



APPENDIX A

AGENCY OUTREACH



November 4, 2020

State Project No. H.013284
Federal Aid Project No. H013284
MRB South GBR: LA 1 to LA 30 Connector
New Route
Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, and West Baton Rouge Parish

Subject: Information Request for an Enhanced Planning Investigation of a New Mississippi River Crossing

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) has initiated an Enhanced Planning Investigation of a new crossing of the Mississippi River, to be located north of Louisiana Highway (LA) 70 and south of I-10 river crossings, connecting LA 1 on the west side of the river to LA 30 on the east side of the river. The Atlas Team, of which Providence is a member, was selected to manage and complete this investigation. A map showing the project area is attached.

The goal of the Enhanced Planning Investigation is to identify feasible corridor alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the project and includes defining a screening methodology for alternatives, stakeholder coordination, and human and natural environment impact identification. The preliminary purpose and need of the proposed project are to provide increased capacity and improved connectivity across the Mississippi River, and to provide an alternate route for emergency evacuations in response to incident-related closures.

During this early phase of the Enhanced Planning Investigation, we are requesting information related to **“showstopping” constraining resources known or managed by your organization. A showstopping constraint** is one that in your opinion would not allow the project to be permitted or physically built.

We request that you provide us with your views and comments by December 2, 2020. All comments should be addressed to:

Jessica Keasler, AICP
Providence Engineering and Environmental Group LLC
1201 Main Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
JessicaKeasler@Providenceeng.com

Alternatively, comments may be provided to DOTD directly by contacting Robert Lott at (225) 242-4504 or via email at Robert.Lott@la.gov.

