

# **Sabine Neches Navigation Improvement Project Integrated Section 203 Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment**

## **Appendix N Agency Correspondence**



February 2026



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**P. O. BOX 1229**  
**GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mr. Rusty Swafford  
Branch Chief  
NOAA Fisheries  
Habitat Conservation Division, Gulf of Mexico Branch  
4700 Avenue U, Bldg. 307  
Galveston, TX 77551-5997

Dear Mr. Swafford:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing NOAA Fisheries of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford NOAA Fisheries the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with NOAA Fisheries. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that NOAA Fisheries engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

Based on NOAA Fisheries engagement on previous USACE studies, we anticipate your: (1) participating in meetings to review information on project-area fish and wildlife resources within your purview; (2) providing technical assistance in the development of a Biological Assessment describing the impacts of the proposed activity to federally listed threatened or endangered species and/or their critical habitat(s) under your jurisdiction; and (3) providing technical assistance in the development of an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment and consideration of potential effects to marine mammals under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The SNND will be conducting an interagency meeting no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. Discussions at the meeting will include the project's purpose and need, a plan for the coordinated review, permitting timeline of the review, agency roles and responsibilities, information needed for the permit or authorization, etc. An important outcome of the meeting,

and future meetings, is a coordinated environmental review for the project, meeting the agreed upon permitting timeline and resolving issues in a timely manner.

Due to the strict time limits required in 40 CFR Part 1501.10, please designate a point of contact and an alternate to participate in the coordinated review process of the Environmental Assessment. Your agency must accept the invitation to participate as a cooperating agency, in accordance with Section 2045 of WRDA 2007, unless your agency (A)(i)(I) has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project; (II) has no expertise or information relevant to the project; or (III) does not have adequate funds to participate in the project; and (B) does not intend to submit comments on the project. If we do not receive a response from you to our invitation as a cooperating agency (federal agencies), or as a participating agency (state agencies), we will assume you are a cooperating/participating agency.

The USACE will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

Please respond to this invitation within 30 days of the date of this letter. Please also provide any relevant data, written comments, or requests for additional information to Blake Westmoreland, Biologist, Regional Planning and Environmental Center via email at [Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil). If you would like a copy of the Implementation Guidance for Section 1005 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), Project Acceleration is available at:

**<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utills/getfile/collection/p16021coll5/id/1375>**

We respectfully request that your office provide any initial input on the enclosed project summary within 30 calendar days of receipt of this letter so that your input may be considered during development of the draft FR/EA. Please provide any relevant data, written comments, or requests for additional information to Blake Westmoreland, Biologist, Regional Planning and Environmental Center ([Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil)).

Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

CC. Charrish Stevens, Fishery Biologist

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**P. O. BOX 1229**  
**GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mr. Scott Alford  
District Conservationist  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
National Resources Conservation Service  
7705 West Bay Road  
Baytown, TX 77523

Dear Mr. Alford:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing NRCS of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford NRCS the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with NRCS. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that NRCS engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

The USACE, Galveston District will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

The SNND will be conducting an interagency meeting no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. Discussions at the meeting will include the project's purpose and need, a plan for the coordinated review, permitting timeline of the review, agency roles and responsibilities, information needed for the permit or authorization, etc. An important outcome of the meeting, and future meetings, is a coordinated environmental review for the project, meeting the agreed upon permitting timeline and resolving issues in a timely manner.

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The USACE will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

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Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P. O. BOX 1229  
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mr. Mark S. Wolfe  
Texas State Historic Preservation Officer  
Texas Historical Commission  
P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, Texas 78711-2276

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing the Texas Historical Commission of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford the Texas Historical Commission the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with State Historic Preservation Officers under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that the Texas Historical Commission engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude Texas SHPO from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

The USACE Galveston District, SNND and the Texas and Louisiana SHPOs recently executed a Programmatic Agreement for which the Scope of Undertaking is “...*applicable to all construction activities related to the SNWW channel improvement project, activities related to maintenance dredging, and additional navigation improvements to the SNWW, Texas and Louisiana, under the authority of Section 203 of WRDA, as amended by Section 101 of WRDA 2020.*” As such, addressing the potential effects on historic properties that may result from the navigation improvements being proposed by the SNND are within the purview of the recent Programmatic Agreement.

The SNND will be conducting an interagency meeting no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. Discussions at the meeting will include the project’s purpose and need, a plan for the coordinated review, permitting timeline of the review, agency roles and responsibilities, information needed for the permit or authorization, etc. An important outcome of the meeting,

and future meetings, is a coordinated environmental review for the project, meeting the agreed upon permitting timeline and resolving issues in a timely manner.

