

Appendix R
Public Involvement and Agency Correspondence



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

September 14, 2012

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. John Rodi
Regional Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394

Dear Mr. Rodi:

The Mobile District is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program Comprehensive Plan and Integrated Programmatic EIS (PEIS) prepared in June 2009. The PEIS evaluated comprehensive water resources improvements associated with hurricane and storm damage reduction, flood damage reduction, and ecosystem restoration in three coastal counties of Mississippi including the comprehensive restoration of the barrier islands. At the time the PEIS was completed, the final decision relative to the location of suitable borrow sites and the detailed design for the restoration had not been made. Therefore, the decision was that this information would be included in a supplement to the PEIS following the completion of the technical and engineering studies. The SEIS being prepared will address the potential impacts associated with the use of the specific borrow sites and the design of the restoration.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 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 any Federal or State agency which has jurisdiction over activities to be considered in the SEIS has the opportunity to serve as a Cooperating Agency. Responsibilities of a Cooperating Agency include but are not limited to provision of data and/or information, and review of the preliminary draft SEIS for completeness. Information relative to the rights and responsibilities of lead and cooperating agencies may be found in CEQ Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's NEPA Regulations (<http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/40>).

As lead agency in the preparation of the SEIS, the Mobile District is requesting your participation as a Cooperating Agency in this effort. We look forward to working with you on this project and if you should have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Larry Parson at (251) 690-3139 or larry.e.parson@usace.army.mil, EIS manager, or Dr. Susan Ivester Rees, Program Manager at (251) 694-4141 or susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil

Sincerely,

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

Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394

MSCIP
Lamy

In Reply Refer To: GM 623E

OCT 05 2012

Mr. Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mobile District
Post Office Box 2288
Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001

Dear Mr. Flakes:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) become a Cooperating Agency during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Mississippi barrier island restoration projects on East and West Ship Islands and Cat Island. The June 2009, "Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program, Comprehensive Plan and Integrated Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement" did not recommend the use of sediment from borrow sources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). It is our understanding that OCS borrow sources are now being considered and that geophysical and geotechnical investigations are underway. Since BOEM has jurisdiction over mineral leasing on the OCS, BOEM agrees to serve as a Cooperating Agency on these restoration projects and in the preparation of the Supplemental EIS. BOEM will prepare a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which will serve as a negotiated lease agreement for the designated borrow areas and define each agency's role in the process.

As a Cooperating Agency, BOEM expects to provide Bureau-appropriate assistance with the preparation of the Supplemental EIS. Dr. Kenneth Ashworth and Dr. Michael Miner will represent BOEM on the Project Delivery Team for the Supplemental EIS; they will help ensure the scope of the Supplemental EIS accurately reflects Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's NEPA and leasing requirements. Following completion of all NEPA requirements, BOEM will prepare a MOA, which will serve as a negotiated lease agreement for the designated borrow areas. If, through the planning process, the consideration of OCS resources is removed from the list of alternatives, BOEM will cease its role as a Cooperating Agency.

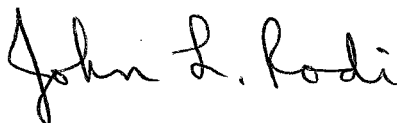
BOEM also recognizes the importance of participating in the required Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation; the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management

Act essential fish habitat (EFH) consultation (Section 305); the National Historic Preservation Act Section (NHPA) 106 process; and the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) Section 307 consistency process. As the lead Federal Agency for the ESA Section 7 and EFH consultations, the Corps must notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of its lead role and BOEM's cooperating role. BOEM would expect the Corps, as lead Agency, to work with BOEM to ensure existing biological opinions from FWS and NMFS are applicable to BOEM's part of the Federal action and/or expect to jointly submit the ESA Section 7 and the EFH assessments to FWS and NMFS. BOEM expects the Corps to be the lead Federal agency for NHPA Section 106 and CZMA Section 307 compliance with BOEM acting in a cooperating role.

It is BOEM's policy to negotiate a new agreement for each use of OCS material; therefore, this agreement only applies to the NEPA and environmental requirements for the East and West Ship Islands and Cat Island projects. The final NEPA document, as well as the outcome of other environmental requirements, may be used to establish stipulations of conditions in future negotiated agreements.

BOEM looks forward to working with the Corps during this process. If you would like to discuss any of these items further, please contact Dr. Kenneth Ashworth at (504) 736-2656 or kenneth.ashworth@boem.gov or Dr. Michael Miner at (504) 736-2700 or michael.miner@boem.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John L. Rodi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "R".

John L. Rodi
Regional Director



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

November 20, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Mr. David Bernhart
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

Dear Mr. Bernhart:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District, has prepared the enclosed Biological Assessment (BA) to analyze the potential effects to protected species under your purview associated with the Mississippi Coastal Improvement Program Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration project.

The Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration consists of the placement of approximately 22 million cubic yards (mcy) of sand within the Ship Island portion of the National Park Service's Gulf Islands National Seashore, Mississippi unit to close Camille Cut between East and West Ship Islands, and to ameliorate erosion of the southern shoreline of East Ship Island. In addition, the plan includes the restoration of the eastern shoreface of Cat Island using an additional approximate 2 mcy of sand. A third related action to maximize the beneficial placement of sandy maintenance dredged material from the Pascagoula Federal navigation project includes the redefinition of Disposal Area 10 and the littoral zone disposal site.

By this letter and enclosed BA, the Corps, Mobile District is requesting formal Section 7 consultation, as required under the Endangered Species Act, for protected species identified in the BA. We are requesting your concurrence with our determination that the proposed actions may affect but are "not likely to adversely affect" Sea Turtles and Gulf sturgeon and "no adverse modification" of critical habitat.

Thank you for your help in assisting us with this project. Should you require any further assistance, please call Ms. Lekesha Reynolds at (251) 690-3260 or via email at lekesha.w.reynolds@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan I. Rees".

Susan I. Rees

Chief, Mississippi Coastal Improvements
Program

Enclosures

Copy furnished: Mr. Ryan Hendren, National Marine Fisheries Service



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

November 20, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Mr. Stephen Ricks
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Suite A
Jackson, Mississippi 39213

Dear Mr. Ricks:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District, has prepared the enclosed Biological Assessment (BA) to analyze the potential effects to protected species under your purview associated with the Mississippi Coastal Improvement Program Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration project.

The Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration consists of the placement of approximately 22 million cubic yards (mcy) of sand within the Ship Island portion of the National Park Service's Gulf Islands National Seashore, Mississippi unit to close Camille Cut between East and West Ship Islands, and to ameliorate erosion of the southern shoreline of East Ship Island. In addition, the plan includes the restoration of the eastern shoreface of Cat Island using an additional approximate 2 mcy of sand. A third related action to maximize the beneficial placement of sandy maintenance dredged material from the Pascagoula Federal navigation project includes the redefinition of Disposal Area (DA) 10 and the littoral zone disposal site.

By this letter and enclosed BA, the Corps, Mobile District is requesting formal Section 7 consultation, as required under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), for protected species identified in the BA. We are requesting your concurrence with our determination that the proposed actions may affect but are "not likely to adversely affect" Sea Turtles and Piping plover and "no adverse modification" of critical habitat.

Thank you for your help in assisting us with this project. Should you require any further assistance, please call Ms. Lekesha Reynolds at (251) 690-3260 or via email at lekesha.w.reynolds@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan L. Rees".

Susan L. Rees

Chief, Mississippi Coastal Improvements
Program

Enclosures

Copy furnished: Mr. Paul Necaie, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Authorization

As a result of these determinations, NMFS proposes to issue an IHA to SIO for conducting a marine geophysical survey in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. The duration of the IHA would not exceed one year from the date of its issuance.

Dated: October 15, 2010.

Helen M. Golde,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2010-26547 Filed 10-20-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648-XZ53

Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; annual affirmative finding renewal.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, (Assistant Administrator) has renewed the affirmative finding for the Government of El Salvador under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). This affirmative finding will allow yellowfin tuna harvested in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP) in compliance with the International Dolphin Conservation Program (IDCP) by El Salvadorian-flag purse seine vessels or purse seine vessels operating under El Salvadorian jurisdiction to be imported into the United States. The affirmative finding was based on review of documentary evidence submitted by the Government of El Salvador and obtained from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the U.S. Department of State.

DATES: The affirmative finding renewal is effective from April 1, 2010, through March 31, 2011.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sarah Wilkin, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; phone 562-980-3230; fax 562-980-4027.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The MMPA, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, allows the entry into the United States of yellowfin tuna harvested by purse seine

vessels in the ETP under certain conditions. If requested by the harvesting nation, the Assistant Administrator will determine whether to make an affirmative finding based upon documentary evidence provided by the government of the harvesting nation, the IATTC, or the Department of State.

The affirmative finding process requires that the harvesting nation is meeting its obligations under the IDCP and obligations of membership in the IATTC. Every 5 years, the government of the harvesting nation must request an affirmative finding and submit the required documentary evidence directly to the Assistant Administrator. On an annual basis, NMFS will review the affirmative finding and determine whether the harvesting nation continues to meet the requirements. A nation may provide information related to compliance with IDCP and IATTC measures directly to NMFS on an annual basis or may authorize the IATTC to release the information to NMFS to annually renew an affirmative finding determination without an application from the harvesting nation.

An affirmative finding will be terminated, in consultation with the Secretary of State, if the Assistant Administrator determines that the requirements of 50 CFR 216.24(f) are no longer being met or that a nation is consistently failing to take enforcement actions on violations, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of the IDCP.

As a part of the affirmative finding process set forth in 50 CFR 216.24(f), the Assistant Administrator considered documentary evidence submitted by the Republic of El Salvador or obtained from the IATTC and the Department of State and has determined that El Salvador has met the MMPA's requirements to receive an annual affirmative finding renewal.

After consultation with the Department of State, the Assistant Administrator issued the Republic of El Salvador's annual affirmative finding renewal, allowing the continued importation into the United States of yellowfin tuna and products derived from yellowfin tuna harvested in the ETP by El Salvadorian-flag purse seine vessels or purse seine vessels operating under El Salvadorian jurisdiction. This annual renewal of El Salvador's affirmative finding will remain valid through March 31, 2011.

Dated: October 15, 2010.

Eric C. Schwaab,

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2010-26552 Filed 10-20-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers****Intent To Prepare a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), Mississippi Barrier Island Restoration, Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) for Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, MS**

AGENCY: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DOD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), intends to prepare a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) to the MsCIP Comprehensive Plan and Integrated Programmatic EIS, prepared in June 2009, which evaluated comprehensive water resource improvements associated with hurricane and storm damage risk reduction, shoreline erosion, salt water intrusion and fish and wildlife preservation in three coastal counties of Mississippi. As described in the Comprehensive Plan, the SEIS will address potential impacts associated with the comprehensive restoration of the Mississippi barrier islands. These actions are related to the consequences of hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005 and will be used as a basis for ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

ADDRESSES: Questions about the proposed action and the DSEIS should be addressed to Mr. Larry Parson, or Dr. Susan Ivester Rees, Planning and Environmental Division, Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, AL 36628-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Larry Parson, (251) 694-3139 or e-mail at larry.e.parson@usace.army.mil or Dr. Susan Ivester Rees, (251) 694-414, or e-mail at susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Mississippi on August 29, 2005 causing catastrophic damage to lives, property, and natural resources throughout coastal Mississippi. In response, the U.S. Congress directed the Secretary of the Army through the Corps of Engineers (the Corps) to conduct an

analysis and design for comprehensive improvements or modifications to existing 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, barrier island restoration, and other related water resources purposes. Further, the Corps was directed to provide interim recommendations for near term improvements by June 30, 2006, with final recommendations provided by December 30, 2007. Environmental impacts associated with implementation of 15 interim projects were addressed in an Environmental Assessment and a Finding of No Significant Impact signed on June 29, 2006.

2. The MsCIP Comprehensive Plan evaluated an array of measures to promote the recovery of coastal Mississippi from the hurricanes of 2005 and to provide for a coast resilient to future storm events. The Integrated Programmatic EIS evaluated multiple natural and engineered alternatives to provide various measures for various levels of risk reduction and restoration for the Mississippi coast. Formulation of the comprehensive plan involved identifying potential "Lines of Defense" moving from offshore to nearshore, shoreline, and along existing natural features inland, to possibly reduce damage from hurricane and storm events. This analysis included restoration of the barrier islands, nearshore features such as rubble and movable wall breakwaters, beachfront measures such as dunes, berms, and seawalls, coastal roadways and beach front property barriers such as elevation of roadways and property, and various other inland features such as installation of levees, elevated highway-topped levee systems, and surge protection gates, for potential inclusion in the overall damage reduction system. Consideration of "non-structural measures", such as acquisition and relocation of structures, hurricane evaluation, floodplain management, building codes and other event planning activities also serve as important hurricane and storm damage reduction planning features. Other alternatives considered restoration of storm damaged habitats such as coastal marshes, beaches, forests, oyster reefs, and submerged aquatic vegetation in Mississippi Sound and on the Mississippi mainland; restoration of historical water flows to coastal watersheds including freshwater diversion from Louisiana; and watershed based drainage modifications

for flood damage reduction. The EIS identified, screened, evaluated, prioritized, and optimized an array of alternatives.

3. The Draft SEIS. As discussed in the Integrated Programmatic EIS, a supplement would be prepared to address the borrow sources and placement areas for the Mississippi Barrier Islands Restoration. This is phase II of the plan described in the Programmatic EIS. Under phase I, the general plan of the barrier islands restoration was addressed; however the final design was not completed because the borrow sources were not identified.

The Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration consists of the placement of approximately 22 million cubic yards of sand within the National Park Service's Gulf Islands National Seashore, Mississippi unit. Between 13–16 million cubic yards of sand would be used to close Camille Cut between East Ship Island and West Ship Island, which originally was opened by Hurricane Camille, through the construction of a low level dune system. The remaining sand would be placed in the littoral zones at the eastern ends of Ship and Petit Bois Islands. This would result in the restoration of 1,150 acres of critical coastal zone habitats and improvement to the water quality of the Mississippi Sound and provide incidental protection to two cultural sites on Ship Island listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the project would include the restoration of Cat Island using 1–2 million cubic yards of sand which are not included in the 22 million cubic yards of sand.

4. Public Involvement: a. The Corps has conducted extensive public involvement during the Comprehensive Plan and Integrated Programmatic EIS of June 2009. Since April 2006, the Corps Mobile District has hosted over 90 public involvement events, including 12 formal public and agency meetings, a 2-day Regional coordination meeting, a Public Scoping workshop, 3 online meetings, a Public Hearing workshop, and numerous internal meetings, which the agencies were invited to participate. The Corps also launched a project website enabling user downloads, project team collaboration, and communication among agencies and the public. This Web site will be updated with information on the SEIS for the Mississippi Barrier Island Restoration Project throughout the NEPA process: <http://www.ms Cip.usace.army.mil>.

b. The SEIS will analyze potential environmental impacts and benefits associated with proposed borrow and placement sites. Specifically, the following major issues will be analyzed

in the SEIS: Water quality, threatened and endangered species, essential fish habitat and other marine habitat, cultural resources, parks and protected lands, wetlands, and cumulative impacts.

c. The Corps will serve as the lead Federal agency during preparation of the SEIS. The following agencies have been invited to participate as cooperating agencies: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Department of the Interior—Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration; U.S. Department of Commerce—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Marine Fisheries Service; U.S. Department of Homeland Security—Federal Emergency Management Agency; U.S. Department of Agriculture—Natural Resources Conservation Service; Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, and Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Mississippi Museum of Natural Science; Mississippi Department of Transportation; Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the Gulf Regional Planning Commission. Participation from other agencies, interest groups, and individual citizens is being encouraged and sought.

5. It is anticipated that the SEIS will be made available for public review in December 2010.

Curtis M. Flakes,

Chief, Planning and Environmental Division.

[FR Doc. 2010–26493 Filed 10–20–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3720–58–P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Board of Visitors, United States Military Academy (USMA)

AGENCY: Department of the Army, DoD.

ACTION: Meeting notice.

SUMMARY: Under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the Government in the Sunshine Act of 1976, and Federal regulations governing advisory committee meetings, the Department of Defense announces a Federal advisory committee meeting for the United States Military Academy Board of Visitors. This is the 2010 Annual Meeting of the USMA Board of Visitors. Members of the Board will be provided updates on Academy issues.



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Phil Bryant
The Governor of Mississippi
Post Office Box 139
Jackson, Mississippi 39205


Dear Governor Bryant:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosure includes a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

Agencies and other interested parties are being furnished copies of the DSEIS for review and comment. We encourage your review and comment as all comments received will be utilized in preparing the final document. Please note that the comment deadline is April 21, 2014.

If you would like additional information on the DSEIS, please contact my program manager, Dr. Susan Ivester Rees at (251) 694-4141 or email at susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,


Gordon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Steven Palazzo
United States House of Representatives
Attention: Mr. Patrick Large
Washington, D.C. 20515-2404


Dear Representative Palazzo:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosure includes a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

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If you would like additional information on the DSEIS, please contact my program manager, Dr. Susan Ivester Rees at (251) 694-4141 or email at susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,


Jon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Steven Palazzo
United States Representative
Attention: Mr. Hunter Lipscomb
1325 25th Street
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501


Dear Representative Palazzo:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosure includes a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

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Sincerely,


Jon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Thad Cochran
United States Senate
Attention: Mr. Daniel Ulmer
Washington, D.C. 20510-2402


Dear Senator Cochran:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosure includes a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

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If you would like additional information on the DSEIS, please contact my program manager, Dr. Susan Ivester Rees at (251) 694-4141 or email at susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,


Jon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

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

FEB 28 2014

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Thad Cochran
United States Senate
Attention: Mr. Myrtis Franks
2012 15th Street, Suite 451
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

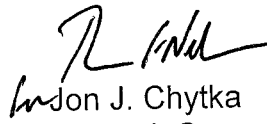
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Sincerely,


Jon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Roger F. Wicker
United States Senate
Attention: Ms. Ellen Beares
Washington, D.C. 20510-2404


Dear Senator Wicker:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosure includes a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

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Sincerely,


Jason J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator
Attention: Ms. Jennifer Schmiot
452 Courthouse Road, Suite F
Gulfport, Mississippi 39507


Dear Senator Wicker:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosures include a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and five additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

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Sincerely,


Jon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

The Honorable Robert J. Bentley
Governor of Alabama
600 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Governor Bentley:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosure includes a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

Agencies and other interested parties are being furnished copies of the DSEIS for review and comment. We encourage your review and comment as all comments received will be utilized in preparing the final document. Please note that the comment deadline is April 21, 2014.

If you would like additional information on the DSEIS, please contact my program manager, Dr. Susan Ivester Rees at (251) 694-4141 or email at susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,


Jon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

FEB 28 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Honorable Roger F. Wicker
United States Senate
Attention: Ms. Jennifer Schmiot
452 Courthouse Road, Suite F
Gulfport, Mississippi 39507

Dear Senator Wicker:

I am enclosing a copy of the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project, located in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The enclosure includes a main report hardcopy, a CDROM of that main report and supporting appendices, and additional CDROM copies for your use. The DSEIS has been forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for filing in compliance with Federal Regulations.

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Sincerely,

Jon J. Chytka
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

Enclosures

SIR
PD/Rees
PD-EC/Jacobson *[Signature]*
PD-EC/Reynolds *[Signature]*
PD-EC/Donaldson *[Signature]*
PD-E/Jacobson *[Signature]*
PD-F/Bell *[Signature]*
PD/Flakes *[Signature]*
DE/
DX/



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Ms. Patti Powell
Alabama Department of Conversation and Natural Resources
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Ms. Powell:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.


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placement in Camille Cut and replenishment of the southern shoreline East Ship Island, beach-front placement of sand along Cat Island, and modification to the management of future dredged material from Pascagoula Ship Channel.

Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for
Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Jamie Miller
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Dear Mr. Miller:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

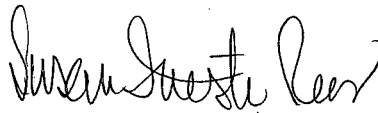
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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. I will also send a copy to Mr. Jan Boyd, Deputy Director, Office of Coastal Ecology. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,



Curtis M. Flakes *for*
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Ms. Heather McTeer Toney
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Sam Nunn Federal Building
61 Forsyth Street South West
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Ms. McTeerToney:

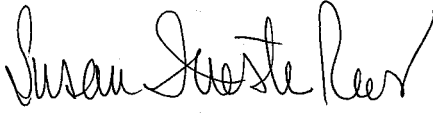
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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. I will also send a copy to Ms. Jennifer Darby, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Dr. Roy E. Crabtree
Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

Dear Mr. Crabtree:

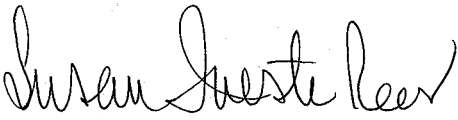
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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. I will also send a copy to Mr. David Bernhardt, Ms. Cathy Tortorici, and Mr. Bob Hoffman NOAA Fisheries, Mr. Miles Croom, and Mr. Mark Thompson, National Marine Fisheries Service. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Mike Miner, Ph.D
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,
Gulf of Mexico Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394

Dear Dr. Miner:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.


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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Jerry W. Cain, P.E., DEE
Chief, Environmental Permits Division
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality,
Office of Pollution Control
Post Office Box 10385
Jackson, Mississippi 39289-0385

Dear Mr. Cain:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

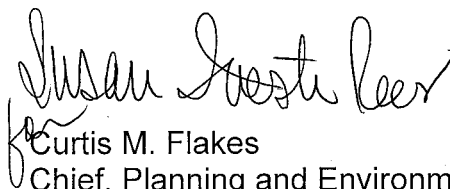
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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. I will also send a copy to Ms. Florance Bass, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan I. Rees". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Ms. Margaret Bretz
Mississippi Secretary of State
Public Lands Division
Post Office Box 97
Gulfport, Mississippi 39502

Dear Ms. Bretz:

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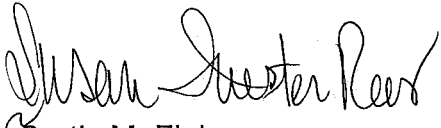
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Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Ms. Cynthia Dohner
S.E. Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Boulevard
Atlanta, Georgia 30345

Dear Ms. Dohner:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

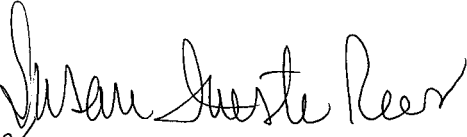
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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. I will also send a copy of this letter to Mr. David Felder, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for

Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Dan Brown
National Park Service
Mississippi Headquarters
3500 Park Road
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564-9709

Dear Mr. Brown:

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Sincerely,


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Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
MOBILE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 2288
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Tom Mann, Ph.D.
Mississippi Museum of Natural Science
2148 Riverside Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39202-7227

Dear Dr. Mann:

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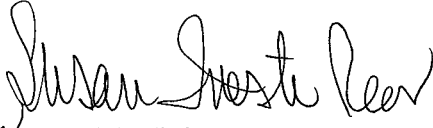
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Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Greg Williamson
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Historic Preservation
Post Office Box 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0571

Dear Mr. Williamson:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

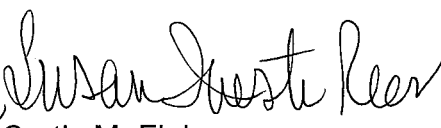
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Tentatively Selected Plan which includes restoration of Ship Island including sand placement in Camille Cut and replenishment of the southern shoreline East Ship Island, beach-front placement of sand along Cat Island, and modification to the management of future dredged material from Pascagoula Ship Channel.

Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Jeff Ely
Mississippi Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 1850
Jackson, Mississippi 39202-1279

Dear Mr. Ely:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.


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Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Robert Latham
Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
Post Office Box 5644
Pearl, Mississippi 39208

Dear Mr. Latham:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

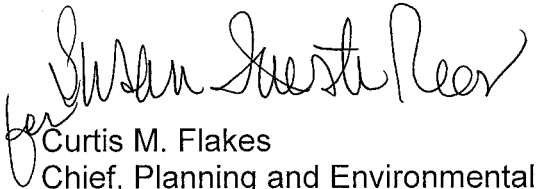
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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for
Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Jess D. Weaver
Region Director, Southeast Region
U.S. Geological Survey, Leetown Science Center
1770 Corporate Drive , Suite 500
Norcross, Georgia 30093

Dear Mr. Weaver:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

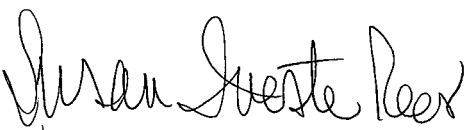
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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. I will also send a copy to Dr. Alyssa Dausman, USGS Southeast Region Science Advisor. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Wesley Kerr
U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Natural Resources Conservation Service
113 Fairfield Drive
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39402

Dear Mr. Kerr:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

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Please feel free to send your comments by mail or e-mail to Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil. Please provide your comments by April 21, 2014. For further information, please contact Dr. Susan I. Rees at the above e-mail address or at (251) 694-4141.

Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Major Phil May
Regional Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 4
3003 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Dear Major May:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

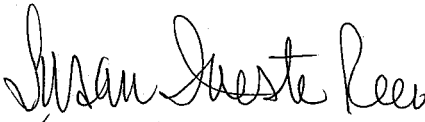
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Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Mr. Andrew H. Hughes
Division Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
666 North Street, Suite 105
Jackson, Mississippi 39202-3199

Dear Mr. Hughes:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.

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Sincerely,


for Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 3, 2014

Coastal Environment Team
Planning and Environmental Division

Ms. Patti Powell
Alabama Department of Conversation and Natural Resources
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Ms. Powell:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District will publish a Notice of Availability for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi in the Federal Register on March 7, 2014. A Notice of Intent for the DSEIS was published on October 21, 2010 in the Federal Register. With the most recent publication in the Federal Register and as a cooperating agency on this action, your review and comments of the enclosed DSEIS (one hardcopy and five electronic copies) are requested.


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Sincerely,


for
Curtis M. Flakes
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division

Enclosures

Agency and Public Review Comments and Responses



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance

Richard B. Russell Federal Building
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303



ER 14/0135
9043.1

April 21, 2014

Dr. Susan I. Rees
Planning and Environmental Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mobile District
109 St. Joseph Street
Mobile, Alabama 36602

Re: Comments and Recommendations on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP), Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi

Dear Dr. Rees:

The Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) and the Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration project. The Department offers the following comments for your consideration.

General Comments

We appreciate the opportunity to cooperate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in evaluating the proposed Mississippi Coastal Improvements Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Program; Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi. The SEIS evaluates alternatives designed to accomplish the purpose of and need for the barrier island restoration elements as recommended in the MsCIP Comprehensive Plan.

The Department supports the USACE tentatively selected plan (TSP) and preferred alternative identified in the Draft SEIS. The National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) have all worked closely with the USACE Mobile District to develop the Draft SEIS and to assist in the identification of the TSP. We also recognize that additional site investigations of potential borrow sources at several Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) locations are being finalized for inclusion in the Final SEIS. We remain committed to working with the USACE to ensure that these

OCS areas are adequately described and evaluated for potential inclusion as an element in the Final TSP and SEIS.

