



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

CESAM-PD-EC
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP06-BH05-03

27 November 2006

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
AND
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY,
OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL
AND
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
FOR THE
RESTORATION OF DEER ISLAND, HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
GRAND BAYOU MARSH, SOUTHERN SHORELINE RESTORATION, AND THE
WESTERN BREACH
A RESTORATION PROJECT**

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District proposes to restore Deer Island back to its historic 1850s shoreline. The island is located in Harrison County, Mississippi. The proposed restoration effort consists of three individual projects: (1) restoring the Grand Bayou Marsh breach; (2) restoring the southern shoreline back to its historic 1850s footprint; and (3) restoring the western end breach.

This Public Notice is issued in accordance with the rules and regulations published in the Federal Register on April 26, 1988. These regulations provide for the review of the dredging programs for federally authorized projects. These laws are applicable whenever dredged or fill material may enter navigable waters. The recipient of this notice is requested specifically to review the proposed action as it may impact on water quality, relative to the requirements of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. We also request comments on any other potential impacts.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: Biloxi Harbor, Mississippi Sound, Jackson and Harrison Counties, Mississippi.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The purpose of this proposed action is to restore and prevent future erosion to Deer Island. The first site is a breached area located on the western end of Deer Island. Unfortunately, Deer Island was divided into two parts after

Hurricane Camille in 1969 and that breach was increased after Hurricane Elena on Labor Day in 1985. Additional other storms throughout the years have greatly increased the breach's size. The last round of storms during 2005, i.e. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, greatly increased the breach's size. The second project area, Grand Bayou Marsh, consists of a small winding tidal creek moving through the island in a winding north-south direction. It is located towards the center-eastern portion of the island. The recent 2005 storm activity caused the creek to cut all the way through the island. The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), the non-Federal partner in this effort, has great concern that the small breached area may increase in size resulting in another large cut through Deer Island. The final restoration effort at Deer Island is to restore the shoreline back to its historic 1850s footprint. Essentially, this effort would enhance the Grand Bayou Marsh restoration project along the southern shoreline.

The proposed 1850s southern shoreline restoration project would extend the entire Deer Island length, including the Grand Bayou Marsh and western end breached area, from Station 44+84.39 to Station 243+00. The restoration project would require approximately 1.3 million cubic yards (cys) of material obtained from a local borrow source near to the island and upland disposal sites, Bonivesta and Sunflower, located in Alabama. The restored features would include approximately 100 feet of flat beach, approximately 75 feet of dunes and maritime forest, and a tidal marsh that would naturally tie into the existing marsh on the island. The area adjacent to the island that would provide the fill material is located approximately 500 feet off the southern shoreline of Deer Island. This offshore borrow area would be approximately 50 feet wide, 6 feet deep, and run the entire length of the island. This material would be cast on the existing shoreline for beach nourishment via a hydraulic dredge. Land equipment, such as a bulldozer and marsh buggy, would then shape the material on the island to form the maritime, beach, tidal marsh, and dune systems. Appropriate flora species would be planted in each specified area. The proposed restoration of the entire southern shoreline would facilitate the placement of approximately 1.3 million cys of material over a total of 273 acres. At its widest point, the restored beach would be approximately 650 feet wide, and at its narrowest only 200 feet wide. The proposed project would restore approximately 273 acres at Deer Island. Approximately 126 acres would be new beach that would be placed south of the current shoreline, while approximately 147 acres would be on the existing land mass of Deer Island.

The proposed western end breach restoration project at Deer Island consists of two revetment containment dikes, one on the south side of the island and one on the north side. Sandy fill material taken from within the breached area would be stacked and eventually covered in a geotextile material and then covered in rock (i.e. rip rap) to form the revetment containment dikes. The two dikes would serve as the containment structures for the fill material to be used to fill the breach in the western portion of Deer Island. The northern and southern containment dikes would encompass an area approximately 6.4 and 7.2 acres, respectively, while the interior of the revetments would be approximately 95 acres in total area to be filled with material from

multiple private dredging projects in the Biloxi area [Commercial Docking Facility (~5,700 cys), Lighthouse Fishing Dock (~50,000 cys), Small Craft Harbor (~35,000 cys), Point Cadet Marina (~75,000 cys)] and also from the offshore borrow area adjacent to the island used in the southern shoreline restoration project.

