



## **Morganza to the Gulf, Louisiana, Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction Project SEIS**



### **Appendix F – Agency Coordination**

**December 2025**

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# COORDINATING AGENCIES

**Part 1: Environmental Protection Agency**

**Part 2: National Marine Fisheries Service**

**Part 3: Fish and Wildlife Services**

**Part 4: Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources**

**Part 5: Federal Emergency Management Agency**

**Part 6: Louisiana Ecological Service Field Office**

**Part 7: Louisiana Department of Natural Resources**

**Part 8: Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office**

**Part 9: USGS Wetlands and Aquatic Research Center**

## **Part 1: Environmental Protection Agency**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Mr. Troy Hill  
USEPA Region 6  
1445 Ross Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75202

Dear. Mr. Hill:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

The MTG hurricane and storm damage risk reduction project is a levee system located approximately 60 miles southwest of New Orleans, Louisiana and includes most of Terrebonne Parish and a portion of Lafourche Parish between the Terrebonne Parish eastern boundary and Bayou Lafourche. The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of damage caused by hurricane storm surges. A review of the project is needed because of the increasing susceptibility of coastal communities to storm surge due to wetland loss, sea level rise, and subsidence.

The MTG Project was authorized to provide the 1% AEP level of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction while maintaining navigational passage and tidal exchange. The project consists of approximately 98 miles of levee including associated navigation, roadway, pump station fronting protection, and environmental control structures. The 2013 RPEIS provided an assessment for both programmatic and constructible features for the MTG project. Constructible features included levee reaches F1, F2, G1; the HNC Lock; and the Bayou Grand Caillou Floodgate. The remaining features were designed to a programmatic design level that would require supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation prior to construction.

The Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS) has constructed the first lift of the levee reaches for a significant portion of the alignment (including reaches F1, F2, and G1) as well as

several of the floodgates (including Bayou Grand Caillou). The NFS is also in the final stages on the HNC lock complex and all associated mitigation.

The SEIS will evaluate the PACR alignment as identified in the 2013 PACR Report to include a reasonable range of alignment modifications that considers existing levee alignments, the least environmental damaging practicable alignment maximizing avoidance and minimization measures to sensitive habitats as well as the no action alternative.

Major Features of the project include: (1) Approximately 98 miles of earthen levee, with final levee elevations ranging from 15 feet to 26.0 feet North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88) plus overbuild and final levee widths from approximately 146 to 446 feet; (2) The Houma Navigation Canal lock complex (HNC Lock) with lock sill depth of -18 feet; (3) Construction on navigable waterways of 21 other floodgates such as stop log gates, barge gates, and sector gates; (4) Environmental water control structures at numerous locations within the levee system. Each control structure would consist of one or more culverts with gates that allow for tidal exchange; (5) Measures to offset the potential for increased water levels on the existing Larose to Golden Meadow project.

The USACE MVN formally invites your agency to become a cooperating agency. Per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR 1501.8, a cooperating agency would participate in the NEPA process at the earliest practicable time, including scoping (as described in § 1501.9); on request of the lead agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise; on request of the lead agency, make available staff support to enhance the lead agency's interdisciplinary capability; normally use its own funds. To the extent available funds permit, the lead agency shall, fund those major activities or analyses it requests from cooperating agencies. Potential lead agencies shall include such funding requirements in their budget requests; consult with the lead agency in developing the schedule (§ 1501.7(i)), meet the schedule, and elevate, as soon as practicable, to the senior agency official of the lead agency any issues relating to purpose and need, alternatives, or other issues that may affect any agencies' ability to meet the schedule; meet the lead agency's schedule for providing comments and limit its comments to those matters for which it has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental issue consistent with § 1503.2; and to the maximum extent practicable, jointly issue environmental documents with the lead agency.

In response to a lead agency's request for assistance in preparing the environmental documents (described in paragraph (b)(3), (4), or (5) of § 1501.8), a cooperating agency may reply that other program commitments preclude any involvement, or the degree of involvement requested in the action that is the subject of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. The cooperating agency shall submit a copy of this reply to the Council and the senior agency official of the lead agency.

