

shoreline to inland areas will be considered in the EIS.

Alternatives

The no-action alternative must be evaluated and retained throughout the study. Additionally, the Barataria Basin portion of the recommended plan from the LDNR Barrier Shoreline Feasibility Study will be investigated. The recommended plan from that study would rebuild dunes at the Caminada-Moreau Headland. The recommendation from that study for the Plaquemines shoreline from Grand Terre to east of Sandy Point is to recreate a dune and marsh platform stabilized with a rock revetment along the gulf shoreline. In addition, another alternative to be evaluated in detail is expected to be developed during the scoping process.

Need for Action

The focus for initial action is in the Barataria Basin (in Lafourche, Jefferson, and Plaquemines parishes), Louisiana, one of nine basins delineated in the Coast 2050 Plan. The Barataria Basin has a very high rate of wetland loss, estimated at about 11 square miles per year from 1978–1990 (Fuller *et al.* 1995). The area also has tremendous potential for restoration because of nearby sediment in coastal bays, the Mississippi River, and in Federal and state waters of the Gulf of Mexico. While the ultimate goal for coastal restoration under the Coast 2050 plan is to implement strategies throughout coastal Louisiana, the Barataria Basin is in dire need of immediate attention. While most Barataria Basin strategies are dependent on the overall input, movement, and circulation of water, sediment, and nutrients in the basin, there are several strategies that can be implemented largely independent of these considerations. The barrier shoreline restoration strategy is one of those strategies. Restoration of barrier islands, headlands, and shoreline can be applied as a separable activity, independent of other strategies in the Barataria Basin and coastal Louisiana.

The barrier shoreline system in Barataria Basin begins about 45 miles northwest of the mouth of the Mississippi River and forms a concave arch of about 53 miles along the Gulf of Mexico at the southern end of the Barataria Basin. Barrier islands, headlands, and shoreline can offer unique ecological characteristics with an assemblage of intertidal bottoms, beaches, dunes, shrub thickets, and salt marshes not found in interior wetlands. The assemblage of plants and animals is different than in any other area of the basin. Some of the species are endemic

to barrier areas. A variety of seabirds, wading birds, and shore birds such as black skimmer, reddish egret, the threatened piping plover, and least tern can utilize barrier islands. The islands can serve as a protection zone for many species of fish, resting areas for migrating birds, nesting locations for birds such as the endangered brown pelican, and nesting beaches for threatened and endangered sea turtles.

The barrier areas in Barataria Basin from Bayou Lafourche to Sandy Point have undergone significant movement and reduction in size during the past 100 years. While some lateral movement of barrier areas is expected as sand is reworked in the nearshore environment, the Barataria Basin barrier areas have retreated and narrowed rapidly, symptoms of a sediment-poor system. Tidal passes that have opened in the islands during the passage of storms do not reseal in fair weather (Levin 1993). Islands have diminished in size (narrowed) to the point that they are likely to vanish in the near future. For example, it is predicted that Grand Terre Island may be gone by 2008 (McBride *et al.* 1992). Overall, the Barataria barrier islands decreased in area by 47 percent from the 1890s to 1988 (Fuller *et al.* 1995).

The Caminada-Moreau Headland, forming the western portion of the Barataria barrier system, has experienced some of the highest rates of shoreline movement on the Louisiana or Gulf coast. Between 1978 and 1988, the shoreline on the Barataria coast retreated at a rate of 45 feet/year. The shoreline has retreated over one mile in some locations from 1887–1988 (McBride *et al.* 1992). The Plaquemines Barrier System in the eastern portion of the system retreated at an average rate of 33 feet/year from 1973–1988. In 1884, Grand Terre Island was 4,198 acres with an average width of 2,982 feet, but by 1988, it was only 1,268 acres with an average width of 1,740 feet. Shell Island was 314 acres with a width of 446 feet. In 1988, it was 171 acres and 345 feet in width (McBride *et al.* 1992). The shoreline has retreated 0.5–0.75 miles over a large part of the Plaquemines Barrier System.

Many of the barrier areas in Barataria Basin have become nothing more than fragmented, low mounds of sand, easily overwashed by minor storm events, maintaining little ecological value. As the barrier areas become narrower and disintegrate, bays and wetlands behind the barriers become more directly connected with the Gulf of Mexico and its associated wave action and higher salinity water. The implications of these changes for coastal industries and

communities are severe even without the threat of hurricane surge and waves. Action to restore barrier areas has become critical.

- Fuller, D.A., J.G. Gosselink, J. Barras, and C.E. Sasser. 1995. Physical Setting. pp. 9–23. In: D.J. Reed (ed.) Current Status and Historical Trends of Hydrological Modification, Reduction in Sediment Availability, and Habitat Loss/Modification in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuarine System. BTNEP No. 20. Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program, Thibodaux, LA.
- Levin, D.R. 1993. Tidal inlet evolution in the Mississippi River delta plain. *Journal of Coastal Research* 9.2:462–480.
- McBride, R.A., S. Penland, M.W. Hiland, S.J. Williams, K.A. Westphal, B.E. Jaffe, and A.H. Sallenger, Jr. 1992. Analysis of barrier shoreline change in Louisiana from 1853 to 1989. pp. 36–97 In: S.J. Williams, S. Penland, and A.H. Sallenger (eds.) Louisiana Barrier Island Erosion Study. Atlas of Shoreline Changes in Louisiana from 1853 to 1989. U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Series I–2150–A.

