



Coast-It Notes

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Thursday, September 13, 2012

Greetings from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Office of Coastal Management.

Act 588 of the 2012 Louisiana legislative session modified the inland boundary of Louisiana's coastal zone. Those changes became effective on June 7, 2012, and increased the coastal zone area by a net 1887 square miles (12.6%). The new law also required that an electronic version of new boundary map be made available on the Office of Coastal Management (OCM) web site for viewing or download. That new boundary map is now viewable on OCM's website at the following location.

<http://dnr.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=928>

Another requirement of Act 588 is that the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources is to maintain map(s) showing those areas in the coastal zone determined by the Secretary to be a fastland or above the five foot contour. Those maps are to be readily accessible to the public for inspection and self-service comparison to proposed project footprints to aid in an applicants' own determination whether their activity is exempt (obviates need to submit an application for a coastal use permit). This information is available through DNR's web based SONRIS GIS System. <http://sonris-www.dnr.state.la.us/gis/agsweb/IE/JSViewer/index.html?TemplateID=181>

Fastlands are defined as lands surrounded by publicly owned, maintained or otherwise validly existing levees or natural formations that normally prevent activities, not to include the pumping of water for drainage purposes, within the surrounded area from having a direct and significant impact on coastal waters. OCM personnel have been reviewing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) datasets and conducting field inspections to determine which areas in the coastal zone meet the definition of a fastland. As a result, some areas have been determined to be fastlands. The fastlands can be found under Coastal Management in the table of contents in the web based SONRIS GIS System as a layer called Fastlands. As that evaluation process continues, additional areas that are determined to be fastlands will also be included in the Fastlands layer.

An elevation layer is also available for use on DNR's web based SONRIS GIS System. The elevation layer can be found under Coastal Management in the table of contents as a layer called Five Foot Contour.

Both the fastland maps and the map elevation tool have been made available to the public by DNR to aid users of coastal resources in determining whether a project is exempt from the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program and would not require a Coastal Use Permit. Our intent is to provide electronic access to the same data that we use to evaluate whether a project is within a fastland or above the five foot contour. By using the same information, members of the public can verify that their project is in an area that has been determined by our agency to be in a fastland or above the five foot contour. Areas depicted as being within a fastland have been verified by our staff. Areas depicted as being above the five foot contour are based on USGS and other published map data. This data may contain a variety of margins of error, which we have compensated for by only depicting those areas that are shown to be at least above 7 feet, to provide a conservative margin of error. As more precise elevation data becomes available, that margin of error will be reduced and the areas depicted as

above the five foot contour will be revised accordingly.


Please be advised that any work performed on special features such as beaches, salt domes, and cheniers requires a Coastal Use Permit regardless of fastland status or elevation. Layers depicting salt domes and cheniers are also available for use on DNR's web based SONRIS GIS System. The salt dome layer can be found under Coastal Management in the table of contents as a layer called Raised Elevation Salt Domes. The chenier layer can be found under Coastal Management in the table of contents as a layer called Cheniers. Also, any project that would create significant impacts to coastal resources, even if it is above the five foot contour or within a fastland, would require an application and review by DNR.

LDNR has made every reasonable attempt to accurately portray fastlands and areas above the five foot contour, but as new information and data become available the maps will be modified or otherwise updated. We encourage users to utilize this tool to reduce the need for unnecessary permit applications, but welcome applications from any party that is not comfortable with making such self-determinations.

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Coastit Notes is a publication of the Office of Coastal Management to inform permit applicants, the public and others of events and items that may impact them or their interaction with our office. This e-document is intended to improve customer service and awareness of OCM works and functions and includes announcements from all OCM divisions as issues arise.

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