The revetment dikes would be filled to an elevation of +3 feet from the existing ground level. The current water depth at the breach ranges between -0.5-foot and -3 feet. Approximately 4,000 linear feet and 4,500 linear feet of revetment dikes would be required on the northern and southern side, respectively. Floation channels would be constructed along the northern (4,000 feet) and southern (4,500 feet) dike interior portions in order to allow heavy equipment to access the site for operations. These channels would be approximately 6 feet deep by 50 feet wide. An interior channel would also be constructed in order to provide the required sandy material for the northern revetment containment dike. Approximately 55,000 and 50,000 cubic yards of sandy material from the southern access channel and the interior borrow area would be required to build the northern and southern dikes, respectively. Approximately 5,000 and 6,500 cys of rip rap material from commercial sources would be required to build the northern and southern dikes, respectively. The entire width of each dike, including the slopes and crest, would be between 60 and 70 feet. Rip rap would be placed along the exterior portions of the dikes covering the sandy and geotextile material for protection. The site would cover a total of approximately 110 acres (95 acres within the site and 14 acres for the revetment dike structure). The site would contain between approximately 675,000 and 700,000 cys of material consisting primarily of clays/ silts and sands. Appropriate maritime and dune species would be planted at the breached area.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Pursuant to the Clean Water Act, state water quality certification is required for the proposed action described above. Water quality certification for a five-year period has been requested from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control (MDEQ-OPC). The Corps, Mobile District anticipates concurrence from the MDEQ-OPC due to the restoration nature of this project. Upon completion of the required 30-day comment period, a decision relative to water quality certification will be made by MDEQ-OPC.

COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY: Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act, the proposed restoration action is consistent with the Mississippi Coastal Program to the maximum extent practicable. Concurrence with this determination is anticipated from the MDMR following the 30-day public review period.

USE BY OTHERS: The proposed restoration action is not expected to create significant impacts on land and water use plans in the vicinity. Use of the waters in the vicinity of the project area includes fishing and recreational boating.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS: In accordance with the requirements of the NEPA, a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Section 404(b)1 Evaluation have been prepared associated with this proposed restoration project at Deer Island, Harrison County, Mississippi. Appropriate revisions will be incorporated into the Final EA and Section 404(b)1 Evaluation if information is received during coordination of this public notice that would dictate the need to amend the document. These documents are on file and available for review at the Corps, Mobile District's website (<http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/pd/Pd1.htm>).

SECTION 404 (B)(1) EVALUATION REPORT: Water quality impacts associated with the proposed restoration project have been identified in an evaluation report prepared in accordance with Public Law 92-500, Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines promulgated by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Water Act. The Section 404 (b)(1) Evaluation is on file at the Corps, Mobile District's website (<http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/pd/Pd1.htm>). The report concludes that only minor and short-term turbidity impacts would result from the implementation of the proposed action.

ENDANGERED/THREATENED SPECIES: Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the proposed restoration project at Deer Island is being coordinated with the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). This restoration project area is designated as Gulf sturgeon critical habitat - Unit 8. The primary constituent elements essential for the conservation of the Gulf sturgeon are those habitat components that support foraging, riverine spawning sites, normal flow regime, water quality, sediment quality, and safe unobstructed migratory pathways. Unit 8 is proposed to protect and conserve the constituent elements of winter-feeding habitat, water quality, sediment quality, and migration habitat. Little data is available on Gulf sturgeon feeding habits. Deer Island consists of very shallow water depths with dynamic wave energy; therefore, the Corps, Mobile District does not anticipate the species to utilize the immediate project area. Based on review of endangered and threatened species that could occur within the project restoration area, the Corps, Mobile District has determined that the proposed action would not adversely impact any listed species or their critical habitat.

CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSIDERATION: The National Register of Historic Places has been consulted during past restoration projects at the island and no properties listed on, being nominated to or determined eligible for the National Register are located in the project vicinity. Coordination efforts are ongoing. Copies of this notice are being sent to the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta, Georgia.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT ASSESSMENT: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (PL 94-265) has developed management plans for the following fisheries: shrimp, red drum, reef fish, stone crab, spiny lobster, coral and coral reef, and coastal migratory pelagic. Of these plans, only those pertaining to shrimp and red drum are applicable to the proposed action. The proposed restoration project will benefit coastal habitat identified as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the project area. The Corps, Mobile District has determined the proposed restoration project would enhance EFH. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Plans (1999) identifies EFH in the project area to be intertidal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, non-vegetated bottoms, shell reefs, and the estuarine water column. Habitat Areas of Particular Concern have not been identified for the project area.

