



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Mobile District

News Release

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Contacts: E. Patrick Robbins 251-690-2512
erwin.p.robbins@sam.usace.army.mil

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Marilyn Phipps 251-690-2506
marilyn.j.phipps@sam.usace.army.mil

News Release: www.sam.usace.army.mil/pa/

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ISSUES REGIONAL GENERAL PERMIT

Mobile, Ala. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, issued Regional General Permit (RGP-SAM-20) today. The regional permit is designed to streamline the permitting process for residential development in the six Mississippi coastal counties affected by Hurricane Katrina.

“This regional general permit takes into account the many comments and concerns we received from the public, federal, state and local agencies when the regional permit was proposed last October,” said E. Patrick Robbins, Public Affairs Officer, Mobile District. “Those comments helped shape the regional general permit.”

The key points of the RGP are

- It authorizes filling up to 3 acres of low-quality wetlands as defined by approved Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedures.
- It is for residential developments only.
- It applies only in Harrison, Hancock, Jackson, George, Stone and Pearl River counties in Mississippi.
- It is valid for two years, but may be renewed up to a maximum of five years.

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REGIONAL PERMIT 2-2-2

- It requires the corps to coordinate with state and federal agencies on all applications, in the same manner as an individual permit.

“The public expressed concerns that the process did not have a public comment period and they would not be able to know what permits were being issued,” Robbins said.

“Our regulatory division that handles the permit applications will create a website and post all permits issued under the RPG-SAM-20. The website will also have a page dedicated to maps, conditions, and requirements associated with the permit.”

As with the current individual permit process, an applicant filing for the regional permit will have to clearly show how they have attempted to totally avoid wetlands and if unable to do so, how they have minimized the impact and how they plan to mitigate for any impacts. The delineation of wetlands must meet an established criteria that clearly indicates the type and value of the wetlands being impacted. The application is then coordinated with other state and federal agencies.

“Another key element of this RGP are the ten exclusion areas,” said Robbins.

“Included in the exclusion areas are all tidal waters as are non-tidal waters within 200 feet of tidal waters. The permit also does not apply to development within the 100-year flood plain as defined by FEMA.”

The Corps has several nationwide permits and Regional General Permits already in place. “They don’t alleviate the need for an applicant to follow the rules and regulation,” said Robbins. “The only difference between an individual permit and a regional permit is if the applicant has met all the requirements and it has been validated, the 30-day public notice and individual environmental assessment won’t be required. The RGP streamlines the process but doesn’t change the basic requirements.”

The RGP-SAM-20 website is <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/rd/reg/RGP/SAM-20>