



State of Louisiana

KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

DWIGHT LANDRENEAU
SECRETARY

October 3, 2005

Mr. Donald Silawsky
Office of Petroleum Reserves, (FE-47)
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585-0301

Re: Proposed Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (West Hackberry, Bayou Choctaw, Clovelly and Chacahoula, LA)

Dear Mr. Silawsky:

The professional staff of the Office of Wildlife reviewed your letter of September 13, 2005 concerning the above referenced project. The following has been determined:

Chacahoula Site - *Ceratopteris pteridoides* may potentially be impacted by the proposed project. *Ceratopteris pteridoides* is a native fern which usually floats on the water surface. It is considered imperiled in the State of Louisiana with a Natural heritage ranking of S2. It occurs in cypress-tupelo swamps and in and along sluggish bayous and canals. The Chacahoula populations were last observed in the fall of 2003.

Two bald eagle nests may potentially be affected by the proposed project. No major activities should occur during the nesting period (October 1- May 15) within one mile of the nest tree. We recommend that, to protect the nesting area, there be no activity within a 1,500-foot radius of the nest tree at any time. All bald eagle nests (active, inactive or seemingly abandoned) should be protected. Within the nesting area, no large trees should be removed. Within the buffer zone, a minimum of three to five large trees should be saved for potential roost and perch trees. For specific location information applicant should contact the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program [LNHP] zoologist at [REDACTED] and reference EOR#135 and EOR#102.

West Hackberry Site - LNHP database indicates observations of Mississippi diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) in the project vicinity. The diamondback terrapin is considered imperiled in the state of Louisiana, and is currently ranked S2. Barrier island marshes and sea-grass beds on the bayside of islands are important habitats for this species. Females use mud and sandbars for nesting. Work activities should be completed in such manner as to minimize the impacts on these habitats. If active nests are found contact the LNHP at [REDACTED] to coordinate activities.

Clovelly - Colonial nesting bird species are known to occur in the project vicinity. If active or inactive nests are found within 400 m (700 m for Brown Pelicans) of the project site, applicant must contact LNHP at [REDACTED] to coordinate activities. Colonial nesters include terns, gulls, skimmers, ibises, herons, egrets, cormorants, anhingas, spoonbills and pelicans.

The proposed project lies within the designated coastal management zone. Contact Rocky Hinds or Bill Pittman with the Department of Natural Resources Coastal Management Division at [REDACTED] concerning coastal use permits.

Each of the proposed project sites has wetlands occurring in them. We strongly recommend that you contact Mr. Ronnie W. Duke of the Corps of Engineers New Orleans District at [REDACTED] concerning wetland permit issues.

Mr. Fred Dunham of my staff is assigned to this project and can be reached at [REDACTED]. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries seeks to work with you in a facilitative manner on this and future such endeavors. Please call my staff should you need further assistance.

Sincerely,



Michael Carloss
Biologist Program Manager

C: LNHP, Venise Ortego