National Park Service Comments

Response:

- Document Cover Page Map - The Cover page map does not identify Sand Island, a recognized island of Gulf Islands National Seashore, Mississippi Unit. Please correct. 1.
- General Comment - Throughout the document Sand Island acreage is listed at 165 acres. This was the acreage before the November 2012 sand placement of dredged material on the southeastern shore of the island. Please update all references to the current 195 acres for Sand Island. 2.
- Section 1.3, Page 1-5, Lines 19-24 - No mention of the extensive freshwater wetlands that are part of this barrier island system. Please correct. 3.
- Section 1.3, Page 1-6, Lines 1-8 - Add Sand Island to the description of the GUIIS barrier island chain. 4.
- Figures 3-1 and 3-3 - Label Sand Island. 5.
- Section 3.2.1.2, Page 3-12, Table 3-3 Environmental Considerations: DA-10/Sand Island - Rewrite to read, "...used by nesting shore birds, contains 26.69 acres of palustrine emergent and estuarine intertidal wetlands, and significant recreational opportunities; site is located...." 6.
- Section 3.2.1.2, Page 3-12, Table 3-3 Summary of Feasibility as Borrow Source: DA-10/Sand Island - Please replace the summary of feasibility with the following; "Feasible: within Gulf sturgeon and piping plover critical habitat; active dredge material disposal site; DA-10/Sand Island Borrow Area Options 1 and 2 would eliminate, or adversely affect the hydrology and functionality of palustrine emergent and estuarine intertidal wetlands. Some piping plover habitat would remain and would reduce wave energy penetrating the Sound by keeping in place the southern shoreline." 7.
- Section 3.2.1.2, Page 3-17, Line 22 - The mentioned wetland area is not 23.5, the total area is 26.69. The ponded 7.8 acre wetland is not the largest wetland therefore this statement should be eliminated. 8.
- Section 3.2.1.2, Page 3-20, Lines 1-9 - Replace text with, "Option 2 (Figure 3-8) was developed to avoid removal of a 7.87-acre ponded wetland inadvertently created through dredged disposal practices at the Pascagoula Harbor Navigation Channel. Use of Option 2 would involve using approximately 58 acres of the eastern part of Sand Island above MLLW while seeking to keep 125 acres of the western segment above MLLW in place. Even with using a smaller area of Sand Island, it is anticipated that removal of this sand would adversely affect all wetlands on Sand Island through dredge removal or from damage to the hydrologic conditions that currently support any remaining wetlands. This area includes the lower berm elevation (+5 feet NAVD88) along the southern shoreline for bird habitat and the higher vegetated elevations upwards of +18 feet NAVD88 associated with an existing ponded wetland. Option 2 is approximately 304 acres in size, 9.

of which 58 acres are above MLLW and 246 acres are below MLLW. Approximately 3.7 mcy of sand would be removed to a depth of -12 feet.”

Section 3.2.1.2, Figure 3-7 - Figure only records the 7.8 acre wetland. None of the other wetland areas, mapped by NPS and provided to the Corps of engineers have been included in this figure. Please correct. (Sand/Spoil Island/ DA 10 Wetlands Mapping Report, NPS, May 2013) 10.

Section 3.4.3, Page 3-51, Lines 13-15 - Please replace the last sentence with, “Borrow Site Option 4 was selected to avoid using Sand Island as a borrow source primarily because it is within Gulf Sturgeon and piping plover critical habitat and because of NPS concerns that removal of Sand Island would lead to the loss of shore bird habitat, important palustrine emergent and estuarine intertidal wetlands, and eliminate significant recreation opportunities provided by the island.” 11.

Section 4.5.1.3 page 4-24 Line 18-19 - Text states 45.48 acres of wetlands 23.49 are internal wetlands and 21.99 are marine intertidal wetlands. Text needs to be corrected to: 45.48 acres, 26.69 of which are internal wetlands and 18.79 of which are marine intertidal. 12.

Figure 4-6 - Both the artificial reef and the DA10/Sand Island designations in the legend are the same color. Only the line thickness is different. In the map/figure, even at a zoomed in view, it is not possible to distinguish between the artificial reefs and Sand Island, thus making Sand Island appear like one of the artificial reef sources of sand. Also, Sand Island is not labeled in this figure. Please correct. 13.

Figure 4-7 - Sand Island is not labeled but is identified as a sand borrow site. Please label. 14.

Section 5.4.1.1, page 5-20, lines 26 and 37-38 - The modeling studies described in Appendix D demonstrate various anticipated reductions in storm wave heights associated with different storm tracks and intensities; however, less so for specific storm surges. NPS suggests deleting the words "storm surges" from these sentences to reflect the modeling results. 15.

Section 5.4.1.1, page 5-22, lines 1-3 and 10-12 - Was the restored Cat Island scenario included in the modeling of storm waves studies described in Appendix D? Please clarify this in the Final SEIS and include any additional supporting studies that address the extent to which restoration of Cat Island will provide greater protection to coastal habitats wetlands in Mississippi from the intensity of storm surges and storm waves. 16.

Appendix A1, Section 3.2.3, 2010 Beach Sediment Investigations, Page 20 - The text states that the results of the grain size analyses of samples indicates that the grain size of the samples taken from to a depth of 4 - 5 feet was slightly larger on the southern side of West Ship Island. However, on page 17, the text states that the results of grain size analyses on samples taken from a transect across West Ship Island (0 – 1 ft depth) indicate that the average D50 grain size is larger on the northern side of the island (0.349 mm) as compared to the southern side (0.288 mm). There is no discussion on this apparent discrepancy in grain size variation on the island’s north side vs the south side. Please address this issue in the Final SEIS. 17.

Appendix A1, Section 6.0, Identified Borrow Areas, Page 70 - In the first paragraph, change the figure number referenced from Figure 6.5 to Figure 6.6. In the second paragraph, change the figure number referenced from Figure 6.6 to Figure 6.7.

18

For matters related to the Gulf Islands National Seashore resources, please contact Steve Wright of the National Park Service on (404) 507-5710 or via email at steven_m_wright@nps.gov.

Fish and Wildlife Comments

Comments for page number 4-59, sections 4.5.8.8

- From line number 25 through 39 the document mentions various surveys conducted for piping plovers. We recommend these surveys have more detail regarding when and how many surveys were conducted, for example: the report should include dates, or months in which surveys were conducted along with number of individual surveys within those months. This would provide more meaningful data than just giving a year that a survey was conducted and how many birds were found. There is a significant difference between a survey being performed twice during a year and a survey being performed ten times during a year and the number of birds found during those surveys. Further, providing time of year in which surveys were conducted helps further evaluate which season the surveys were performed (for example fall migration, mid-winter, spring migration) since there would typically be a higher number of individuals seen during the peak fall and spring migration time frames compared to other times of the year.
- Also, line 40 and 41 refers to bird surveys conducted between two dates...we recommend the sentence include the number of actual surveys conducted between those two dates. This will provide a better estimate of the number of birds seen on a given day.
- **Comments for page Number 4-60, section 4.5.8.9**
- As stated above, line 18-20 refers to bird surveys conducted between two dates...we recommend the sentence include the number of actual surveys conducted between those two dates. This will provide a better estimate of the number of birds seen on a given day.

1,

2,

3,

If you questions regarding Fish and Wildlife comments, please contact Paul Necaise on (228) 493-6631 or via email at paul_necaise@fws.gov.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Comments

Significant Overarching Comments

- **OCS Borrow Area Uncertainty:** The document states that the alternatives evaluated for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) are based on the additional detailed information collected since the Programmatic EIS (PEIS), including geophysical and geotechnical evaluations. The following represent specific concerns:

1,

- With respect to the offshore Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) sand resource evaluation areas, it is noted that the geophysical and geotechnical efforts are still underway and that the OCS borrow areas have still not clearly been defined. As identified in Figure 3-13, the additional OCS borrow areas still being evaluated are expansive. Since the analysis of borrow options is considered one of the four components of the tentatively selected plan (TSP) a change in selected borrow areas based on new data would alter the borrow alternative analysis and subsequent impact analysis to an unknown degree.
- The document states that new borrow options identified as a result of the on-going geophysical and geotechnical effort would be incorporated in the Final SEIS. The deficiency in OCS coverage in this Draft SEIS needs to be corrected in the Final SEIS. The Final SEIS needs to be adequate for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to prepare an independent Record of Decision (ROD). Because BOEM will be adopting this National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document and preparing a ROD, it is important to establish the context of historic and current involvement on the project relative to the development of the OCS borrow alternatives. 2.
- We suggest that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) consider increasing the OCS borrow quantities above the projected 4.1 million cubic yard (mcy). Unforeseen events could result in the need for additional sand. If BOEM has to modify the negotiated agreement to exceed the 4.1 mcy, it would require additional environmental/NEPA analysis and consultations; project schedules could be impacted. 3.
- **Cooperating Agency Status and Clear Distinction of Agency Roles:** On September 14, 2012, the USACE's Mobile District sent a letter requesting that BOEM participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the NEPA document for this project. Having jurisdiction over mineral leasing in the OCS, BOEM agreed to serve as a cooperating agency on the study via a letter dated October 5, 2012. As stated in the letter, BOEM agreed to participate in required consultations (i.e., Endangered Species Act [ESA], Marine Mammal Protection Act [MMPA], essential fish habitat [EFH], national Historic Preservation Act [NHPA], etc.). To assure coverage for BOEM's action, BOEM requested that USACE state BOEM's cooperating role where the USACE is serving as the lead Federal Agency. Additionally, where existing biological opinions are being applied for this project (i.e., Gulf regional Biological Opinion [GRBO]), BOEM requested that USACE, as lead agency, ensure applicability to BOEM's action. We recommend adding additional language in the proposed action section to clarify the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. We request that, because BOEM's cooperating role and connected action were not noted in the earlier consultation letters (i.e. ESA, EFH, NHPA, etc.), follow-up coordination occurs with each agency to include OCS impacts and that BOEM would be copied on all correspondence. As a cooperating agency, BOEM would be adopting the USACE's NEPA document and as such, the Final PEIS must indicate that the OCS impacts have been clearly evaluated and that all relevant consultations have been updated and completed. 4.

- **Environmental Effects Conclusion:** Many of the conclusions made in Section 5 are lacking supporting references from available scientific literature. 5.
- **Purpose and Need (in both the Executive Summary and Main Report):** Realizing that the intent of the SEIS is to evaluate the potential sand borrow locations needed to support the placement alternatives, it is important to clarify BOEM's connected action in the purpose and need section early in the document. Specifically, we recommend clarifying BOEM's connected action and purpose of providing a negotiated agreement for the use of sand resources within the OCS. 6.
- **Executive Summary and Main Report:** Within Borrow Option 4, the document states that a total of 19.0 mcy of sand, assuming 5-10 percent losses, would be needed for filling Camille Cut and restoring East Ship Island. This estimate of losses may be low when considering dredging and placement losses, as well as changes in the existing shoreline profiles due to future storm losses, etc. Clearly defining the dredged volume relative to the placement volume is important as the actual dredged volume is what will be included in BOEM's negotiated agreement. Since BOEM will be adopting the USACE's environmental impact statement and preparing the ROD, it is important that the full scope of the potential borrow area's impact are captured relative to the intended volume of material documented in the negotiated agreement. As currently written, the negotiated agreement would be established around the identified 4.1 mcy to be dredged from the OCS. We recommend that a conservative estimate of losses be considered for the quantity of material dredged from the OCS to assure that the dredged volumes authorized in the negotiated agreement support the placement volumes needed at Camille Cut and East Ship Island. 7.
- **Executive Summary:** In the Final SEIS, you will need to note that additional consultations and coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] and National Marine Fisheries Service [NMFS]) were completed and that the Biological Assessment (BA) and Biological Opinions were updated to cover OCS borrow sites and associated impacts. 8.
- **Introduction:** You need to note in the Final SEIS that updated/revised biological assessments covering ESA, MMPA, and EFS impacts were completed for OCS borrow sites. 9.
- **Cultural Resources:** Detailed surveys of submerged cultural resource shave not been completed for the proposed OCS borrow sources. Once the surveys have been completed, this information needs to be included in the Final SEIS. The additional surveys should include proposed pipeline corridors and any associated pump-out locations, and not just the borrow source. 10.
 - BOEM usually requires that side-scan sonar, magnetometer, and subbottom profiler data be collected according to our specifications and then reviewed by a qualified marine archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications.

- The cultural resource assessment of the nearshore environment and the offshore borrow areas should also discuss the potential for the presence of buried and submerged paleo-landforms.
- **Essential Fish Habitat:** Understanding that more refined vibrocore and survey data will occur during the preliminary engineering design, we recommend incorporating an additional discussion on the proposed borrow area use plan based on the data that are currently available. For example, incorporating the ranges of potential dredging depths, and post-dredging sediment types, etc., will help in the analysis of EFH impacts as well as other physical and biological impacts. Also, a discussion of the geomorphology of the identified sediment resource is recommended. A discussion of the geomorphologic setting of the proposed borrow area would help in the understanding and analysis of the physical and biological impacts resulting from the dredging of the shoal features. 11.
- **Figures:** Recommend that all figures, where appropriate, depict the State vs. Federal OCS boundary line. 12.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

- **Section 3, Page 3-1:** The last sentence states that “any sand removed from the OCS requires review and an agreement from the BOEM.” We recommend clarifying that the use of OCS resources requires more than just “review” but rather that BOEM’s negotiated agreement would be the Federal action requiring compliance with NEPA, ESA, Section 106, etc. As a cooperating agency, BOEM would be adopting the USACE’s NEPA document and serving in a joint capacity on relevant consultations. 13.
- **Section 3.2.1:** In the Final SEIS, this section needs to be updated and note that the borrow investigations have been completed for the OCS. Page 3-6, lines 2-4 needs to clearly state that OCS sites were evaluated regarding impacts on biological resources, including EFH and critical habitat for threatened or endangered species. To aid both pre and post impact analysis, selected borrow sites (i.e., Borrow Option 4) should have a more clearly defined dredge plan in the context of the physical drivers of the system, and surface and sediment types. 14.
- **Section 3.2.1.2, Page 3-2:** In the Final SEIS, describe the geomorphology of the proposed site to inform the context of the sand source. Cut thicknesses of 18 feet could be significant and may result in EFH impacts depending on the resource that is being dredged, the dynamics of the surrounding environment, etc. 15.
- **Figure 3-13:** Given the large amount of data to be gathered and analyzed, coupled with the uncertainty regarding quantities and specific OCS locations, the data gaps and associated consultations are considerable. The closing of these data gaps could significantly change the borrow area’s alternative analysis and subsequent impact analysis. 16.