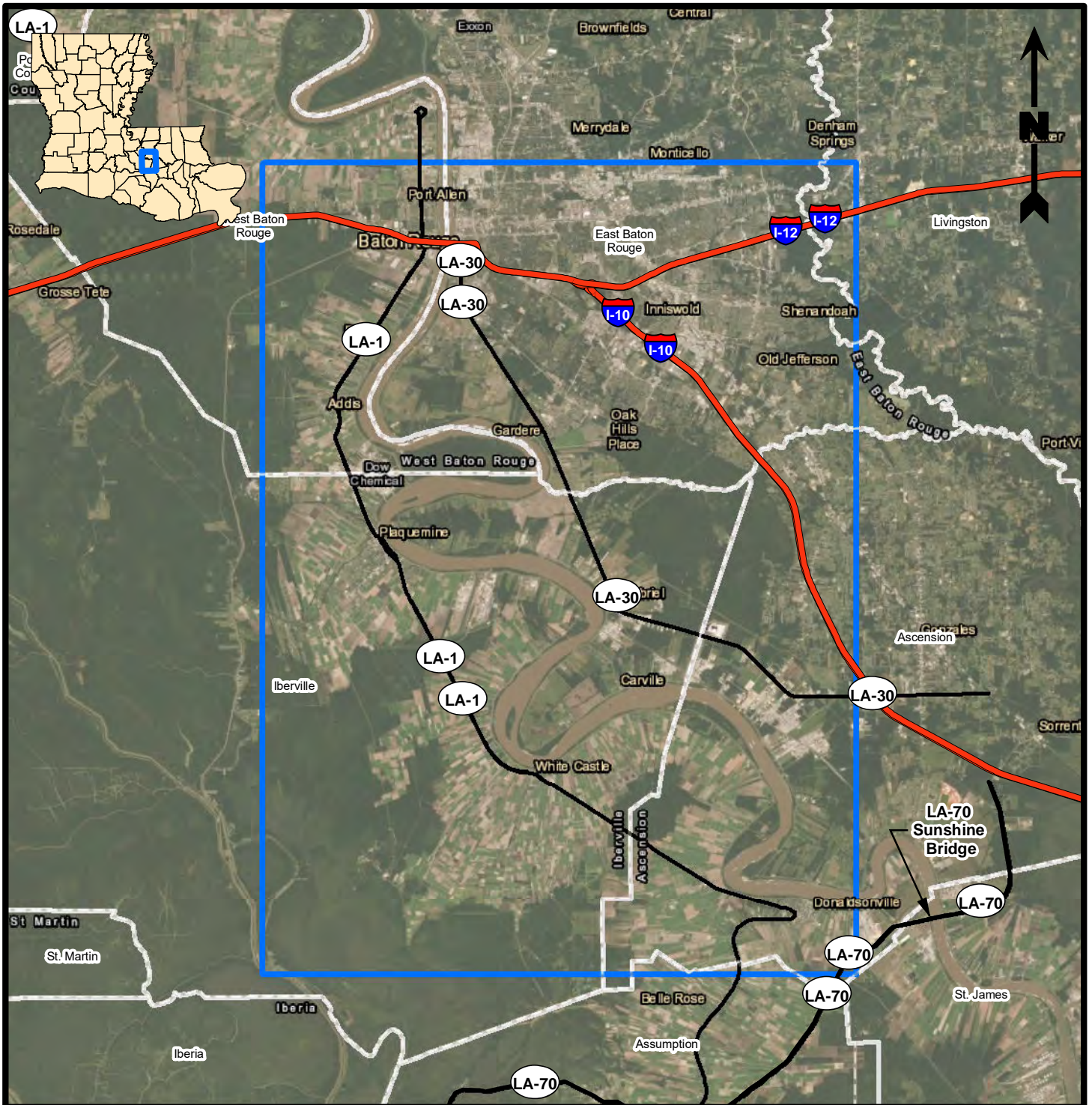
Sincerely,

Jessica Keasler, AICP
Providence Engineering and Environmental Group, LLC

Providence Engineering and Environmental Group LLC

WWW.PROVIDENCEENG.COM

1375-001-001NG MRB Stakeholder Ltr



5 2.5 0 5 Miles

Legend

- Study Area
- Parish Boundary
- Interstate
- State Highway

Reference


Base map comprised of ESRI's World Imagery exported 7/27/20.

Study Area

Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston, & West Baton Rouge Parishes

Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC
LA 1/LA 30 Connector (SPN H.013284)

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Drawn By | TDJ | 10/27/2020 |
| Checked By | KO | 10/27/2020 |
| Approved By | JK | 10/27/2020 |
| Project Number | | 1 Figure |
| 1375-001 | | |
| Drawing Number | | |
| 1375-001-A003 | | |



PROVIDENCE

8TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT (NO) DISTRICT
COMMANDER
HALE BOGGS FEDERAL BUILDING
500 POYDRAS ST
NEW ORLEANS LA 70130

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE ONLINE
USFWS SOV
WWW.FWS.GOV/LAFAYETTE
LAFAYETTE LA 70506

USDA/NRCS
STATE CONSERVATIONIST
3737 GOVERNMENT ST
ALEXANDRIA LA 71302

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY COE PROJECT
LOCATION NEW ORLEANS D
C/O STEPHEN PFEFFER, DOTD LIAISON
NEW ORLEANS LA 70160-0267

USEPA REGION 6
1201 ELM ST
DALLAS TX 75270

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE RECREATION &
TOURISM CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
P O BOX 44247
BATON ROUGE LA 70804

EAST BATON ROUGE
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
PLANNING DIRECTOR
P O BOX 1471
BATON ROUGE LA 70821

DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY EMAIL
LETTERS SOV'S TO LINDA.HARDY@LA.GOV
EMAIL: LINDA.HARDY@LA.GOV
BATON ROUGE LA 70802

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE RECREATION &
TOURISM STATE PARKS
P O BOX 44426
BATON ROUGE LA 70804

DEPT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES LA.
NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
P O BOX 98000
BATON ROUGE LA 70898

LA. DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION
P O BOX 94275
BATON ROUGE LA 70804-9275

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION STATE LAND
OFFICE
P O BOX 44124
BATON ROUGE LA 70804

ATCHAFALAYA BASIN LEVEE DISTRICT
CHRISTY JEWELL
P O BOX 170
PORT ALLEN LA 707067-0170

UNITED STATES NATIONAL MARINE
FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS)
HABITAT CONSERVATION DIVISION
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BATON ROUGE, LA 70808

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LUTCHER LA 70071

LAFORCHE BASIN LEVEE DISTRICT
DONALD HENRY
P O BOX 670
VACHERIE LA 70090

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ASCENSION PARISH PLANNING AND ZONING
COMMISSION
LANCE BROCK, ZONING OFFICIAL
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RANDALL DUNN
IBERVILLE PARISH PLANNING COMMISSION
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WEST BATON ROUGE PLANNING AND
ZONING COMMISSION
JOHN TILTON, III CHAIRMAN
7121 N. RIVER ROAD
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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND
SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
7667 INDEPENDENCE BLVD.
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806

CITY PARISH EBR
DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS
SHANE NICHOLAS
P O BOX 1471
BATON ROUGE LA 70821

SAM DIGIROLAMO
LIVINGSTON PARISH DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
P.O. BOX 998
LIVINGSTON, LA 70754

DRAFT LIST AS OF 11/4/2020



JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION

THOMAS F. HARRIS
SECRETARY

RICHARD P. IEYOUB
COMMISSIONER OF CONSERVATION

December 7, 2020

TO: Providence Engineering and Environmental Group, LLC
Ms. Jessica Keasler
1201 Main Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70801

RE: Solicitation of Views
F.A.P. H.013284
MRB South GBR: LA 1 to LA 30 Connector
Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville and West Baton Rouge Parishes

Dear Ms. Keasler:

In response to your letter dated November 16, 2020, concerning the referenced matter, please be advised that the Office of Conservation collects and maintains many types of information regarding oil and gas exploration, production, distribution, and other data relative to the petroleum industry as well as related and non-related injection well information, surface mining and ground water information and other natural resource related data. Most information concerning oil, gas and injection wells for any given area of the state, including the subject area of your letter can be obtained through records search via the SONRIS data access application available at:

<http://www.dnr.louisiana.gov>

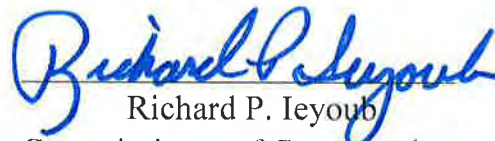
A review of our computer records for the referenced project area indicates that there are oil, gas or injection wells located in the project area. The DNR water well database indicates that there are also registered water wells located in the vicinity of the project area. Additionally, it is possible that unregistered water wells may be located in the area.

The Office of Conservation maintains records of all activities within its jurisdiction in paper, microfilm or electronic format. These records may be accessed during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, except on State holidays or emergencies that require the Office to be closed. Please call 225-342-5540 for specific contact information or for directions to the Office of Conservation, located in the LaSalle Building, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. For pipelines and other underground hazards, please contact Louisiana One Call at 1-800-272-3020 prior to commencing operations. Should you need to direct your inquiry to any of our Divisions, you may use the following contact information:

| <u>Division</u> | <u>Contact</u> | <u>Phone No.</u> | <u>E-mail Address</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Engineering | Carrie Wiebelt | 225-342-9380 | carrie.wiebelt@la.gov |
| Pipeline | Steven Giambrone | 225-342-2989 | steven.giambrone@la.gov |
| Injection & Mining | Byron Ebner | 225-342-4286 | byron.ebner@la.gov |
| Geological | Reid Bohlinger | 225-342-0362 | reid.bohlinger@la.gov |
| Environmental | Gary Snellgrove | 225-342-7222 | gary.snellgrove@la.gov |

If you have difficulty in accessing the data via the referenced website because of computer related issues, you may obtain assistance from our technical support section by selecting Help on the SONRIS tool bar and submitting an email describing your problems and including a telephone number where you may be reached.

Sincerely,


Richard P. Ieyoub
Commissioner of Conservation

RPI:RWB

Jessica Keasler

From: Hodges, Joe A <joe_hodges@fws.gov> on behalf of Lafayette ES, FW4 <lafayette@fws.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 4:28 PM
To: Jessica Keasler
Subject: [E] Re: [EXTERNAL] State Project No. H.013284

Good afternoon,

Threatened and endangered species and/or their designated critical habitats may be located within the study area. You can perform an IPaC review to determine potential presence of T&E species or their respective habitats and potential impacts as a result of future project activities. To perform an IPaC review, you would go to the IPaC website, create an account, and start a project review.

I'll provide a link to the IPaC website below. Let me know if you have any questions.

<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

Thanks,

Joe A. Hodges

From: Jessica Keasler <jessicakeasler@providenceeng.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 19, 2020 1:52 PM
To: Lafayette ES, FW4 <lafayette@fws.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] State Project No. H.013284

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Please find the attached stakeholder letter for New Route between LA 1 to LA 30 across Mississippi River.

Thanks,
Jessica

Jessica Rury Keasler, AICP
Site Evaluation Remediation Director
JessicaKeasler@Providenceeng.com

Main: 225-766-7400 ext. 233

Cell: 225-771-9065

Fax: 225-766-7440

www.providenceeng.com

1201 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Feedback drives our success. Please let us know how we're doing by completing our [2020 Performance Survey](#).



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BILLY NUNGESSER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

KRISTIN P. SANDERS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

December 11, 2020

Jessica Keasler, AICP
Providence Engineering and Environmental Group, LLC
1201 Main Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70801

Re: State Project H.013284
MRB South GBR: LA 1 to LA 30 Connector
Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, and West Baton Rouge Parishes

Dear Ms. Keasler,

This is in response to your submittal received by our office on November 17, 2020 regarding the above referenced project. At this stage of the project, our office cannot offer any “showstopping” constraints given the scope of the investigation area. There are numerous eligible archaeological sites and structures along both banks of the Mississippi River within the study area. In order to offer “showstopping” constraints, we would need more information regarding project alternatives. Our office will be able to offer additional comments once project alternatives are determined.

Regardless of the project location, our office would recommend a Phase I cultural resources survey of both the terrestrial and marine APEs once the location is chosen.

