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## CBRA letter for three MS TIG project alternatives

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To: Stephen Ricks <stephen\_ricks@fws.gov>  
Cc: Ashley Mills <ashley\_mills@fws.gov>

Sat, Mar 11, 2017 at 5:43 PM

Stephen, attached please find the CBRA letter for three MS TIG project alternatives. We are requesting your concurrence with our consistency determination.

If you have any questions please contact Ashley Mills.

Thanks

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**CBRA letter MS alternatives March 11, 2017.pdf**  
1099K

Stephen,

March 10, 2017

The DOI Deepwater Horizon Case Management Office is working through various environmental compliance consultations on post-settlement proposed restoration alternatives in Mississippi. First, we would like to thank you for all your efforts in the ESA Section 7 consultations your office has conducted for the Early Restoration projects. We are now working on the Coastal Barrier Resources Act consistency determinations for proposed alternatives. There are three proposed alternatives that could occur in Mississippi that are being evaluated by the Mississippi Trustee Implementation Group (TIG) as potential restoration projects. The alternatives were proposed in a draft restoration plan released for public review and comment December 27, 2016.

We used the Coastal Barrier Resources System mapper – Beta (<http://www.fws.gov/cbra/Maps/Mapper.html> [accessed January 17, 2017]) to determine if the proposed alternatives were located within an Otherwise Protected Area or within a System Unit. If the proposed alternatives would occur in an Otherwise Protected Area or outside of a System Unit, no additional analysis was developed.

The table below summarizes the three proposed alternatives and our CBRA Consistency Determinations. These alternatives are briefly described below, and shown in Figures 1-5.

<b>Proposed Alternatives</b>	<b>CBRA Consistency Determination</b>
Upper Pascagoula Nutrient Reduction Project	Does not occur within any CBRS Unit.
Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management	A portion occurs within System Unit R01A. We request your concurrence with our Consistency Determination.
Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Management	Does not occur within any CBRS Unit.

## 1. Upper Pascagoula River Water Quality Enhancement Project

The Upper Pascagoula River Water Quality Enhancement project alternative includes 20,000 acres of land within portions of Newton, Lauderdale, Clarke, Neshoba, and Kemper counties, Mississippi. The project boundary is the Chunky-Okatibbee watershed boundary. The primary goal for the project is water quality improvement by nutrient and sediment reduction. Runoff from cropland, pasture/grassland, and forests contributes excess nutrient and sediment that adversely impact the health of coastal waters of the Gulf. The project includes landowner outreach and planning, and implementation of the Ecological/Nutrient Reduction and Soil and Water Conservation/Nutrient Reduction conservation practices. If the MS TIG selects this project alternative, after consideration of public comment, the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service will implement this project.

### *Consistency Analysis*

The proposed alternative is not within any designated System Unit and is therefore not subject to the CBRA.

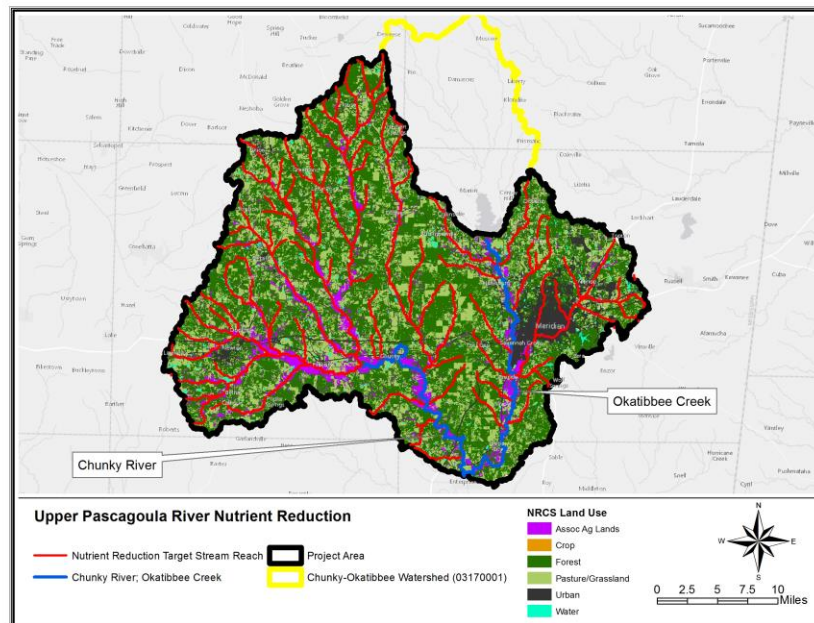


Figure 1. Location of the Upper Pascagoula River Water Quality Enhancement proposed alternative, Mississippi.

