

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
New Orleans, Louisiana**

**FINAL
SITE-SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
ENDANGERED SPECIES/STRUCTURE REMOVAL
No. ES/SR 89-046**

**Structure-Removal Activities
West Delta Area, Block 20
Lease OCS-G 7789**

May 1989

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SITE-SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
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No. ES/SR 89-046**

**Assessment of the Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Removal of
Well No. 1 in West Delta Area, Block 20 (Lease OCS-G 7789)
by WAINOCO Oil & Gas Company**

**Date Submitted: May 8, 1989
Commencement Date: May 1989
Prepared by Dennis Chew**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have considered the notification by WAINOCO Oil & Gas Company to remove Well No. 1 in West Delta Area, Block 20 (OCS-G 7789), SEA No. ES/SR 89-046. Based on the environmental analysis contained therein, I find that there is no evidence to indicate that the proposed action will significantly (40 CFR 1508.27) affect the quality of the human environment, and the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

JB

Regional Supervisor,
Leasing and Environment,
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

5/17/89

Date

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Site-Specific Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to assess the specific impacts associated with proposed structure-removal activities. The SEA is based on a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) (USDI, MMS, 1987) which evaluates a broader spectrum of potential impacts resulting from the removal of structures, e.g., platforms/caissons across the Central and Western Planning Areas of the Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf. The PEA/SEA process is designed to simplify and reduce the size of environmental assessment documents by eliminating repetitive discussions of the same issues. This SEA conforms to MMS and other appropriate guidelines for preparing environmental assessments by utilizing data presented in the PEA to complete the assessment. It presents site-specific data regarding the proposed structure removal and evaluates the removal's potential impacts. Preparation of this SEA has allowed the determination of whether a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate or whether further assessment of the proposal is necessary.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSAL

A. Description of the Proposed Action With Mitigation

WAINOCO Oil & Gas Company proposes to remove Well No. 1 in West Delta Area, Block 20 (Lease OCS-G 7789). The structure is located in a water depth of 41 feet. Block 20 is located approximately seven miles south of Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. The operator plans to sever the well five meters or more below the mud line using a jet sand cutter. The well is being abandoned.

Since no explosives will be utilized during the proposed structure-removal activities, MMS has determined that sea turtles and marine mammals will not be affected. A Section 7 Consultation under the Endangered Species Act will not be initiated.

Refer to Appendix A for structure specifications and additional information on the removal activities.

In the course of this evaluation process, the following protective measure was identified to further mitigate the environmental impacts associated with the proposal:

There are pipelines located within 150 meters (490 feet) of the proposed activities. Precautions in accordance with NTL No. 83-3, Section IV.B, shall be taken prior to conducting the proposed operations.

B. Need for the Proposed Action

A discussion of the legal and regulatory mandates to remove abandoned oil and gas structures from Federal waters can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987).

II. ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

The alternative to the proposed structure removal as originally submitted is non-removal. Non-removal of the structure would represent a conflict with Federal legal and regulatory requirements, which mandate the timely removal of obsolete or abandoned structures within a period of one year after termination of the lease, or upon termination of a right of use or easement. Therefore, non-removal does not appear to be a valid alternative.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS, SOCIOECONOMIC CONCERNS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Environmental Geology and Geologic Hazards

A discussion of environmental geology and geologic hazards can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987). The proposed structure-removal activities are not in an area of sediment instability (mud flows, slumps, or slides). Therefore, geologic conditions are not expected to have an impact on the proposed structure-removal activities.

2. Meteorological Conditions

No impacts are expected as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

3. Physical and Chemical Oceanography

a. Physical Oceanography

No impacts are expected as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

b. Chemical Oceanography

Impacts are expected to be very low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

4. Water Quality

Impacts are expected to be low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

5. Air Quality

Impacts are expected to be very low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

B. BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Coastal Habitats

No impacts are expected as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

2. Protected, Endangered, and/or Threatened Species

a. Birds

The operator has indicated that they propose to use Venice, Louisiana, as the shore base to support the proposed structure-removal activities. The PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987) delineates sensitive areas along the Texas coastline where whooping cranes and brown pelicans could be adversely impacted by structure-removal support activities. The proposed work is not expected to impact threatened or endangered birds or their habitats.

b. Marine Mammals

A discussion of marine mammals occurring across the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) and an assessment of the potential impacts of structure-removal activities on marine mammals can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987). Fritts et al. (1983) conducted aerial surveys across a 9,514 square mile area of waters lying in the central GOM. Results of these surveys indicate that the bottlenose dolphin is by far the most likely marine mammal to be encountered at the proposed structure removal. Since the proposed structure removal will not utilize explosives, no impacts are expected on marine mammals.

c. Sea Turtles

A discussion of sea turtles occurring across the central and western GOM and an assessment of the potential impacts of structure-removal activities on sea turtles can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987). Studies by Fritts et al. (1983) and Fuller and Tappan (1986) as well as stranding data from the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (Warner, 1988) indicate that sea turtles occur in the vicinity of the proposed activities. Definitive information on the probability of encountering sea turtles at the removal site during removal operations is scarce. Since the proposed structure removal will not utilize explosives, no impacts are expected on sea turtles.

3. Birds

Impacts are expected to be very low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

4. Sensitive Marine Habitats

A discussion of sensitive marine habitats occurring in the central and western GOM and an assessment of the potential impacts of structure-removal activities on these areas can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987). The proposed activities are not near any sensitive marine habitats. Therefore, the subject structure removal will not impact any sensitive marine habitats or their resident biota.

