

CHAPTER 7 PROGRAMMATIC CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions in the LCA Comprehensive Study.

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

The LCA Comprehensive Study report evaluates an array of coastwide plans, presenting the effects of each plan and comparisons of all the plans. This report and PEIS does not contain a recommended plan for implementation. The USACE is taking the opportunity to solicit additional public input on the coastwide plans in the final array in order to assure as open a process as possible in the selection of a recommended plan. The recommended plan will be selected with respect to achieving completeness, effectiveness, acceptability, and efficiency. Comments received during the public review process will be used in recommending a plan for authorization. The process being employed will ensure full consideration and input from government agencies and the public on the selection of a recommended coastwide plan.

The final array of alternatives consists of the most cost-effective and implementable plans to address comprehensive coastwide ecosystem restoration in the State of Louisiana. Each of the alternative plans includes ecosystem restoration measures in all four coastal Louisiana subprovinces.

The final array accomplishes the Hydrogeomorphic Planning Objectives 1 and 2 (Main Report page 97). In the Deltaic Plain, the alternatives reintroduce significant freshwater and sediment from the Mississippi River at multiple locations and scales. In the Chenier Plain, the alternatives employ salinity controls to manage freshwater inputs and limit saltwater penetration from the coast.

Components of all the alternative plans in the final array are directed at Hydrogeomorphic Planning Objective 3 through conservation and restoration of barrier islands and shorelines, several critical land bridges, and historic shell reefs.

Each of the alternative plans meets Ecosystem Planning Objective 1 by increasing total wetland area in all subprovinces. The increased introduction of Mississippi River water and sediment, as well as the improved management of Atchafalaya River water throughout Subprovince 3, provides significant opportunities to improve connectivity and material exchange. The plans increase vegetative productivity in Subprovinces 1-3 and reduce it by less than 2 percent in Subprovince 4.

In addition, each of the plans in the final array meets Ecosystem Planning Objective 2 by reducing Gulf of Mexico hypoxia.

Each of the alternative plans in the final array complies with the National goal of “no net loss of wetlands” and the USACE’s Environmental Operating Principles.