



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applicant:
Keesler Air Force Base

Published: November 17, 2025
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**Mobile District
Permit Application No. SAM-2024-00768-DCH
Joint Public Notice: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE),
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Office of
Pollution Control (MDEQ), and Mississippi Department of
Marine Resources (MDMR) (DMR25-000445)**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §403). The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments from the public regarding the work described below:

APPLICANT: Keesler Air Force Base
Mr. David Randolph
508 L Street, Keesler Air Force Base
Biloxi, MS 39534

AGENT: Mississippi State University
Mr. Eric Sparks
1815 Popps Ferry Road
Biloxi, MS 39532

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The project would affect waters of the United States and navigable waters of the United States associated with Back Bay of Biloxi. The project/review area is located along the shoreline of Biloxi Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) and Keesler Air Force Base (AFB) in Section 20, Township 7 South, Range 9 West; at Latitude 30.416837 North and Longitude 88.927795 West; in Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The proposed project encompasses 1.35 miles of shoreline. The existing shoreline along Keesler AFB has several piers and is characterized by natural marsh habitat, small lengths of beach, and some existing riprap. The existing shoreline along Biloxi VAMC is made up of mostly natural marsh with scattered beaches and some riprap. There are areas of clam shells within the project boundary. Satellite imagery depicts the shoreline is eroding at a rate of approximately 1 foot per year. The Federal navigation Channel is located approximately 604 linear feet from the nearest proposed breakwater to the channel.

PROJECT PURPOSE: To reduce shoreline erosion through the reduction of wave energy along the southern shoreline of Back Bay of Biloxi shared by Keesler AFB and Biloxi VAMC; to conserve and promote the expansion of marshes and associated ecosystem services; and increase community resilience by protecting vital infrastructure from sea-level rise and storm surge.

Basic: To construct a living shoreline.

Overall: To reduce shoreline erosion, conserve and promote the expansion of marshes, and protect vital infrastructure at Keesler AFB and Biloxi VAMC.

PROPOSED WORK: The applicant requests authorization to install a total of 74 riprap breakwaters each 100 ft long, 9 ft wide at the base, and 4 feet tall (or a maximum of 1 foot above mean high water). The breakwaters will be placed a maximum of 30 feet from mean high water with approximately 25 feet between each breakwater. In locations with clam beds, the breakwater placement will be adjusted to avoid the clam beds. The project would install 35 breakwaters along the shoreline of Biloxi VAMC, 28 breakwaters along the shoreline of Keesler Air Force Base, and 11 breakwaters along the nearby island. This project requires a maximum of 8,194 cubic yards of riprap with 2,021 cubic yards of riprap occurring above mean high water. Barges would be staged just offshore of the breakwater construction area with a maximum distance/working radius offshore of the breakwaters of 50 feet. The barges would be moved along just offshore of the breakwaters as they progress down the shoreline for construction.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment:

BMPs would be implemented during construction, including regular inspection of construction equipment for leaks. Any potential minor spills or releases would be handled according to procedures outlined in the base's Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plans.

Material used for construction would not contain trash, debris, and/or toxic pollutants. Transiting vessels/barges will occur at slow transit speeds (5 knots or less). The project would comply with Measures for Reducing Entrapment Risk to Protected Species. Sediment curtains/boom would be used when placement of breakwater material creates sediment disturbance.

There are clam beds within the project area. However, the applicant has stated that they would ensure clam beds are avoided, and the breakwaters would be installed at a minimum 10 feet from any clam beds.

Construction of a bulkhead and a riprap revetment were considered but eliminated due to the proposed breakwaters having the most positive effects and the lowest negative effects.

The proposed project is intended to restore and enhance wetland vegetation and reduce erosion along the shoreline, which will be an enhancement of current shoreline conditions.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION:

The applicant has provided the following explanation why compensatory mitigation should not be required: There is no loss of wetlands or other special aquatic sites. The only discharge associated with the project is the placement of 8,194 cubic yards of riprap for the construction of 74 breakwaters in open waterbottoms.