Please indicate in writing whether your agency accepts this formal invitation to become a cooperating agency within 30 days of the date of this letter. If you have questions, please contact Eric Williams by phone at 504-862-2862 or by email at [Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

September 17, 2024

VIA Email Submission

Eric Williams  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New Orleans District  
7400 Leake Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118  
[eric.m.williams@usace.army.mil](mailto:eric.m.williams@usace.army.mil)

Re: Cooperating Agency Agreement for the Morganza to the Gulf Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Williams:

This letter is in response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) correspondence dated September 6, 2024, requesting that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 (EPA) participate as a Cooperating Agency for the Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The MTG Project is a hurricane and storm damage risk reduction project and part of the Mississippi River and Tributaries system. The project was authorized to provide the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability level of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction while maintaining navigational passage and tidal exchange. The project consists of approximately 98 miles of levee including associated navigation, roadway, pump station fronting protection, and environmental control structures. Since the SEIS will analyze the impacts of the proposed project to the human and natural environment, the EPA accepts your invitation and agrees to participate as a cooperating agency. As a cooperating agency, EPA will:

- provide expertise on NEPA compliance and other subject matter such as wetlands, water quality, air quality, and environmental justice, during the SEIS planning and development;
- provide timely technical reviews and comments on preliminary documents, reports, analyses, and sections of the SEIS;
- participate in meetings and provide information as requested by USACE, as resources allow;

- provide sources for information or support in the analysis of such information, when known, during preparation of the SEIS in areas in which EPA has expertise; and
- review and comment on the SEIS pursuant to our regulatory responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The EPA anticipates that a cooperative team approach will streamline the environmental process and result in a high-quality SEIS. If you have any further questions, please contact Gabe Gruta, the project review lead, at 214-665-2174 or [gruta.gabriel@epa.gov](mailto:gruta.gabriel@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

Robert Houston  
Acting Deputy Director  
Environmental Justice, Community Engagement  
and Environmental Review Division

## **Part 2: National Marine Fisheries Service**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Mr. Rusty Swafford  
NMFS Habitat Conservation Division  
C/O Louisiana State University  
South Stadium Road #266  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

Dear. Mr. Swafford:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

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The MTG Project was authorized to provide the 1% AEP level of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction while maintaining navigational passage and tidal exchange. The project consists of approximately 98 miles of levee including associated navigation, roadway, pump station fronting protection, and environmental control structures. The 2013 RPEIS provided an assessment for both programmatic and constructible features for the MTG project. Constructible features included levee reaches F1, F2, G1; the HNC Lock; and the Bayou Grand Caillou Floodgate. The remaining features were designed to a programmatic design level that would require supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation prior to construction.

The Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS) has constructed the first lift of the levee reaches for a significant portion of the alignment (including reaches F1, F2, and G1) as well as

several of the floodgates (including Bayou Grand Caillou). The NFS is also in the final stages on the HNC lock complex and all associated mitigation.

The SEIS will evaluate the PACR alignment as identified in the 2013 PACR Report to include a reasonable range of alignment modifications that considers existing levee alignments, the least environmental damaging practicable alignment maximizing avoidance and minimization measures to sensitive habitats as well as the no action alternative.

Major Features of the project include: (1) Approximately 98 miles of earthen levee, with final levee elevations ranging from 15 feet to 26.0 feet North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88) plus overbuild and final levee widths from approximately 146 to 446 feet; (2) The Houma Navigation Canal lock complex (HNC Lock) with lock sill depth of -18 feet; (3) Construction on navigable waterways of 21 other floodgates such as stop log gates, barge gates, and sector gates; (4) Environmental water control structures at numerous locations within the levee system. Each control structure would consist of one or more culverts with gates that allow for tidal exchange; (5) Measures to offset the potential for increased water levels on the existing Larose to Golden Meadow project.

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Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT**  
**7400 LEAKE AVE**  
**NEW ORLEANS, LA 70118-3651**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Mr. David Bernhart  
NMFS Protected Resources Division  
263 13th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

Dear. Mr. Bernhart:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

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The MTG Project was authorized to provide the 1% AEP level of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction while maintaining navigational passage and tidal exchange. The project consists of approximately 98 miles of levee including associated navigation, roadway, pump station fronting protection, and environmental control structures. The 2013 RPEIS provided an assessment for both programmatic and constructible features for the MTG project. Constructible features included levee reaches F1, F2, G1; the HNC Lock; and the Bayou Grand Caillou Floodgate. The remaining features were designed to a programmatic design level that would require supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation prior to construction.