Due to the strict time limits required in 40 CFR Part 1501.10, please designate a point of contact and an alternate to participate in the coordinated review process of the Environmental Assessment. Your agency must accept the invitation to participate as a cooperating agency, in accordance with Section 2045 of WRDA 2007, unless your agency (A)(i)(I) has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project; (II) has no expertise or information relevant to the project; or (III) does not have adequate funds to participate in the project; and (B) does not intend to submit comments on the project. If we do not receive a response from you to our invitation as a cooperating agency (federal agencies), or as a participating agency (state agencies), we will assume you are a cooperating/participating agency.

The USACE will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

Please respond to this invitation within 30 days of the date of this letter. Please also provide any relevant data, written comments, or requests for additional information to Blake Westmoreland, Biologist, Regional Planning and Environmental Center via email at [Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil). If you would like a copy of the Implementation Guidance for Section 1005 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), Project Acceleration is available at:

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Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**P. O. BOX 1229**  
**GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mr. Robert Sadlier  
Deputy Director, Water Quality Division  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Dear Mr. Sadlier:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford TCEQ the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with NOAA Fisheries. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that TCEQ engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

The SNND will be conducting an interagency meeting no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. Discussions at the meeting will include the project's purpose and need, a plan for the coordinated review, permitting timeline of the review, agency roles and responsibilities, information needed for the permit or authorization, etc. An important outcome of the meeting, and future meetings, is a coordinated environmental review for the project, meeting the agreed upon permitting timeline and resolving issues in a timely manner.

Due to the strict time limits required in 40 CFR Part 1501.10, please designate a point of contact and an alternate to participate in the coordinated review process of the Environmental Assessment. Your agency must accept the invitation to participate as a cooperating agency, in accordance with Section 2045 of WRDA 2007, unless your agency (A)(i)(I) has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project; (II) has no expertise or information relevant to the project; or (III) does not have adequate funds to participate in the project; and (B) does not intend to submit

comments on the project. If we do not receive a response from you to our invitation as a cooperating agency (federal agencies), or as a participating agency (state agencies), we will assume you are a cooperating/participating agency.

The USACE will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

Please respond to this invitation within 30 days of the date of this letter. Please also provide any relevant data, written comments, or requests for additional information to Blake Westmoreland, Biologist, Regional Planning and Environmental Center via email at [Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil). If you would like a copy of the Implementation Guidance for Section 1005 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), Project Acceleration is available at:

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Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

Cc: Peter Schaefer, Water Quality Assessment Section

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**P. O. BOX 1229**  
**GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Leslie Koza  
Federal Consistency Coordinator  
Texas General Land Office  
1700 North Congress Avenue, Room 330  
Austin, Texas 78701-1495

Dear Ms. Koza:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing the General Land Office (GLO) of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford GLO the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents, including consultation with GLO. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that GLO engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

The SNND will be conducting an interagency meeting no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. Discussions at the meeting will include the project's purpose and need, a plan for the coordinated review, permitting timeline of the review, agency roles and responsibilities, information needed for the permit or authorization, etc. An important outcome of the meeting, and future meetings, is a coordinated environmental review for the project, meeting the agreed upon permitting timeline and resolving issues in a timely manner.

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cooperating agency (federal agencies), or as a participating agency (state agencies), we will assume you are a cooperating/participating agency.

The USACE will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

Please respond to this invitation within 30 days of the date of this letter. Please also provide any relevant data, written comments, or requests for additional information to Blake Westmoreland, Biologist, Regional Planning and Environmental Center via email at [Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil). If you would like a copy of the Implementation Guidance for Section 1005 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), Project Acceleration is available at:

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Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

CC: Leslie Coza, Coastal Management Program  
Dianna Ramirez, Upper Coast Regional Manager

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**P. O. BOX 1229**  
**GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Kelley Kowal  
Upper Coast Regional Director  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
1502 FM 517 East  
Dickenson, TX 77539

Dear Ms. Kowal:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford TPWD the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with TPWD. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that TPWD engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

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Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

CC. Cherie O'Brien, Natural Resources Specialist

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**P. O. BOX 1229**  
**GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Carla G. Guthrie, Ph.D.  
Director, Surface Water Division  
Texas Water Development Board  
1700 North Congress Avenue  
P.O. Box 13231  
Austin, Texas 78701 -3231

Dear Ms. Guthrie:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford TWDB the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with TWDB. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that TWDB engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

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Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

CC. Ms. Caimee Schoenbaechler, Coastal Science Manager

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P. O. BOX 1229  
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Dr. Earthea Nance, Regional Administrator  
U.S. EPA Region 6 Main Office  
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500  
Dallas, Texas 75270

Dear Dr. Nance:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing the USEPA of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford USEPA the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with USEPA. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that USEPA engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

The SNND will be conducting an interagency meeting no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. Discussions at the meeting will include the project's purpose and need, a plan for the coordinated review, permitting timeline of the review, agency roles and responsibilities, information needed for the permit or authorization, etc. An important outcome of the meeting, and future meetings, is a coordinated environmental review for the project, meeting the agreed upon permitting timeline and resolving issues in a timely manner.

