

RECORD OF DECISION  
MISSISSIPPI RIVER-GULF OUTLET  
DEEP-DRAFT DE-AUTHORIZATION STUDY  
ST. BERNARD PARISH, LOUISIANA,

The Integrated Final Report to Congress and Legislative Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi River – Gulf Outlet (MRGO) Deep Draft De-authorization Study, St. Bernard Parishes, Louisiana, dated November 2007 and revised January 2008 recommends a plan to deauthorize and close a portion of the MRGO Federal navigation channel under the authority of Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. Based on this report, along with the views of interested agencies and the concerned public, and the review of my staff, I find the recommended plan to be cost effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible, in compliance with applicable environmental statutes, and in the public interest. Thus, I approve the recommended plan for construction.

The recommended plan consists of the following features:

- A closure structure located downstream of the south ridge of Bayou la Loutre in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana at approximately Mile 36 would be constructed. The structure would connect two sides of the ridge, a distance of approximately 950 feet. The top width would be about 12 feet and the elevation would be about + 7 feet NAVD 88. The side slopes would be about 1 vertical to 2 horizontal and the bottom width would be approximately 450 feet. Overbank extensions on either side of the structure would prevent flanking of the channel closure. These overbank tie-ins would be approximately 50-feet wide and 7-feet high and extend inshore approximately 150 feet on the south bank and approximately 250 feet on the north bank. Approximately 391,500 tons of stone would be used in construction.
- The MRGO channel from Mile 60 at the southern bank of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to the Gulf of Mexico at Mile -9.4 is not authorized as a Federal navigation channel.
- Existing bank stabilization features and jetties are de-authorized, but will remain in place. These features will be available for disposal or maintenance under other authorities.
- The MRGO channel from mile 60 to mile 66, the Michoud Canal Project, and Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock Replacement Project would remain authorized.
- Navigation aids and channel markers would be considered for removal at the discretion of the United States Coast Guard.

In addition to the no action alternative, numerous alternative plans were screened down to a final array of two alternatives; construction of a complete closure structure at Bayou la Loutre, and a cessation of all MRGO operations and maintenance dredging

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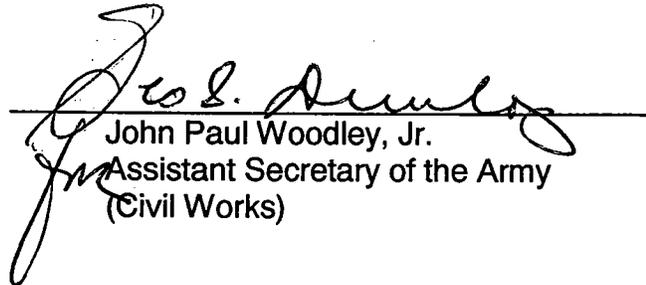
activities immediately. These alternatives are fully discussed in the MRGO Deep Draft De-authorization Report, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

All practicable means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects have been incorporated into the recommended plan and no impacts have been identified that would require compensatory mitigation. The project has been extensively coordinated with the public and with resource agencies and is in compliance with environmental requirements. The recommended plan is the environmentally preferable plan and is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.

Technical and economic criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resource Council's Principles and Guidelines. All applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations and local government plans were considered in the evaluation of the alternatives. Based on review of these evaluations, I find that the overall benefits gained by the construction of the recommended plan far outweigh any adverse effects. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act process.

JUN 5 2008

Date



John Paul Woodley, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
(Civil Works)