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several of the floodgates (including Bayou Grand Caillou). The NFS is also in the final stages on the HNC lock complex and all associated mitigation.

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Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

Colonel Cullen Jones, District Commander  
United States Army Corps of Engineers  
New Orleans District  
7400 Leake Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70118-3651

Attention: Sandra Stiles & Jordan Logarbo

**Re: Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction (HSDRR)  
Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)**

Dear Colonel Jones:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office (SERO) received your Agency's September 6, 2024, coordination letter for the New Orleans District's MTG HSDRR project's SEIS which outlines the need for the project and requests that we serve as a Cooperating Agency. The MTG HSDRR project is a levee system located approximately 60-miles southwest of New Orleans, Louisiana, and includes most of Terrebonne Parish and a portion of Lafourche Parish between the Terrebonne Parish eastern boundary and Bayou Lafourche. The purpose is to reduce the risk of damage caused by hurricane storm surges. The SEIS evaluates design changes to the authorized MTG project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction for a 100-year level of risk and to incorporate the increasing susceptibility of coastal communities to storm surge due to wetland loss, sea level rise, and subsidence. The SEIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report with a signed Record of Decision in December 2013. SERO's Protected Resources Division, which has special expertise and jurisdiction by law under the Endangered Species Act, completed an informal consultation for the MTG project on April 9, 2024. The completed consultation does not require reinitiation because the action has not been modified in a manner that would cause an effect to a federally listed species or critical habitat not considered in the original consultation.

Because we have special expertise and jurisdiction by law under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), we agree to serve as a Cooperating Agency for this project. Due to our current staffing constraints, our participation may be limited to coordination teleconferences and reviewing National Environmental Policy Act documents.

We appreciate your invitation to serve as a Cooperating Agency for this project. For questions pertaining to the MSA, please direct correspondences to Mr. Craig Gothreaux ([craig.gothreaux@noaa.gov](mailto:craig.gothreaux@noaa.gov)).

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Strelcheck  
Regional Administrator

cc:

F/SER, Strelcheck, Amendola, Blough, Silverman, Rosegger, Sogluizzo  
F/SER4, Croom, Swafford, Gothreaux

## **Part 3: Fish and Wildlife Services**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Mr. Charles Reulet  
Interagency Affairs - Field Services Division  
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 44487  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Mr. Charles Reulet:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

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Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

**From:** [Michael Perot](#)  
**To:** [Williams, Eric M CIV USARMY CEMVN \(USA\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Stiles, Sandra E CIV USARMY CEMVN \(USA\)](#); [Tyler Bosworth](#)  
**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] Invitation acceptance to participate in MTG SEIS  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 10, 2024 11:51:19 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Good Morning Eric,

On behalf of Secretary Sheahan, I am emailing you to accept your invitation for LDWF to become a cooperating agency for the MTG SEIS. I will be LDWF's point of contact for this SEIS and look forward to participating. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

*Mike Perot*

**Mike Perot**  
**Biologist Director**  
**LA Department of Wildlife & Fisheries**  
**Office: (225)765-3978**





## United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
200 Dulles Drive  
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506



July 22, 2024

Ms. Sandra Stiles  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New Orleans District  
Attn: CEMVN-PDS  
7400 Leake Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

Dear Ms. Stiles:

Please reference the June 20, 2024, Federal Register “Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to the Revised Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (RPEIS) for the Morganza to the Gulf of Mexico, Louisiana, Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction Project (MTG)” (Notice). In the Notice, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mississippi Valley Division, New Orleans District asked for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s (Service) comment and participation in the coordinated environmental review process for the SEIS to evaluate design changes to the authorized MTG project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). The SEIS supplements the RPEIS, MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The Service accepts your invitation to participate as a cooperating agency for this effort.

According to the Notice, the MTG hurricane and storm damage reduction project is an approximately 98-mile levee system located mostly in Terrebonne and part of Lafourche Parishes, Louisiana, intended to reduce the risk of damage due to hurricane storm surges in the area. The MTG project was initially authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. The project was redesigned in the 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR Report to address cost increases and to meet updated post-Hurricane Katrina design guidelines. The SEIS will analyze the expected environmental impacts including indirect and cumulative effects for the final array of levee alignments and other features such as floodgates, etc.