- **Section 3.2.3:** We recommend discussing the details associated with hopper dredge pump-out operations, including pipeline route and anchor points. Additionally, we recommend clarifying the pipeline (floating and/or submerged) associated with cutterhead pipeline operations. 17.
- **Section 3.4.2, TSP:** The TSP includes restoration of Ship Island, including sand placement in Camille Cut and replenishment of East Ship Island, beachfront and dune placement of sand along Cat Island, and management of maintenance dredged material from Pascagoula Ship Channel. Ship placement in Camille Cut and replenishment of East Ship Island would occur using 19 mcy of sand from five borrow areas (i.e., Borrow Option 4), of which up to 4.1 mcy will come from the OCS. However, there is a need for clarification regarding the remaining OCS and sand resources that are being considered and how they would tie into proposed Borrow Option 4. The additional OCS sites being considered are more expansive than any other borrow option. Considering one of the intended purposes of this SEIS is to address borrow sources, it seems that the lack of data on the remaining OCS resources is a significant data gap for the purpose of this NEPA document and BOEM's connected action. 18.
- **Section 4.3, Physical Environment:** Discuss geomorphology, physical dynamics, bathymetry, etc., in the context of the actual offshore borrow areas (i.e., OCS sources) being considered. 19.
- **Section 4.3.3.4:** Add information/note on sand shoal complex (geomorphology). 20.
- **Section 4.3.4.2:** Add information/note on sand shoal complex (geomorphology). 21.
- **Section 4.3.6, Page 4-16, Line 26:** Add that oil is unlikely to be present in offshore borrow sites and specifically note/include the OCS borrow locations in discussion. 22.
- **Section 4.5.3.1, Benthic Invertebrates:** The document states the following: 23.
During the three benthic macroinfauna community assessments conducted for MsCIP, in June 2010, September 2010, and April/May 2011, benthic macroinfauna samples were collected from 20 offshore locations (borrow site stations), 19 beach/subtidal locations (beach transect stations), and 25 sand placement locations (placement site stations) (Figure 4-5). **The offshore locations were selected within each potential borrow area to be representative of conditions in each of the potential borrow areas and included littoral shoal/disposal habitats (e.g., DA-10/Sand Island and Petit Bois Pass) and fluvial/ebb-tide delta habitats (Ship Island and Cat Island borrow areas).**

The baseline benthic data used to frame benthic resource impacts do not appear to have included any sampling from the OCS borrow areas and, therefore, may not completely reflect the full scope of Borrow Option 4. If the sampling stations that have been conducted represent the potential OCS resource areas, this should be discussed.

- **Section 4.5.8:** This section needs to be updated to include OCS borrow locations and needs to be consistent with the revised BA. This also needs to be noted on page 4-51, lines 6 and 7. 24.
- **Section 4.5.8.2, Figure 4-7:** The figures throughout the main report and associated appendices (e.g., “Appendix N – Biological Assessment”) do not effectively communicate the borrow area locations and are not consistent. We recommend cross checking figures within the main report and relevant appendices to assure borrow area locations are consistent. 25.
- **Section 4.8:** Note BOEM’s role in the Section 106 consultation process as established in the Cooperating Agency letter and note that BOEM’s archaeologists are working with USACE staff to satisfy BOEM’s OCS requirements. Cultural resources need to be updated as appropriate with new information following completion of the OCS cultural resource surveys. 26.
- **Section 4.10:** Update the noise section to incorporate resource impacts relative to noise sources associated with dredging activities. We recommend incorporating the most recent Engineer Research and Development Center’s Technical Report titled *Characterization of Underwater Sounds Produced by Trailing Suction Hopper Dredges During Sand Mining and Pump-Out Operations*. 27.
- **Section 5, Environmental Effects:** Many of the conclusions made in this section need to be supported by best available scientific literature and referenced. 28.
- **Section 5.2.4.1:** On page 5-9, you need to add a paragraph on PBP-OCS after discussion of PBP-AL borrow. 29.
- **Section 5.2.5:** We recommend clarifying the post-dredging sediment characteristics for all borrow options based on vibracore data and proposed dredging depths. Though silts and clays are native, a shift from sand to silt and clays is a change in habitat type and a potential resource impact. Borrow areas that fill in with silts and clays result in a change in the community structure and composition. The borrow area benthic community impact analysis should be completed in the context of sediment type following dredging, risk of hypoxia based on dredge depth and circulation, frequency of dredging, and infilling/settling sediments. 30.
- **Section 5.2.3.1, Borrow Option 4:** This section states that “removal of material from the PBP-OCS borrow sites were not modeled considering OCS sites are located more than 3.5 miles offshore in water depths of 45 to 60 feet. Given the offshore distance and ambient water depths, it is unlikely that use of the potential borrow areas in the OCS would cause impacts from wave refraction or focusing.” Realizing that many of the potential OCS sites are pending and that the geomorphology and dredging depths have not been clarified, we recommend confirming that modeling is still not necessary once additional data come in. 31.

- **Section 5.4.5.1:** You need to add a short discussion/note concerning the GRBO, as discussed on page 5-43, lines 17-31. 32,
- **Section 5.4.8, Borrow Option 4:** As discussed in the Cooperating Agency letter, BOEM requested to be incorporated into existing consultations. We recommend documenting that BOEM has coverage under existing regional/programmatic consultations (i.e., GRBO). We recommend correcting the summary conclusions for Gulf sturgeon and sea turtles from MANLA to MALAA considering the lethal entrainment risk. 33,
- **Section 5.5.1.1, EFH, Borrow Option 4:** We recommend incorporating more discussion on the dredging methodology, borrow area use plan, post-dredging sediment characteristics, dredging depths, etc., to support the conclusions that recovery would occur quickly. 34,
- **Section 5.14, Cumulative Impacts:** This section summarizes other activities occurring in the vicinity, but it does not fully evaluate the cumulative effects in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality guidelines. 35,
- **Section 6.1:** This section notes that “This SEIS will be used to support the NEPA compliance requirements for the USACE, the NPS, and the BOEM...” We recommend that this be stated up front in the document and that this include what the proposed action and the purpose and need are for each agency. 36,
- **Section 6.1:** You need to add a short discussion of the GRBO within this section as it covers ESA, MMPA, and turtles on OCS. 37,
- **Section 6.7, ESA:** We recommend clarifying that BOEM, as a cooperating agency on this project, is a joint consultant on all ESA consultations. Additionally, BOEM requests coverage under all existing consultations and clearly states that those consultations cover all proposed OCS borrow locations and associated activities. 38,
- **Section 6.9:** In the Final SEIS, you need to note that the EFH consultations included OCS borrow locations. 39,
- **Section 6.10:** In the Final SEIS, you need to note that consultation included OCS borrow locations. 40,
- **Section 6.15:** In the Final SEIS, you need to add/update the completed OCS cultural resource surveys data and coordination. 41.

APPENDIX N – BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

SIGNIFICANT OVERARCHING COMMENT

- The proposed action, as discussed within this BA, is not consistent with the TSP documented in the SEIS. It needs to be updated to be consistent with the Borrow Option 4 component of the TSP and to specifically address the OCS resources. Additionally, consistent with the October 5, 2012, Cooperating Agency letter, BOEM's connected action and joint consulting role on both NMFS and USFWS consultations need to be clarified in the BA and all associated letter correspondence needs to be revised to document ESA coverage for BOEM's connected action. 42,

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

- **Proposed Action, Page 5:** Include BOEM's connected action and joint consulting role on this consultation with NMFS and USFWS. 43,
- **Proposed Action, Page 5:** The following statement is inconsistent with the main report/SEIS: "Approximately 16 mcy would be placed in Camille Cut and approximately 6 mcy would be placed along the southern shore of East Ship Island." This is not consistent with the SEIS, which states a total of 13.5 mcy in Camille Cut and 5.5 mcy at East Ship Island. 44,
- **Page 6, Second Paragraph:** The proposed action is not consistent with the SEIS document and needs to be updated to reflect consistency with the Borrow Option 4 component of the TSP. Specifically, the proposed action needs to address the OCS sand. 45.
- **Potential Borrow Areas, Page 16:** Not consistent with TSP in the SEIS document. 46.
- **Page 23, First Paragraph:** We request USACE and BOEM coverage under the GRBO. 47.
- **Loggerhead Sea Turtle, Page 32:** We recommend including proposed critical habitat CH designation. 48.
- **Loggerhead Sea Turtle, Page 39:** The BA states that "It is likely that these whales, if within the borrow areas, would avoid the operations activities due to noise." This statement could be interpreted as a behavior modification associated with the proposed action and is inconsistent with NEPA conclusions that noise would not be significant and exceed threshold levels. We recommend revising this statement regarding project-related impacts to marine mammals relative to noise. 49.

For questions regarding the BOEM comments, please contact Dr. Kenneth Ashworth (504) 736-2656 via email at Kenneth.ashworth@boem.gov or Dr. Michael Miner on (504) 736-2700 or via email at Michael.miner@boem.gov.

The Department has a continuing interest in working with the USACE to ensure that impacts to resources of concern to the Department are adequately addressed. I can be reached on (404) 331-4524 or via email at joyce_stanley@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Stanley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joyce Stanley, MPA
Regional Environmental Protection Specialist

cc: Tommy Broussard - BOEM
Christine Willis - USFWS
Gary Lecain - USGS
Steven M. Wright - NPS
OEPC - WASH

Responses to Department of Interior Comments, Letter dated April 21, 2014

National Park Service Comments Responses

1. Concur that the cover page does not include Sand Island. This was changed on the cover page.
2. Non-concur, the acreage of the island will continue to change in response to available sediment input. The analyses of acreages of all islands used in the SEIS were based on full island topographic survey data coverage.
3. Non-concur, the language in Section 1.3 is a generic discussion and the freshwater wetlands are addressed elsewhere in the document.
4. No action taken because Sand Island is already included in the description.
5. Non-concur on 3-1 and concur on 3-3. Figure 3-1 is from a prior publication and cannot be changed. The change was made in Figure 3-3.
6. Concur, the edits were made to reflect the comment recommendations.
7. There may have been confusion between DA-10/Sand Island Borrow Option 1 and 2 (which take 5.1 and 3.7 mcy respectively) and the Alternative Borrow Options (Options 1 and 2, which takes 5.1 mcy, Option 3 which takes 3.7 mcy, and Option 4, which takes 0 mcy). Table 3-3 is referring to the DA-10/Sand Island Borrow Options only. The text was revised to state:

Feasible; within Gulf sturgeon and piping plover critical habitat; active dredge material disposal site;

DA-10/Sand Island Borrow Area Option 1 would eliminate or adversely affect the hydrology and functionality of the palustrine emergent wetlands and some of the estuarine intertidal wetlands, some piping plover habitat would remain, and this option would reduce wave energy penetrating the Sound by keeping in place the southern shoreline;

DA-10/Sand Island Borrow Area Option 2 would avoid the palustrine emergent wetlands.
8. Concur, the edits were made to reflect the recommended comment text.
9. Non-concur, this comment included only the addition of the sentence "Even with using a smaller area of Sand Island, it is anticipated that removal of this sand would adversely affect all wetlands on Sand Island through dredge removal or from damage to the hydrologic conditions that currently support any remaining wetlands. We do concur

with statement that hydrologic conditions would impact all wetlands on DA-10 and will be updated to reflect such.

10. Concur, figures were revised accordingly.

11. Non-concur

12. Concur, wetland impacts were corrected to be consistent with WSOF report.

13. Concur, figures were revised accordingly.

14. Concur, figures were revised accordingly.

15. Concur, recommended changes were made accordingly.

16. Concur, clarification was added. Cat Island was included in the modeling grid for storm wave sensitivity analysis. Alternative sand placement strategies were not included. Although not quantified as a percent reduction the analysis does show a clear reduction in wave heights in the sound and along the mainland in the lee of the island. Text added to 5.4.1.1., under Cat Island Restoration: Restoration would result in a reduction in wave heights in the Mississippi Sound and along the mainland in the lee of Cat Island (Appendix C).

17. There is not an apparent discrepancy in grain size variation that warrants further discussion in the SEIS. The sampling results merely show what the grain size was at those discrete locations. It is a small sample population in comparison with the entire island and grain size will be naturally variable throughout the island because of the effects of the depositional environment when it was deposited and the ensuing coastal processes reworking it. The difference in grain size (~0.06 mm) is very small and does not constitute a difference in sediment type (gravel vs. sand vs. silt/clay) based on grain size. All the samples were classified as a medium-grained sand on the Wentworth scale and were poorly graded, with similar color and percentage of fine sediments.

