

Progress Update on the Phase III Early Restoration Hancock County Marsh Living Shoreline Project and Notification of Material Change Evaluation

The Hancock County Marsh Living Shoreline Project was analyzed in the 2015 Deepwater Horizon (DWH) Final Programmatic and Phase III Early Restoration Plan/Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (“ERP/PEIS”) and selected by the Trustees for implementation in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Phase III ERP/PEIS third phase of early restoration. It includes construction of up to 5.9 miles of living shoreline/breakwaters, approximately 46 acres of salt marsh creation, and 46 acres of subtidal reef restoration. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are partners in this \$50 million project.

Project status

Final engineering and design was completed in 2016. The project still includes three components as originally proposed. During final engineering and design, it was determined that:

- The breakwater height and base width should be increased to provide the desired level of shoreline protection;
- The most suitable location of the subtidal reef would be in the northwestern portion of Heron Bay, as opposed to the northeastern portion;
- The proposed temporary flotation channels were no longer necessary for project construction; and,
- Marsh creation would be limited to the boundaries within Heron Bay, as opposed to extending into the Mississippi Sound shoreward of the breakwaters.

Further, the final project design was made available for public review and comment. A joint public notice was issued by the USACE (SAM-2013-00088-MJF), MDEQ, and MDMR (DMR-140197) on September 30, 2015. The public notice was for state MDEQ Water Quality Certification under the Clean Water Act Section 401 and MS Department of Marine Resources Mississippi Coastal Wetlands Protection Law and federal Clean Water Act Section 404 / Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 permitting processes. All permits have been issued.

Notification of evaluation of a material project change and finding of consistency with Final Phase III ERP/PEIS

The Trustees are required to evaluate material changes to any selected early restoration project. We must also determine whether additional restoration planning and environmental review—including opportunity for public comment—is necessary. We evaluated the changes to the final design based on the criteria established in the section 9.2 of the Phase III Record of Decision. The criteria include (1) whether any change to the project is consistent with the environmental review conducted in the Final Phase III ERP/PEIS or if there are substantial changes that are relevant to environmental concerns, and (2) whether or not there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns not addressed in the impact analysis of the Final Phase III ERP/PEIS that affects their selection under the Oil Pollution Act. The Trustees have concluded that the final design does not impact the

overall project objectives and that the environmental consequences of the changes to the project components will not be substantial. The changes do not affect the selection of this project as an early restoration project under the Oil Pollution Act.

The Trustees have determined that the project is consistent with the environmental review conducted for Phase III. No further analyses under the Oil Pollution Act or the National Environmental Protection Act are necessary, and the project may proceed. The Evaluation of Changes to the Hancock County Marsh Living Shoreline Project can be found in the Administrative Record.

Next steps:

The project will be constructed in phases. Solicitations are underway for contractors to construct two components of the project: Phase 1 (Pearl River to Heron Bay) and Phase 4 (Heron Bay Subtidal Reef). Construction of Phase 1 and Phase 4 of the project is expected to begin in late summer 2016.