The following comments are provided as an early planning aid in accordance with provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (83 Stat. 852, as amended; 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

## **Significant Fish and Wildlife Resources to Be Considered**

### Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Species of Concern

The proposed study is located in an area where federal trust resources such as threatened and endangered species, at-risk species, nesting wading birds, and bald eagles occur. According to the Notice, the USACE will consult with the Service regarding potential project impacts to threatened and endangered species and any designated critical habitat. The USACE should obtain a list of threatened and endangered species that may occur in the proposed project location from our Information for Planning and Consultation ([IPaC](#)) online tool. The USACE should then make determinations about effects to those species using IPaC.

### Section 7(a)(1) opportunities

[Section 7\(a\)\(1\) of the ESA](#) is a conservation mandate that states, “All... Federal agencies shall ... utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered species and threatened species.” It is a proactive authority with a goal to recover listed species. The Service recommends throughout the study process that consideration be given to the recovery of listed and proposed species. For examples and ideas of conservation measures refer to the USACE’s 2014 [Conservation Plan for the Interior Least Tern, Pallid Sturgeon, and Fat Pocketbook Mussel in the Lower Mississippi River](#) which was developed to help comply with Sect 7(a)(1) for those species.

### At-Risk Species Opportunities

The Service’s Southeast Region has defined “at-risk species” as those that are: 1) proposed for listing under the ESA by the Service; 2) candidates for listing under the ESA, which means the species has a “warranted but precluded 12-month finding”; or 3) petitioned for listing under the ESA, which means a citizen or group has requested that the Service add them to the list of protected species. Petitioned species include those for which the Service has made a substantial 90-day finding as well as those that are under review for a 90-day finding. As the Service develops proactive conservation strategies with partners for at-risk species, the states’ Species of Greatest Conservation Need (defined as species with low or declining populations) will also be considered. Opportunities to consider for reducing the likelihood of additional species listings would be actions that benefit at-risk species. Please see [At Risk Species](#) or contact the Service’s Louisiana Ecological Services Office for further information on each species.

### Opportunities for Birds of Conservation Concern

The 1988 amendment to the FWCA mandates the Service to identify species, subspecies, and populations (hereafter taxa) of all migratory nongame birds that without additional conservation action are likely to become candidates for listing under the ESA. The Birds of Conservation Concern 2021 ([BCC 2021](#)) is the most recent effort to carry out this mandate. The Service’s goal is to work with private and public entities on proactive conservation to conserve these species, thereby precluding the need to federally list as many at-risk species as possible. Please use the link above to find several Birds of Conservation Concern known to occur within the study area.

## **Significant Habitats**

Coastal marshes, swamp, bottomland hardwood forest ([BLH] wet and dry), riparian zone, stream water bottoms, and other habitats are considered by the Service to be resources of national

importance due to their increasing scarcity and high habitat value for fish and wildlife within Federal trusteeship (i.e., migratory waterfowl, wading birds, other migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, at-risk species, and interjurisdictional fisheries).

The Service's Mitigation Policy (Federal Register, Volume 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981) identifies four resource categories that are used to ensure that the level of mitigation recommended by Service biologists will be consistent with the fish and wildlife resource values involved.

Resource Category 1 - Habitat to be impacted is of high value for evaluation species and is unique and irreplaceable on a national basis or in the ecoregion section. The mitigation goal for this Resource Category is that there should be no loss of existing habitat value.

Resource Category 2 - Habitat to be impacted is of high value for evaluation species and is relatively scarce or becoming scarce on a national basis or in the ecoregion section. The mitigation goal for habitat placed in this category is that there should be no net loss of in-kind habitat value.

Resource Category 3 - Habitat to be impacted is of high to medium value for evaluation species and is relatively abundant on a national basis. FWS's mitigation goal here is that there be no net loss of habitat value while minimizing loss of in-kind habitat value.

Resource Category 4 - Habitat to be impacted is of medium to low value for evaluation species. The mitigation goal is to minimize loss of habitat value.

The Service recommends the USACE investigate alternatives which avoid and minimize impacts to these habitats and where possible to enhance or restore them. If the below habitats cannot be avoided, mitigation will be recommended. Considering the high value of these wetlands for fish and wildlife and the relative scarcity of those habitat types, those habitat types are designated as Resource Category 2, the mitigation goal for which is no net loss of in-kind habitat value.

#### Coastal Marshes

Louisiana supports the largest area of coastal marsh in North America (Coleman and Huh 2004; Couvillion et al. 2017). Marsh types in the study area include fresh, intermediate, and brackish (Enwright et al. 2014). Coastal marshes exhibit an increasing salinity gradient beginning with freshwater wetlands in the uppermost basins and near existing breaches along the bank of the Mississippi River, which transition into intermediate marsh, followed by brackish habitats, and then saline marshes towards the Gulf of Mexico. The marshes and waters of coastal Louisiana are high in biological productivity (Day et al. 1982). They serve as vital nursery areas for fish and shellfish (Van Sickle et al. 1976) as well as wildlife habitat (Lowery 1974a, 1974b). Some of the waterways and marshes in the area are identified as Essential Fish Habitat by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act; P.L. 104-297). Those wetlands provide plant detritus to adjacent coastal waters and thereby contribute to the production of commercially and recreationally important fishes and shellfishes. Wetlands also provide valuable water quality functions such as reduction of excessive dissolved nutrient levels, filtering of waterborne contaminants, and removal of suspended sediment. In addition, coastal wetlands buffer storm surges and reduce their damaging effect to man-made infrastructure within the coastal area.

### Forested Wetlands (Swamp and Bottomland Hardwood Forest)

Forested wetlands (BLH and swamp) are found along the natural levees of the Mississippi River and its distributary ridges throughout the floodplain. Swamp habitat in the study area consists primarily of cypress, tupelo, and red maple. The BLH habitat consists of species such as oaks, hickories, American elm, green ash, sweetgum, sugarberry, boxelder, persimmon, honey locust, red mulberry, eastern cottonwood, and American sycamore. Swamp and BLH are valuable plant communities that provide a variety of significant benefits to wildlife including food, nesting areas, shelter, and water.

### **National Wildlife Refuges**

The Service administers the Mandalay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) located adjacent to the study area along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The Service recommends the USACE consider in their planning that NWR and any other lands with conservation mandates, such as State of Louisiana Wildlife Management Areas, that may potentially be impacted by the proposed project. The USACE should coordination with the Refuge Project Leader (Pon Dixson, [pon\\_dixson@fws.gov](mailto:pon_dixson@fws.gov)) for any potential impacts to Mandalay NWR.

The USACE and the Service have formally committed to work together to conserve, protect, and restore fish and wildlife resources while ensuring environmental sustainability of our Nation's water resources under the January 22, 2003, Partnership Agreement for Water Resources and Fish and Wildlife. Accordingly, the Service looks forward to our continued work on the MTG SEIS. Comments and responses to this early planning aid letter can be directed to the Service's Louisiana Ecological Services Office. We appreciate the cooperation of your staff on the MTG SEIS. Should your staff have any questions regarding this letter, please have them contact Mr. David Castellanos (337-291-3112) of this office.

Sincerely,



Brigette D. Firmin  
Field Supervisor  
Louisiana Ecological Services Office

cc:

FWS, Fisheries Conservation Office, Baton Rouge, LA  
FWS, Migratory Birds Program, Atlanta, GA  
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), Baton Rouge, LA  
National Marine Fisheries Service, Baton Rouge, LA  
LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, Baton Rouge, LA  
LA Dept. of Energy and Natural Resources (CMD), Baton Rouge, LA

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## **Part 4: Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Mr. Kyle Balkum, Coastal Resources Administrator  
Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 98000  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Dear Mr. Kyle Balkum:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

The MTG hurricane and storm damage risk reduction project is a levee system located approximately 60 miles southwest of New Orleans, Louisiana and includes most of Terrebonne Parish and a portion of Lafourche Parish between the Terrebonne Parish eastern boundary and Bayou Lafourche. The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of damage caused by hurricane storm surges. A review of the project is needed because of the increasing susceptibility of coastal communities to storm surge due to wetland loss, sea level rise, and subsidence.