## **2. Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management Project**

The Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management project alternative includes the acquisition and preservation of up to 1,410 acres of habitat within and adjacent to Graveline Bay Coastal Preserve (CP), and restoration and management activities on up to 2,185 acres of existing CP land and newly acquired parcels in the vicinity of the CP. Project objectives include: acquisition of properties that have a high threat of development, preserving a buffer to keep adjacent marsh habitat intact, and reducing habitat fragmentation and realizing connectivity benefit that would result from habitat management adjacent to existing state-owned CP land. Proposed restoration measures and management activities include: access restriction, invasive species management, debris removal, and road removal/repair and culvert replacement. If the MS TIG selects this project alternative, after consideration of public comment, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality will implement this project, in partnership with Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

### *Consistency Analysis*

A portion of this proposed project alternative occurs in System Unit R01A and is subject to a Consistency Analysis under the CBRA. Within Unit R01A, the proposed action includes acquiring and managing up to 1,410 acres of habitat within Graveline Bay (Figures 2-3). Consequently, these activities are consistent with the CBRA per exemption 16 U.S.C. 3505(a)(6)(A) for “Projects for the study, management, protection, and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources and habitats, including acquisition of fish and wildlife habitats, and related lands, stabilization projects for fish and wildlife habitats, and recreational projects.” The purposes of CBRA are “to minimize the loss of human life, wasteful expenditure of Federal revenues, and the damages to fish, wildlife, and other natural resources associated with the coastal barriers along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts...” 16 U.S.C. §3501(b). The Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management project alternative is designed to restore natural resources injured by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. Accordingly, this project is consistent with the purposes of the CBRA and falls within the CBRA exemption discussed above.

