



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
MOBILE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 2288  
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

**CESAM-PD-EC**  
**Public Notice No. FP16-MsCIP01-10**

**January 22, 2016**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS,  
MOBILE DISTRICT**

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI COASTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM  
COMPREHENSIVE BARRIER ISLANDS RESTORATION PROJECT  
FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**JACKSON, HARRISON, AND HANCOCK COUNTIES, MISSISSIPPI AND MOBILE  
COUNTY, ALABAMA**

**TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mobile District is announcing the availability and soliciting public review and comments on the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Comprehensive Barrier Islands Restoration Project, Jackson, Harrison, and Hancock Counties, Mississippi and Mobile County, Alabama. A copy of the FSEIS is located at the following website:

<http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/ProgramandProjectManagement/MsCIPProgram/MsCIPDownloads.aspx>. This document is being circulated to resource agencies and interested members of the public for a 30-day comment period and is also being forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations. A copy of the Draft SEIS was made available for review on March 7, 2014. Comments received were addressed and incorporated into the FSEIS, and copies of those comments are in Appendix R of the FSEIS. The USACE published the Notice of Intent to prepare the Draft SEIS in the Federal Register on October 21, 2010.

In response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the Secretary of the Army was directed to prepare a comprehensive plan for improvements in the coastal area of Mississippi in the interest of hurricane and storm damage reduction, prevention of

saltwater intrusion, preservation of fish and wildlife, prevention of erosion, and other related water resource purposes (Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2006 [Public Law (P.L.) 7 109-148]). The *MsCIP for Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi Comprehensive Plan and Integrated Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (PEIS) was completed in June 2009 to support the long-term recovery of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi with the goal of enhancing the resilience of the coastal area and its communities against future events, including storms. The Report of the Chief of Engineers and the Record of Decision (ROD), signed by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, were submitted to Congress on January 15, 2010. Recommendations included the comprehensive restoration of the Mississippi barrier islands; restoration of over 3,000 acres of wetland and coastal forest habitat; acquisition of approximately 2,000 parcels, with relocation of residents, within the high hazard area; improvement of a levee at the Forest Heights community in Gulfport; a flood-proofing demonstration in Waveland; and the study of 53 other hurricane and storm damage risk reduction and ecosystem restoration options across the coastal area.

The Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (P. L. 111-32), provided funds and direction to the Secretary of the Army to restore historic levels of storm damage reduction to Mississippi Gulf Coast through barrier island restoration and ecosystem restoration. The MsCIP PEIS addressed the general plan for comprehensive barrier island restoration; however, the final design was not complete at the time because specific sand borrow sources and the final design templates had not been determined. To ensure full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the USACE has prepared this SEIS in cooperation with other Federal, state, and local agencies. The MsCIP PEIS' ROD recommended a comprehensive restoration plan; therefore, new alternatives to restore the sediment to the barrier island system and help preserve the Mississippi Sound are considered in this FSEIS.

The alternatives considered in this FSEIS are focused specifically on site-specific sand placement options for sediment supply to the barrier islands within the National Park Service, Gulf Islands National Seashore, (GUIS) Mississippi Unit and Cat Island, and various sand borrow sites within the area. The two alternatives evaluated in the FSEIS include the "No Action" Alternative and the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP). The TSP consists of the restoration of sediment to Ship Island including sand placement in Camille Cut and replenishment of the southern shoreline of East Ship Island, beach-front placement of sand along the eastern shoreface of Cat Island, and modification to the management of future dredged material from Pascagoula Ship Channel as described in the FSEIS. Selection of the TSP included the evaluation of four combinations of borrow site options developed for use in the closure of Camille Cut and restoration of East Ship Island as well as borrow material for Cat Island restoration described in detail in the FSEIS. These options include identical placement locations, design and engineering methods, and construction methods and phasing, but different combinations and volumes from various borrow sites.