The MTG Project was authorized to provide the 1% AEP level of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction while maintaining navigational passage and tidal exchange. The project consists of approximately 98 miles of levee including associated navigation, roadway, pump station fronting protection, and environmental control structures. The 2013 RPEIS provided an assessment for both programmatic and constructible features for the MTG project. Constructible features included levee reaches F1, F2, G1; the HNC Lock; and the Bayou Grand Caillou Floodgate. The remaining features were designed to a programmatic design level that would require supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation prior to construction.

The Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS) has constructed the first lift of the levee reaches for a significant portion of the alignment (including reaches F1, F2, and G1) as well as

several of the floodgates (including Bayou Grand Caillou). The NFS is also in the final stages on the HNC lock complex and all associated mitigation.

The SEIS will evaluate the PACR alignment as identified in the 2013 PACR Report to include a reasonable range of alignment modifications that considers existing levee alignments, the least environmental damaging practicable alignment maximizing avoidance and minimization measures to sensitive habitats as well as the no action alternative.

Major Features of the project include: (1) Approximately 98 miles of earthen levee, with final levee elevations ranging from 15 feet to 26.0 feet North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88) plus overbuild and final levee widths from approximately 146 to 446 feet; (2) The Houma Navigation Canal lock complex (HNC Lock) with lock sill depth of -18 feet; (3) Construction on navigable waterways of 21 other floodgates such as stop log gates, barge gates, and sector gates; (4) Environmental water control structures at numerous locations within the levee system. Each control structure would consist of one or more culverts with gates that allow for tidal exchange; (5) Measures to offset the potential for increased water levels on the existing Larose to Golden Meadow project.

The USACE MVN formally invites your agency to become a cooperating agency. Per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR 1501.8, a cooperating agency would participate in the NEPA process at the earliest practicable time, including scoping (as described in § 1501.9); on request of the lead agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise; on request of the lead agency, make available staff support to enhance the lead agency's interdisciplinary capability; normally use its own funds. To the extent available funds permit, the lead agency shall, fund those major activities or analyses it requests from cooperating agencies. Potential lead agencies shall include such funding requirements in their budget requests; consult with the lead agency in developing the schedule (§ 1501.7(i)), meet the schedule, and elevate, as soon as practicable, to the senior agency official of the lead agency any issues relating to purpose and need, alternatives, or other issues that may affect any agencies' ability to meet the schedule; meet the lead agency's schedule for providing comments and limit its comments to those matters for which it has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental issue consistent with § 1503.2; and to the maximum extent practicable, jointly issue environmental documents with the lead agency.

In response to a lead agency's request for assistance in preparing the environmental documents (described in paragraph (b)(3), (4), or (5) of § 1501.8), a cooperating agency may reply that other program commitments preclude any involvement, or the degree of involvement requested in the action that is the subject of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. The cooperating agency shall submit a copy of this reply to the Council and the senior agency official of the lead agency.

Please indicate in writing whether your agency accepts this formal invitation to become a cooperating agency within 30 days of the date of this letter. If you have questions, please contact Eric Williams by phone at 504-862-2862 or by email at [Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

**From:** [Charles Reulet](#)  
**To:** [Stiles, Sandra E CIV USARMY CEMVN \(USA\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Williams, Eric M CIV USARMY CEMVN \(USA\)](#); [Logarbo, Jordan Rita CIV \(USA\)](#); [Sara Krupa](#); [Mark Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] RE: Morganza to the Gulf HSDRR Project SEIS - Request for Cooperating Agency Letter  
**Date:** Monday, September 9, 2024 8:54:23 AM

---

LDENR accepts this formal invitation to become a cooperating agency for the MTG SEIS. Please include Sara Krupa and Mark Hogan (cc'd) on future correspondence.

Thanks

**Charles Reulet**

Administrator

Office of Coastal Management  
Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources  
225.342.0861 Office  
225.937.5688 Cell

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**From:** Stiles, Sandra E CIV USARMY CEMVN (USA) <[Sandra.E.Stiles@usace.army.mil](mailto:Sandra.E.Stiles@usace.army.mil)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 6, 2024 3:07 PM  
**To:** Charles Reulet <[Charles.Reulet@LA.GOV](mailto:Charles.Reulet@LA.GOV)>  
**Cc:** Williams, Eric M CIV USARMY CEMVN (USA) <[Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil)>; Logarbo, Jordan Rita CIV (USA) <[Jordan.R.Logarbo@usace.army.mil](mailto:Jordan.R.Logarbo@usace.army.mil)>  
**Subject:** Morganza to the Gulf HSDRR Project SEIS - Request for Cooperating Agency Letter

**EXTERNAL EMAIL:** Please do not click on links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Please see attached letter requesting your agency's consideration as a Cooperating Agency for the Subject Project. Please feel free to reach out if you have any comments or questions.

