The proposed action would not be initiated until all coordination has been completed.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are currently reviewing the New Orleans District's determination that the proposed action would have no effect to any threatened or endangered species or critical habitat.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES: Consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and federally recognized Tribes is on-going. Investigations to identify historic and cultural resources in the vicinity of the proposed action have been completed and a draft report is expected by April 11, 2014. The results of the investigations will be coordinated with the SHPO and federally recognized Tribes. It is not expected that historic properties would be adversely affected by the proposed action. The proposed action would not be initiated until all coordination has been completed.

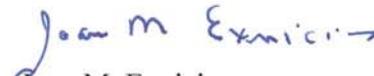
COORDINATION: The following is a partial list of agencies to which a copy of this notice is being sent:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI
Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Regional Director, NOAA Fisheries Service
U.S. Coast Guard, Eighth District
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer

PROJECT PLANS: Plans for the proposed work will be on file in the Regional Planning Division South Office, Environmental Compliance Branch, Coastal Environmental Compliance Section, US Army Corps of Engineer District, New Orleans, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118, and may be seen by anyone having an interest in them.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Interested parties may submit comments or suggest modifications regarding the proposed work in writing to Mr. Howard Ladner, PDC-CEC, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267. Mr. Ladner can also be reached at (504) 862-2021 or at howard.w.ladner@usace.army.mil.

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by proposed project action may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to Mr. Ladner within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by the proposed action. You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.


Joan M. Exnicios
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch

The comment period for this public notice expires: May 14, 2014

