

COVER SHEET

DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement I-12 to Bush, Louisiana Proposed Highway St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana

LEAD AGENCY:

Department of the Army
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District

COOPERATING AGENCIES:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

ABSTRACT:

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development proposes to construct a high-speed, four-lane arterial highway from the southern terminus of the current, modern four-lane arterial portion of Louisiana Highway (LA) 21 in Bush, Louisiana, to Interstate 12 (I-12), a distance between 17.4 and 21 miles. Because the project proposes work in wetlands and structural crossings of various waterways in the project area, a Department of Army permit pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act is required before any construction activities. This environmental impact statement (EIS) has been prepared to address the NEPA, environmental and cultural resource laws, USACE Regulatory Program Regulations (Title 33 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] Parts 320–332), including the USACE NEPA regulations at 33 CFR Part 325, Appendix B, and the requirements of the section 404(b)(1) guidelines (40 CFR Part 230), so that the EIS provides the information needed for the USACE permit decision-making process. The USACE defines the overall project purpose as to construct a four-lane arterial highway from the southern terminus of LA 21 in Bush, Louisiana, to I-12. The need for the project is to meet a legislative mandate in Louisiana Revised Statute 47:820.2B(e), which requires, “[t]he Louisiana Highway 3241 project from Interstate 12 to Bush...shall be constructed as a [four]-lane or more highway.” Four alternatives, plus the no build alternative, were evaluated to determine the potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts resulting from the proposed action. Resource areas evaluated include land use and land cover, water resources, ecological resources, geology and soils, air quality, noise, recreation, traffic and transportation, utilities, socioeconomics, aesthetics and visual resources, and cultural resources.

All comments concerning this EIS are requested to be submitted by October 24, 2011.

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