18. Concur, appropriate changes were made.

Fish and Wildlife Service Comments Responses

1. Non-concur, a statement was added in the text citing the appropriate Appendix for additional information.

2. Concur, the number of surveys were added in the text.

3. Concur, the number of surveys were added in the text.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Comments Responses

Significant Overarching Comments:

1. Concur, the final listing of identified borrow areas and their corresponding descriptions will be in the final SEIS.
2. Concur, the language provided was added to the document appropriately.
3. Concur, 4.1 is the effective volume after assuming 15% dredge inefficiency. The total delineated volume is 4.9 MCY. A table was added to the SEIS to show total available, effective volume and in place volumes.
4. Concur, the requested language was incorporated into the document. BOEM will be copied on all subsequent consultations and coordinations associated with the OCS borrow areas.
5. Concur, the Corps coordinated with BOEM to obtain additional studies and references. This information was used to update the impacts assessments throughout Chapter 5.
6. Concur, see response above.
7. Concur, 4.1 is the effective volume in the OCS after assuming 15% dredge inefficiency. The total delineated volume is 4.9 MCY. A table will be added to the SEIS to show total available, effective volume and in place volumes. The total available volume is approximately 24 MCY, not assuming DA-10 or expansion of Ship Island borrow. The assumed effective volume to be obtained from the borrow areas is 19.5 MCY due to dredge inefficiencies. Assuming an estimated 5-10% loss during transport and placement, the current estimated placement volume is approximately 18 MCY. To address issues with storms, the current plan has exhaustion of all available suitable borrow sources outside of the Petit Bois Alabama sites. Any contingencies would likely come from these sources. A section was added to the SEIS which discusses contingencies for placement of up to the authorized amount of 22 MCY should unforeseen events occur during construction that would warrant further placement.
8. Non-concur on first part of the comment, page 3-6 is a general discussion of all borrow sites. Concur on second part, but should be discussed in Chapter 5 instead of 3.2.1. Also will add a description of the criteria/approach used to determine the depth and area limits of the borrow sites in 3.2.1.2 (i.e. buffer used on bottom of borrow sites).
9. Concur, these coordinations for the OCS sites were added appropriately.
10. Concur, once the cultural resources surveys have been completed, this information will be included in the Final SEIS.

11. Concur, discussion of the ranges of potential dredging depths, and post-dredging sediment types, and geomorphology of the identified sediment resource will be added to the SEIS. This discussion and cited scientific literature was used to substantiate conclusions for impacts to benthic communities and EFH.

12. Concur, figures were revised accordingly.

Specific Comments:

13. Concur, language added to Section 3: BOEM also agreed to participate in the required ESA Section 7 consultation, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management Act Essential Fish Habitat consultation (Section 305), the NHPA Section 106 process, and the Coastal Zone Management Act Section 307 consistency determination. As the lead federal agency for ESA Section 7 and the Essential Fish Habitat consultations, USACE notified USFWS and NMFS of its lead role and BOEM's cooperating status. Through this partnership USACE jointly submitted, with BOEM, the ESA Section 7 and Essential Fish Habitat assessments to USFWS and NMFS. USACE also acted as the lead federal agency for Section 106 compliance in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800.2(2) while BOEM acted as a cooperating agency for Section 106 compliance, offering input and consultation as needed.

14. Non-concur on first part. Page 3-6 is a general discussion of all borrow sites. Concur on second part, but should be discussed in Chapter 5 instead of 3.2.1. Also need to add a description of the criteria/approach used to determine the depth and area limits of the borrow sites in 3.2.1.2 (i.e. buffer used on bottom of borrow sites).

15. Appropriate discussion was added to this section in accordance with BOEM guidance.

16. Concur, the description of the new OCS sites will be provided in the final document.

17. It is anticipated that the contractor will need several pipeline routes from water depths of approximately 30 ft south of the island to the breach closure area and East Ship. Per the contract specifications, the contractor will be required to submit a pipeline route plan for COE approval at which time it will be evaluated against all environment and cultural resource requirements. The contractor's pipeline route plan will include methodology, pipeline type, equipment needed and anchor point locations.

18. Concur, the document has been updated with the current OCS information when the geotechnical work is completed. This work has been completed and incorporated into the document.

19. Appropriate language was added to this section in accordance with BOEM guidance.

20. Appropriate language was added to this section in accordance with BOEM guidance.

21. Appropriate language was added to this section in accordance with BOEM guidance.

22. Concur, added: No oil or tar products were observed during borrow site (in state or federal/OCS areas) sediment sampling from 2010 through 2014, and no oil or tar products were identified from core sediment sample analysis.

23. Concur, information provided by Vittor and Associates and added to the document for the OCS sites. They have identified other benthic studies that have been done closer to the OCS sites. These studies were not exactly in the OCS sites but are within the general vicinity and representative of the sites being used.

24. Concur. This section was updated to include the OCS borrow locations and checked for consistency with the BA. Text added to Section 4.5.8: Whale species protected under NOAA Fisheries (Table 4-7) are unlikely to occur in the nearshore project area due to its shallow waters. These species occur in the OCS, but typically at depths greater than 200 feet, and therefore not within the proposed OCS borrow site areas.

25. Concur, the BA was updated with the latest figures.

26. Concur, added to Section 4.8: USACE acted as the lead federal agency for Section 106 compliance in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800.2(2), while BOEM acted as a cooperating agency for Section 106 compliance, established in the Cooperating Agency letter. As such, BOEM archaeologists worked with USACE to satisfy BOEM's OCS Section 106 compliance, offering input and consultation as needed.

27. Concur, additional information from BOEM was used to update the impacts assessment on noise.

28. Concur, the Corps coordinated with BOEM to obtain additional studies and references from BOEM. This information was used to update the impacts assessments throughout Chapter 5.

29. Concur, a paragraph on the PBS-OCS was added.

30. Concur, appropriate language was added to this section in accordance with BOEM guidance.

31. Concur, the need for additional modeling will be carefully considered based on final borrow area site locations for the additional OCS areas. Appropriate discussion will be added to the SEIS for all sites where applicable.

32. Concur, paragraph revised to: Impacts under Borrow Site Option 4 would be similar to those described above for Ship Island restoration but would also include marine mammal species that could occur in the deeper OCS areas. The NOAA Fisheries Service issued the Gulf Regional Biological Opinion for Dredging of Gulf of Mexico Navigation Channels and Sand Mining Areas Using Hopper Dredges by USACE Galveston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Jacksonville Districts (Gulf of Mexico Regional Biological Opinion [GRBO]) (Consultation Number F/SER/2000/01287) dated November 19, 2003. This document stated that the blue, fin, or sei whales would not be adversely affected by hopper dredging operations, since these are deepwater species and unlikely to be found near hopper dredging sites. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries has determined that there are no resident stocks of these species in the Gulf of Mexico, and therefore these species are not likely to be adversely affected by projects in the Gulf (2003). Therefore, no significant impacts would occur.

33. Concur with first part that BOEM has coverage under GRBO. The GRBO covers measures to minimize adverse actions and a take statement for gulf sturgeon and sea turtles. Non-concur with second part, and impact analysis will not be changed.

34. Concur, appropriate language was added to this section in accordance with BOEM guidance.

35. Concur, this section was updated to include cumulative effects in accordance with the CEQ guidelines.

36. Concur, added to Exec Summary and Section 2.1: This SEIS will be used to support the NEPA compliance requirements for the federal agencies with jurisdiction over parts of the tentatively selected plan, including USACE, the NPS, and the BOEM. As a federal agency with jurisdiction to manage the resources available on OCS, BOEM was invited by USACE to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the SEIS. BOEM's connected, though separate, proposed action is to issue a negotiated agreement pursuant to its authority under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act for use of sand, gravel, and shell resources for CSDR projects from the OCS. What about NPS?

37. Partially concur, the GRBO was discussed more in Section 5, under the sections to which it applies. Section 6.1 addresses Env. Laws, regs and E.O.s.

38. Concur, BOEM will be included in all remaining consultations with NMFS and USFWS.

39. The SEIS covers OCS borrow locations, EFH consultations will be via the SEIS. A formal letter will be sent to NMFS as a courtesy.

40. Concur, this language was added to SEIS as appropriate.

41. Concur, the Final SEIS, will contain the completed OCS cultural resource surveys data and coordination.

APPENDIX N – Biological Assessment:

Significant Overarching Comment

42. Concur, the BA was updated appropriately and included in Appendix N.

Specific Comments

43. Concur, language was added to the BA to indicate the connected action and joint consulting role the consultations with NMFS and USFWS.

44. Concur, the BA was corrected to be consistent with the SEIS.

45. Concur, the BA was corrected to be consistent with the SEIS.

46. Concur, the BA was corrected to be consistent with the SEIS.

47. Concur, the appropriate updates were made to the BA.

48. Non-concur, USFWS critical habitat designation for loggerhead sea turtles is on Petit Bois and Horn Islands, which are outside of the project areas. The Corps will check to see if NMFS and USFWS designations for loggerheads overlap. If so, appropriate changes will be made

49. Concur, the BA was modified to say that whales are not likely to be present in the project area.



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

April 21, 2014

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mobile District
Attention: Dr. Susan I. Rees (CESAM-PD)
109 St. Joseph Street
Mobile, AL 36602

Subject: EPA Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration. Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi
CEQ #: 20140060 and ERP#: COE-E39075-MS

Dear Dr. Rees:

Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, and Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed the subject document. As a cooperating agency on the project, EPA participated in interagency meetings, interim document reviews and a public workshop meeting on April 3, 2014. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with EPA's Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) comments on the proposed project.

EPA commends the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District (COE) for your planning and coordination efforts on this project. The subject document is a supplement to the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) Comprehensive Plan and Integrated Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (USACE, 2009a). The MsCIP PEIS evaluated measures to promote the recovery of coastal Mississippi from the hurricanes of 2005 and to increase the resilience of the coast against damage from future storms. The PEIS recommended a number of important elements for phased implementation over a 30–40 year period including the comprehensive restoration of the Mississippi barrier islands.

EPA recognizes that sea level rise is the primary driver of coastal land loss, but storms are the means of sediment redistribution and land loss along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The DSEIS proposes to restore part of the Mississippi barrier islands in the Gulf of Mexico by placing sand within the National Park Service (NPS) Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS), Mississippi units. This action is intended to address the consequences of previous hurricanes and navigational dredging activities that altered sediment transport along the islands.

The DSEIS evaluates a No-Action alternative and a Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) Alternative for restoring the Mississippi barrier island system. The TSP Alternative includes the restoration of Ship Island, the placement of beach-front and dune sand along Cat Island and the management of maintenance dredged material from the Pascagoula Ship Channel. Within this alternative, the DSEIS also evaluates alternative sand borrow areas including the preferred Borrow Site Option (BS Option 4), site-specific options for restoration at the sand placement locations authorized for construction, and specification of sand quantity for the Cat Island restoration, engineering and design alternatives, and construction methods.

According to the DSEIS, approximately 22 million cubic yards (mcy) of sand will be placed on the barrier island or within the littoral transport system. Specifically, the Ship Island restoration involves directly placing about 13.5 mcy of sand between East Ship Island and West Ship Island to fill a 3.5-mile breach in Camille Cut and placing 5.5 mcy of sand along the southern shoreline of East Ship Island to replenish sand and build up the island. The total fill encompasses 1,500 acres with 800 acres above the Mean High Water Level (MHWL). The sand used in these areas would be dredged from five main borrow areas offshore from Ship Island, Petit Bois Pass (AL, MS, OCS) and Horn Island Pass.

The Cat Island dune and beach restoration plan involves placing natural dune vegetation and 2 mcy of sand found off the eastern shoreline of Cat Island directly on the eastern shoreface of Cat Island. The total fill area encompasses 305 acres which should restore the island to 1998 conditions. In addition, future dredge material from the Pascagoula Navigation Channel Horn Island Pass Segment is now proposed for disposal between Disposal Area 10 (DA-10) and the south end of Pascagoula Harbor littoral zone placement site where it can contribute to littoral transport.

According to the DSEIS, implementation of the TSP will result in negative and beneficial impacts to placement and borrow areas and to the area users. "These impacts include the permanent loss of open water habitat at Camille Cut, construction-related disruptions to birds and other wildlife of Ship and Cat Islands, and construction-related disruptions to public use of borrow and placement areas." However, the DSEIS indicates that "the overall significant long-term system-wide benefits to the ecosystems, as well as economic benefits associated with damages and economic losses avoided and regional economic benefits, outweigh the negative impacts. The restoration of the islands, with important economic, recreational, environmental and aesthetic benefits, help maintain and sustain Mississippi Sound and the coastal mainland."

In addition, "restoration would provide additional nesting habitat for threatened and endangered sea turtles and over-wintering critical habitat for the piping plover as well as habitat for neotropical migrants and waterfowl. Closure of Camille Cut would help maintain the salinity regime in the Sound and the habitat conditions for oysters and numerous estuarine dependent fish and crustacean species that are essential for commercial and recreational fishing." "In addition, the barrier island restoration would contribute to continued protection of the significant historical and cultural sites within the GUIIS. The anticipated reduction in storm surges would also help to protect unique coastal mainland habitats, wetlands, and special aquatic sites (including the Grand Bay NERR)."

EPA supports the need to protect and maintain the estuarine ecosystem of Mississippi Sound, reduce the amount of storm damage incurred along the mainland coast of Mississippi, and preserve and protect the Mississippi barrier islands and their natural and cultural resources. We note that the DSEIS identifies a long-term solution for island restoration by adding large volumes of beach quality sand back into the littoral sediment transport system to nourish adjacent barrier islands and mitigate land losses. We also note that the TSP will result in 800 acres of new habitat on Ship Island, 305 acres of new habitat on Cat Island, 762 acres of foraging habitat for wintering birds, 93.39 acres marine intertidal wetland created, and a 0.2-1.25 meter wave height reduction on the mainland. On the other hand, 25.57 acres marine and estuarine intertidal wetland will be lost, 39 acres of designated piping plover critical habitat will be unavailable during construction, 511 acres of Gulf sturgeon critical habitat in Camille cut will be lost by filling Camille cut and a path for crossing of nesting turtles will be also be affected. In addition, resident birds and breeding migrants will be disrupted, infaunal species submerged and epifaunal invertebrates displaced. Other species such as benthic, non-motile mollusks and amphipods should recover over time.

