

PUBLIC NOTICE
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MODIFICATION OF PERMIT APPLICATION AND INTENT FOR ADDITIONAL
SCOPING FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PORT OF
GULFPORT EXPANSION PROJECT
HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District (USACE) announces a modification to a project proposed by the Mississippi State Port Authority (MSPA) for which an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared. The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) are cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EIS. The proposed Port of Gulfport Expansion Project is located in the City of Gulfport, Harrison County, Mississippi. The proposed project is approximately 80 miles west of Mobile, Alabama, and 80 miles east of New Orleans, Louisiana.

The proposed port expansion project involves impacting up to 200 acres of open-water bottom in the Mississippi Sound from the construction of wharfs, bulkheads, terminal facilities, container storage areas, intermodal container transfer facilities, dredging and dredged material disposal and infrastructure, and construction of a breakwater of approximately 4,000 linear feet. The proposed expanded port facility will be elevated 25 feet above sea level to provide protection against future tropical storm surge events. The originally proposed project, as described in the application filed on March 17, 2010, was modified by the MSPA to reduce the overall potential impact from 700 acres of open-water benthic habitat in the Mississippi Sound to 200 acres and to not include any impacts to the Gulfport Harbor Federal Navigation Channel (FNC) or Turning Basin. However, the project, as currently described in the permit application modification received April 16, 2013 includes modifications to the authorized FNC and other navigation features, as necessary for efficient port operations. These modifications will include the navigation channel from the Gulf to the port facilities to support a navigable channel depth of up to 47 feet in the Mississippi Sound and 49 feet in the Bar Channel plus advance maintenance and allowable over depth requirements. Widening the channel may be requested based on results of planned ship simulations. Modification to navigation features adjacent to the port facilities include deepening the existing federal turning basin area and port berthing areas, a turning basin expansion, and new berthing areas. The depth of these features will be appropriate to the deeper navigation channel. Final channel design and associated environmental impacts will be addressed during the permitting and EIS process.

The EIS will evaluate the effects of construction and long-term effects of the proposed channel modification, including placement of new work and maintenance dredged material in beneficial use sites or other placement areas, such as open water and ocean dredged material disposal sites. The EIS will also include the original proposed actions, as modified and noted above. Potential impacts of the proposed project, connected actions, and alternatives will be evaluated in the EIS, which will assist the USACE in deciding whether to issue a Department of the Army permit. It is anticipated that a Draft EIS will be made available for public review in early calendar year 2014. A public hearing will be held during the public comment period for the Draft EIS.

A public scoping meeting was held in spring of 2011 in Gulfport, Mississippi, to solicit comments from the public and agencies in regards to the original permit application and proposed project. An informational public workshop was hosted in Gulfport, Mississippi in August 2012 to inform the public of the status of the project and NEPA process. To ensure that all of the issues related to this proposed project and permit action modification are addressed, the USACE will conduct an additional public scoping meeting in which agencies, organizations, and members of the general public are invited to present comments or suggestions with regard to the range of actions, alternatives, and potential impacts to be considered in the EIS, given the proposed project changes.

A public scoping meeting will be held on May 21, 2013, at the Marriott Courtyard Gulfport Beachfront Hotel, 1600 East Beach Boulevard, Gulfport, Mississippi 39501, as indicated on the enclosed map. The USACE invites comments on the proposed scope and content of the EIS from all interested parties. The scoping meeting will begin with an informal open house from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. followed by a formal presentation of the proposed permit action and modifications. Verbal and written comments will be taken at the scoping meeting following the formal presentation until 8 p.m. A time limit will be imposed on verbal comments, as necessary. Displays and other forms of information about the proposed action and modifications will be available, and USACE, MSPA, and MDA personnel will be present at the open house to discuss the proposed project and modifications and the EIS process.

The scoping meeting will be conducted in English. If hearing impaired or language translation services are needed, please contact Damon M. Young, P.G., at the USACE at (251) 694-3781, at Port.GulfportEIS@usace.army.mil, or at the mailing address provided below by May 14, 2013.

Any comments received at the scoping meeting and during the formal comment period will be considered by the USACE to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposed project. All comments will be considered in the EIS pursuant to NEPA. All comments must be received or postmarked by June 17, 2013. Comments received after the formal commenting period will be considered to the extent practicable. Written comments regarding the proposed EIS scope or permit application modifications should be addressed to Mr. Damon M. Young, P.G., USACE, Mobile District, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628. Individuals who would like to electronically provide comments should contact Mr. Young by e-mail at Port.GulfportEIS@usace.army.mil.

For information about this project, to be included on the mailing list for future updates and meeting announcements, or to receive a copy of the Draft EIS when it is issued, contact Damon M. Young, P.G., at the USACE at (251) 694-3781 or the address provided above. Mr. Ewing Milam, at the MDA can also be contacted for additional information at P.O. Box 849, Jackson, Mississippi, 39205, (601) 359-2157 or by e-mail at EMilam@mississippi.org. Please refer to Department of the Army Permit Number **SAM-2009-1768-DMY**. For additional information about the proposed project, please visit www.PortofGulfportEIS.com.

MOBILE DISTRICT
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Directions to the Marriott Courtyard Gulfport Beachfront Hotel**From Lyman area (from North)**

Take Mississippi Highway 53 EAST. Turn **right** onto US Highway 49 and head **south** towards Gulfport. Cross Interstate Highway 10 and continue **south** on US Highway 49. Turn **left** onto US Highway 90 (East Beach Blvd.). After crossing 15th Street, the Courtyard Marriott will be on the left side.

