
Geologic Review

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ABSTRACT

Geologic Review is a Louisiana Geological Survey environmental geology program providing regulatory technical assistance to the Coastal Management Division of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and to three districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It assists in the implementation of Section 404 of The Clean Water Act and the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program regulations, both of which impact oil and gas operations by mandating that only the least damaging feasible alternative be permitted. Oil and gas permit applications made to these two agencies which involve significant environmental impact to vegetated wetlands or other environmentally sensitive areas, have their geology, engineering, lease, and site-specific data reviewed and evaluated by the Louisiana Geological Survey in order to determine if any less-damaging feasible alternatives are available. Such alternatives may include reducing the size of ring levees and slips, reducing the length of board roads and canals, the use of directional drilling, and the use of alternate and less-damaging access routes; their goal is to avoid or minimize any environmental damage. Geological Review involves interagency participation; up to ten state, federal, and local agencies may be involved on any given oil and gas permit under review. An annual reduction in permitted impact footage versus requested footage of 85+% is not uncommon. The long-term effect of Geologic Review, which began in 1982, has been an overall 75% reduction in the average length of canals and board roads built in the Louisiana Coastal Zone.