Scoping

The Corps of Engineers and LDNR invite NEPA input in writing or in person concerning the scope of the EIS, resources to be evaluated, and alternatives to be considered. Individuals, groups, and agencies can write comments to the Corps of Engineers using Mr. Martinson's address shown above. The Corps of Engineers and LDNR plan to hold a scoping meeting in Thibodaux, Louisiana on June 8, 2000 from 7–10 pm in the Century Room of the John L. Guidry Stadium located on Audubon Drive of Nicholls State University Campus, Thibodaux, LA 70301. The entrance to the Century Room is a red door under the stadium. Additional meetings with local interests will be held after the scoping meeting as necessary.

A draft EIS is scheduled to be available for public review during March of 2001. A public meeting on the draft EIS will be scheduled at that time.

Dale A. Knieriemen,

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army, Acting District Engineer.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Evaluate a Permit Application by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—New York District, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The New Jersey Turnpike Authority of New Brunswick, New Jersey has submitted an application for a Department of the Army permit to discharge fill material permanently impacting approximately 12 acres of waters of the United States including wetlands, and to temporarily fill other waters, to facilitate the construction of a limited-access toll roadway known as New Jersey Route 92. The discharge of fill material into waters of the United States requires a Department of the Army Permit pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process will assist the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in determining whether to issue or deny a permit for the project under that authority. This action is taking place in accordance with the USACE procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 33 CFR Parts 230 and 325.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. James W. Haggerty, Chief, Eastern Permits Section, New York District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 26 Federal Plaza, Room 1937, New York, New York 10278-0090, e-mail James.W.Haggerty@usace.army.mil Telephone (212) 264-3912

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Project Description

The New Jersey Turnpike Authority has submitted an application for a Department of the Army permit to discharge fill material permanently impacting approximately 12 acres of waters of the United States including wetlands, and to temporarily fill other waters, to facilitate the construction of a limited-access toll roadway known as New Jersey Route 92. The proposed roadway corridor is within the Devils Brook and Shallow Brook watersheds in the Townships of South Brunswick, Monroe and Plainsboro, Middlesex County, New Jersey. The applicant has submitted a wetlands mitigation plan with the application, proposing creation of approximately 57 acres of wetlands from existing uplands and proposing preservation activities. In total, approximately 260 acres of mostly forested wetlands, owned by the applicant adjacent to the proposed roadway corridor, would be created and/or preserved.

On February 7, 2000, USACE completed an analysis of the Need to Prepare an EIS. This analysis was prepared under the Corps of Engineers and Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA. The analysis was prepared utilizing

information made available through the public interest process until that date, including the issuance of a public notice and the conduct of a public hearing in Plainsboro, New Jersey on March 29, 1999. The analysis concluded that USACE will require the preparation of an EIS to process the application.

2. Reasonable Alternatives

In addition to the no action alternative, reasonable alternatives to be considered include the following:

- a. Preferred Alternative of New Jersey Turnpike Authority
- b. Alternatives to construction as proposed
- c. Alternate construction techniques

3. EIS Scoping

As part of the EIS scoping process, comments on the proposed scope of the EIS will be accepted until 45 days after the publication of this Notice of Intent in the **Federal Register**. All comments should be addressed to the contact person indicated above. In addition to receiving written comments, the USACE will receive oral comments during a public scoping meeting to be scheduled for the latter part of the scoping period. Notice of the public scoping meeting will be made through mailings and/or the New York District's website. (<http://www.nan.usace.army.mil>)

4. Public Participation in the EIS Process

The EIS process will provide opportunities for full participation by interested federal, state, and local agencies, as well as other interested organizations and the general public. All interested parties are encouraged to submit their names and addresses to the contact person indicated above for inclusion on the list for distribution of the draft and final EIS and any related public notices.

5. Federal Agency Participation in the EIS Process

Federal agencies with an interest in this EIS effort are requested to participate as cooperating agencies pursuant to 40 CFR part 1501.6. All interested federal agencies are requested to submit a letter of intent to Joseph J. Seebode, Chief, Regulatory Branch, New York District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Joseph J. Seebode,

Chief, Regulatory Branch.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. ER00-1975-000]

American Energy Savings, Inc.; Notice of Issuance of Order

April 24, 2000.

American Energy Savings, Inc. (American Energy) submitted for filing a rate schedule under which American Energy will engage in wholesale electric power and energy transactions as a marketer. American Energy also requested waiver of various Commission regulations. In particular, American Energy requested that the Commission grant blanket approval under 18 CFR part 34 of all future issuances of securities and assumptions of liability by American Energy.

On April 21, 2000, pursuant to delegated authority, the Director, Division of Corporate Applications, Office of Markets, Tariffs and Rates, granted requests for blanket approval under part 34, subject to the following:

Within thirty days of the date of the order, any person desiring to be heard or to protest the blanket approval of issuances of securities or assumptions of liability by American Energy should file a motion to intervene or protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.211 and 385.214).

Absent a request for hearing within this period, American Energy is authorized to issue securities and assume obligations or liabilities as a guarantor, indorser, surety, or otherwise in respect of any security of another person; provided that such issuance or assumption is for some lawful object within the corporate purposes of the applicant, and compatible with the public interest, and is reasonably necessary or appropriate for such purposes.

The Commission reserves the right to require a further showing that neither public nor private interests will be adversely affected by continued approval of American Energy's issuances of securities or assumptions of liability.

Notice is hereby given that the deadline for filing motions to intervene or protests, as set forth above, is May 22, 2000.

Copies of the full text of the Order are available from the Commission's Public Reference Branch, 888 First Street, NE.,