If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Watson at rwatson@crt.la.gov or Abigail Bleichner at ableichner@crt.la.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristin P. Sanders".

Kristin Sanders
State Historic Preservation Officer

**JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR**



**JACK MONToucET
SECRETARY**

PO BOX 98000 | BATON ROUGE LA | 70898

Date December 29, 2020
Name Jessica Keasler
Company Providence
Street Address 1201 Main Street
City, State Zip Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Project MRB S GBR
Project ID
Invoice Number 20122901DDA

Personnel of the Coastal and Nongame Resources Division have reviewed the preliminary data for the captioned project. The attached files contain two ESRI shapefiles of the Louisiana Wildlife Diversity Program (WDP) data. The file named 2020_WDP_DDA_Providence_MRB_S_GBR_points_final contains point data of all Element Occurrence records located within 16 USGS 7.5' quadrangles located in Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston, St. James, and West Baton Rouge parishes, Louisiana. These Element Occurrences do not reflect the local extent of the occurrence, and the accuracy of the location information may be limited.

The 2020_WDP_DDA_Providence_MRB_S_GBR_polygons_final layer contains defined polygons of rare animal and plant species and natural communities that occur within 16 USGS 7.5' quadrangles located in Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston, St. James, and West Baton Rouge parishes, Louisiana. These polygons were created by the WDP using DOQQ aerial photography and topographic maps. As with the point data, these Element Occurrence polygons do not reflect the local extent of the occurrence, and the accuracy of the location information may be limited.

Please refer to the WDP Data Utilization Agreement for restrictions regarding the use of these data. All users of these data shall read and abide by the Data Utilization Agreement and familiarize themselves with the metadata provided. Metadata regarding the field descriptions and ranking codes used in the database are enclosed. Please refer to the precision data field in the attributes table which defines the precision to which the Element Occurrence, as described, may be located on a topographic map.

One State wildlife refuge – Waddill Wildlife Refuge – occurs in the Baton Rouge East quad. No activities shall occur within any LDWF Wildlife Management Area or refuge without first obtaining a Special Use Permit from LDWF. Please contact Cornelius Williams at 225-763-8807 to obtain the Special Use Permit. No federal refuges occur within the 16 quads.

One State-designated Scenic Stream – Bayou Manchac – occurs within the 16 quads. Please contact Chris Davis at 225-765-2642 for more information.

Five State-designated Natural Areas occur within the 16 quads. Please contact Chris Doffitt at 318-487-5885 for more information.

One Baton Rouge Recreation and Park Commission (BREC) conservation-oriented property – Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center – occurs in the Saint Gabriel quad. Please contact BREC staff at 225-273-6405 for additional information.

Cypress Swamps, which are found within the 16 quads, are forested, alluvial wetlands occurring on intermittently exposed soils, most commonly along rivers and streams but also in backswamp depressions and swales. The soils are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater on a nearly permanent basis throughout the growing season, except during periods of drought. Even deepwater swamps with almost continuous flooding experience seasonal fluctuations in water levels (LNHP 2009). Cypress Swamps have relatively low floristic diversity. The composition of associate species may vary widely from site to site. Undergrowth is often sparse because of low light intensity and a long hydroperiod. Baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) seeds cannot germinate underwater, nor can young seedlings of these trees survive long submergence. Seedling recruitment can only occur during draw-down periods.

Bottomland Hardwood Forests are forested, alluvial wetlands occupying broad floodplain areas. This forest type is found throughout Louisiana, including within the 16 quads, and is the predominant natural community type of the Mississippi River Alluvial Plain (MRAP) ecoregion. Bottomland Hardwood Forests are characterized and maintained by a natural hydrologic regime of alternating wet and dry periods generally following seasonal flooding events. They are important natural communities for maintenance of water quality, providing a productive habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species, and regulating flooding and stream recharge (LNHP 2009). Unlike many coastal stopover sites, Neotropical migratory birds utilize Bottomland Hardwood Forests as “full-service hotels,” which provide food, water, and shelter during their perilous journey (Mehlman et al. 2005). In general, forested floodplain habitats are mixtures of broadleaf deciduous, needleleaf deciduous, and evergreen trees and shrubs. Bottomland Hardwood Forests contain a number of species which can be aggregated into specific associations based on environmental factors such as physiography, topography, soils, and moisture regime (Allen 1997, The Nature Conservancy 2004).

