

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

Appendix O Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)



February 2026

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

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District
2000 Fort Point Road
Galveston, Texas 77550

February 2026

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
 SABINE NECHES NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
 INTEGRATED SECTION 203
 FEASIBILITY REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
 JEFFERSON AND ORANGE COUNTIES, TEXAS

The Sabine Neches Navigation District (SNND), acting as the non-federal interest, has prepared an integrated feasibility report and environmental assessment (FR/EAEA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The content of the EA has been integrated with the Section 203 Feasibility Report for the Sabine Neches Navigation Improvement Project and is incorporated by reference. Within the integrated Feasibility Report and EA (FR/EA), the USACE has evaluated the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects from the construction and future maintenance of the navigation improvement; alternatives to the proposed action, including the no-action alternative; and dredged material management and beneficial use of dredged material. The reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of implementing the proposed action are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1.
 Summary of Reasonably Foreseeable Effects of the Proposed Action

Resource	Insignificant Negative Effects	Insignificant Effects as a Result of Mitigation	Resource Unaffected by Action
Topography and Geology	X		
Climate	X		
Hydrology and Tidal Processes	X		
Land Use	X		
Soils and Dredged Sediment Management	X		
Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste	X		
Erosion	X		
Water Quality	X		
Air Quality	X		
Vegetation, Wetlands, and Submerged Aquatic Vegetation	X		
Wildlife	X		
Benthic Fauna	X		
Fishery Resources and Essential Fish Habitat	X		
Threatened and Endangered Species	X		
Cultural Resources	X		

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the proposed action. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed in the FR/EA will be implemented, if appropriate, to avoid and minimize environmental effects. No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the proposed action. There will be a

public review of the FR/EA and draft FONSI and comments submitted during the public review period will be considered prior to publication of the Final EA and FONSI.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, for the proposed widening, the USACE determined the project would have “*no effect*” on the green sea turtle, hawksbill sea turtle, Kemp’s ridley sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, and loggerhead sea turtle. The USACE also determined that the proposed project “*is not likely to jeopardize*” the tricolored bat, alligator snapping turtle, Louisiana pigtoe, Texas heelsplitter, and monarch butterfly and that the proposed project “*may affect, not likely to adversely affect*” the eastern black rail, West Indian manatee, piping plover, red knot, and whooping crane. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the USACE’s effects determinations, “*based on the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures, and the minimal amount of suitable habitat for each species in the project action area.*” Conservation measures described in the FR/EA will be implemented to ensure the effects of the proposed action will not adversely affect listed species.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has asserted that the March 2024 Biological Opinion has been applied to the proposed action under this Section 203 Navigation Improvement Project pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1934, as amended, the USFWS does not object to the proposed navigation improvement on the condition that the recommendations are considered and implemented to the extent that is satisfactory to fulfill Service responsibilities under the FWCA, as included in Appendix F to the FR/EA. The USFWS “*recommends that unavoidable losses of marsh and BLH habitats should be fully offset by integrated project features such as the proposed beneficial use (BU) of material dredged to widen the channel. That project feature would create approximately 75-100 acres of fresh-intermediate marsh at the Bessie Heights BU site.*”

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the USACE has negotiated a Programmatic Agreement (PA) pursuant to 36 CFR§800.14(b) with the Texas and Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officers. The PA outlines the process for addressing the potential effects on historic properties from the proposed widening action under the Section 203 Authority as well as ongoing and future maintenance dredging of the waterway.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the proposed action has been evaluated with Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230) and the evaluation is in Appendix I to the FR/EA.

A water quality certification request, pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, has been prepared and is included as Appendix J to the FR/EA, and is being reviewed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Conditions of the pending water quality certification will be implemented to minimize adverse effects to water quality.

A determination of consistency with the Texas Coastal Zone Management program pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 will be obtained from the Texas General Land Office for the proposed action. The USACE’s draft Coastal Zone Consistency Determination is included as Appendix K to the FR/EA. All conditions of the consistency determination will be implemented to minimize adverse impacts on the coastal zone.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials will be completed.

This work does not represent a novel or unprecedented activity. Widening portions of the navigation channel and maintaining the waterway in the future are actions that the USACE, Galveston District and the Sabine Neches Navigation District have a proven record of executing while being protective of public health and safety and not violating federal, state, Tribal, or local laws.

Based on the content of the FR/EA, the reviews by other federal, state and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the proposed navigational improvements to the Sabine Neches Waterway would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date

David W. Dake
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander