



Commander's note

As I write this month's column our area is faced with an unprecedented crisis of epic proportions. The oil from the Deepwater Horizon is threatening our coastal shores even as we enter this hurricane season.

The impacts of this disaster will be felt for many years and its magnitude is far greater than any single agency's ability. A successful response must be a collective effort. Yet, to have a good partnership, you must first be a good partner. With this in mind, the Corps of Engineers is committed to supporting the State of Louisiana and its coastal parishes, the National Incident Commander, and all of our local and federal partners to the best of our abilities. At the end of the day solving this crisis will take all of us doing everything we can.

With so much at stake, everyone engaged in the response efforts must have the ability and resources to respond quickly. It is with this understanding that New Orleans District has been operating under the expedited permitting procedures afforded by the NOD-20 General Permit. Since the disaster began, we have issued 11 permits under these emergency procedures. We are committed to operating under these expedited measures to ensure our responders have every chance of fighting the encroaching oil.

Today, we are only beginning to

understand the disaster's short and long-term impacts upon the region and the nation's economy, wildlife and fisheries, and already fragile ecosystem. Moreover, these impacts continue to increase with each gallon of oil that enters the Gulf of Mexico.

The Corps stands ready to provide any assistance it possibly can to the incredible response effort underway. Together, we can help end this crisis facing the people of Louisiana and our Nation.

Building Strong,
Col. Al Lee



Permit issued for state's barrier island concept

The United States Army Corps of Engineers' role in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response efforts is under its regulatory authority and environmental compliance. As a result, the New Orleans District has been operating under its NOD-20 general permit for emergency procedures. These procedures allow the Corps to assess applications for projects that protect against environmen-

tal hazards, loss of property, or immediate economic hardship in an expedited manner. Depending upon the project's complexity and environmental impact, the standard process typically takes between 60 and 120 days. However, under NOD-20 the Corps has issued 11 permits since May 5, 2010. The largest and most extensive of these permits was the concept often referred to as

"the barrier island plan."

On May 11, (see chronology below) the state of Louisiana submitted an emergency request in which 12 dredges would build an approximately 100-mile sand barrier offshore, using borrow material within 1 mile of the existing barrier islands. Upon receipt of comments received following an inter-agency review, the state revised its application to reflect

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Permit Chronology

- 11 MAY – USACE coordinated pre-application teleconference with state and federal agencies
- 11 MAY – State submitted emergency permit request for Barrier Concept to USACE
- 12-14 MAY – Interagency application review meeting held by USACE; Agency comments on Barrier Concept submitted to USACE and forwarded to State
- 14 MAY – Revised Barrier Concept and responses to agency comments submitted to USACE by the State
- 15-17 MAY – Revised Barrier Concept submitted to agencies for comments; Interagency application review meeting held by USACE on revised Barrier Concept; Agency comments on Revised Barrier Concept submitted to USACE and forwarded to State
- 17 MAY – Agency recommendations on special conditions for NOD-20 permit forwarded to USACE
- 18-21 MAY – Completed initial environmental assessment; Completed engineering analysis; Discussed engineering analysis results with State and forwarded additional comments to the State.
- 22-24 MAY - Revised initial environmental assessment based on engineering analysis results; received State's comments on engineering analysis results
- 24 MAY – Forwarded State's comments, final revised concept, and draft permit (with special conditions) to Agencies (NIC Interagency Solutions Group) for final comments
- 27 May – USACE receives Environmental Protection Agency comments on modified permit
- 27 May – USACE proffers emergency permit to state
- 3 June – USACE receives signed permit from the State





(Permit, continued from previous page)

a concept that employs 18 dredges applying sand from borrow areas outside the littoral system to construct a 90-mile berm along the coast. Additionally, this modified proposal included several open sections to allow tidal flow.

