

Billing Code: 3410-41

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**Adoption of Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Prepared for Habitat Restoration Activities Implemented Throughout the Coastal United States**

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent (NOI) to adopt final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

**SUMMARY:** NRCS announces its intent to adopt the Final PEIS Prepared for Habitat Restoration Activities Implemented throughout the Coastal United States, as prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce's, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Habitat Conservation, under the provisions of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1506.3).

**DATES:** NRCS will accept comments received or postmarked concerning the adoption of this PEIS at the address below until December 29, 2023.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments concerning the adoption of the PEIS, request a copy of the PEIS, or submit comments on actions being taken by NRCS regarding this matter to: Ms. Angela Trahan, Wildlife Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 700 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette, Louisiana 70506; or by e-mail at [angela.trahan@usda.gov](mailto:angela.trahan@usda.gov) .

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Angela Trahan, Wildlife Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 700 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette, Louisiana 70506; or by e-mail at [angela.trahan@usda.gov](mailto:angela.trahan@usda.gov) .

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NRCS announces its intent to adopt the Final PEIS Prepared for Habitat Restoration Activities Implemented throughout the Coastal United States, as prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce's, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Habitat Conservation, under the provisions of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1506.3).

NRCS has reviewed this PEIS and determined that it adequately addresses the environmental impacts related to fund or otherwise implement coastal habitat restoration activities through its existing programmatic framework and related procedures.

As described in the PEIS the restoration activities evaluated in the PEIS are similar to, and often allied with, those implemented by the NRCS through the Coastal Wetlands Planning Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) Program. In addition to activities for riverine and coastal restoration, the 2015 PEIS also analyzes technical assistance activities and conservation transactions. The NRCS will not use those components of the PEIS, only the components that address coastal habitat restoration. Restoration activities that are not within the scope of environmental consequences considered in the PEIS will require additional and separate NEPA review and analysis.

The 2015 PEIS expanded and updated similar analyses that NOAA conducted for an earlier Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment published in 2002 and 2006, respectively. Since adoption, NOAA has effectively applied the 2015 PEIS to hundreds of projects including projects funded through the CWPPRA

Program, achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness. NRCS' adoption of this PEIS will streamline the NEPA process for regularly conducted, on-the-ground, riverine and coastal restoration projects supported by the NRCS. Examples of those projects can be found at < [lacoast.gov](http://lacoast.gov) >. Adoption of the PEIS will also minimize redundant processes while assuring compliance with NEPA regarding projects that do not generate significant deleterious impacts to the human environment and that are of little or no controversy.

The NOAA RC PEIS analyzed a suite of restoration activities that have been shown to effectively conserve and restore coastal and marine habitats and ecosystems. Fish passage improvements, hydrologic/tidal reconnection, freshwater wetland restoration, shellfish restoration, saltmarsh and barrier island restoration, coastal erosion prevention, debris removal, and invasive species removal are among the most common project types implemented by the NOAA RC and the NRCS through their assistance programs including the CWPPRA program. The CWPPRA program was one of at least 5 programs specifically addressed in the PEIS. The purpose, scope, geographic locations, and activities that NOAA evaluated also characterize many of the projects implemented in coastal landscapes through NRCS assistance programs including the CWPPRA program.

Dated: November 28, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kris Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kris" and last name "Davis" clearly distinguishable.

Kris Davis  
Acting Louisiana State Conservationist  
Natural Resources Conservation Service