Due to the strict time limits required in 40 CFR Part 1501.10, please designate a point of contact and an alternate to participate in the coordinated review process of the Environmental Assessment. Your agency must accept the invitation to participate as a cooperating agency, in accordance with Section 2045 of WRDA 2007, unless your agency (A)(i)(I) has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project; (II) has no expertise or information relevant to the project; or (III) does not have adequate funds to participate in the project; and (B) does not intend to submit comments on the project. If we do not receive a response from you to our invitation as a

cooperating agency (federal agencies), or as a participating agency (state agencies), we will assume you are a cooperating/participating agency.

The USACE will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

Please respond to this invitation within 30 days of the date of this letter. Please also provide any relevant data, written comments, or requests for additional information to Blake Westmoreland, Biologist, Regional Planning and Environmental Center via email at [Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil). If you would like a copy of the Implementation Guidance for Section 1005 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), Project Acceleration is available at:

**<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utills/getfile/collection/p16021coll5/id/1375>**

We respectfully request that your office provide any initial input on the enclosed project summary within 30 calendar days of receipt of this letter so that your input may be considered during development of the draft FR/EA. Please provide any relevant data, written comments, or requests for additional information to Blake Westmoreland, Biologist, Regional Planning and Environmental Center ([Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil](mailto:Blake.E.Westmoreland@usace.army.mil)).

Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

CC. Paul Kaspar,  
Charles Maguire, Water Division

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P. O. BOX 1229  
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229**

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mr. Chuck Ardizzone  
Project Leader  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Texas Coastal Ecological Services Field Office  
17629 El Camino Real, Suite 211  
Houston, Texas 77058

Dear Mr. Ardizzone:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District, in cooperation with the Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), is informing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) of a feasibility study of proposed navigation improvements to a portion of the Sabine Neches Waterway in Texas under the authority provided by the U.S. Congress in Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. Under the Section 203 authority, the SNND will prepare a draft Feasibility Report and integrated Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) and submit it to the USACE for review.

The enclosed summary is provided to afford the Service the opportunity for input into development of the draft FR/EA. Although the FR/EA will be prepared by the SNND, the USACE will provide SNND with technical assistance in the development of environmental compliance documents including consultation with the Service. Nothing in the provision of technical assistance by the USACE should be considered as an endorsement or approval of the FR/EA at this time. The USACE also recognizes that the Service engagement during FR/EA preparation does not preclude your agency from providing comments on the draft FR/EA and does not ensure your support of the final selected plan.

Based on the Service's engagement on previous USACE studies, we anticipate your: (1) participating in meetings to review information on project-area fish and wildlife resources within your purview; (2) evaluating the proposed project's impacts to wetlands and associated fish and wildlife resources, and assisting in the development of measures to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for those impacts (including project alternatives); (3) developing a Coordination Act Report or Planning Aid Letter to identify problems and opportunities related to the conservation and enhancement of potentially impacted fish and wildlife resources; and (4) providing technical assistance in the USACE's development of a Biological Assessment describing the impacts of the proposed activity to federally listed threatened or endangered species and/or their critical habitat(s) under your jurisdiction.

The SNND will be conducting an interagency meeting no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. Discussions at the meeting will include the project's purpose and need, a plan for the

coordinated review, permitting timeline of the review, agency roles and responsibilities, information needed for the permit or authorization, etc. An important outcome of the meeting, and future meetings, is a coordinated environmental review for the project, meeting the agreed upon permitting timeline and resolving issues in a timely manner.

Due to the strict time limits required in 40 CFR Part 1501.10, please designate a point of contact and an alternate to participate in the coordinated review process of the Environmental Assessment. Your agency must accept the invitation to participate as a cooperating agency, in accordance with Section 2045 of WRDA 2007, unless your agency (A)(i)(I) has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project; (II) has no expertise or information relevant to the project; or (III) does not have adequate funds to participate in the project; and (B) does not intend to submit comments on the project. If we do not receive a response from you to our invitation as a cooperating agency (federal agencies), or as a participating agency (state agencies), we will assume you are a cooperating/participating agency.

The USACE will independently evaluate the draft FR/EA and, if meeting USACE standards, the USACE will circulate the draft FR/EA to resource agencies, Tribes, and the public for the requisite 30-day review. Upon completion of the review period and consideration of comments received, SNND will submit the draft FR/EA to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) for potential approval and recommendation to Congress.

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Sincerely,

*Brandon Wadlington*

Brandon Wadlington  
Chief, NEPA and Natural Resources Section  
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Enclosure