

# NOAA Restoration Center NEPA Inclusion Analysis

Award Number  
**TBD**

## I. IDENTIFYING PROJECT INFORMATION

|                                                                                           |  |                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------|
| Project Name<br><b>Island Road Marsh Creation and Nourishment (TE-117)</b>                |  | Project State<br><b>LA</b>                 |
| Project Proponent / Applicant<br><b>NOAA/Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority</b> |  | Project Contact<br><b>Patrick Williams</b> |

## II. OTHER FEDERAL PARTNERS AND LEVEL OF NEPA ANALYSIS

|                                                         |                                         |                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Has another Federal agency completed NEPA?              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is NOAA the lead federal agency for this NEPA analysis? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |

## III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION / SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES FOR ANALYSIS

Please check one of the following conditions:

I am analyzing impacts of project planning and design activities, in order to gather all required project information

I have all information needed to complete the final analysis of impacts for the entire project

|                                                                |                                         |                                         |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--|
| Has a NEPA review been conducted for prior project activities? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | Date of NEPA completion for prior phase |  |
|                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> No             | <b>2-28-2017</b>                        |  |

Describe the full scope of the project, including historic/ geographic/ ecological context, the type of restoration, and how it will be conducted.

The project includes 295 acres of saline marsh restoration in the Terrebonne Basin, Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana. The restoration technique consists of marsh creation and nourishment by placing hydraulically dredged sediment from a lake into three confined disposal areas. Containment dikes will be gapped to establish tidal function. More information is supplied in the associated supplemental document for this action.

Describe the proposed action (i.e. the portion of the project that NOAA is funding/approving).

NOAA's award will fund marsh creation and nourishment. Additional activities outside the NOAA award, but whose impacts have been considered in this analysis, include a 20-year period of monitoring and maintenance of the project. A prior NOAA award funded engineering and design of the project. The engineering and design being completed under the present NOAA award and a construction award are and will be 85% funded by NOAA and 15% funded by CPRA. Federal and non-federal costs directly related to the construction award will include: final engineering and design, land easements, servitudes, and rights-of-way, project construction costs, construction management and inspection costs, post construction monitoring, operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation costs, supervision and inspection, and environmental compliance. If authorized in January 2022 for funding, construction could commence as early as 2023. NOAA would continue with involvement in funding oversight, construction and long term post-construction activities, including monitoring project performance and making decisions on any required maintenance for a period of 20 years.

Check the types of activities being conducted in this project:

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                            |                                                                  |                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Technical Assistance</b>                                                                             |                                                                                                                            |                                                                  |                                                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education Classes, Programs, Centers, Partnerships and Materials; Training Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Monitoring            |                                                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning, Feasibility Studies, Design Engineering, and Permitting → | Check the specific project planning activities being analyzed in this checklist                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Feasibility Studies                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering and Design |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permitting and Consultations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (enter here)     |

|                                                                |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Riverine and Coastal Habitat Restoration</b>                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach and Dune Restoration            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debris Removal                        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dam and Culvert Removal & Replacement |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical and Nature-like Fishways    |  |

# NEPA Inclusion Analysis

|                                                             |                                                                            |                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Species Control           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Restoration and Erosion Reduction            | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Conservation and Stream Diversion               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed Burns/Forest Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Coral Reef Restoration                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Levee & Culvert Removal, Modification, Set-back       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Species Enhancement                | <input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish Reef Restoration                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fringing Marsh and Shoreline Stabilization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Channel Restoration                | <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Reef Restoration                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sediment Removal                                      |
|                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Road Upgrading/Decommissioning; Trail Restoration | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sediment/Materials Placement               |
|                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage and Access Management                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland Planting                                      |
|                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> SAV Restoration                                   |                                                                                |
|                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Algae Restoration                          |                                                                                |

**Conservation Transactions**

|                                           |                                             |                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Acquisition | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Transactions | <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration/Conservation Banking |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|

## IV. PROJECT IMPACT ANALYSIS

### Core Questions

|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                         |                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Are the <b>activities</b> to be carried out under this project fully described in Section 2.2 of the NOAA RC PEIS?                                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| 2. Are the specific <b>impacts</b> that are likely to result from this project fully described in Section 4.5.2 of the NOAA RC PEIS?                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| 3. Does the level of adverse impact for the project exceed that described in Table 11 of the NOAA RC PEIS for any resource, including significant adverse impact? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

4. Describe the project impacts to resources (including beneficial impacts) and any mitigating measures being implemented.

Please see attached supplemental information under item IV. PROJECT IMPACT ANALYSIS.

5. Describe any potential cumulative impacts that may result from past, present or reasonably foreseeable future actions (beneficial or adverse).

The 2017 Coastal Master Plan for Louisiana identifies projects designed to build and maintain land, reduce flood risk to citizens and communities, and provide habitats to support ecosystems. The plan consists of eight different project types, including marsh creation. Master Plan Project Number 03a.MC.09b includes the creation of 5,400 acres of marsh south of Montegut to create new wetland habitat and restore degraded marsh. All of the TE-117 marsh creation cells located within the footprint of the Master Plan project and is considered to be consistent with the plan. Cumulative beneficial impacts are expected if this project is built as a component of that larger State Master Plan element.

Wetlands in the project vicinity have undergone substantial wetland loss from erosion, subsidence, and development. The majority of wetland loss in the project vicinity from development including oil and gas exploration is historic loss although erosion and elevation loss is continuing to contribute to present and forecasted rapid wetland loss.