Thank you,  
Sandy

*Sandra Stiles*  
Biologist, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division, South  
New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## **Part 5: Federal Emergency Management Agency**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Mr. Gary Zimmerer  
FEMA - Region VI, Federal Center  
800 North Loop 288  
Denton, TX 76201-3698

Dear. Mr. Zimmerer:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

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The MTG Project was authorized to provide the 1% AEP level of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction while maintaining navigational passage and tidal exchange. The project consists of approximately 98 miles of levee including associated navigation, roadway, pump station fronting protection, and environmental control structures. The 2013 RPEIS provided an assessment for both programmatic and constructible features for the MTG project. Constructible features included levee reaches F1, F2, G1; the HNC Lock; and the Bayou Grand Caillou Floodgate. The remaining features were designed to a programmatic design level that would require supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation prior to construction.

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several of the floodgates (including Bayou Grand Caillou). The NFS is also in the final stages on the HNC lock complex and all associated mitigation.

The SEIS will evaluate the PACR alignment as identified in the 2013 PACR Report to include a reasonable range of alignment modifications that considers existing levee alignments, the least environmental damaging practicable alignment maximizing avoidance and minimization measures to sensitive habitats as well as the no action alternative.

Major Features of the project include: (1) Approximately 98 miles of earthen levee, with final levee elevations ranging from 15 feet to 26.0 feet North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88) plus overbuild and final levee widths from approximately 146 to 446 feet; (2) The Houma Navigation Canal lock complex (HNC Lock) with lock sill depth of -18 feet; (3) Construction on navigable waterways of 21 other floodgates such as stop log gates, barge gates, and sector gates; (4) Environmental water control structures at numerous locations within the levee system. Each control structure would consist of one or more culverts with gates that allow for tidal exchange; (5) Measures to offset the potential for increased water levels on the existing Larose to Golden Meadow project.

The USACE MVN formally invites your agency to become a cooperating agency. Per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR 1501.8, a cooperating agency would participate in the NEPA process at the earliest practicable time, including scoping (as described in § 1501.9); on request of the lead agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise; on request of the lead agency, make available staff support to enhance the lead agency's interdisciplinary capability; normally use its own funds. To the extent available funds permit, the lead agency shall, fund those major activities or analyses it requests from cooperating agencies. Potential lead agencies shall include such funding requirements in their budget requests; consult with the lead agency in developing the schedule (§ 1501.7(i)), meet the schedule, and elevate, as soon as practicable, to the senior agency official of the lead agency any issues relating to purpose and need, alternatives, or other issues that may affect any agencies' ability to meet the schedule; meet the lead agency's schedule for providing comments and limit its comments to those matters for which it has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental issue consistent with § 1503.2; and to the maximum extent practicable, jointly issue environmental documents with the lead agency.

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Please indicate in writing whether your agency accepts this formal invitation to become a cooperating agency within 30 days of the date of this letter. If you have questions, please contact Eric Williams by phone at 504-862-2862 or by email at [Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

## **Part 6: Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Brigette Firmin  
Field Supervisor  
Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office  
200 Dullus Drive  
Lafayette, LA 70506

Dear Ms. Firmin:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

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Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

## **Part 7: Louisiana Department of Natural Resources**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Mr. Charles Reulet  
Interagency Affairs - Field Services Division  
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 44487  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Mr. Charles Reulet:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

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Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

## **Part 8: Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Ms. Kristin Sanders  
Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer  
Office of Cultural Development  
P.O. Box 44247  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Ms. Sanders:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate design changes to the authorized Morganza to the Gulf (MTG) project to meet the one percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) Storm Surge Risk Reduction (100-year level of risk reduction (LORR)). This EIS supplements the Revised Programmatic EIS (RPEIS), MTG, Louisiana, that was integrated with the 2013 Final Post Authorization Change Report (PACR). The 2013 Integrated RPEIS and PACR was approved in the Chief's Report that was signed July 8, 2013. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on December 9, 2013.