The database indicates that Batture Forest occurs within the 16 quads. This habitat develops on the slope between the natural (or man-made) levee crest and major streams/rivers. Batture areas are periodically scoured when river levels rise, and depending on sediment particle size, new sediment may be deposited when river levels fall. Historically, meandering rivers naturally shifted laterally (a process now inhibited by man-made levees and water control structures) via sediment erosion. As a river shifted course, the distance between the Batture and river channel increased, allowing the Batture Forest to undergo succession into other Bottomland Hardwood Forest associations. In large rivers such as the Mississippi, the area between the man-made levee and the river channel remains unstable and thus supports a Batture Forest containing early successional plant species. This often linear habitat can act as a migratory corridor and should be left intact where possible.

The database also indicates that Small Stream Forests occur in the 16 quads. These are relatively narrow wetland forests occurring along rivers and streams in central, western, southeastern, and northern Louisiana. These forests are seasonally flooded for brief periods. The percentage of sand, silt, calcareous clay, acidic clay, and organic material in the soil is highly variable (depending on local geology) and has a significant effect on species composition. Soils are typically classified as silt loams. At times, the community is quite similar in species composition to Hardwood Slope Forests (Beech-Magnolia Forests). These forested wetlands are critical components of the landscape, filtering surface and subsurface flows, improving water quality, and storing sediment and nutrients (Rummer 2004). Spruce Pine (*Pinus glabra*) is a common associate in the Florida Parishes, and Baldcypress and Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*) are occasional associates statewide.

The Spruce Pine-Hardwood Mesic Flatwoods natural community is found within the 16 quads. This flatwoods type is a natural mixed forest community endemic to the western Florida Parishes and is distinguished by the prevalence of Spruce Pine over Loblolly Pine. Hardwoods usually dominate the forest, but Spruce Pine can dominate areas within a stand. Soils are hydric, acidic silt loams including the Encrow, Gilbert and Springfield series. These soils are significantly higher in nutrient levels than those historically supporting the Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*) communities occupying similar hydrologic settings in the eastern Florida Parishes (Smith 1996). This edaphic factor may have precluded Longleaf Pine from this community type. Historically, fire was likely not a major component in this community as the constituent plant species are not fire adapted and fuel conditions are not conducive to fire. Spruce Pine-Hardwood Flatwoods typically have a dense canopy resulting in heavy shading and, usually, a sparse understory. Palmetto is often an understory dominant. For more information on these natural communities, please contact Chris Doffitt at 318-487-5885.

The database indicates that several plant species that are imperiled (S2) to critically imperiled (S1) in Louisiana occur within the 16 quads, including:

Correll's False Dragon-head (*Physostegia correllii*; S1)
Dwarf Bulrush (*Lipocarpa micrantha*; S1)
Low Erythrodes (*Platythelys querceticola*; S1)
Snow Melanthera (*Melanthera nivea*; S2)
Southern Shield Woodfern (*Dryopteris ludoviciana*; S2)
Square-stem Monkeyflower (*Mimulus ringens*; S2)
Powdery Thalia (*Thalia dealbata*; S2S3)

For more information on these plant species, please contact Chris Doffitt at 318-487-5885.

The database indicates that four mussel Species of Greatest Conservation Concern occur within the 16 quads. Species present include the state and federally threatened Inflated Heelsplitter (*Potamilus inflatus*; S1), the critically imperiled Southern Creekmussel (*Pseudodontoideus subvexus*; S1), the imperiled Southern Rainbow (*Villosa vibex*; S2), and the vulnerable Southern Pocketbook (*Lampsilis ornata*; S3). Freshwater mussels are among the most imperiled animal groups in the southeastern United States. As excellent indicators of environmental health, mussels are typically extremely sensitive to water quality degradation, alterations to stream flow, and increases in water temperature. To minimize impacts to mussels within the project area, prevent siltation of streams, drive no vehicles across or through streambeds, and respect Streamside Management Zones. Leaving buffers of trees along streams allows for shading, which reduces adverse water temperature fluctuations and minimizes erosion and siltation. Contact Chuck Battaglia at 337-735-8688 for additional information.

The database indicates that the Six-banded Longhorn Beetle (*Dryobius sexnotatus*) may occur within the 16 quads. Six-banded Longhorn Beetles are critically imperiled (S1) in Louisiana, requiring habitats that are becoming increasingly rare on the landscape. These medium-sized, long-antennaed (= long horned) attractive beetles are banded black and yellow with a "flight season" of spring and summer. Each elytron has four bold yellow spots against a black background. The pronotum has two yellow stripes, one of which appears to merge with another yellow stripe on the head. The combination of four sets of yellow spots and a pair of yellow stripes on the pronotum creates the six bands for which the species is named. Six-banded Longhorn Beetles require old, mature trees to complete their life cycle; maple (*Acer*) species appear to be the most utilized. Please retain old growth timber, including trees in significant decline, where possible.

