



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS

P.O. BOX 60267

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160-0267

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Planning, Programs, and
Project Management Division
Environmental Planning
and Compliance Branch

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS RESPONSE TO HURRICANES KATRINA & RITA IN LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA #433

Description of Action. As a result of the flooding and destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina (August 29, 2006) and Rita (September 24, 2006) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (CEMVN), took emergency action to unwater the New Orleans metropolitan area, rehabilitate Federally authorized levees, and restore non-Federal levees and pump stations in Orleans, St. Bernard, Jefferson and Plaquemines Parishes. Additionally, CEMVN conducted flood fight operations in St. Mary's, Terrebonne, and Lafourche Parishes.

Factors Considered in Determination. This office has assessed the impacts of the proposed action on significant resources, including the water quality of Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River, wetlands, fisheries, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, Essential Fish Habitat, Coastal Zone Management consistency, air quality, non wet upland resources, and prime and unique farmlands. No significant adverse impacts were identified for any of the significant resources. The risk of encountering HTRW is low.

Impacts to wetlands were identified that would require compensatory mitigation. In coordination with USFWS and NMFS biologists, CEMVN biologists determined that a total of 95.7 acres of wetland impacts have occurred or will occur as a result of the actions taken by the USACE to unwater the metropolitan area, to rebuild the existing Federally authorized levee system, to repair levee breaks in non-Federal levee system in Plaquemines parish, and to build a FEMA-tasked temporary morgue facility in Carville, Louisiana.

By letters dated May 23, 2006 and May 2, 2006, respectively, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service confirmed that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species. A Coastal Zone Consistency Determination was sent to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for concurrence with the determination that the proposed action is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program. A 60 day review period, mandated by the State and Local Coastal Resources Management Act., as amended (Act 361, La. R.S. 49:214.21 et seq has passed without an official response, as such concurrence is granted. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality waived the requirement for a Water Quality Certificate due to the existing emergency conditions as long as the USACE was coordinating recovery actions with the Environmental Protection Agency. Review of the Section 404(b)(1) Public Notice was completed on May 16, 2006. The Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation was signed on June 23, 2006. Coordination with the state of Louisiana Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) occurred throughout the recovery period and the SHPO has concurred with CEMVN archeologist's recommendations of no effect on historic properties. This office has concurred with, or resolved, all Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act recommendations contained in a Planning Aid Report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, dated May 9, 2006.

Environmental Design Commitments. The following commitments are an integral part of the proposed action:

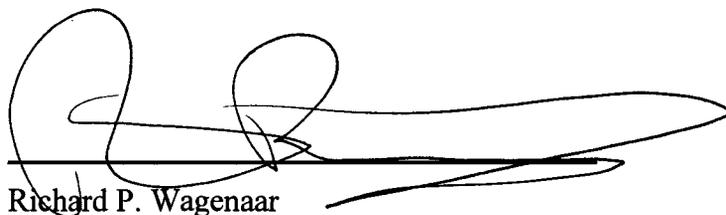
- 1.) Compensatory mitigation for the 95.7 acres of wetlands will be implemented per the plan outlined in EA #433. An alternative mitigation plan may be developed and implemented should land at the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge or in the Big Mar area not be available.
- 2.) If any unrecorded cultural resources are determined to exist within the project boundaries, then work will not proceed in the area containing these cultural resources until a CEMVN-PM-RN archeologist has been notified and final coordination with the SHPO and THPO has been completed. [CEMVN-PM-RN/SHPO Standard Operating Procedure]

Public Involvement. The proposed action has been coordinated with appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, businesses, organizations, and individuals through distribution of Environmental Assessment # 433 for their review and comment. EA#433 is attached hereto and made a part of this FONSI.

Conclusion. This office has assessed the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action. Based on this assessment, a review of the comments made on EA #433, and the implementation of the environmental design commitments listed above, a determination has been made that the proposed action would have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for the work described in EA #433.

7-24-06

Date



Richard P. Wagenaar

Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander