



Public Notice

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment EA #543 titled “New Right of Way and Mitigation for New Orleans to Venice Hurricane Risk Reduction Project: Incorporation of Non-Federal Levees from Oakville to St. Jude and New Orleans to Venice (NFL NOV) Federal Hurricane Protection Levee, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District (CEMVN), has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment EA #543 titled “New Right of Way and Mitigation for New Orleans to Venice Hurricane Risk Reduction Project: Incorporation of Non-Federal Levees from Oakville to St. Jude and New Orleans to Venice (NFL NOV) Federal Hurricane Protection Levee, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana” which is available for your review. This public notice is being posted per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council of Environmental Quality’s Regulations for Implementing NEPA, Section 1506.6, Public Involvement and the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 in accordance with provisions of Title 33 CFR Parts 336.1(b)(1) and 337.1, which establish policy, practices, and procedures to be followed on Federal actions involving the disposal of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States (application of Section 404(b)(1) of the CWA guidelines). Notice is hereby given that the CEMVN has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification to place fill material for the NFL NOV levee construction and mitigation in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. The applicant is applying to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services for a Water Quality Certification in accordance with statutory authority contained in the LAC 33:IX.1507.A-E and provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

The purpose of the proposed action discussed in EA #543 is to evaluate additional project right of way (ROW) alternatives required for on-going construction of the NFL NOV as well as to evaluate mitigation plan alternatives for the impacts resulting from construction of the NFL NOV. The mitigation plan was formulated to provide compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts assessed in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), NOV Hurricane Protection Levee, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana; Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), NOV, Louisiana, Hurricane Risk Reduction Project: Incorporation of NFL from Oakville to St. Jude, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana; and Supplemental EA (SEA) #537, NOV Hurricane Risk Reduction Project: Changes to the NFL Project, Oakville to St. Jude, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. The Record of Decision (ROD) for both the SEIS and EIS was signed on 31 October 2011 and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for SEA #537 was signed on 25 March 2016. The mitigation plan described in EA #543 will provide compensatory mitigation for all of wetland and bottomland hardwood (BLH) impacts. Evaluation of the proposed action includes application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through 40 CFR 230.

Location of Work The proposed action is located in Plaquemines Parish, LA

Description of Work The proposed action (TSP) assessed in EA #543 involves changes to the approved project for safety and stability that has necessitated the need for some additional ROW for levee reaches NOV 09 and NOV-NF-W-05a.1. The TSP for EA #543 to mitigate for wetland and BLH impacts as result of the NOV NFL construction is to purchase mitigation bank credits, in lieu fee (ILF) credits, and construct the Coleman Brackish Marsh project. In order to conform with approved mitigation banks in the Barataria basin and ILF credit availability within the Deltaic Plain some habitats have been combined. BLH wet, BLH dry, and scrub shrub impacts would be mitigated by purchase of BLH wet credits and swamp impacts would be mitigated by purchase of swamp credits from a mitigation bank. Freshwater marsh and wet pasture impacts would be mitigated by purchasing available ILF credits and mitigation bank credits. Intermediate, brackish, saline marsh, and open water impacts would be mitigated by constructing the Coleman Brackish marsh project. The TSP Coleman brackish marsh project would create approximately 230 acres of brackish marsh in an area south of West Point a la Hache. Approximately 340 acres of the Mississippi River upstream of the project site near mile markers 50 and 51 would be dredged to provide borrow material for the Coleman brackish marsh project.

Public Involvement The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties. Copies of EA #543 and supporting documents are available at <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/About/Projects/> or upon request.

Comments concerning this 401 application can be filed with the Water Permits Section within 30 days of this notice by referencing WQC 110520-01/AI 101235/CER20160001 to the following address: Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Water Permits Division P.O. Box 4313, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4313 Attn: Elizabeth Hill. A copy of the application is available for inspection and review at the LDEQ Public Records Center, on the first floor of the Galvez Building, Room 127 at 602 North Fifth Street Baton Rouge, LA 70802 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

The 45-day public review for EA #543 and CWA Section 404(b)(1) will begin on June 27, 2017 and end on August 10, 2017. Interested parties may express their views on the proposed action. All comments postmarked on or before the expiration of the comment period for this notice will be considered. Comments may be submitted to Laura Lee Wilkinson by emailing Laura.L.Wilkinson@usace.army.mil, by fax to (504) 862-1375; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Regional Planning and Environmental Division South; PDN-CEP; 7400 Leake Ave, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118-3651 to request a copy.