Some uncertainty remains regarding the impact of prolonged and uninterrupted construction activities on SHIP Island over a minimum period of 2.5 years. Approximately 1,500 acres of habitat will not be useable during this period. Many of the impacts discussed in the document are described as short-term because after construction is complete the environment is assumed to return to normal. However, it is unclear what the impacts of no nesting, no spawning, no benthic community have on populations, or reduced dissolved oxygen and increased turbidity may mean for fishing in the area (i.e., ship island) during this period. It is also unclear in some cases the extent of the turbidity plumes. EPA notes that it would be helpful to be able to review both the monitoring and adaptive management plan which may include routine monitoring and adaptive strategies should certain events occur and possibly the biological opinion to ensure that every effort is being made to further avoid or minimize impacts to spawning fish or foraging birds in the impact zone.

EPA understands that the COE coordinated with the tribes on cultural resources with the project area. However, uncertainty now exists with the value placed on the resource in the area. The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) should include any additional tribal coordination efforts or changes to the resource designations (i.e., sacred sites).

Again, EPA supports efforts to protect the Mississippi Gulf Coast from future storm damage by restoring the Mississippi Barrier Islands. Based on our analysis of the proposed action, EPA rates this DSEIS as EC-1 -i.e., EPA has "Environmental Concerns." EPA's rating system can be found online at: <http://www.epa.gov/oecaerth/nepa/comments/ratings.html>. The rating is based on the need to ensure that natural resource concerns such as water quality and impacts to fish and wildlife species are fully addressed in the monitoring and adaptive management plan. EPA understands the monitoring and adaptive management plan and the biological opinion, which are key components to addressing remaining resource questions, are being completed with assistance from federal agencies such as the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. According to the COE, this information will be available soon for interagency review and should help resolve any remaining issues that we may have.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions or require technical assistance, please contact Ntale Kajumba of my staff at (404) 562-9620, Calista Guthrie from the Wetlands Program Staff at (404) 562-9288 or John Bowie of the Gulf of Mexico Program Office at (228) 688-3888.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ramona K. McCune for". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Office of Environmental Accountability

Responses to Environmental Protection Agency's Comments, Letter dated April 21, 2014

1. Some uncertainty remains regarding the impact of prolonged and uninterrupted construction activities on Ship Island over a minimum period of 2.5 years. Approximately 1500 acres of habitat will not be usable during this period. Many of the impacts discussed in the document are described as short-term b/c after construction is complete the environment is assumed to return to normal. However, it is unclear what the impacts of no nesting, no spawning, no benthic community have on populations, or reduced dissolved oxygen and increased turbidity may mean for fishing in the area (i.e., Ship Island) during this period. It is also unclear in some cases the extent of the turbidity plumes. EPA notes that it would be helpful to be able to review both the monitoring and adaptive management plan, which may include routine monitoring and adaptive strategies should certain events occur and possibly the biological opinion to ensure that every effort is being made to further avoid or minimize impacts to spawning fish or foraging birds in the impact zone.

Response: The construction schedule is being coordinated with USFWS and NPS to minimize impacts. The impacts of concern are addressed in Chapter 5 of the SEIS. A monitoring and adaptive management (MAM) plan has been prepared and is included in Appendix S.

2. EPA understands that the COE coordinated with the tribes on cultural resources with the project area. However, uncertainty now exists with the value placed on the resource area. The FSEIS should include any additional tribal coordination efforts or changes to the resource designations (i.e., sacred sites).

Response: The appropriate cultural resources coordinations are being conducted and will be included in the SEIS when completed.

3. Based on our analysis of the proposed action, EPA rates this DSEIS as EC-1 (i.e., EPA has "environmental concerns"). The rating is based on the need to ensure that natural resource concerns such as water quality and impacts to fish and wildlife species are fully addressed in the monitoring and adaptive management plan. EPA understands the monitoring and adaptive management plan and the biological opinion, which are key components to addressing remaining resource questions, are being completed with assistance from federal agencies such as the NPS and USFWS. According to the COE, this information will be available soon for interagency review and should help resolve any remaining issues that we may have.

Response: A monitoring and adaptive management (MAM) plan has been prepared and is included in Appendix S.



**MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS**

Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director

April 30, 2014

**Susan Rees
Department of the Army
Mobile District Corps of Engineers
PO Box 2288
Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001**

Re: MsCIP-Draft Supplemental EIS
Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration
Hancock, Harrison, and Hancock Counties, Mississippi

R# 10053

To Ms. Susan Rees:

In response to your request for information dated December 12, 2013, we have searched our database for occurrences of state or federally listed species and species of special concern that occur within 2 miles of the site of the proposed project. Please find our concerns and recommendations below.

Recommendations:

Numerous species of concern, including several state and federally threatened or endangered species, occur on and around the Mississippi barrier islands. Specifically, the East and West tips of East Ship Island, and the East tip of West Ship Island are heavily utilized by Piping and Southeastern Snowy Plovers. In addition, Gulf Sturgeon are known utilize habitat within the proposed project area. Our recommendation for minimizing and/or avoiding impacts to these species is to minimize or avoid, if possible, work on the East and West tips of East Ship Island, the East tip of West Ship Island, and any known Gulf Sturgeon hotspots in the area from early September to late April.

Please feel free to contact us if we can provide any additional information, resources, or assistance that will help minimize negative impacts to the species and/or ecological communities

identified in this review. We are happy to work with you to ensure that our state's precious natural heritage is conserved and preserved for future Mississippians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Sanderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Andy Sanderson, Coordinator
Mississippi Natural Heritage Program
(601) 576-6046

The Mississippi Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) has compiled a database that is the most complete source of information about Mississippi's rare, threatened, and endangered plants, animals, and ecological communities. The quantity and quality of data collected by MNHP are dependent on the research and observations of many individuals and organizations. In many cases, this information is not the result of comprehensive or site-specific field surveys; most natural areas in Mississippi have not been thoroughly surveyed and new occurrences of plant and animal species are often discovered. Heritage reports summarize the existing information known to the MNHP at the time of the request and cannot always be considered a definitive statement on the presence, absence or condition of biological elements on a particular site.

Response to Mississippi Museum of Natural Science Comments, Letter dated April 30, 2014

Response: Formal consultations are being conducted with the NOAA Fisheries, NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A biological assessment (BA) has been prepared and is included in Appendix N of the SEIS. The Corps will be receiving biological opinions from both agencies which will include terms and conditions towards minimizing impacts to protected species including sea turtles, shorebirds, migratory birds, and Gulf sturgeon.

April 21, 2014

Dr. Susan I. Rees
Department of the Army
Mobile District, Corps of Engineers
PO Box 2288
Mobile, Alabama, 36628-0001
Susan.I.Rees@usace.army.mil



RE: Regarding DSEIS - MSCIP.

Dear Dr. Rees:

On behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association, I hereby submit these comments in response to the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) and the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) for sand borrow sites to replenish Cat and Ship Islands within the Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS). NPCA supports the DSEIS and TSP to the extent that the sand borrow sites lie outside of the Gulf Islands National Seashore, and supports efforts for more research and analysis of borrow sites within Mississippi or the Outer Continental Shelf as a superior alternative to purchase of sand from Alabama.

NPCA Supports Use of Sand Removed From Areas Outside of the Park System

The TSP in the DSEIS recommends removal of 19 million cubic yards (mcy) of sand from the following five locations for the replenishment of East Ship Island and closure of Camille Cut:

- Ship Island (1.2 mcy)
- Petit Bois Pass—in Alabama (8.5 mcy)
- Petit Bois Pass-Mississippi (2.0 mcy)
- Petit Bois Pass—Outer Continental Shelf (4.1 mcy), and
- Horn Island Pass (3.2 mcy)

This proposed course of action is referred to as “Borrow Site Option 4.” The TSP also includes a proposal to remove another 2 mcy from a site outside of the GUIS to replenish Cat Island.

NPCA supports the decision to avoid disturbance of Sand Island. Sand Island should not be considered as a borrow site for sand removal because it maintains wildlife habitat within the boundary of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. NPCA supports the utilization of sands removed from non-Park sites, a goal in line with the National Park Service’s mission to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.”

The stated purposes of the DSEIS are: “...to restore a portion of the Mississippi barrier islands”...“related to the consequences of Hurricane Katrina, other hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005, and past navigational dredging and disposal activities that have altered sediment availability and transport along the islands.”¹ To shuffle the same sand that is already in the GUIS island system to a

¹ DSEIS, Executive Summary, p.2

new location within that system goes against the goal of the DSEIS to replenish the GUIS with sand lost - a historic loss of 22 mcu of sand – due to man-made dredging activities. This goal supported by the Army Corps of Engineers, NPS, the United States, the State of Mississippi, and the public. As such, NPCA supports the DSEIS and TSP to the extent that the sand borrow sites lie outside of the Gulf Islands National Seashore.

NPCA Supports Additional Research Regarding Use of Outer-Continental Shelf Sands

NPCA supports a less expensive alternative than use of sands purchased or obtained from sites in Alabama if feasible. NPCA understands that purchase of sands from Alabama may result in increased costs ranging from \$28 to \$40 million dollars. These monies could be more effective and/or beneficial for use on other projects under the MsCIP without negatively impacting the GUIS replenishment project. We therefore support the decision to explore other areas in Mississippi or the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) for the availability of suitable sand for both the Ship and Cat Island projects. If suitable material is found in these areas, then the purchase of Alabama sand can be reduced or avoided.

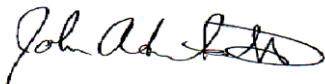
Specifically, a more thorough analysis should be conducted regarding the availability of, and a cost/benefit analysis of utilizing, sands from the Outer-Continental Shelf off of the Mississippi shore for the GUIS sand replenishment. Additional studies should also be performed regarding the safety of removal of sands from any locations which may be impacted by underground oil reserves or fault lines.

Gulf Islands National Seashore spreads across two island chains off the coast of Mississippi and Florida's panhandle, offering historic forts, white sand beaches, and endless opportunities to learn and explore. The Park's military forts and six cultural heritage sites were built over a span of nearly 150 years. NPCA supports continued efforts by the Corps to conserve and protect the natural wildlife, habitat, and historic places of the GUIS. Specifically, this project should not result in negative impacts to endangered species, particularly sea turtles and wading birds, nor to these cultural and historic sites.

We recognize that Corps has done significant work in evaluating the different management alternatives and subsequent environmental impacts surrounding this complex issue, and we appreciate the staff time and resources that have gone into making the most responsible and beneficial decision on this matter.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you toward the protection of America's National Parks.

Sincerely,



John Adornato III
Sun Coast Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association
450 North Park Road, Suite 301
Hollywood, FL 33021

Response to National Conservation Association Comments, Letter dated April 21, 2014

Response: Thank you for your comments. Information concerning additional borrow sites within the OCS is included in the Final SEIS.

To: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile AL (via e-mail: mscip@usace.army.mil)
From: Julia O'Neal, Vice-chair, Mississippi Chapter of the Sierra Club
Date: 4-21-14
Re: Comments; Draft SEIS, March 2014 (Cat and Ship Island Restoration and Alternative Site for Dredge Material Deposit from Pascagoula Channel)

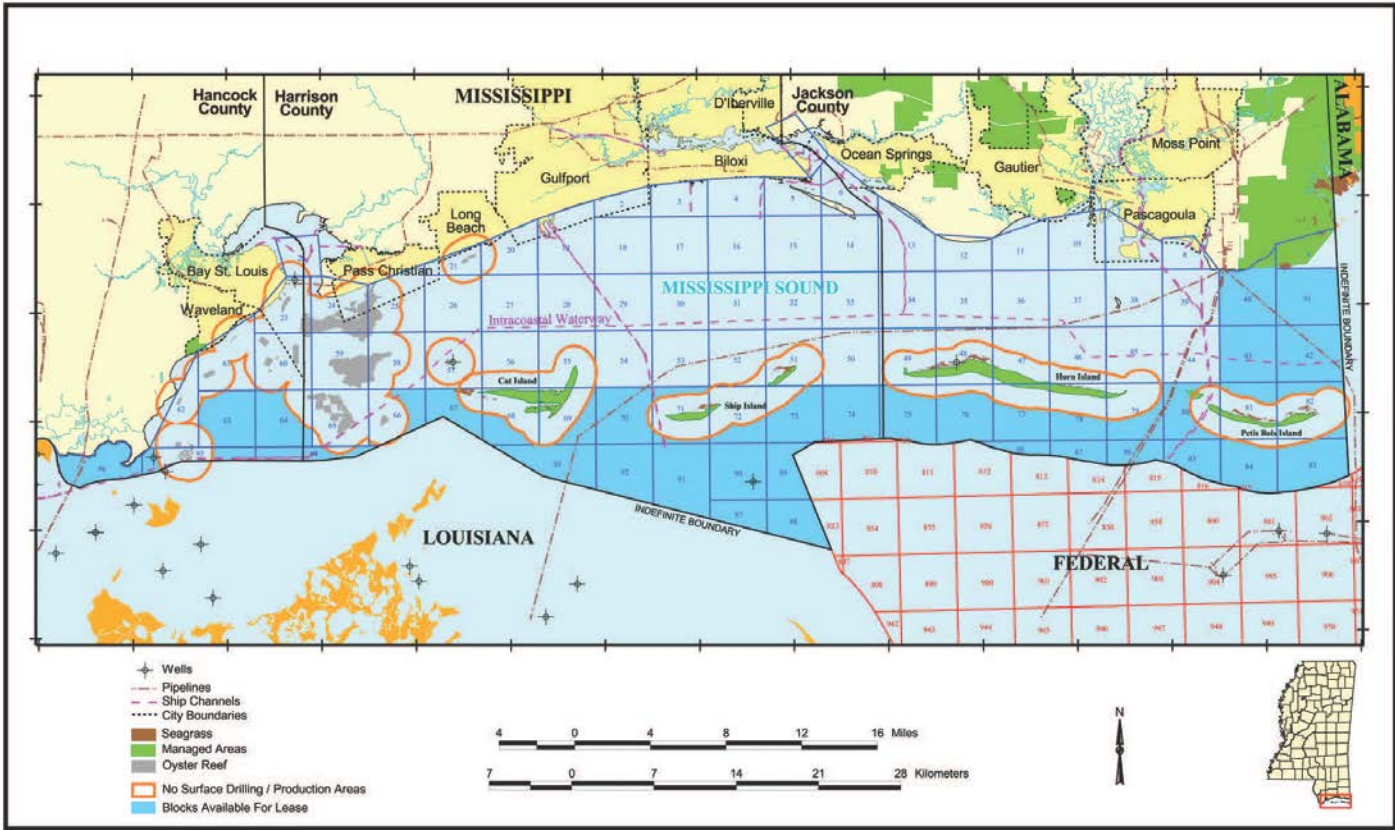
While the DSEIS is exhaustively researched and in many places goes far beyond my expertise (the composition and size of the borrow material, the latest knowledge of littoral movement, equipment), there are some areas that some of us would like to be assured will be handled carefully.

