

United States Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Regulatory Branch
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, La. 70160-0267
ATTENTION: REGULATORY BRANCH (Michael Hermann)
Permit Application Number MVN-2015-01796-WLL

Dear Mr. Hermann,

We've had a chance to review the Beau Bayou Management Unit permit, and we are very concerned about the irreparable consequences that this project will have on valuable wetlands in the Atchafalaya Basin. Please, if possible, make these comments part of the public record.

The Atchafalaya Basin is of tremendous economic, ecological, cultural, and recreational value to residents of Louisiana, the people of the United States, and the world. The largest river swamp left in North America, it provides the largest harvest of wild crawfish in the world; critical for both migratory birds, and our Louisiana Cajun culture.

As important as the Atchafalaya Basin is for ecological values, we cannot forget that the Basin is also a Spillway that is critical for flood control. Since 1932, there has been a net accretion of nearly 2.5 billion cubic meters of sediment in the Basin floodway, converting a substantial amount of open water and cypress swamps to bottomland hardwood forests. The ability of the Atchafalaya Basin to move flood waters is still immense, but is already severely diminished because of this massive accretion issue. As an example, during our last ongoing flood Grand River at Bayou Sorrel crested at 10.39' on August 17, while across the levee inside the floodway it crested at only 7.1' on August 14 (levels are fluctuating as the Mississippi River rises). Converting more the Spillway's wetlands and open water into uplands will greatly diminish the ability of the Spillway to handle future floods. This is not only irresponsible, but negligent.

In addition to converting cypress swamps and open water into uplands, projects to enlarge or create new cuts to increase river water diversions will most likely silt-up again in a short period of time making the project a complete waste of money. Louisiana should not be using public funds to fill valuable wetlands located far away from the coast and these constant controversies are unnecessary and detrimental to Louisiana's image nationwide.

The project would have other impacts which are very worrisome:

1) Total Direct Wetland Impacts (Fill, Excavation & Clearing):

51.6 acres Total Excavation of Wetlands: 10.9 acres; 67,939 Cubic Yards

2) Total Excavation of Waterbottoms: 27.0 acres; 68,592 cubic yards

3) Total Fill in Wetlands: 34.1 acres; 102,515 cubic yards

4) Total Clearing of Forested Wetlands: 6.6 acres; 1,287 cubic yards

As these issues demonstrate, permitting projects like this one is permitting the filling of wetlands, and for that reason they should be denied until such time as sediment control measures are put in place to guarantee the integrity of those ecosystems.

As wetland ecosystems disappear along the coast, the Atchafalaya Basin will become more and more important for migratory birds and flood protection, and should be protected at all costs. We owe it to our country, the world, and future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

LCPA-West. Vice-President

Ben Bienvenu



Atchafalaya Basinkeeper. Executive Director

Dean A. Wilson

