



# State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES  
Governor

## MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CHRIS WELLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

December 5, 2025

Mr. Bryan Williamson  
U.S Army Corps of Engineers  
Vicksburg District  
4155 Clay Street  
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39183-3435

Re: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Nationwide Permit No. 54  
Living Shorelines  
WQC No. WQC2025020

Pursuant to Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U. S. C. 1251, 1341), the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issues this Certification, after public notice and opportunity for public hearing, to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an applicant for a Federal License or permit to conduct the following activity:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nationwide Permit No. 54:

Nationwide Permits (NWP) are general permits issued on a nationwide basis to streamline the authorization of activities that have no more than minimal and cumulative adverse effects on the aquatic environment. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues NWPs to authorize certain activities that require Department of the Army permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

54. *Living Shorelines*. Structures and work in navigable waters of the United States and discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States for the construction and maintenance of living shorelines to stabilize banks and shores in coastal waters, which includes the Great Lakes, along shores with small fetch and gentle slopes that are subject to low- to mid-energy waves. A living shoreline has a footprint that is made up mostly of native material. It incorporates vegetation or other living, natural “soft” elements alone or in combination with some type of harder shoreline structure (e.g., oyster or mussel reefs or rock sills) for added protection and stability. Living shorelines should maintain the natural

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continuity of the land-water interface, and retain or enhance shoreline ecological processes. Living shorelines must have a substantial biological component, either tidal or lacustrine fringe wetlands or oyster or mussel reef structures, but a portion of a living shoreline may consist of an unvegetated cobble, gravel, and/or sand beach, (i.e., a pocket beach). The following conditions must be met:

- (a) The structures and fill area, including cobble, gravel, and/or sand fills, sills, breakwaters, or reefs, cannot extend into the waterbody more than 30 feet from the mean low water line in tidal waters or the ordinary high water mark in the Great Lakes, unless the district engineer waives this criterion by making a written determination concluding that the activity will result in no more than minimal adverse environmental effects;
- (b) The activity is no more than 500 feet in length along the bank, unless the district engineer waives this criterion by making a written determination concluding that the activity will result in no more than minimal adverse environmental effects;
- (c) Coir logs, coir mats, stone, native oyster shell, native wood debris, and other structural materials must be adequately anchored, of sufficient weight, or installed in a manner that prevents relocation in most wave action or water flow conditions, except for extremely severe storms;
- (d) For living shorelines consisting of tidal or lacustrine fringe wetlands, native plants appropriate for current site conditions, including salinity and elevation, must be used if the site is planted by the permittee;
- (e) Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, and oyster or mussel reef structures in navigable waters, must be the minimum necessary for the establishment and maintenance of the living shoreline;
- (f) If sills, breakwaters, or other structures must be constructed to protect fringe wetlands for the living shoreline, those structures must be the minimum size necessary to protect those fringe wetlands;
- (g) The activity must be designed, constructed, and maintained so that it has no more than minimal adverse effects on water movement between the waterbody and the shore and the movement of aquatic organisms between the waterbody and the shore; and
- (h) The living shoreline must be properly maintained, which may require periodic repair of sills, breakwaters, or reefs, or replacing cobble, gravel, and/or sand fills after severe storms or erosion events. Vegetation may be replanted to maintain the living shoreline. This NWP authorizes those maintenance and repair activities,

including any minor deviations necessary to address changing environmental conditions.

This NWP does not authorize beach nourishment or land reclamation activities.

Notification: The permittee must submit a pre-construction notification to the district engineer prior to commencing the construction of the living shoreline. (See general condition 32.) The pre-construction notification must include a delineation of special aquatic sites (see paragraph (b)(4) of general condition 32). Pre-construction notification is not required for maintenance and repair activities for living shorelines unless required by applicable NWP general conditions or regional conditions. (Authorities: Sections 10 and 404)

**Note:** In waters outside of coastal waters, nature-based bank stabilization techniques, such as bioengineering and vegetative stabilization, may be authorized by NWP 13. [NWP No. 54, WQC2025020].

MDEQ certifies that the above-described activity will be in compliance with the applicable provisions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and Section 49-17-29 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, if the applicant complies with the following conditions:

1. The permittee must obtain all other required permits from the Permit Board prior to commencing work on the project, unless the activity is exempted from permit requirements by a regulation promulgated by the Commission in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. 49-17-29 (2)(b). (Statement A, E, & H) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
2. All material placed for beneficial use shall be properly tested and analyzed as required by the Mississippi Beneficial Use Program (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.3.1.B(7))
3. Appropriate installation of erosion and sediment controls shall be required during the construction phase, such as buffer zones, and slope cover. Appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) are found in the Field Manual For Erosion and Sediment Control. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
4. The permittee shall obtain appropriate wastewater permits and/or approvals for the proposed activity prior to the commencement of construction activities. (Statement G) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
5. For projects greater than five acres of total ground disturbances including clearing, grading, excavating, or other construction activities, the applicant shall obtain the necessary coverage under the State of Mississippi's Large Construction Storm Water General NPDES Permit. For projects greater than one, to less the

five acres of total ground disturbances including clearing, grading, excavating, or other construction activities, the applicant shall follow the conditions and limitations of the State of Mississippi's Small Construction Storm Water General NPDES Permit. No construction activities shall begin until the necessary approvals and/or permits have been obtained. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)

6. Turbidity outside the limits of a 750-foot mixing zone shall not exceed the ambient turbidity by more than 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Units. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 2.2.A.(3))
7. No sewage, oil, refuse, or other pollutants shall be discharged into the watercourse. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 2.2.A.(3))

As part of the Scope of Review for Application Decisions, 11 Mississippi Administrative Code Part 6, Rule 1.3.4(B), the above conditions are necessary for MDEQ to ensure that appropriate measures will be taken to eliminate unreasonable degradation and irreparable harm to waters of the State, such that the activity will not meet the criteria for denial:

- (A) The proposed activity permanently alters the aquatic ecosystem such that water quality criteria are violated and/or it no longer supports its existing or classified uses. An example is the channelization of streams
- (B) There is a feasible alternative to the activity which reduces adverse consequences on water quality and classified or existing uses of waters of the State.
- (C) The proposed activity adversely impacts waters containing State or federally recognized threatened or endangered species.
- (D) The proposed activity adversely impacts a special or unique aquatic habitat, such as National or State Wild and Scenic Rivers and/or State Outstanding Resource Waters.
- (E) The proposed activity in conjunction with other activities may result in adverse cumulative impacts.
- (F) Nonpoint source/storm water management practices necessary to protect water quality have not been proposed.
- (G) Denial of wastewater permits and/or approvals by the State with regard to the proposed activities.
- (H) The proposed activity results in significant environmental impacts which may adversely impact water quality.

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MDEQ also certifies that there are no limitations under Section 302 nor standards under Sections 306 and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act which are applicable to the applicant's above-described activity.

This certification is valid for the project as proposed. Any deviations without proper modifications and/or approvals may result in a violation of the 401 Water Quality Certification. If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Barefoot at (601) 961-5171.

Sincerely,



Becky Simonson  
Chief, Environmental Permits Division

cc: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nashville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4