- 1) The comprehensive 2009 MsCIP PEIS was completed before the BP spill. Some of us are concerned that the borrow areas for the buildup projects detailed here may contain tar mats. Your random samplings for Macondo oil detritus (TPH) were conducted in June 2010, September 2010 and April/May 2011 (Chapter 4.3.6). Tar balls and tar mats are still turning up in places where they weren't before, on land. There could easily have been movement under the water. If bird survey data are current up to December 2013, we should see more recent surveys for TPH (total petroleum hydrocarbons). On p. 5-12 (5.2.5) you say that if tar balls were encountered, the USCG would be notified for appropriate clean up. We would contend that with more timely testing you could avoid this disturbance, which might lead to using contaminated borrow material. There is very little mention, overall, of oil contamination in this DSEIS, and it deserves more study.
- 2) Attached is a map of the areas that Mississippi Development Authority plans to lease for oil and gas drilling in state waters. It looks as though the Mississippi borrow sites (in the adopted Option 4) for Ship Island (Figures 4-6 and 4-7), Horn Island Pass (Figure 3-13), and PBP-MS (Figure 3-11) are outside the one mile buffer around the Gulf Islands National Seashore, and in the lease area. You discuss the BOEM jurisdiction over mineral extraction, including gravel and sand, as applied to Alabama (p. VI and ff). Presumably if Mississippi is leasing these areas of state waters, it might also consider your activity "mining." Perhaps the Mississippi Development Authority has given permission, but we would like to know.
- 3) The replanting of the "new" areas of marsh and dune are to be "sea oats and forbs" (repeated often in the early section). Later, the inventory of existing flora on the islands is thorough (4.5.1.2). You have cross sections showing how you intend to structure the new geography, but you do not explain how you plan to re-vegetate the resulting foreshore & backshore, wetlands, dunes, etc., that result. There will be some differences, as you point out, in the sand from different borrowing areas. Varying heights need specific flora or the planting will not be successful. Without the plants to hold these dunes and marshes in place, the constructions will be more subject to storms and the disturbance of nature may turn out to have been in vain. It is essential that the first planting be successful so the vegetation is established as quickly as possible. There is no real discussion of how the reconstructions will be configured and what the floral composition will be, other than "sea oats and forbs." Both geographical design and how

vegetative cover will be “re-established” and “re-colonized” (p. 5-20) deserve detailed planning.

Your discussion of sea grass loss—from 13,000 acres in 1969 to 3,614 in 2010 is striking, but we don’t know if you plan to address it. In Chapter 5, you say “Restoration of Ship Island could further enhance habitat for SAV” [submerged aquatic vegetation] (p. 5-21) but it sounds like a passive expectation, not cultivation.

- 4) General doubts: At 4.5.5, you seem sanguine about the health of the bottlenose dolphin population—that doesn’t seem to be the general scientific consensus lately, as each new calving season brings more bad news. You discuss the red knot as a species of concern, and that they have been observed wintering on East Ship (4.5.6.1). Do we really want to re-connect the humans on West Ship with the birds? The entirety of Chapter 5 describes impacts on benthic life, phyto- and zooplankton, DO, turbidity, nutrient destruction, especially in the borrow sites, but the existing life in the placement sites will also be destroyed. You express extreme confidence that all this will re-generate quickly. At one point, relative to the noise (especially of hopper dredgers), you say that “endangered species observers would be on board and would record all whale sightings and note any potential behavioral impact” (p. 5-34). Noting impact is not preventing it. Although there is much discussion of the positive after-effects for birds of more foraging and nesting land, the stress of disruption that you describe, particularly for migratory species, is daunting. Do we really want to disrupt already stressed habitat, especially so soon after the BP disaster?



Responses to Mississippi Chapter, Sierra Club Comments, Email dated April 21, 2014

1. The majority of sampling conducted by USACE for borrow material was conducted after the oil spill in 2010. No oil, tar balls, or other petroleum products were encountered during the 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013 sampling events. Due to the offshore borrow locations, it is unlikely that oil or tar products will be encountered other than the normal seeps that occur in the GOM. During project construction, the contractor will have an inspector aboard the dredge platform during operations to ensure that if oil and tar products are encountered, the dredged material will not be used for the project. In the event that a borrow area is contaminated, it will be reported to the US Coast Guard and the dredge will be decontaminated as necessary and move to another designated borrow area. In the event that contaminated material is used in the fill, the USCG will be notified and proper cleanup measures will be taken.

Added to Section 4.3.6 Sediment Quality: No oil or tar products were observed during borrow site (in state or federal/OCS areas) sediment sampling from 2010 through 2014, and no oil or tar products were identified from core sediment sample analysis.

2. This issue was discussed with the MS Secretary of State and staff. They currently have no leases in the vicinity of our borrow sites. Per their request, we provided them the locations of the borrow sites so they could ensure that actions associated with future leases will avoid the areas around the borrow sites until after the project is complete.

3. The planting will be done similar to the West Ship Island north shore action, and may include typically beach/dune species such as sea oats, gulf bluestem, etc. We expect sea grass population to expand thru natural recruitment. Per bulleted impact statements included in Section 5.4.1 (see below), beach vegetation would be increased through plantings and recruitment, and SAV would be increased due to natural recruitment from the addition of new habitat suitable for SAV. Under Section 5.4.1 (Coastal Habitats), the following text is included:

- Short-term to long-term minor impacts would occur to barrier island beach vegetation. These losses would occur at the tips of East Ship and West Ship Islands around Camille Cut. Re-vegetation would occur via plantings and natural recruitment on newly added upland.
- Long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts to SAV would occur from the addition of potential new habitat for colonization.

In Section 5.4.1, text added to the end of this sentence: Although flora and fauna occupying these habitats would be lost, the various habitats would become re-established and re-colonized following restoration. The newly created island segment would be planted with native dune vegetation, including sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*), gulf bluestem (*Schizachyrium maritimum*), and or other grasses and forbs, to restore stable dune habitat. Planting would include vegetation similar to that found in the existing coastal habitats (Section 4.5.1).

In Section 3.2.2.4, (Optimal Design for Restoration of Ship Island), and Section 3.2.3.3 (Construction Phasing) text added: The newly created island segment would be planted with native dune vegetation, including sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*), gulf bluestem (*Schizachyrium maritimum*), and or other grasses and forbs, to restore stable dune habitat. Planting would include vegetation similar to that found in the existing coastal habitats (Section 4.5.1).

4. Yes, because the long-term impacts of no action are significant. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of the SEIS.



Dr. Susan I. Rees
MsCIP Program
Department of the Army,
Mobile District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 2288
Mobile, AL 36628-0001

By email: susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil mscip@us.army.mil

April 21, 2014

RE: Comments on MsCIP Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration for Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, March 2014.

Dear Dr. Rees:

Gulf Restoration Network is committed to empowering people to protect and restore the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico Region. GRN submits these comments on behalf of its members who live and work in Mississippi and on behalf of its members and supporters who use and enjoy the Mississippi barrier islands.

Comments cover points presented in the recent draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) project to replenish and restore portions of the barrier islands of the Gulf Islands National Seashore located in Mississippi state waters.

The National Park Service, in its stewardship of the Gulf Islands National Seashore, manages and has jurisdiction over the biological, physical and cultural resources found on the islands and in the waters within one mile of their terrestrial limits.

It is clear from my conversations with both National Park Service staff and Mobile Corps staff at the Corps' public information workshop in Biloxi in April 2014 that the restoration of Ship and Cat Islands is a matter on which the Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service have disagreed. The two agencies seem to have overcome their

differences which were substantially over location of borrow sites. This issue necessarily includes questions of the cost of obtaining suitable material (sand) for the repair of the islands.

The project has gone through several iterations and has been narrowed from many restoration areas to focus on rejoining the two halves of Ship Island (East and West Ship Island) and on replenishing sand on beaches facing the Gulf side on the eastern extremities of both East Ship Island and Cat Island.

A central point of dispute between the Corps and the National Park Service has been whether Sand Island should be dredged or dug out to provide sand for the replenishment and repair of Ship and Cat Islands. Sand Island, situated near the western tip of Petit Bois Island, is a Corps of Engineers spoil disposal site used to place materials produced through dredging the Pascagoula Ship Channel. Sand has been deposited in this site; known as Disposal Area 10 (DA-10) for many decades. The Pascagoula Ship Channel has been federally maintained for well over a century. Sand Island at DA-10 has been built by dredge spoil deposition at a site within the boundaries of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. The USACOE sought to rely on Sand Island as a borrow site for this barrier island restoration project. At the same time, the National Park Service has resisted any disturbance of it because Sand Island offers wildlife habitat, particularly terrestrial resting, feeding and nesting habitat for sea birds, and is used by recreational boaters in the Gulf Islands National Seashore. Sand Island contains established fresh water wetlands much like the wetlands found on the other nearby barrier islands such as Horn Island. The National Park Service relies on its regulations and agency operating procedures as authority for its insistence that Sand Island not be disturbed by dredging.

The present version of the SEIS for the MsCIP barrier island restoration and replenishment project avoids using any of Sand Island and leaves it undisturbed. The solution for finding suitable sand is to seek it in the territorial waters of both Mississippi and Alabama, and in the federal waters of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). A sizeable amount of sand of suitable size/grade has been located for this project in a number of places around the Mississippi barrier islands and in Alabama. At the time of publication of this SEIS in March 2014, sand from Alabama was relied upon for a substantial portion of the material needed for re-connecting the halves of Ship Island. However, other sites in Mississippi territorial waters and in the OCS are being studied that may provide suitable sand. The result of these studies were not available at the time of publication of the March 2014 SEIS for this project.

The current draft SEIS states that there will be purchases of sand from the State of Alabama for use in this Mississippi project. The SEIS also states that at the time of its publication, other sand borrow sites are being surveyed in the OCS south of Horn and Petit Bois Islands. If significant quantities of suitable sand material can be found in these areas, the sand purchases from Alabama may be reduced, producing welcome cost savings for the Corps of Engineers.

Gulf Restoration Network recognizes that the two federal agencies have worked to overcome their differences on the issue of cost and the sources of sand to be used in this island restoration project. Gulf Restoration Network supports the island restoration work proposed for Ship and Cat Island including the closing of Camille Cut between East and West Ship Islands.

Rejoining East and West Ship Islands will create new terrestrial habitat. The areas of the Mississippi Sound north of a restored Ship Island will benefit from the project by having salinities decreased, and by being sheltered from wave action from the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricane Camille Cut, the breach opened by the storm in 1969 between East and West Ship Island, has for more than forty years allowed increased volumes of high salinity Gulf water to reach the Mississippi Sound, raising the salinity in the sound north of Ship island. Closing Camille Cut to make Ship Island whole should decrease these local salinity levels. Sea grass beds on the north side of Ship Island may re-colonize the bottom in calmer, lower salinity waters of the island's north (Sound) side after the work is complete. Increasing the coverage of sound-side sea grass beds would increase nursery habitat for estuarine fish and invertebrate species.

Avoiding disturbance of Sand Island preserves habitat utilized by shorebirds and seabirds and keeps freshwater wetlands intact on the island. Gulf Restoration Network supports the decision by the COE to avoid dredging Sand Island and to seek suitable sand elsewhere whether in the OCS or in Alabama.

In Mississippi's Coastal Zone Program document (MCP 1988), the stability of the barrier islands, their function in wave attenuation, and in protecting the mainland from the full force of Gulf waves and storms are discussed as being part of the national interest. MCP Ch. 8 Section 7 (G) provides the following: "consideration shall be given to protecting the physical integrity of Mississippi's barrier islands so that they may continue to shelter the coastal area from devastation." When development projects propose any changes to the barrier islands, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Coastal Zone Management Program must consider how the national interest might be affected, particularly if the height of the barrier islands or their stability is reduced.

Projects to restore and stabilize the Mississippi barrier islands are in the national interest. The projects to add sand to exposed and eroding faces of Cat or Ship Islands to restore their dimensions, and the larger project to fill Camille Cut and rejoin the East and West halves of Ship Island are protective of the same national interest as described by the state's Coastal Zone Management Program regulation document. These projects will help protect the mainland by keeping the barrier islands stable and functioning to attenuate waves from Gulf storms.

A feature of the tentatively selected plan (Option 4) is the alteration of the Pascagoula Ship Channel dredge spoil placement area (DA-10). The spoil drop area will be moved to a point farther southward of Sand Island so that the dredged material put there will be more likely to be captured by westward moving longshore currents and become part of

the littoral drift that builds the barrier islands. This is a good adjustment to COE dredge operations and is supported by Gulf Restoration Network.