The Creole Pearly-eye (*Lethe creola*) also occurs in the 16 quads. This small, brown and tan butterfly may be found in moist forests and swamps, particularly those with its host plants – native canes. The Creole Pearly-eye is considered vulnerable globally (G3G4) and in Louisiana (S3). Maintain natural hydrology of forested wetlands and bottomland hardwood forests and do not disturb cane thickets.

The database indicates that the Little Metalmark (*Calephelis virginensis*) occurs within the 16 quads. This small, but striking, orange, black, and rust-colored butterfly is apparently secure (S4) in Louisiana; however, the species inhabits grasslands and forested grasslands, which are vulnerable to imperiled in Louisiana. The name "metalmark" refers to fine lines and spots of shiny silver scales on this species' upper and lower wing surfaces. Yellow thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*) is the host plant for its caterpillars. Avoid overuse and overspray of pesticides and herbicides.

Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) may occur in waterbodies within the 16 quads. The Pallid Sturgeon is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544) and is confined to the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers in southern Louisiana. This species requires large, turbid, free-flowing riverine habitat and is adapted to living close to the bottom of large, shallow rivers with sand and gravel bars. Pallid Sturgeon typically spawn from July-August, but successful reproduction has been severely reduced due to habitat modification. This includes the loss of habitat through the construction of dams that have modified flows, reduced turbidity and lowered water temperatures. We advise you to take the necessary measures to avoid the breeding season and any degradation of water quality in the Mississippi River.

The Alabama Shad (*Alosa alabamae*) may occur in waterbodies within the 16 quads. This freshwater fish species is critically imperiled (S1) in Louisiana and globally imperiled (G2G3). The Alabama Shad prefers large flowing rivers, spawning over sand, gravel, and rock substrates from January to April. An increase in water control structures, poor water quality, and dredging of sand bars has caused a significant population decline over the last forty years. Habitat protection is recommended for this species by avoiding disturbances such as construction of dams, water pollution, and siltation; in addition, prevent disturbance to stream beds.

The database indicates that the Clear Chub (*Hybopsis winchelli*) occurs within the 16 quads. This freshwater fish species is considered vulnerable (S3) in Louisiana where it may be found in creeks and rivers with sand-silt bottoms and riffles. Prevent negative impacts to waterbodies in the project area.

The database indicates that the Four-toed Salamander (*Hemidactylium scutatum*) occurs within the 16 quads. This attractive salamander is critically imperiled (S1) in Louisiana, at least in part due to the sensitivity of its preferred nesting habitat – patches of sphagnum moss in isolated forested wetlands. Four-toed Salamanders are reddish brown on their backs, but have a distinctive white belly with black spotting. Four toes on the hind

legs and a prominent constriction at the base of their tails confirms identification. Prevent destruction of sphagnum bogs and prevent introduction of invasive plant and animal species into the Four-toed Salamander's preferred habitat. For more information, please contact Chuck Battaglia at 337-735-8688.

The database also indicates that the Eastern Spadefoot (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*) occurs within the 16 quads. This toad species is considered vulnerable (S3) in Louisiana, where it may be found in the Florida Parishes. The Eastern Spadefoot inhabits sandy, uplands, including Longleaf Pine Savanna, and requires fish-free, vernal pools for breeding. The species is most often detectable after heavy rains, at which time they emerge from underground burrows, excavated using spades on their hind feet. This species is especially vulnerable during the breeding season (spring and summer) when individuals are at risk of vehicle strikes while crossing roads to access breeding pools. Avoid physical and chemical alterations to vernal pools. Prevent introduction of invasive plant species, including Chinese Tallow Tree, which greatly alters water chemistry. For additional information, please contact Chuck Battaglia at 337-735-8688.

WDP records indicate that the Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*), a vulnerable (S3) species in Louisiana, occurs in the 16 quads. Minimize disturbance and alteration of nesting habitat, particularly during nesting season (April – June). Nesting typically occurs close to river banks and lake shores. Minimize removal of log jams in streams, as woody debris provides cover and hunting areas used by this species. Stream alteration should be avoided to protect turtle habitat. If dredging is needed, material should be dumped away from potential turtle nesting sites or dumped prior to egg laying (May – early June). Please contact Chuck Battaglia at 337-735-8688 for more information.

The database indicates that the Smooth Softshell (*Apalone mutica*) occurs in waterbodies within the 16 quads. This freshwater turtle species is considered vulnerable (S3) in Louisiana, where it occurs in rivers and streams, particularly those with sandbars for nesting. In addition to threats like the depredation of nests and construction of aquatic barriers, as a species of sandbar-nesting turtle, the Smooth Softshell may experience significant nest loss via off-road vehicle disturbance. Please contact Chuck Battaglia at 337-735-8688 for more information.

The Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) occurs within the 16 quads. This species is considered vulnerable (S3S4) in Louisiana, likely due to continued unwarranted persecution by humans as well as fragmentation of large forest blocks required by this species. Do not kill snakes in the project area; be mindful of road-crossing snakes and minimize disturbance to forested habitats. Please contact Chuck Battaglia at 337-735-8688 for more information.

The Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) has been identified as occurring within the 16 quads. This species is federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712) and considered an imperiled to critically imperiled breeder (S1S2B) in Louisiana. Swallow-tailed Kites nest from mid-March to mid-May near water, especially in large pines, Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), and Baldcypress. The WDP recommends protection of all potential nesting habitat for this species. Emergent and super-emergent trees should be left standing. Please contact Rob Dobbs at 337-735-8675 should you have questions.

Our records also indicate that nesting Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) occur within the 16 quads. This species is protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668c) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712) and is protected by the State of Louisiana. All Bald Eagle nests (active, inactive, or seemingly abandoned) should be protected, and no large trees should be removed. No major activities should occur within the nesting period (September 1 – June 1). Please refer to the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service Bald Eagle Management Guidelines for more information on avoiding impacts to this species including suggested buffer distances: <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/es/baldeagle/> & <https://www.fws.gov/southeast/our-services/eagle-technical-assistance/>

In addition, the database indicates the presence of bird nesting colonies within the 16 quads. Please be aware that entry into or disturbance of active breeding colonies is prohibited by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). In addition, LDWF prohibits work within a certain radius of in active nesting colony.

Nesting colonies can move from year to year, and no current information is available on the status of these colonies. If work for the proposed project will commence during the nesting season, conduct a field visit to the worksite to look for evidence of nesting colonies. This field visit should take place no more than two weeks before the project begins. If no nesting colonies are found within 1000 feet (2000 feet for Brown Pelicans) of the proposed project, no further consultation with LDWF will be necessary. If active nesting colonies are found within the previously stated distances of the proposed project, further consultation with LDWF will be required. In addition, colonies should be surveyed by a qualified biologist to document species present and the extent of colonies. Provide LDWF with a survey report which is to include the following information:

1. qualifications of survey personnel;
2. survey methodology including dates, site characteristics, and size of survey area;
3. species of birds present, activity, estimates of number of nests present, and general vegetation type including digital photographs representing the site; and
4. topographic maps and ArcGIS shapefiles projected in UTM NAD83 Zone 15 to illustrate the location and extent of the colony.

Please mail survey reports on CD to:

Wildlife Diversity Program
La. Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
P.O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000

To minimize disturbance to colonial nesting birds, the following restrictions on activity should be observed:

- For colonies containing nesting wading birds (e.g., herons, egrets, night-herons, ibis, Roseate Spoonbills) or Anhingas or cormorants, all project activity occurring within 1000 feet of an active nesting colony should be restricted to the non-nesting period (i.e., September 1 through February 15).
- For colonies containing nesting gulls, terns, or Black Skimmers, all project activity occurring within 650 feet (2000 feet for Brown Pelicans) of an active nesting colony should be restricted to the non-nesting period (i.e., September 16 through April 1).

If you have any questions or need additional information on birds, please contact Rob Dobbs at 337-735-8675.

The Eastern Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys humulis*) occurs within the 16 quads. This small mammal is considered vulnerable (S3) in Louisiana where it may be found in grasslands from old fields to Longleaf Pine savannas. Threats to the species include loss of early successional and grassland habitats, overuse of pesticides, nontarget impacts of pesticides, and outdoor cats.

The database also indicates that the Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*), which is considered vulnerable (S3) in Louisiana, occurs in the 16 quads. This species is found in a wide variety of habitats, usually near water, and dens in abandoned burrows of other mammals, in rock crevices, brush piles, and spaces among tree roots. Threats to this species include the draining of wetlands and habitat fragmentation due to agricultural practices. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Keri Lejeune at 337-735-8676.

The database indicates that the West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) may occur in the surrounding waterbodies of the 16 quads. Manatees are large mammals that inhabit both fresh and salt water. Although most manatees are year round residents of Florida and Central America, they have been known to migrate to areas along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts during the summer months. The West Indian Manatee is a threatened species protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the Federal Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. In Louisiana, take or harassment of a manatee is a violation of state and federal laws. Critical habitat for manatees includes beds of submerged aquatic vegetation (e.g., sea-grass beds). Areas with sea-grass beds should be avoided during project activities. Report all manatee sightings to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at 337-735-8676 or 1-800-442-2511.

Due to several records being classified as "sensitive," usually due to elements occurring on private lands, some records could not be released at this time. Table 1 (Sensitive_Records_WDP_DDA_Providence_MRB_S_GBR_Dec2020.pdf; attached) indicates the Element Occurrences that were omitted from these shapefiles. Should your project be significantly negatively impacted by the exclusion of these data, please contact the WDP Data Manager at 225-763-3554.

