



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

DEC 29 2007

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

To All Interested Agencies and Public Groups:

In accordance with the environmental review guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality at 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1500, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has performed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the following proposed action under the authority of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) of November 1990, House Document 646, 101st Congress (Public Law 101-646).

Project Name: Whiskey Island Back Barrier Marsh Creation (TE-50)

Sponsors: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

Total estimated funding	\$ 27,914,086.00
Phase I (Engineering and Design) funding	\$ 2,754,889.00
Phase 2 (Construction) funding	\$ 25,159,197.00

Location: On Whiskey Island, within the Isles Dernieres Barrier Island chain, approximately 18 miles southwest of Cocodrie, Louisiana, in Terrebonne Parish. The project area is located between Coupe Colin, Whiskey Pass, Lake Pelto, Caillou Boca, and Caillou Bay to the north, and the Gulf of Mexico to the south. The proposed sand borrow site is located approximately 2.8 to 4.5 miles southeast of Whiskey Island and encompasses about 230 acres.

Background: The EPA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in December 1993 for the restoration of Isles Derniers Barrier Island, which included Racoon Island, Whiskey Island, Trinity Island and East Island. On September 4, 1997, EPA issued an addendum to the EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for the Whiskey Island Barrier Island Restoration and Coastal Wetland Creation (TE-27) project. This project was completed in June 2000, addressing the direct creation of approximately 355 acres of emergent marsh platform, and four major breach closures, including the Coupe Nouvelle. Continuing this effort to create additional back barrier marsh habitat north of the TE-27 project, in 2004, the CWPPRA Task Force approved Phase I funding for Engineering and Design of the Whiskey Island Back Barrier Marsh Creation (TE-50).

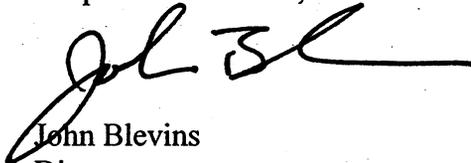
Proposed Action: The goals of the project are to construct a sand dune along the gulf side beach shore, to create approximately 316 acres of back barrier intertidal habitat, to construct a minimum of 5,800 linear feet of tidal creeks and three 1-acre tidal ponds to allow hydraulic exchange and circulation within the new back barrier marsh, and to increase the longevity of the

natural and previously-restored portions of the island by increasing the width of the island to help retain sand volumes and elevations. The newly created intertidal habitat will be planted with smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), and black mangrove (*Avicennis nitida*). Additionally, the constructed sand dunes will be planted with bitter panicum (*Panicum amarum*), seacoast bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), seashore dropseed (*Sporobollus virginicus*), marshhay cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), and sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*).

The proposed project is part of and consistent with the ecosystem strategy of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force, and the Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Authority to restore barrier islands and gulf shorelines. Under CWPPRA, the project cost is shared between the sponsoring federal agency and the State of Louisiana, with the federal government providing 85 percent of the cost and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources providing the remaining 15 percent.

Finding: On the basis of this EA for the proposed project and other findings and available information, EPA Region 6 has determined that the proposed project is not a major Federal action significantly or adversely affecting the quality of the human environment and that preparation of an EIS is not warranted. This preliminary FNSI will become final 30 days after the issuance of the public notice if no new information is received to alter this finding. No administrative action will be taken on this decision during the 30-day comment period. Comments regarding this preliminary decision not to prepare an EIS, requests for copies of the EA, or review of the Administrative Record containing the information supporting this decision, may be submitted in writing to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP); 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200; Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, or by telephone at (214) 665-8150.

Responsible Official,



John Blevins
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