The MTG hurricane and storm damage risk reduction project is a levee system located approximately 60 miles southwest of New Orleans, Louisiana and includes most of Terrebonne Parish and a portion of Lafourche Parish between the Terrebonne Parish eastern boundary and Bayou Lafourche. The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of damage caused by hurricane storm surges. A review of the project is needed because of the increasing susceptibility of coastal communities to storm surge due to wetland loss, sea level rise, and subsidence.

The MTG Project was authorized to provide the 1% AEP level of hurricane and storm damage risk reduction while maintaining navigational passage and tidal exchange. The project consists of approximately 98 miles of levee including associated navigation, roadway, pump station fronting protection, and environmental control structures. The 2013 RPEIS provided an assessment for both programmatic and constructible features for the MTG project. Constructible features included levee reaches F1, F2, G1; the HNC Lock; and the Bayou Grand Caillou Floodgate. The remaining features were designed to a programmatic design level that would require supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation prior to construction.

The Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS) has constructed the first lift of the levee reaches for a significant portion of the alignment (including reaches F1, F2, and G1) as well as

several of the floodgates (including Bayou Grand Caillou). The NFS is also in the final stages on the HNC lock complex and all associated mitigation.

The SEIS will evaluate the PACR alignment as identified in the 2013 PACR Report to include a reasonable range of alignment modifications that considers existing levee alignments, the least environmental damaging practicable alignment maximizing avoidance and minimization measures to sensitive habitats as well as the no action alternative.

Major Features of the project include: (1) Approximately 98 miles of earthen levee, with final levee elevations ranging from 15 feet to 26.0 feet North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88) plus overbuild and final levee widths from approximately 146 to 446 feet; (2) The Houma Navigation Canal lock complex (HNC Lock) with lock sill depth of -18 feet; (3) Construction on navigable waterways of 21 other floodgates such as stop log gates, barge gates, and sector gates; (4) Environmental water control structures at numerous locations within the levee system. Each control structure would consist of one or more culverts with gates that allow for tidal exchange; (5) Measures to offset the potential for increased water levels on the existing Larose to Golden Meadow project.

The USACE MVN formally invites your agency to become a cooperating agency. Per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR 1501.8, a cooperating agency would participate in the NEPA process at the earliest practicable time, including scoping (as described in § 1501.9); on request of the lead agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise; on request of the lead agency, make available staff support to enhance the lead agency's interdisciplinary capability; normally use its own funds. To the extent available funds permit, the lead agency shall, fund those major activities or analyses it requests from cooperating agencies. Potential lead agencies shall include such funding requirements in their budget requests; consult with the lead agency in developing the schedule (§ 1501.7(i)), meet the schedule, and elevate, as soon as practicable, to the senior agency official of the lead agency any issues relating to purpose and need, alternatives, or other issues that may affect any agencies' ability to meet the schedule; meet the lead agency's schedule for providing comments and limit its comments to those matters for which it has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental issue consistent with § 1503.2; and to the maximum extent practicable, jointly issue environmental documents with the lead agency.

In response to a lead agency's request for assistance in preparing the environmental documents (described in paragraph (b)(3), (4), or (5) of § 1501.8), a cooperating agency may reply that other program commitments preclude any involvement, or the degree of involvement requested in the action that is the subject of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. The cooperating agency shall submit a copy of this reply to the Council and the senior agency official of the lead agency.

Please indicate in writing whether your agency accepts this formal invitation to become a cooperating agency within 30 days of the date of this letter. If you have questions, please contact Eric Williams by phone at 504-862-2862 or by email at [Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eric.M.Williams@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

Eric M. Williams  
Chief, Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environment Division  
South

## **Part 9: USGS Wetlands and Aquatic Research Center**

September 6, 2024

Environmental Planning Branch  
Regional Planning and Environmental Division South

Lynn Copeland, PhD, Director  
USGS Wetlands and Aquatic Research Center  
700 Cajundome Blvd.  
Lafayette, LA 70506

Dear Dr. Copeland.:

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Eric M. Williams  
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