



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
10117 PRINCESS PALM AVENUE, SUITE 120
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33610-8302

November 15, 2010

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Tampa Regulatory Section
SAJ-2007-01791 (Mod-MGH)

Mr. Miles M. Croom
Assistant Regional Administrator
Southeast Regional Office, Habitat Conservation
NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Dear Mr. Croom:

Reference is made to a Department of the Army (DA) Permit number SAJ-2007-1791-IP-MFN issued to the City of Port Richey which authorized the maintenance dredging of approximately 19,061 cubic yards of sand from the 20 channel areas shown on the areas to be dredged drawing covering approximately 7.429 acres. The project is located in Miller's Bayou, Pithlachascotee River, and the Gulf of Mexico, in Sections 29 through 32, Township 25 South, Range 16 East, Pasco County, Florida. The permit expires on February 27, 2013.

The purpose of this letter is to initiate consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996. The proposal would impact approximately 16.2 acres of marine habitat utilized by various life stages of marine species. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in Miller's Bayou, Pithlachascotee River and the Gulf of Mexico.

On June 24, 2010 and September 27, 2010, Taylor Engineering, the permittee's agent submitted a modification to the DA permit. Specifically, Taylor Engineering requests the following modifications:

1. Correct an error in the original permit dredging volumes and area.
DA Permit Original Project Description: To maintenance dredge a total of approximately 19,061 cubic yards of sand from 20 channel areas shown on the areas to be dredged drawing covering approximately 7.429 acres of dredge area. The depth of the channels would be -5' MLW. Widths vary from approximately 22' to 70'. The method of dredging would be mostly hydraulic with some mechanical dredging to remove rocks and spoil would be placed in an upland site at Waterfront Park to dry with ultimate spoil placement to the Oreto Drive and Ridge Road Storage Facility (ODRROSF) which is a stockpile site on the uplands.

Proposed Project Description: To maintenance dredge a total of approximately 47,000 cubic yards of rock, weathered limestone, sand, and silts and clays from the 20 channel areas shown on the areas to be dredged drawing covering approximately 16.2 acres of dredge area. The depths of the channels would be -5' MLW. Widths vary from approximately 22' to 30'. The method of dredging would be mechanical dredging to remove rocks and spoil would be placed in an upland site at the River Gulf Road as described in the attached Operational Protocol to dry. The selected dredging contractor will select the final disposal location for agency approval as described in the Operational Protocol.

The above proposed project description is a result of Channel 26 dredging volume being excluded from the authorized work section of the DA permit. Channel 26 will consist of approximately 26,599 cubic yards of material. In addition, approximately 308.24 linear feet of Channel 19 is proposed to be included within the proposed modification. A total of approximately 1,228 cubic yards of material will be dredged within Channel 19. The channel 19 extension is located next to the proposed off-loading facility at the corner of Weber Lane and River Gulf Road.

Dredging is proposed to occur in the following channels: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24 and 26. Table 1 Summary of Geotechnical Data by Channel Number, September 27, 2010 submittal provides detailed information for each channel (i.e. length, channel volumes, rock volumes, etc.)

2. Relocate the disposal site to two (2) separate parcels totaling approximately 1.7 acres and located east of US 19, west of Grand Boulevard, and south of River Gulf Road in Pasco County, Florida. The disposal site is located in Section 32, Township 25 South, Range 16 East.

The authorized Oreto Drive and Ridge Road Storage Facility were abandoned because it was not large enough to hold the volume of dredged material. The River Gulf Road Site was chosen as the spoil site.

According to the April 2010 Environmental Technical Memorandum Prepared by Scheda Ecological Associates, one wetland system is identified within the proposed disposal site (River Gulf Road Site). Wetland 1 is a canal located west and south of the disposal site. Vegetative species on the eastern portion of the canal include Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), sabal palms (*Sabal palmetto*), live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) and one black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*). In the canal, the water depth was approximately 1 foot and water clarity was poor to moderate. It was stated that No seagrasses were observed during 2006 field. Field work performed on March 18, 2010 confirmed that there were no seagrasses within Channel 19. There are no permanent wetland impacts associated with the proposed modification.

Proposed modification of disposal site indicates that barges will transport the dredged material from the channel to the River Gulf Road temporary dredged material management area (DMMA). Temporary piles are proposed to be installed at the temporary offloading site to dock the dredging barges. Trucks will transport excavation material from the River Gulf Road site to a final disposal site.

3. Revise the dredging methodology from hydraulic dredging to mechanical dredging which will utilize the clamshell bucket.

The September 27, 2010 submittal, Question 5 response provides a description and schematic of an environmental clamshell and describes the benefits to the aquatic environment as compared to a standard clamshell.

Please inform this office if you agree with the above determination or require additional information to complete your review. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Ms. Mindy Hogan at the letterhead address, by telephone at 813-769-7066, or by electronic mail at Melinda.G.Hogan@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,


Charles A. Schnepel
Chief, Tampa Section

Enclosures:

June 23, 2010 - Submittal
September 27, 2010 - Submittal
November 7, 2010 - Email submittal

Copies Furnished:

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