The restoration of sediment to Ship Island includes the closure of Camille Cut and restoration of the shoreline of the current East Ship Island. This restoration would be accomplished in 5 phases over an approximate 2.5-year period. The combined Camille Cut and East Ship Island after natural fill adjustment would initially encompass approximately 1,500 acres, of which roughly 800 acres would be above mean high water level (MHWL). The placement on Ship Island would be a one-time event. This effort will involve use of sand from 18 borrow areas based on multiple alternatives that were considered. A total of approximately 19.0 million cubic yards (mcy) of in-placed sand will be required to fill Camille Cut and to restore East Ship Island. The term "in-placed" refers to the actual volume of sand material on the beach, assuming that some fraction above this net volume might be lost in the process. Borrow areas determined to contain total volumes of suitable sand available before factoring construction losses and inefficiencies includes: Ship Island (2.7 mcy), Horn Island Pass (4.9 mcy), Petit Bois Pass Alabama (PBP-AL) (19.8 mcy), Petit Bois Pass Mississippi (PBP-MS) (2.0 mcy), and Petit Bois Pass Outer Continental Shelf (PBP-OCS) (19.6 mcy). The 18 borrow areas listed above include sub-areas, several of which are outside waters of the State of Mississippi. These include the PBP-AL borrow areas located entirely in Alabama waters and the PBP-OCS borrow areas located in Federal waters.

The State of Alabama owns the title to lands underlying coastal waters to a line 3 geographical miles distant from its coastline. The United States has paramount rights in these waters for purposes of commerce, navigation, national defense, and international affairs, none of which apply to the removal of sand for the purposes of beach or island restoration. The State's position is that removal of sand within the state boundaries will be done in accordance with Alabama State Law and either a direct sale or royalty payment may be assessed for removal.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is the agency of Department of Interior tasked with managing the extraction of offshore minerals from the OCS. While the largest component of this management is related to exploration for and development of oil and gas resources, the BOEM is also responsible for what are loosely referred to as "non-energy minerals" (primarily sand and gravel) obtained from the ocean floor. BOEM jurisdiction for leasing and regulating the recovery of minerals extends to the subsoil and seabed of all submerged lands seaward of State-owned waters to the limits of the OCS. BOEM has the authority to negotiate, on a noncompetitive basis, the rights to OCS sand, gravel, or shell resources for shore protection, beach or wetlands restoration projects, or for use in construction projects funded in whole or part by or authorized by the Federal Government, without payment of fees. Any sand removed from the OCS requires review and an agreement from the BOEM.

The Ship Island restoration component would be constructed in 5 phases. Four of the phases would consist of dredging and placement activities and the 5th phase would consist of dune planting activities on the newly restored Ship Island. Phases 3, 4, and 5 may be constructed concurrently. It is estimated that the 5 phases would be completed over a period of approximately 2.5 years.

Restoration on Cat Island will be implemented through placement of approximately 2 mcy of sand on the eastern beach fronting Cat Island based on restoring the eastern shoreface of Cat Island to 1998 conditions. Direct placement of sand on the eastern beach would restore the island habitats and enhance the island's ability to absorb energy from westward-propagating waves. The construction profile would be expected to adjust rapidly through the erosion of the upper profile and mimic the natural nearshore once it reaches equilibrium. The equilibrium design berm width averages 175 – 200 feet. The total equilibrated fill area encompasses approximately 305 acres. Sand used in the restoration of Cat Island would come from an approximately 429-acre sand deposit in an area about 2 miles long and 0.2-mile wide centered about 1.25 miles off the eastern shoreline of Cat Island. The proposed borrow site is located east of the placement area and outside of the GUI boundaries.

Another component of the TSP plan includes the modification to the management of future dredged material from Pascagoula Ship Channel. This modification includes revision to the dredged material placement practices within the littoral zone of the Horn Island Pass portion of the Pascagoula Federal Navigation Project. The intent of the revisions is to ensure that placement of future dredged material is in an area that enhances the natural transport of dredged material to Horn Island while not increasing costs to operations of the Pascagoula Federal Navigation Project. This includes placement of suitable sandy material along the shallow shoals in the south and west portions of the existing specified DA-10 and the northern portion of the existing specified littoral zone dredged material placement site. The total area for potential direct placement would encompass approximately 1,600 acres, including a portion of the existing DA-10 and the existing littoral zone placement site, with existing depths generally between 5 and 30 feet.