**We are requesting your concurrence with our consistency determination.**

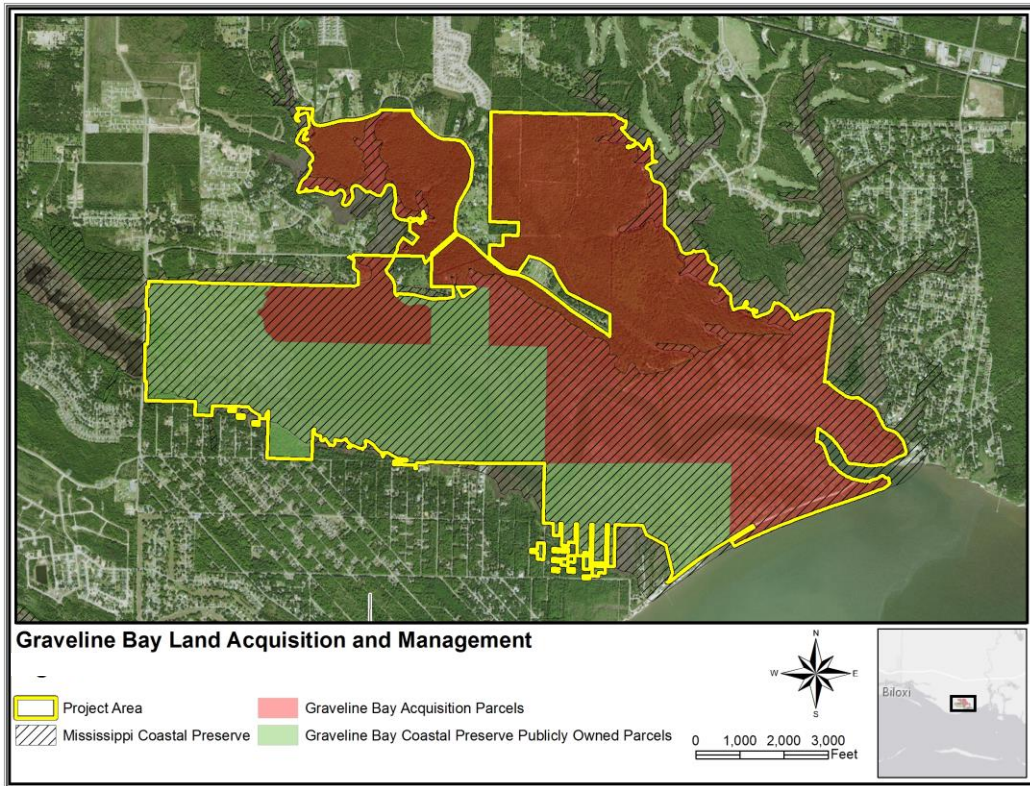


Figure 2. Location of the Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management project alternative, Mississippi.

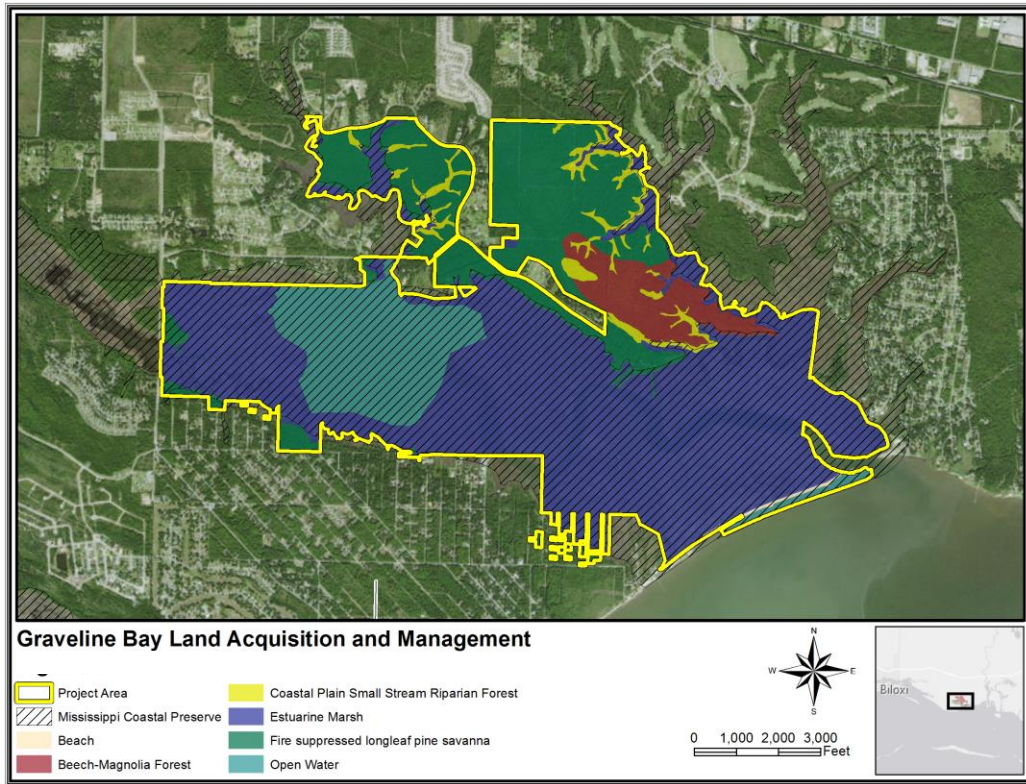


Figure 3. Habitat Types of the Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management project alternative, Mississippi.

### 3. Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Habitat Management Project

The Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Habitat Management project alternative includes the acquisition of up to 8,000 acres of land and habitat management activities on up to 17,500 acres in public ownership and in newly acquired parcels within the boundaries of the Grand Bay NWR, the Grand Bay NERR and Grand Bay Savanna Coastal Preserve. The project has several objectives including: acquisition of properties to protect habitat; contiguous ownership of large tracts for connectivity and to facilitate large-scale, well-established habitat management techniques; and restoration of the structure and function of target habitats within the project boundary. Proposed restoration measures and management activities include access restriction and invasive species management. If the MS TIG selects this project alternative, after consideration of public comment, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of the Interior will implement this project, in partnership with Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and Grand Bay NERR.