CLEAN AIR ACT: Air quality in the vicinity of the proposed action would not be significantly affected by the proposed action. The equipment and machinery would generate some air pollution during construction activities, such as increased particulate levels from the burning of fossil fuels. However, these impacts would be minor and temporary in nature. The proposed action is in compliance with the Clean Air Act, as amended. The project area is in attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards parameters. The proposed action would not affect the attainment status of the project area or the region. A State Implementation Plan conformity determination (42 United States Code 7506(c)) is not required since the project area is in attainment for all critical pollutants.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to proceed with the proposed action will be based on an evaluation of the overall public interest. That decision would reflect the national concerns for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits that may be expected to accrue from this proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to proceed, and the conditions under which the activity would occur, would be determined by the outcome of this general balancing process. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal would be considered. Among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the public. The proposed action would proceed unless it is found to be contrary to the overall public interest. Inasmuch as the proposed work would involve the discharge of materials into navigable waters, specification of the proposed borrow sites associated with this restoration project is being made through the application of guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army. If these guidelines alone prohibit the specification of any proposed site, any potential impairment of the maintenance of

navigation, including any economic impacts on navigation and anchorage that would result from the failure to use this site would also be considered.

COORDINATION: Among the agencies receiving copies of this public notice are:

Region 4, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Jackson, Mississippi
Regional Director, National Park Service
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, Panama City, Florida
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, St. Petersburg, Florida
Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District
Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Appropriate federally recognized Indian Tribes

Other federal, state, and local organizations, U.S. Senators and Representatives of the State of Mississippi are being sent copies of the notice and are being asked to participate in coordinating this proposed work.

CORRESPONDENCE: Any person who has an interest that may be affected by this proposed restoration activity may request a public hearing. Any comments or requests for a public hearing must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within 30 days of the date on this public notice. A request for a hearing must clearly set forth the interest, which may be affected, and the manner in which the interest may be affected. Correspondence concerning this public notice should refer to Public Notice No. FP06-BH05-03 and should be directed to the Commander, U.S. Army Engineer District Mobile, Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, ATTN: CESAM-PD-EC. For additional information please contact Jenny L. Jacobson at (251) 690-2724, email address jennifer.l.jacobson@sam.usace.army.mil.



CURTIS M. FLAKES
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mobile District