Fact sheets for Element Occurrences may be found on our website at: https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/resources/search?q_resources=fact+sheets. The above web address will direct you to fact sheets that were created for all plant and animal species and natural communities with a G1-G2 global rank and all plant and animal species and natural communities located in Louisiana's Coastal Zone.

The WDP compiles data on rare, threatened, endangered, or otherwise significant plant and animal species and aggregations, plant communities, and other natural features throughout the state of Louisiana. Reports summarize the existing information known at the time of the request regarding the location in question. The quantity and quality of data collected by the WDP are dependent on the research and observations of many individuals. In most cases, this information is not the result of comprehensive or site-specific field surveys; many natural areas in Louisiana have not been surveyed. This report does not address the occurrence of wetlands at the site in question. Reports should not be considered final statements on the biological elements or areas being considered, nor should they be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. WDP requires that this office be acknowledged in all reports as the source of all data provided here.

If at any time WDP tracked species are encountered within the project area, please contact Michael Seymour, WDP Data Manager at 225-763-3554. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please call Carolyn Michon, Assistant Data Manager at 225-765-2357.

Sincerely,



Nicole Lorenz, Biologist Program Manager
Wildlife Diversity Program

Enclosed:

ESRI Shapefiles, Signed Copy of the Data Agreement, Metadata, Explanation of Rankings, Fact Sheets, and Table 1

**JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR**



**JACK MONToucET
SECRETARY**

PO BOX 98000 | BATON ROUGE LA | 70898

INVOICE

RETURN THIS COPY OF INVOICE WITH PAYMENT

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Date | December 29, 2020 |
| Invoice Number | 20122901DDA |
| Project | MRB S GBR |
| Name | Jessica Keasler |
| Company | Providence |
| Street Address | 1201 Main Street |
| City, State, Zip | Baton Rouge, LA 70802 |
| Number of Quads Reviewed | 16 |
| Total Due | \$640.00 |

Payment should be made to "Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries" within 30 days of the date of this invoice. Please include the invoice number on your check and return a copy of this invoice with your remittance to the following address:

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
Attn: Jennifer Riddle
P.O. Box 80399
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0399

Should you have any questions regarding this invoice, for review of the Wildlife Diversity database for information on known sensitive elements at a charge of \$40.00 per quad reviewed, please contact WDP at (225) 765-2357.

**JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR**



**JACK MONToucET
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PO BOX 98000 | BATON ROUGE LA | 70898

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270

December 17, 2020

Ms. Jessica Keasler, AICP
Providence Engineering and Environmental Group LLC
1201 Main Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70801

Dear Ms. Keasler:

We have received your November 16, 2020, letter requesting our evaluation of the potential environmental impacts which might result from the following project:

Propose New Crossing of Mississippi River, Located N. of LA 70 and S. of I-10 River Crossings, Connecting LA 1 on the W. Side of River to LA 30 on the E. Side of River, MRB South GBR: LA 1 to LA 30 Connector, STP No. H.013284, FAP No. H013284 /// General Area Only: Plaquemine, River Road (30.254923, -91.117742), Possible Several Parishes for Consideration: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, and West Baton Rouge Parishes, LA

The project funded by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), is located on the Southern Hills aquifer system which has been designated a sole source aquifer (SSA) by the EPA. Based on the information provided for the project, we have determined that the project, as proposed, should not have an adverse effect on the quality of the ground water underlying the project site.


This approval of the proposed project does not relieve the applicant from adhering to other State and Federal requirements, which may apply. This approval is based solely upon the potential impact to the quality of ground water as it relates to the EPA's authority pursuant to Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

EPA intends to evaluate and respond to all projects submitted for formal review or evaluation purposes within forty-five (45) calendar days, from the Stamped Date the project is received by the EPA. However, if EPA is unable to complete its review within that timeframe, no assumption of a determination of a lack of impacts can be made. EPA acknowledges our approval is not required by law for the project to proceed with funding.

If you did not include the parish, project description, project location, area map, plat or the federal funding agency, please do so in future SSA correspondence.

If you have any questions on this letter or the SSA program please contact me at (214) 665-8485.

Sincerely yours,


Omar T. Martinez, Coordinator
Sole Source Aquifer Program
Ground Water/UIC Section

cc: Robert Lott, LA DOTD
Jesse Means, LDEQ

Date: December 17, 2020

FYI: We have moved and have a New Address & Mail Code, please see below.

Omar T. Martinez, Environmental Scientist
Sole Source Aquifer Program Coordinator
Ground Water/UIC Section (Mail Code: WDDG)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500
Dallas, Texas 75270