

SECTION 11

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
LETTER



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

November 21, 2002 F/SER44/RH:jk
225/389-0508

Mr. Richard E. Boe
Environmental Planning and Compliance Branch
Planning, Programs, and Management Division
New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Mr. Boe:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has received the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) titled "**BAYOU SORREL LOCK, LOUISIANA; Draft Feasibility Report; Main Report and Environmental Impact Statement**" transmitted by a letter from Mr. Robert J. Martinson dated November 5, 2002. The DEIS evaluates the potential impacts associated with the construction of a new lock at the intersection of Bayou Sorrel and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to replace an existing lock that is inadequate in size and cannot withstand a project flood. The tentatively selected plan consists of constructing a 1,200-foot long by 75-foot wide sector-gated lock with new connecting channels.

The tentatively selected plan has been designed to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to fish and wildlife habitats through project construction sequencing that avoids impacting undisturbed habitats. NOAA Fisheries has reviewed the DEIS and agrees with the determination that the proposed lock replacement activities would not impact marine fishery species or other resources of concern. As such, NOAA Fisheries has no comments to provide on the DEIS and has no Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Recommendations to provide.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS and Feasibility Report.

Sincerely,

for Andreas Mager, Jr.
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

c:
FWS, Lafayette
EPA - Dallas
LA DNR - Consistency
F/SER4
Files