On June 3, 2010, the Corps received the state of Louisiana's acceptance of an emergency permit for portions of the state's modified barrier island proposal. The permit, proffered by the Corps on May 27, authorized the state to proceed with six of the proposed reaches: W8 through W11 to the west of the Mississippi River and reaches E3 and E4 near the Chandeleur Islands. After closely working with the state of Louisiana and its federal partners, the Corps identified these reaches as critical locations where an immediate benefit can be achieved with minimal disruption to the coastal circulation patterns.

Upon acceptance of the permit, the state agreed to meet 33 specific conditions. While the state can immediately begin mobilization, several of these conditions must be fulfilled prior to the actual start of construction. Among the preconstruction conditions, the state must develop a construction schedule and time frame, conduct a survey of the berm alignment and, in

consultation with the Corps and other interested parties, establish a monitoring plan.

Given the large number of dredges needed to undertake this project in an expedited time frame, the state will need the use of several vessels currently under contract with the Corps. As a result, the Corps has maintained an open channel of communication between the state and its contractor, the Shaw Group, regarding

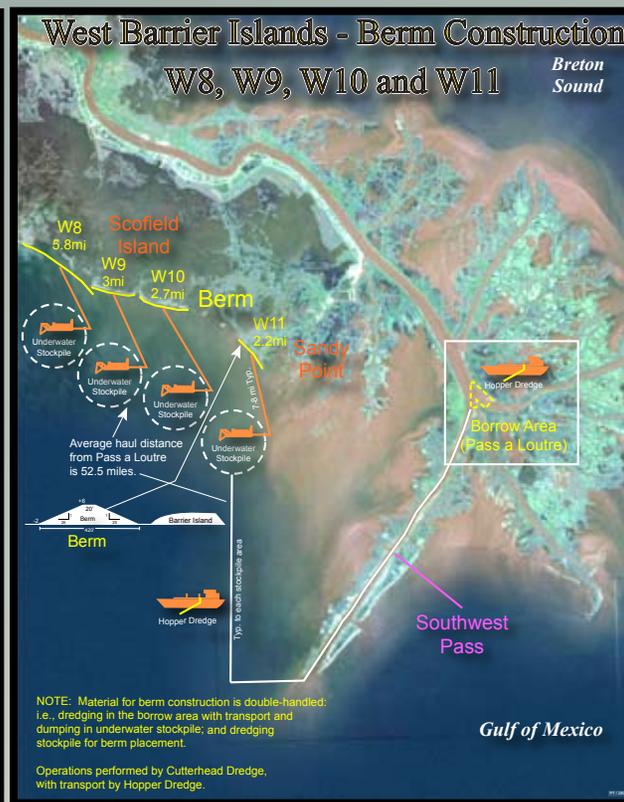
this need to ensure that all parties are aware of the process for requesting the release of dredges from Corps projects.

It is important to note that the current steps taken in construction of the six areas of the barrier island are being performed under the NOD-20 emergency permit. However, any such authorization is only a temporary approval to allow the application to perform work under the emergency

situation. Within 30 days of approval, the state must submit a full Department of the Army permit request. This request will undergo the standard permit approval process, including the public comment period and the determination of whether an Environmental Impact Statement is required.

During this time of an unprecedented ecological threat, the response must be collective and comprehensive. As the nation's

engineer, the Corps stands ready to assist responding agencies and help protect the environment, as well as the peoples' health and safety. It is ready to provide its scientific and technical expertise to assist the men and women of Louisiana in developing solutions that will protect their way of life today and tomorrow.



The permit accepted by the state authorized the construction of six of the proposed reaches. These reaches are E3 and E4 near the Chandeleur Islands (far right), and reaches W8, W9, W10 and W11 (right) to the west of the Mississippi River. These reaches were identified as critical locations where greater immediate benefit is likely to be achieved with minimal adverse disruption of coastal circulation patterns.

For more information on the Corps' emergency permit process and decision, please visit the web pages:
<http://155.76.147.200/news/Emergency%20Permit%20Documents%20Compressed%20FINAL.pdf>
and
<http://155.76.147.200/news/mvnipr1june2010final.pdf>