Numerous neighboring projects exist contributing to adverse, offsetting, or beneficial temporary or permanent direct impacts. These include constructing levees, floodgates, and mitigation under the Morganza to Gulf Flood Protection Project, maintenance of Island Road and Louisiana Highway 665/Pointe aux Chenes Road, numerous projects on the Pointe aux Chenes Wildlife Management Area ranging from levees, installation of water control structures, construction of terraces, and boat launches the most recent being Island Road Recreation Use Project (TE-144) and Pointe aux Chenes Wildlife Management Area Enhancements Project (TE-146), and Phase 1 and 2 of the Ducks Unlimited Terracing projects adjacent to the planned TE-117. Opportunities for additive coastal restoration projects are being actively explored for the potential to link projects (with TE-117) and provide landscape or across basin benefits (e.g., landbridge).

It is not reasonably foreseeable that there will be adverse impacts from development overlapping with the TE-117 project if it receives construction funding. Therefore, any short-term, direct or indirect minor local adverse impacts of the TE-117 project would not interact with other projects listed to pose a cumulatively significant adverse impact. As with the 5,400 acres of marsh creation encompassing the TE-117 project in the State Master Plan, it is envisioned that any other built or planned restoration (e.g., CWPPRA) projects in this area will have local cumulatively significant beneficial impacts for living resources, vegetation, and socioeconomics.

## Core Questions (continued)

6. Describe the public outreach and/or opportunities for public comment that have taken place to this point. Are any future opportunities for public input anticipated?

During the engineering and design process, a CWPPRA project is subjected to layers of public, academic, and interagency review to ensure that effective projects move forward for design and ultimate construction. The project selection process begins in January of each year when Regional Planning Teams across the coast convene to solicit project nominations from the public, State, and federal agencies, as well as industry and academia. Members of the public can attend these meetings. Every nominated project contains conceptual project features, approximate construction costs, and anticipated benefits to wetland resources. Electronic voting by each CWPPRA federal agency, the State, and coastal Parishes screens projects to 20 nominees.

Interagency and academic working groups then evaluate the conceptual nominee project features for cost and project-associated wetland benefits for feasibility and appropriateness to address local land loss. The 20 nominee projects are then voted on by CWPPRA federal agencies and the State to obtain a list of the 10 candidate projects to continue through the process. These candidate projects undergo several months of additional conceptual design and interagency evaluation to determine whether the proposed project features are feasible, the anticipated benefits are likely, and the project costs are within the funding constraints of the program. Certain project features are typically discounted during this preliminary design phase based on concerns about inferior performance, adverse impacts, technical infeasibility, or unreasonable costs. Candidate projects are publicly presented and voted on by CWPPRA agencies to be funded for Phase 1 analysis, which includes engineering and design, permitting, land rights, and environmental compliance before the project competes for authorization of construction funds.

Coordination is ongoing with the local government, land owners, Native American tribes, and non-governmental organizations. If the project receives construction funding, the project will be featured in different media outlets and advertised at local marinas in addition to specific coordination with the previously listed categories of stakeholders.

7. Have any public comments raised issues of scientific/environmental controversy? Please describe.

No. Similar projects have been proposed for restoration in the project vicinity. Examples include the Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing Project (TE-51) (inactivated), Terrebonne Bay Marsh Creation and Nourishment (TE-83) (deauthorized), Terrebonne Basin Ridge and Marsh Creation, Bayou Terrebonne Increment (TE-0139) (nearing final design), and the Phase 1 and 2 Ducks Unlimited Terracing Projects (constructed and under implementation). Soils have been perceived as a limiting factor and have contributed to the inactivation and deauthorization of two previous CWPPRA projects (TE-51 and TE-83, respectively). However, multiple factors (e.g., soils, water depth, land rights, pipelines) are contributing factors influencing constructibility and cost effectiveness and therefore affordability which is not unique to the geographic area of the project vicinity. State of the science data acquisition and analyses applied through step-wise exploratory and in-depth searches and analyses yielded a constructible design, an affordable cost while substantially improving design, performance, and cost risk. Although the amount of historic loss contributing to deep water depths increases the cost to benefit ratio, new design information and results can be leveraged and applied to future restoration planning in the project vicinity to enable the potential for additive restoration for cumulative landscape benefits with reduced risk.

Access to construction areas and siting borrow areas to minimize impacts to habitat and privately owned waterbottoms is a challenge for restoration projects in southeast Terrebonne Parish. The proximity to navigation channels, shallow waters, and pipelines influence design strategies and the cost of restoration in this geographic area. Private ownership of waterbottoms, avoiding state and privately issued oyster leases and Tier II state oyster seed grounds while maintaining buffers from existing shorelines and pipelines limits availability of borrow within short pumping distances. A tradeoff analysis was accomplished through the evaluation of seven alternative borrow sites to address private land owner concerns with siting the borrow area.

8. Describe the most common positive and negative public comments on issues other than scientific controversy described above in Question 7.

The most common positive and negative public comments concerning this project concern the time it takes for implementing restoration relative to the people's need for action.

See following page for NEPA Determination

## V. NEPA DETERMINATION

The action is completely covered by the impact analysis within the NOAA RC Programmatic EIS (PEIS). The project and its potential impacts may be limited through terms or conditions placed on the recipient of NOAA funds. It requires no further environmental review. An EIS Inclusion Document will be prepared.

The action analyzed here has unknown impacts. At this time, funding will be limited to those portions of the action and impacts analyzed in the PEIS. These limitations will be described in terms or conditions placed on the recipient of NOAA funds. If all remaining activities and impacts are later determined to be described in the PEIS, this analysis will be documented in the program record and the applicant may then proceed with the project. If all remaining activities and impacts are later determined to not be described in the PEIS, further NEPA review will be required; see below.

The action or its impacts are not covered by the analysis within the PEIS. It will require preparation of an individual EA, a supplemental EIS, adoption of another agency's EA or EIS, or will be covered by a Categorical Exclusion.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_