



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Phil Bryant
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

Jamie M. Miller, Executive Director

April 5, 2017

Andree Duvarney
National Environmental Coordinator
Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
7578 Old Canton Road
Madison, MS 39110

Re: DMR-170192; Mississippi Trustee Implementation Group (MS TIG) Draft 2016-2017
Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment (Draft RP/EA)

Dear Ms. Duvarney:

The Department of Marine Resources (Department) in cooperation with other state agencies is responsible under the Mississippi Coastal Program (MCP) for managing the coastal resources of Mississippi. Proposed activities in the coastal area are reviewed to insure that the activities are in compliance with the MCP.

The Department has reviewed the proposed selection of three (3) proposed NRDA restoration projects within Mississippi's Coastal Zone (see attached list). The selection of the listed projects and the preliminary project descriptions have been reviewed based upon provisions of the Mississippi Coastal Program and Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (as amended). The selection of the listed projects as restoration actions for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill has been determined to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the Mississippi Coastal Program.

It appears from the preliminary descriptions that the projects themselves will include impacts regulated by both this Department and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Once the plans for the three projects have been finalized, applications should be submitted to this office for review. An application packet has been included with this letter, and the application form can also be found on the Department's web site at <http://dmr.ms.gov/images/permitting/joint-application-notification-form2.pdf>.

The above granted consistency certification was based upon the information presented. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Greg Christodoulou with the Bureau of Wetlands Permitting at (228) 523-4109 or greg.christodoulou@dmr.ms.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie M. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie M. Miller
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

JMM/gsc

Enclosures

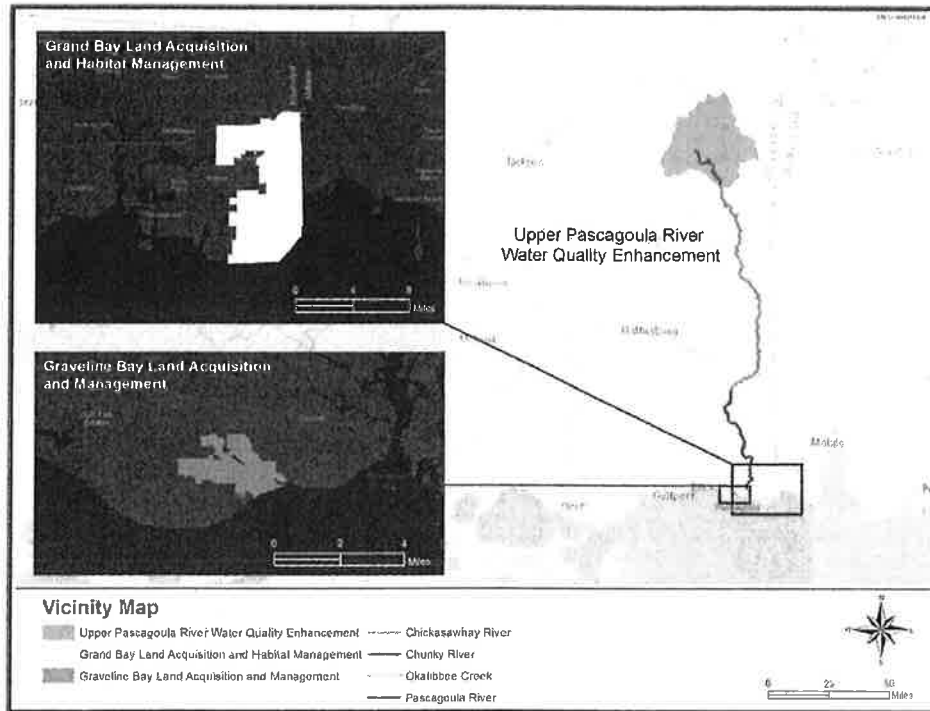


Figure 1: Locations of Proposed Projects

- **Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management**

The proposed project would include private land acquisition from willing sellers (up to 1,410 acres) and habitat management (up to 1,410 acres) within and adjacent to the Graveline Bay Coastal Preserve in Jackson County, Mississippi. Restoration goals of this 15-year project include 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. Restoration measures and management activities would include vehicular access restriction on Graveline beach; invasive species management by use of chemical treatment, mechanical treatment, and prescribed fire; debris removal; and road repair/removal and culvert placement. Acquisition of properties depends on market availability and willing sellers. Restoration measures and management activities would be implemented on a site-specific basis and may vary across the project area depending on the current condition of habitats. Environmental impacts of the proposed actions to the physical, biological, and socioeconomic environment are evaluated in the Draft RP/EA. Once parcels are acquired and site-specific restoration measures and management activities are developed for a site, the Implementing Trustee or their designee will complete a site-specific Environmental Evaluation. Consultation with Mississippi

Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) Bureau of Wetlands Permitting would be initiated if any specific site activities include impacts regulated by MDMR or the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). Consultation with other federal or state agencies would be conducted and permits would be obtained as determined necessary as a result of the site-specific environmental evaluation.