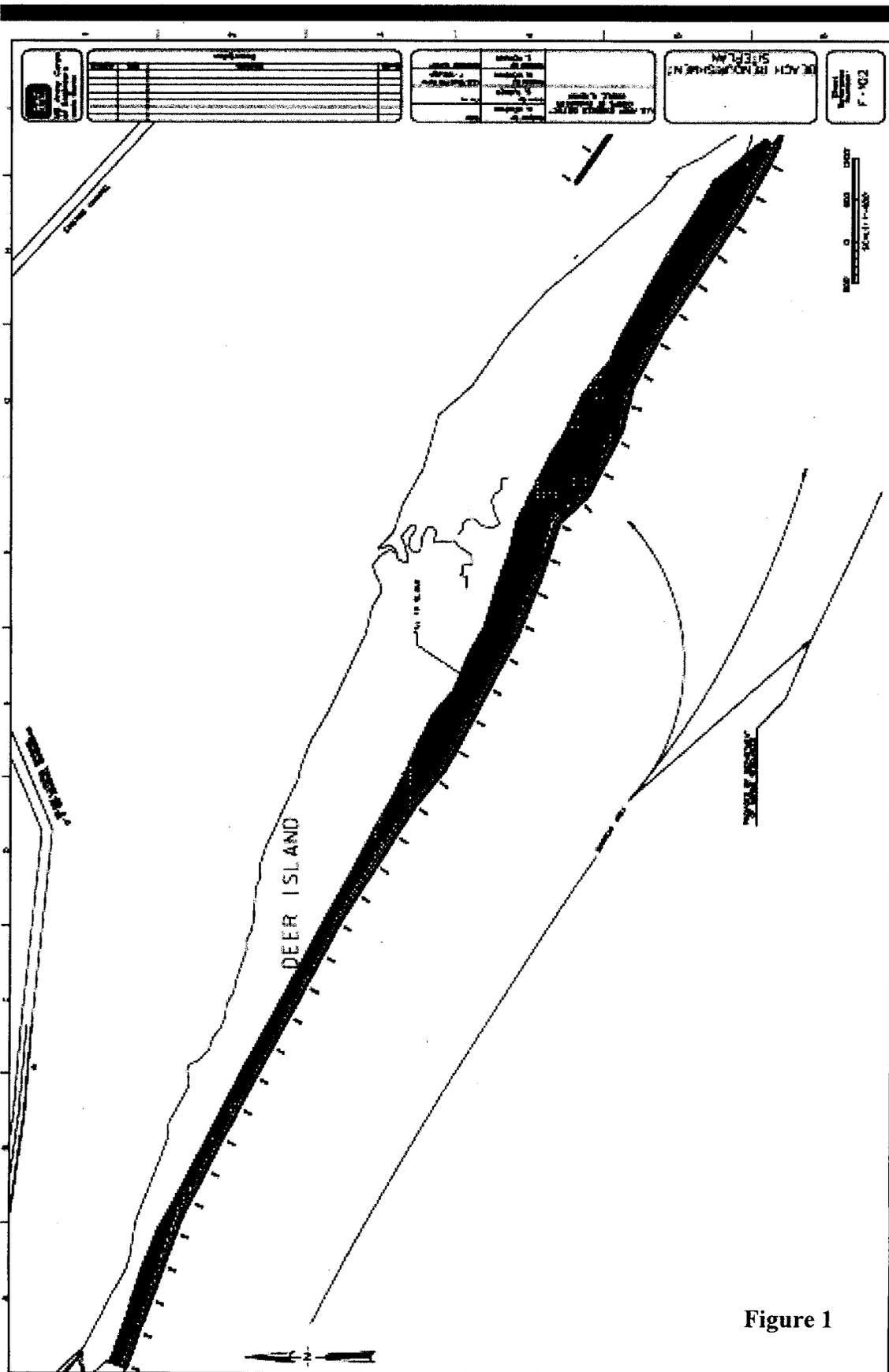
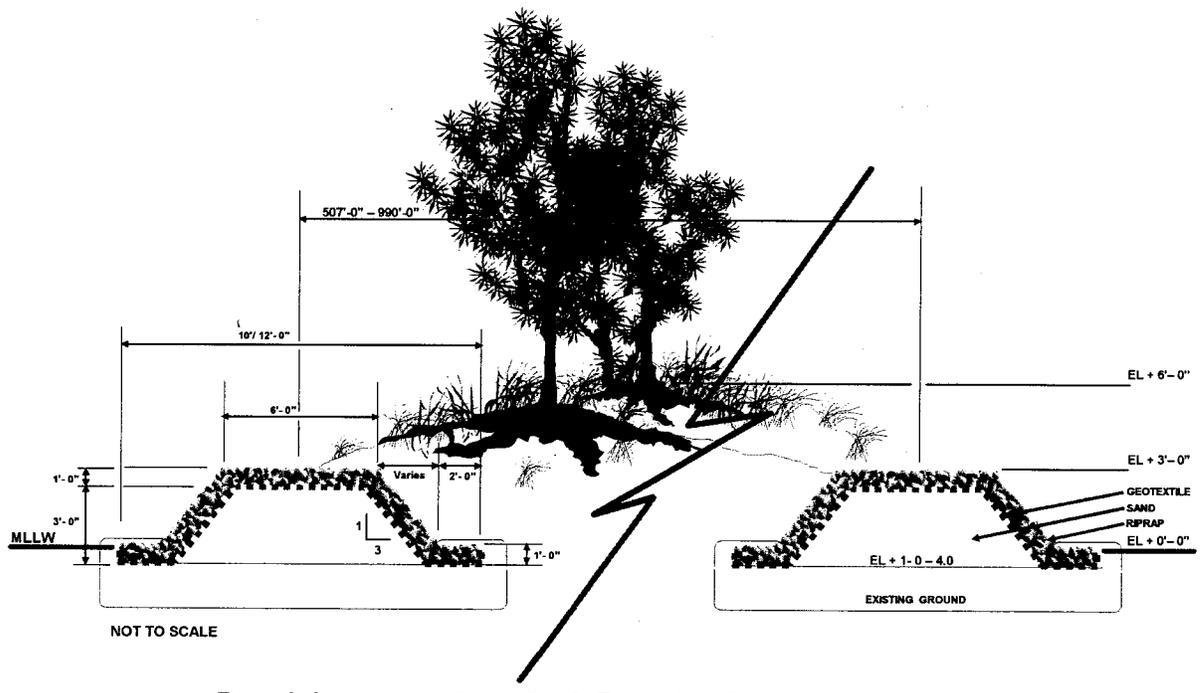


Figure 1



Deer Island, Ms West End Breach – Revetment Option

Figure 2