

Robbins/ea/38

LMVPD-P (NOD 14 Apr 78) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Lake Pontchartrain, LA, and Vicinity - Restudy and Revision
of EIS

Campbell
PD-

DA, Lower Mississippi Valley Division, Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg,
MS 39180 24 Apr 78

Gardner
PD-

TO: District Engineer, New Orleans, ATTN: LMVPD-R

GH Harri
PD-

The subject EIS schedule submitted with the basic letter is approved,
subject to the following:

a. The potential for loss of human lives in the absence of an effective hurricane protection system for the project area makes it imperative that the legal inadequacies of the EIS be corrected in the shortest possible time consistent with the Court Order of 30 December 1977, as modified by the Court Orders of 8, 10, and 27 March 1978. In this light, there can be no acceptable slippage in the recommended schedule and it must be compressed to a maximum time frame of 36 months, beginning with the Cronin-Stone meeting of 17 March 1978.

GH Hill
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Bayle
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b. The restudy should include provisions for a checkpoint conference with LMVD about March or April 1979, with a view to determining at that time whether or not sufficient information has been developed to approach the Court for further modification of the injunction. Provisions should also be made for a second checkpoint conference following completion of the draft EIS.

Nelson
C

JB Graha
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c. The alternatives report tentatively scheduled for February 1980 should be expanded to include documentation of the economic reanalysis, design and cost estimates, and related information, and should be submitted to LMVD in the form of a supplement to the approved general design memorandum for the project. The supplement should generally conform to the requirements for a Phase I GDM and should contain the reporting officer's Statement of Findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for project modifications based on the restudy. Submission of the GDM supplement and the draft EIS should be made concurrently.

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McClain
C

RD Harri
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COL Phillip
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R. C. MARSHALL
Major General, USA
Division Engineer

GEN Marsha

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PDR

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IN REPLY REFER TO
LMNPD-R

14 April 1978

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Division Engineer, Lower Mississippi Valley
ATTN: LMVPD-R

1. The inclosed schedule for accomplishment of subject work represents the current best estimate of the minimum time to accomplish the identified investigations and studies to adequately respond to deficiencies in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and other project supporting information cited by the United States District Court in its recent decision.
2. Briefly summarized, the major areas of deficiencies and concerns cited by the court with regard to supporting evidence for the authorized plan of protection are that the current EIS does not describe what the US Army Corps of Engineers actually proposed to build, that the alternatives to the barrier are not adequately described and evaluated, and that the impact of the project on the productivity of the surrounding wetlands and the impact of the barriers on the movement of aquatic organisms through the passes are not adequately addressed.
3. Engineering, model, and environmental studies to be conducted, including the barrier plan investigations recommended by Dr. L. Eugene Cronin, our estuarine consultant, are described briefly in notes on the schedule. With respect to project justification, an economic reanalysis of the project will be necessary to put the NOD in compliance with the court order. The present Form 23 Economic Analysis is mainly based on price-level updates of field information gathered some 18 years ago with some minor modifications since that time in high growth areas. A thorough inventory of the development that has occurred during the period is required; projections will be revised to reflect recent growth trends, and land-use data will be updated to be in conformance with present Corps wetlands policy. All benefit computations will be revised to agree with the latest Corps regulations. Due to the size and complexity of the New Orleans metropolitan area, this complete reanalysis will require a major effort.

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4. A meeting in this office is scheduled for 25-26 April 1978 with representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The primary purpose of this meeting is to secure the views of these agencies regarding the adequacy of proposed studies and their desired input and participation.

5. Approval of the proposed schedule is recommended, subject to any modification which may become necessary arising from consultation with the coordinating agencies.

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EARLY J. RUSH III
Colonel, CE
District Engineer