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

The Corps is evaluating the undertaking for effects to historic properties as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This public notice serves to inform the public of the proposed undertaking and invites comments including those from local, State, and Federal government Agencies with respect to historic resources. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer, federally recognized tribes and other interested parties.

The District Engineer's final eligibility and effect determination will be based upon coordination with the SHPO and/or THPO, as appropriate and required, and with full consideration given to the proposed undertaking's potential direct and indirect effects on historic properties within the Corps-identified permit area.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The Corps has performed an initial review of the application, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species (SLOPES), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Region Section 7 Mapper, and the NMFS Critical Habitat Mapper to determine if any threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, as well as the proposed and final designated critical habitat may occur in the vicinity of the proposed project. Based on this initial review, the Corps has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project may affect species and critical habitat listed below. No other ESA-listed species or critical habitat will be affected by the proposed action.

Table 1: ESA-listed species and/or critical habitat potentially present in the action area.

Species Common Name and/or Critical Habitat Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	Potential Effect
West Indian Manatee	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	Threatened	Not Likely to Adversely Effect

Eastern Black Rail	<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>	Threatened	No Effect
MS Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis pulla</i>	Endangered	No Effect
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Threatened	No Effect
Alabama Red-Bellied Turtle	<i>Pseudemys alabamensis</i>	Endangered	Not Likely to Adversely Effect
Loggerhead See Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Endangered	No Effect
Alligator Snapping Turtle	<i>Macrochelys temminckii</i>	Proposed Threatened	No Effect
Gopher Tortoise	<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Threatened	No Effect
Gulf Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser oxyrhynchus desotoi</i>	Threatened	No Effect

The USFWS Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Activities will be required.

Pursuant to Section 7 ESA, any required consultation with the Service(s) will be conducted in accordance with 50 CFR part 402. The Corps is the lead Federal agency for ESA consultation for the proposed action. Any required consultation will be completed by the Corps.

This notice serves as request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service for any additional information on whether any listed or proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or critical habitat may be present in the area which would be affected by the proposed activity.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996, the Corps reviewed the project area, examined information provided by the applicant, and consulted available species information.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Our initial determination is that the proposed action may adversely affect EFH and/or fisheries managed by Fishery Management Councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service

(NMFS). Implementation of the proposed project would directly impact approximately 1.50 acres of estuarine substrate and water column. The effects of the project are determined to be minimal and permanent. These habitat(s) are utilized by the following species and their various life stages:

Table 2: EFH species and life stages.

<i>NOAA Essential Fish Habitat (6 feature(s) returned)</i>	
<i>Species</i>	<i>Life Stage</i>
Coastal Migratory Pelagics	ALL
Red Drum	ALL
Shrimp	ALL
Spinner Shark	Neonate
Bull Shark	Juvenile/Adult
Reef Fish	ALL
<i>Source: https://services2.arcgis.com/C8EMqrsFcRFL6LrL/arcgis/rest/services/EFH/FeatureServer/0</i>	

Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NAVIGATION: Based on the information provided by the applicant, the waterward edge of the proposed structure is approximately 604 feet away from the near bottom edge of the Biloxi Back Bay federal channel. All staging would take place approximately 550 feet away from the federal channel.

SECTION 408: The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Water Quality Certification may be required from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The geographic extent of aquatic resources within the proposed project area that either are, or are presumed to be, within the Corps jurisdiction has not been verified by Corps personnel.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion

and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act or the criteria established under authority of Section 102(a) of the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. A permit will be granted unless its issuance is found to be contrary to the public interest.

COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

The Mobile District will receive written comments on the proposed work, as outlined above, until December 17, 2025. Comments should be submitted electronically via the Regulatory Request System (RRS) at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs> or to Mr. Christopher S. Pickering at christopher.s.pickering@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Attention: Mr. Christopher S. Pickering, 100 Canal Street, Regulatory Division, Mobile, Alabama 36602-1901. Copies of all comments should be furnished to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control, Post Office Box 2261, Jackson, Mississippi 39225, and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530. Please refer to the permit application number in your comments.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing will be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.