From Long Beach area (from West)

Take US Highway 90 **east** (W Beach Blvd). West Beach Blvd. becomes East Beach Blvd. after crossing 25th Avenue (US 49). Continue **east** on East Beach Blvd. After crossing 15th Street, the Courtyard Marriott will be on the left side.

From Biloxi area (from East)

Take US Highway 90 **west** (Beach Blvd.) Cross Mississippi Highway 605 and continue **west** on US Highway 90. After crossing Thornton Avenue, the Courtyard Marriott will be one block further on the right side.

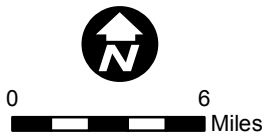
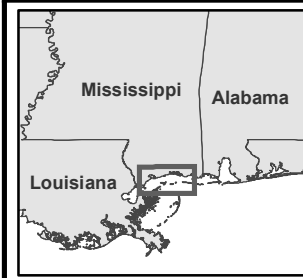
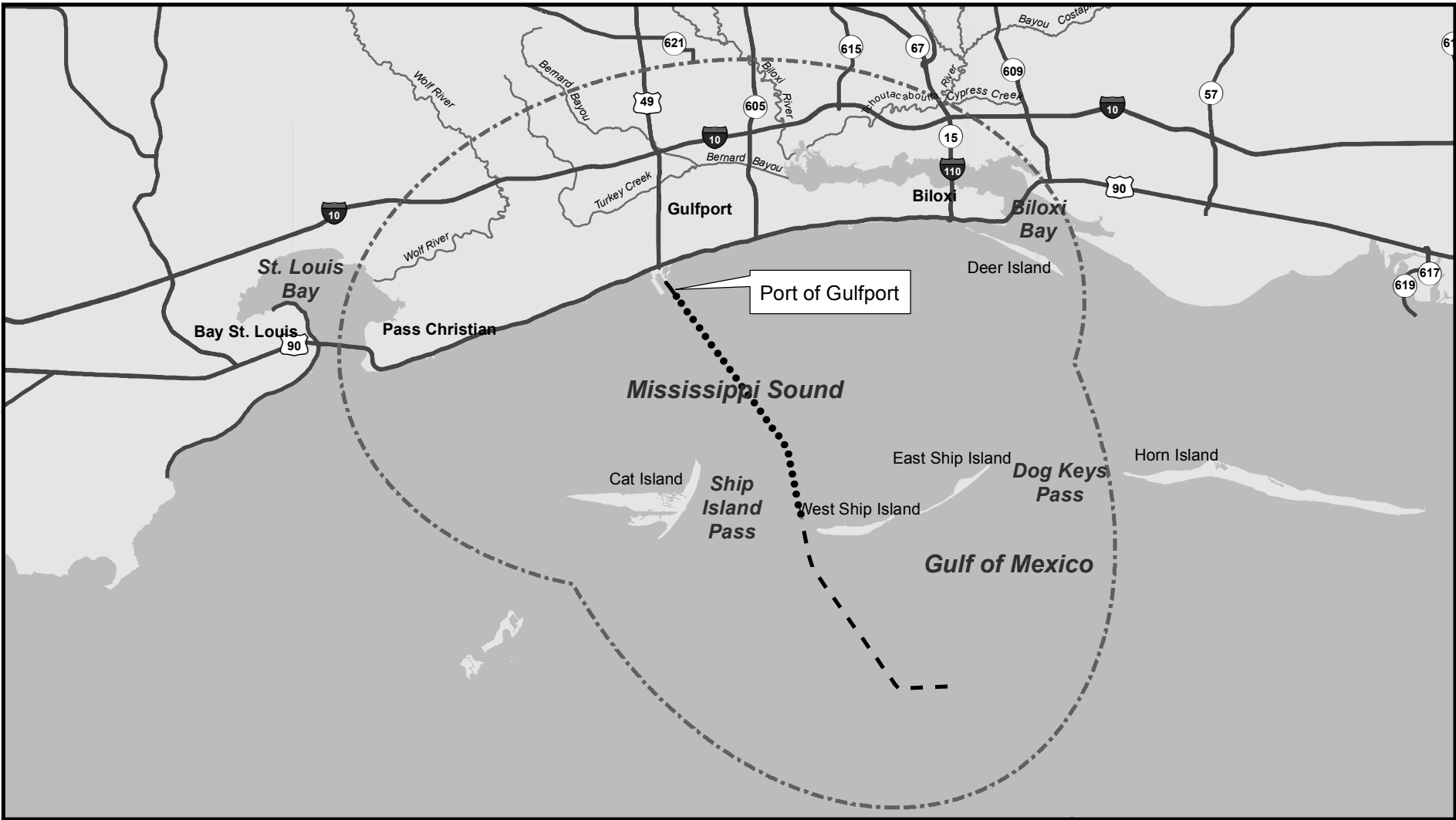
Address is as follows:





Marriott Courtyard Gulfport Beachfront Hotel

1600 E Beach Blvd.

Gulfport, Mississippi 39501





-  Study Area
- Channel**
-  Gulfport Anchorage Basin
-  Gulfport Bar Channel
-  Gulfport Sound Channel

Port of Gulfport Expansion Project
Study Area

Prepared By: 25913	Scale: 1" = 6 miles
Job No.: 100018536	Date: April 17, 2013