



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
646 Cajundome Blvd.
Suite 400
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506



February 14, 2011

Colonel Edward R. Fleming
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Fleming:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the draft Individual Environmental Report Supplemental (IER) West Bank and Vicinity (WBV), Lake Cataouatche Levee, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, (IER15a) transmitted to our office via a letter from Ms. Joan M. Exnicios, Chief of your New Orleans Environmental Branch. That study was conducted in response to Public Law 109-234, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006 (i.e., Supplemental 4). That law authorized the Corps of Engineers (Corps) to upgrade the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity and the West Bank and Vicinity hurricane protection projects to provide protection against a 100-year hurricane event. The Service submits the following comments in accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (83 Stat. 852; 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

General Comments

The IER is well-written and provides a good description of fish and wildlife resources in the project area and project impacts on those resources. Wetlands in the project area provide important habitat for several Federal trust species including wading birds, neotropical migrants, and resident and migratory waterfowl. Specific comments are provided in the following section.

Specific Comments

Page 14, paragraph 3.2 Significant Resources – This section discusses the significant resources to be impacted by the proposed project. The Service recommends that in future IERs that may impact public lands (e.g., state or federal parks, etc.) that those public lands (and impacts to them) be appropriately addressed in this section.


Page 27, Selection Rationale – According to the National Park Service (NPS), it is unclear if the existing pipeline right-of-way within the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (JLNHPP) is large enough to accommodate directional drilling and the NPS must comply with



that agencies environmental and special use permitting requirements. Depending on the utility company's ability to perform work within the existing right-of-way the selected plan may or may not be completed in a timely manner. Therefore, the Service continues to recommend that the Corps maintain cooperation with the NPS to ensure that the selected plan avoids and/or minimizes impacts to the JLNHPP.

The Service thus far does not object to the proposed hurricane protection features for supplement to IER15. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this draft IER. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact David Walther at (337) 291-3122.

Sincerely,



Brad Rieck
Acting Supervisor
Louisiana Field Office

cc: Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, New Orleans, LA
EPA, Dallas, TX
National Marine Fisheries Service, Baton Rouge, LA
LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, Baton Rouge, LA
LA Dept. of Natural Resources (CMD), Baton Rouge, LA
OCPR, Baton Rouge, LA