#### *Consistency Analysis*

The proposed alternative is not within any designated System Unit and is therefore not subject to the CBRA.

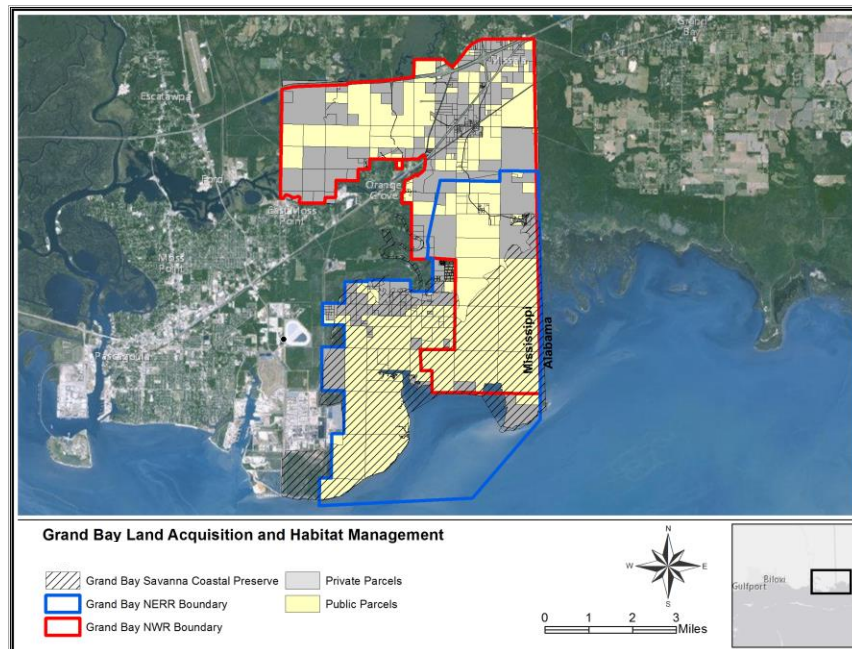


Figure 4. Location of the Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Management proposed alternative, Mississippi.

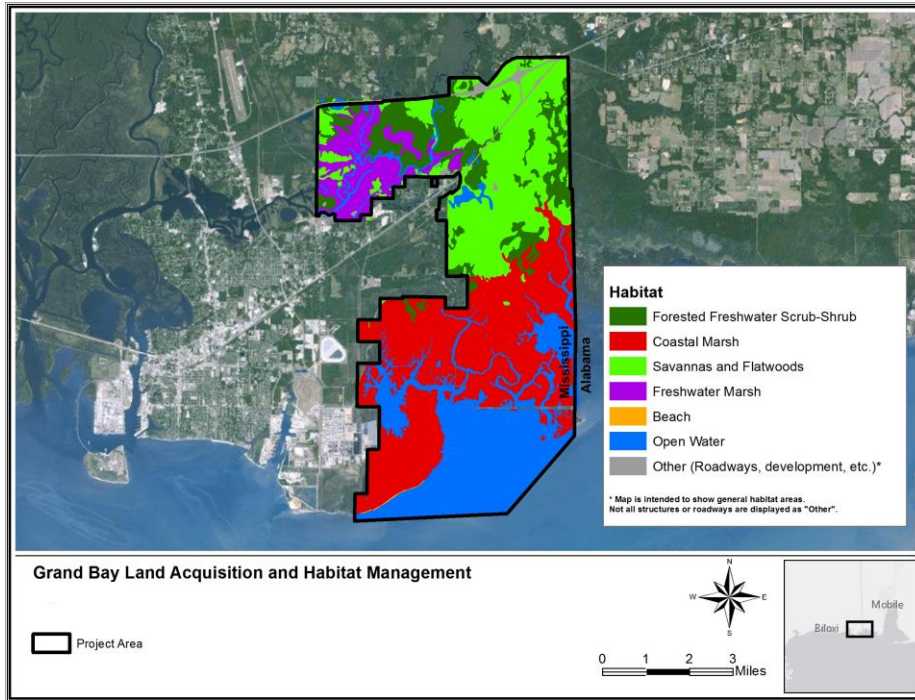


Figure 5. Habitat Types of the Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Management proposed alternative, Mississippi.