Most dredging would be performed using hydraulic or hydraulic cutterhead dredges. Other construction equipment used includes a variety of support equipment. Sediment transport equipment could include several types of conveyances, such as scows, crane, and jack-up barges, pipelines (submerged, floating, and land), and booster pumps. Channels would be placed outside of environmentally sensitive areas to the maximum extent possible.

In addition, a Monitoring and Adaptive Management (MAM) Plan was developed as an added component of the MsCIP Barrier Island Restoration project. The primary purpose for implementing the MAM Plan is to determine progress toward restoration success and to increase the likelihood of achieving desired project outcomes in the face of uncertainty. Monitoring results will be used through an assessment process to determine whether the project outcomes are consistent with original project goals and objectives. The cost of the MAM Plan is borne 100% Federal for up to 10 years, which could end prior to 10 years depending on when success criteria are met.

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION:** Pursuant to the Clean Water Act (CWA), state water quality certification is required for the proposed action described above. The activity will be conducted in a manner which will not violate applicable water quality standards. As indicated in the FSEIS, the waterways of potential impact include the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi Sound. The material that will be utilized for the restoration of the Mississippi barrier islands meets the criteria set forth in 20 CFR 230.60(b). The material is characterized as clean unconsolidated sand which is sufficiently removed from sources of pollution and is located in areas of high current velocities to provide reasonable assurance that the material would not be contaminated. In addition, the material originates in the regional vicinity of the placement activity, is similar to the substrate of the placement site, and receives similar overlying waters as the placement site. Based on the results of the FSEIS and the determination made by the Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation Report (Appendix P of the FSEIS), water quality certification is being requested from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Because a portion of the borrow sources is located within the State of Alabama's jurisdictional water bottoms, a water quality certification is also being requested from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). Upon completion of the required 30-day FSEIS comment period, a decision relative to water quality certification will be made by both MDEQ and ADEM.

**COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY:** Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), the proposed action is consistent with the Mississippi and Alabama Coastal Programs to the maximum extent practicable. Concurrences with these determinations are being requested from the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) and ADEM. Based on the results of the FSEIS and upon completion of the required 30-day FSEIS comment period, decisions relative to coastal zone consistency will be made by MDMR and ADEM.

**SECTION 404 (B)(1) EVALUATION REPORT:** Water quality impacts associated with the proposed action have been identified in an evaluation report prepared in accordance with P.L. 92-500, Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines promulgated by the EPA under the CWA. The Section 404 (b)(1) Evaluation Report is included in Appendix P of the FSEIS. The report concludes that only minor and short-term turbidity impacts would result from the implementation of the proposed action.

Public comments can be submitted through a variety of methods. Written comments may be submitted to the USACE, Mobile District by mail, facsimile, or electronic methods within 30 days after the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

The Council on Environmental Quality's *Regulations on Implementing National Environmental Policy Act Procedures (NEPA)* (40 CFR 1500-1508) emphasizes agency cooperation early in the NEPA process through the establishment of Cooperating Agency status. In essence, the following Federal or State agencies have jurisdiction over activities to be considered in the FSEIS and serve as a Cooperating Agency:

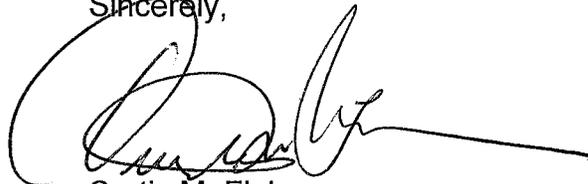
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

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- Alabama Department of Environmental Management
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Mississippi Department of Archives and History
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
- Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
- Mississippi Department of Transportation
- Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
- Mississippi Museum of Natural Science
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Natural Resources and Conservation Service
- National Park Service, Gulf Islands National Seashore
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. National Park Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

For further information contact:

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curtis M. Flakes', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Curtis M. Flakes  
Chief, Planning and Environmental  
Division