The MsCIP draft Supplemental EIS discusses the restoration projects for these islands as the first line of defense in helping the Mississippi Coast resist the physical effects of future storms. Other lines of defense, all landward of the islands and on the mainland, include non-structural solutions, the rebuilding of levees and the purchase of wetlands to preserve them as flood water storage, among others. Gulf Restoration Network recognizes that the island restoration projects described in the MsCIP SEIS are part of a comprehensive suite of projects designed to make the coast more resistant to storms and flooding.

Gulf Restoration Network supports the MsCIP barrier island restoration project tentatively selected for the restoration of Ship and Cat Islands. This is also described as Option 4 in the draft SEIS. We support the decision to avoid disturbance of Sand Island because it maintains wildlife habitat within the boundary of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. We support the decision to explore other areas in Mississippi or the OCS for the availability of suitable sand for the Ship and Cat Island projects. If suitable material is found in these areas, then the purchases of Alabama sand can be reduced or avoided.

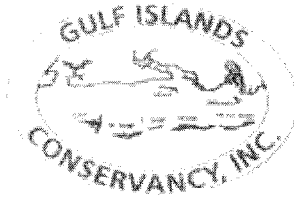
Gulf Restoration Network appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the above project.

Sincerely,

Andrew Whitehurst
Water Policy Director
Gulf Restoration Network

Response to the Gulf Restoration Network Comments, Letter dated April 21, 2014

Response: Thank you for your review and support of the project.



P.O. Box 676
Biloxi MS 39533
www.gulfislandsconservancy.com

Dr. Susan I. Rees
MsCIP Program
Department of the Army,
Mobile District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 2288
Mobile, AL 36628-0001

By email: susan.i.rees@usace.army.mil m SCIP@us.army.mil

April 21, 2014

RE: Comments on MsCIP Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration for Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, March 2014.

Dear Dr. Rees:

Response#

Thank you for the opportunity to comment of the MsCIP Draft EIS. Gulf Islands Conservancy, Inc. (GIC) would like the comments submitted to you by Gulf Restoration Network (Andrew Whitehurst) and The Mississippi Chapter of the Sierra Club (Julia O'Neal) to be considered part of our comment document.

GIC would like to stress the need for testing burrow areas immediately prior to dredging, so that oil or tar products are not dredged up and blown onto/into the restoration sites. If any oil/tar materials are found, they must be reported to the USCG, removed from the area, and disposed of on shore in the proper, safe manner.

1.

GIC also want the restored areas monitored/evaluated for at least a year after the project(s) are completed to ensure the restoration is successful. Surely there is a standard for the length of time needed to monitor the success of such a project – we are starting with one year. Only with scheduled, funded monitoring can you find any

2.

success/problems that might occur after the project is completed. Monitoring would allow you to take steps needed to correct any problems you might find. Funding for monitoring and assessment should be part of this project. If you find a problem with the project, plans should be in place for dealing with what is found during the monitoring period.

We need to know what plants/trees will be used to stabilize the restored areas –
We need to know that the plants used are supposed to be found on the barrier islands.

3,

Thank you for the work your staff did at the public meeting, and for this opportunity to submit written comments.

Sincerely,

Terese P. Collins
Gulf Islands Conservancy, Inc.
P.O. Box 676
Biloxi MS 39533

Responses to the Gulf Islands Conservancy Comments, Email dated April 21, 2014

1. Following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, USACE and USEPA jointly developed a testing protocol to analyze the spill's potential impact to USACE's Federal channels. In late 2010, sediment and water samples were collected and analyzed to characterize the physical and chemical quality of the proposed dredged material and disposal site(s). Chemical concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, total organic carbon (TOC), and total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), including diesel-range organics, oil-range organics, and gasoline-range organics, were also identified in the sediment samples. Additionally, in June 2010, USACE conducted statistically random sediment testing in the borrow and placement areas that were under investigation at that time. Grab samples collected were analyzed for TPH. Based on USACE-USEPA sediment and water sample results, no discernible changes in the sediment quality were attributable to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. If any evidence of oil is detected during construction operations, the Coastal Guard will be notified accordingly.

2. A Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan has been prepared and is included in Appendix S of the SEIS.

3. The planting will be done similar to the West Ship Island north shore action, and may include typically beach/dune species such as sea oats, gulf bluestem, etc. We expect sea grass population to expand thru natural recruitment. Per bulleted impact statements included in Section 5.4.1 (see below), beach vegetation would be increased through plantings and recruitment, and SAV would be increased due to natural recruitment from the addition of new habitat suitable for SAV. Under Section 5.4.1 (Coastal Habitats), the following text is included:

- Short-term to long-term minor impacts would occur to barrier island beach vegetation. These losses would occur at the tips of East Ship and West Ship Islands around Camille Cut. Re-vegetation would occur via plantings and natural recruitment on newly added upland.
- Long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts to SAV would occur from the addition of potential new habitat for colonization.

In Section 5.4.1, text added to the end of this sentence: Although flora and fauna occupying these habitats would be lost, the various habitats would become re-established and re-colonized following restoration. The newly created island segment would be planted with native dune vegetation, including sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*), gulf bluestem (*Schizachyrium maritimum*), and or other grasses and forbs, to restore stable dune habitat. Planting would include vegetation similar to that found in the existing coastal habitats (Section 4.5.1).

In Section 3.2.2.4, (Optimal Design for Restoration of Ship Island), and Section 3.2.3.3 (Construction Phasing) text added: The newly created island segment would be planted with native dune vegetation, including sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*), gulf bluestem (*Schizachyrium maritimum*), and or other grasses and forbs, to restore stable dune habitat. Planting would include vegetation similar to that found in the existing coastal habitats (Section 4.5.1).

Charles Kremer

April 8, 2014,

Dr. Susan I. Rees
109 St. Joseph St.
Mobile, AL 36602

Dear Dr. Rees:

Below is an excerpt from an earlier letter that I sent to you.

(Whenever a wave or wake is created and makes landfall, if the water is deep all the way to the shoreline the swell simply goes ashore, the land is submerged and then the water flows back out. Usually no damage occurs. If the swell encounters shallow water before landfall it breaks into a wave that crashes ashore knocking down things and doing considerable damage.

I see no evidence that the islands ever protected our coast quite to the contrary. Rising water caused by hurricanes would not knock down bridges and buildings but only temporarily submerge them. A wave on the other hand could destroy them. I firmly believe that if the water were deep all the way to the Mississippi Coast the storm swells from Camille and Katrina would not have knocked down our bridges and buildings, but only submerged them. I think the barrier islands are what caused the storm swells to turn into destructive waves.)

I think this theory could be shown to be either the true effect the islands have on tidal surge or not, by simulating the effect of the islands in a wave tank. It would certainly be in good judgment to ascertain the result of such a test before actually restoring the island chain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. Kremer".

Charles Kremer

Charles Kremer

March 9, 2014

Dr. Susan I. Rees
109 St. Joseph St.
Mobile, AL 36602

Dear Dr. Rees:

I have read the article in the Sun Herald about restoring the barrier islands. I believe, this is the worst possible thing that can be done to destroy our coastline and future tourism along the coast of Mississippi.

Being an engineer and in the marine business for the last sixty years, I have observed several things.

First is wave action. Whenever a wave or wake is created and makes landfall, if the water is deep all the way to the shoreline the swell simply goes ashore, the land is submerged and then the water flows back out. Usually no damage occurs. If the swell encounters shallow water before landfall it breaks into a wave that crashes ashore knocking down things and doing considerable damage.

I see no evidence that the islands ever protected our coast, quite to the contrary. Rising water caused by hurricanes would not knock down bridges and buildings but only temporarily submerge them. A wave on the other hand could destroy them. I firmly believe that if the water were deep all the way to the Mississippi Coast the storm swells from Camille

and Katrina would not have knocked down our bridges and buildings, but only submerged them. I think the barrier islands are what caused the storm swells to turn into destructive waves.

Secondly, when I was a child the water along our seawall was opaque with muddy backwater from the Mississippi River. Today with much of the island chain gone the water is considerably clearer. The difference between our beaches and those in Florida is: Florida has beautiful blue-green water and surf while Mississippi has muddy brown water and no surf. Even people who live on the Coast go to Florida to vacation. If there were no barrier islands our beaches would rival those in Florida and Floridians, as well as tourist all over the world would flock to Mississippi Coast to vacation.

The Mississippi Coast offers things non-existent in Florida. Mississippi has trees, a view of the water and unlimited access to the beach.

We should spend the 439 million dollars dredging away the barrier islands instead of restoring them. I cannot even imagine the positive economic impact created by lessening future hurricane destruction and creating a vacation destination unequal to none.

Of course we would keep the one positive asset, Ship Island, which houses the fort. One small island would not cause the same negative effect as the entire chain.

Sincerely,



Charles Kremer

Responses to Comments from Charles Kremer, Emails dated April 8 and March 9, 2014

Email Dated April 8, 2014

Response: Extensive storm surge and wave modeling along the Mississippi coast as documented in Wamsley, T.V. et al, 2013 as well as the 2009 Mississippi Barrier Island Feasibility report has shown that while restoring the islands' footprint does not have a significant impact on storm surge it does have the ability to reduce wave energy in the lee and thus peak water levels along the mainland.

Email Dated March 9, 2014

Response: 2. See previous response concerning detail modeling and published technical reports that demonstrate these islands have the ability to reduce wave energy generated by hurricanes in their lee. Although the amount of wave reduction is highly dependent on the characteristics of the storm (i.e. forward speed, path ect.) the reports clearly support that the islands provide a reduction in wave energy and total water level in their lee. There is no known published literature that supports the notion that loss of the islands would lessen future hurricane storm damage.

From: [Ken Murphy](#)
To: [Rees, Susan I SAM](#); [David Baria](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Barrier Island Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 1:27:42 PM

Dear Susan:

Thank you for the opportunity.

Although I am in favor of restoring the islands I think the money (\$439,000,000) could be used more wisely.

Rather than just restoring islands that will most certainly be damaged by future storms, what if:

We build a levee running along the northern side of the islands, 1/4 mile or so from the shoreline, enlarging the island, but close enough so the island would fill in naturally. It would be about 25 feet high, enough to protect against most storms. Further, much of the base could be built using concrete construction debris, offsetting the cost of construction.

It would double as a state park and a true barrier to future storms.

The levee could run from Alabama to Louisiana and support two lanes of car traffic with fingers going down to the waters edge for outdoor recreation such as fishing, picnicking etc..

Usage fees could be charged. This way we create a tourism destination project that will pay for itself as well as create jobs and tax revenue well into the future.

I realize that this would be a much larger project, costing more, but look how much more we would benefit in the future. I don't think anyone would complain.

Thank you,

Ken Murphy

Response to Comments from Ken Murphy, Email dated March 11, 2014

Response: The overarching goal of the MsCIP barrier island component is to restore sediment that was removed from the barrier island system through dredging and disposal practices of maintenance of the federal navigation channel(s). A levee running along the northern side of the islands would not be able to accomplish this primary goal. While a levee would likely help reduce wave heights in its lee such a large scale project spanning the region would likely have unintended consequences.

From: [Peter Kraemer](#)
To: [Rees, Susan I SAM](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Beach Restoration
Date: Sunday, March 16, 2014 12:17:59 PM

Dr. Rees,

I read about the funds and project dedicated to restoring the Mississippi Sound barrier islands.

Would it be possible to allocate some of that funding to a Dauphin Island? The Island is an important part of the ecosystem as well and it seems odd to stop the project just short of the island.

Best Regards

Peter Kraemer

Response to Comments from Peter Kraemer, Email dated March 16, 2014

Response: Thank you for your concern relative to Dauphin Island. The Congressional authorization [The Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (P.L. 111-32)] is very specific directing the Secretary of the Army to use the amount provided for barrier island restoration to restore historic levels of storm damage reduction to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Application of any of these funds to Dauphin Island would be in violation of the Congressional authorization.

From: [Holcomb, Sammy](#)
To: [Rees, Susan I SAM](#)
Cc: [Jeffrey, James A](#); [Thurman, Kim](#); [Ely, Jeff](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments for MsCIP Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration - DSEIS
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 11:03:25 AM

Susan,

I have one overall question, but it is far beyond my knowledge level. What I am about to ask may be impossible for whatever reason, but I thought I would just throw it out there.

I have heard that the Port of Gulfport is possibly planning to do some dredging. Is it possible to dredge the port and use the material that is dredged for the building up of the islands? Again this may be out of the question, but my thoughts were to "kill two birds with one stone."

Our Environmental Division, may have more comments at a later date.

Thanks,

Sammy Holcomb

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Response to Comments from Sammy Holcomb, Email dated March 21, 2014

Response: Vibracore borings were completed along the Gulfport Channel in 2010 as part of this project. The borings indicated that generally the grain size of the sediments was too small to be compatible with the fill requirements for this project. The few borings that did contain a larger grain size were isolated and did not indicate a large enough deposit for economical mining. Many of the samples also indicated that the sediments also contain a higher percentage of fine sediments (silts and clays) than is desired for this project. Therefore, because of the generally small grain size and higher content of fine sediments, USACE has determined that it would not be feasible to use the sediments from this area as fill for this project.

From: [Jim Landrum](#)
To: [Rees, Susan I SAM](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ms Barrier Island Restoration Plan
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 7:44:10 AM

Dear Susan,

I am happy to see that this includes restoring the south spit of Cat Island. However I would like to see the sand dredged from Smugglers Cove to rebuild the south spit. This would return Smugglers Cove to its original depth and provide a more usable safe harbor for recreational boaters.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this project.

James Landrum

Sent from my iPad

Response to Comments from Jim Landrum, Email dated March 14, 2014

Response: While Summglers Cove likely contains some level of compatible material due to overwash along the southern spit, the area is part of the present day island platform and was therefore not considered a viable source.