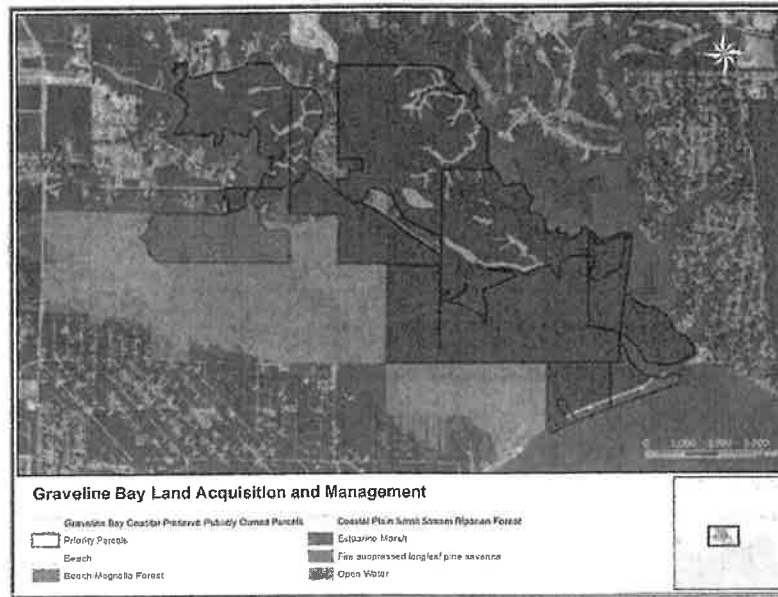


Figure 2: Graveline Bay Land Acquisition and Management project area

- **Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Habitat Management**

The proposed project would include private land acquisition (up to 8,000 acres) from willing sellers and habitat management (up to 17,500 acres) of publicly-owned and newly acquired lands within the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Grand Bay National Estuarine Refuge Reserve and the Grand Bay Savanna Coastal Preserve in Jackson County, Mississippi. Restoration goals of this 15-year project include 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. Habitat restoration measures and management activities would include invasive species management by use of chemical treatment, mechanical treatment, and prescribed fire, as well as debris removal. Acquisition of properties depends on market availability and willing sellers. Restoration measures and management activities would be implemented on a site-specific basis and may vary across the project area depending on the

current condition of habitats. Environmental impacts of the proposed actions to the physical, biological, and socioeconomic environment are evaluated in the Draft RP/EA. Once parcels are acquired and site-specific restoration measures and management activities are developed for a site, the Implementing Trustee or their designee will complete a site-specific Environmental Evaluation. Consultation with MDMR Bureau of Wetlands Permitting would be initiated if any specific site activities include impacts regulated by MDMR or the USACE. Consultation with other federal or state agencies would be conducted and permits would be obtained as determined necessary as a result of the site-specific environmental evaluation.

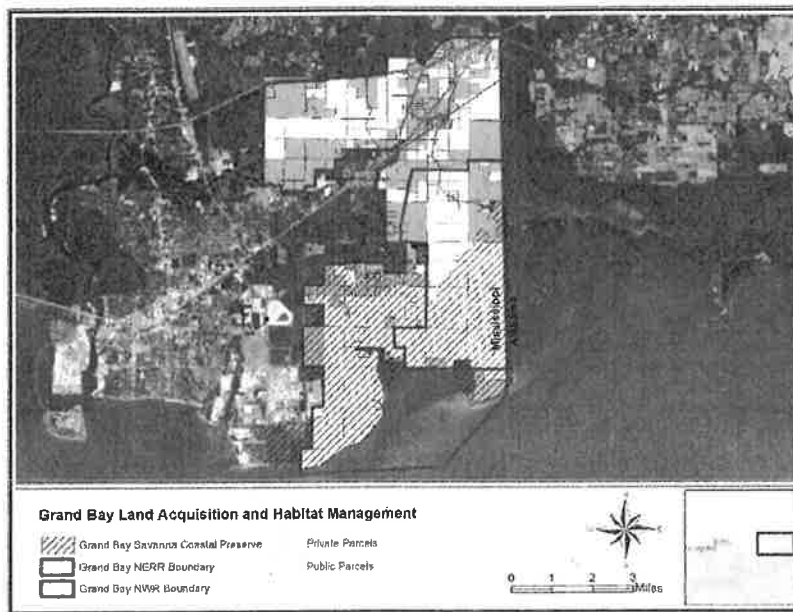


Figure 3: Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Habitat Management project area

- **Upper Pascagoula River Water Quality Enhancement**

The proposed project would be implemented by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) on private lands within a 20,000-acre area in the Chunky-Okatibbee watershed in portions of Newton, Lauderdale, Clarke, Neshoba, and Kemper counties, Mississippi. The primary restoration goal of this 5-year project is water quality improvement through the development and implementation of conservation plans and practices to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff entering the Gulf of Mexico from the Pascagoula watershed. A list of the NRCS conservation practices that may be implemented is attached as Appendix A. Implementation depends on the voluntary participation of landowners. Conservation practices, especially those systems that avoid, control and trap nutrient and sediment losses, would be implemented on cropland, pasture/grassland, forestland, and associated agriculture lands within the Okatibbee-Chunky watersheds on a site-specific basis and would vary across

the project area based on site conditions. Environmental impacts of the proposed actions to the physical, biological, and socioeconomic environment are evaluated in the Draft RP/EA. Once willing landowners are identified and a site-specific conservation plan is developed, the USDA NRCS will complete a site-specific Environmental Evaluation. Consultation with MDMR Bureau of Wetlands Permitting would be initiated if any specific site activities include impacts regulated by MDMR or the USACE. Consultation with other federal or state agencies would be conducted and permits would be obtained as determined necessary as a result of the site-specific environmental evaluation.

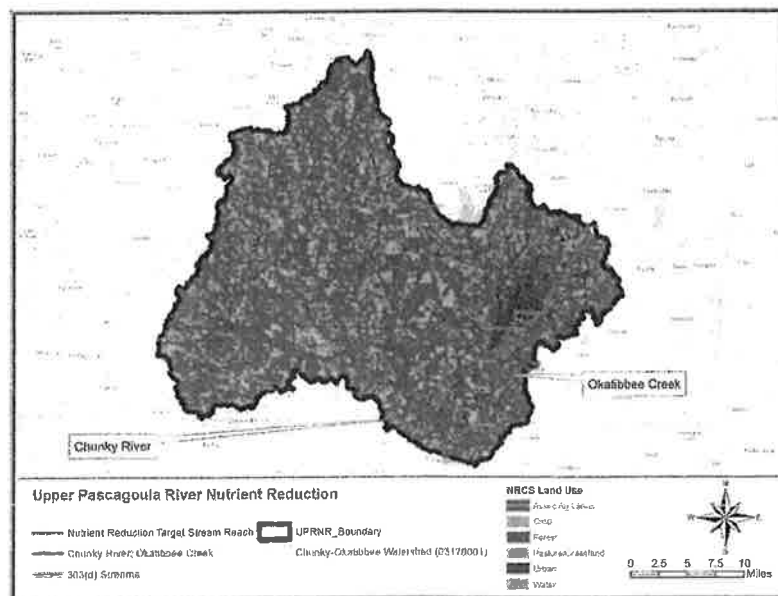


Figure 3: Upper Pascagoula River Water Quality Enhancement project area

Federally-approved MCMP Consistency Review

The federally-approved MCMP is comprised of a network of agencies with authority in the state's coastal zone. The primary authority guiding the MCMP is the Mississippi Coastal Wetlands Protection Act. The MCMP is built around the following goals:

- 1) To provide for reasonable industrial expansion in the coastal area and to insure efficient utilization of waterfront industrial sites so that suitable sites are conserved for water dependent industry;
- 2) To favor the preservation of the coastal wetlands and ecosystems, except where a specific alteration of a specific coastal wetland would serve a higher public purpose in accordance with the public purposes of the public trust in which the coastal wetlands are held;