5. Offshore Habitats and Biota

Impacts are expected to be low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

C. SOCIOECONOMIC CONCERNS

1. Employment

Impacts are expected to be very low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

2. Economics

Impacts are expected to be very low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

3. Onshore Support Facilities, Land Use, and Coastal Communities and Services

No impacts are expected as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

D. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

a. Commercial Fisheries

Impacts are expected to be low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

b. Recreational Fisheries

Impacts are expected to be low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

2. Archaeological Resources

Impacts are expected to be low as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

3. Military Use/Warning Areas and Explosives Dumping Areas

The proposed structure-removal activity will not take place in a military use/warning area or in an explosive dumping location chosen by the operator and/or vessels or aircraft to traverse any of these areas, their locations and potential impacts. In addition, the shore base actor(s) will not require support areas. A description of these of structure-removal activities on these areas can be found in the PEA (USD, MMS, 1987). The proposed activities will not impact or be impacted by any military use/warning areas or explosives dumping areas.

4. Navigation and Shipping

The proposed structure-removal activities in West Delta Area, Block 20 are not located adjacent to a vessel safety fairway or in an anchorage area. Structures located nearshore may serve as "landmarks" to vessels or helicopters operating in the area on a regular basis. The overall impacts of the proposed work on navigation and shipping is expected to be very low. More information on the impacts of structure removals on navigation and shipping can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987).

5. Pipelines and Cables

The PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987) contains a description of the impacts of structure removals on pipelines and cables. The proposed work will take place within 150 m (490 feet) of existing pipelines. Since the operator must adhere to existing laws and regulations for abandonment of structures (including procedures required by Notice to Lessees and Operators 63-3), the proposed work will not pose a hazard to pipelines or cables in the area.

6. Other Mineral Resources

No impacts are expected as a result of the proposed activities. For analysis information, see the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

7. Human Health and Safety

The PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987) describes the hazardous conditions for workers during structure-removal activities. The operator has proposed the use of a nonexplosive method to remove the subject well. Existing legal and regulatory safety requirements will keep the impacts of the proposed work on human health and safety at a very low level.

E. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

A discussion of unavoidable adverse impacts can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987). One area of primary concern is the potential loss of habitat to the marine environment. This topic is discussed in the PEA and a low level of impact is expected. Other unavoidable adverse impacts are considered to be minor.

IV. PUBLIC OPINION

A discussion of public concerns regarding structure removals can be found in the PEA (USDI, MMS, 1987). The proposed structure removal has generated no comments from the public.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

In accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, this proposed structure removal does not require coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SPECIAL REFERENCES

- Fritts, T.H., A.B. Irving, P.D. Jennings, L.A. Collum, W. Hoffman, and M.A. McGehee. 1983. Turtles, birds, and mammals in the northern Gulf of Mexico and nearby Atlantic waters. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Biological Services. Washington, D.C.
- Fuller, D.A. and A.M. Tappan. 1986. The occurrence of sea turtles in Louisiana coastal waters. Coastal Fisheries Institute. Center for Wetland Resources. Louisiana State University. Baton Rouge, LA.
- U.S. Department of the Interior. Minerals Management Service. 1985. Accidents connected with Federal oil and gas operations on the Outer Continental Shelf. Gulf of Mexico OCS Region. Volume II January, 1980-December, 1984. Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Department of the Interior. Minerals Management Service. 1987. Programmatic Environmental Assessment. Structure-removal activities Central and Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Areas. OCS/EA 87-0002. Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, New Orleans, LA.
- Warner, A.A. 1988. 1988 third quarter report of the sea turtle stranding and salvage network. Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the United States. January-September 1988. National Marine Fisheries Service. Southeast Fisheries Center, Miami Laboratory, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami FL.

VII. APPENDIX

A. MAINCO OIL & GAS COMPANY CORRESPONDENCE

APPENDIX A
WAINOCO OIL & GAS COMPANY CORRESPONDENCE

FB 5/5/89

Chew

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
MEMORANDUM

5/8/89

To: Environmental Operations Section (LE-5)
From: Office of Structural and Technical Support, Field Operations,
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region (OSTS)

Subject: Platform Removal

RECEIVED

OPERATOR: WAINOCO

Control No: ES/SR 89-16

Management Service
Environment

<u>Platform</u>	<u>Area/Block</u>	<u>Lease</u>
<u>#1</u>	<u>WD 20</u>	<u>OCS-G 7789</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Shore Base: Venice, LA

The attached application is forwarded to your office so that the Finding of No Significant Impact can be prepared. We believe this proposed activity meets the requirements of the generic Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation Document. There are/are no existing pipeline(s) within 500 feet of the proposed removal location.

Arvind Shah (OSTS)
Extension 2894

Enclosure

cc:

AShah: :LEXITYPE:Disk 5

WAINOCO
OIL & GAS COMPANY



May 3, 1989

RECEIVED

MAY 04 1989

Office of Structural
and Technical Support

MMS General Supervisor
Field Operations (OSTS)
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123

Attention: Arvind Shah

Re: Attached Removal
Application for
West Delta 20

Dear Mr. Shah:

Please find attached the removal proposal for Wainoco Oil & Gas, OCSG 7789 #1, located at West Delta 20, for your immediate consideration. As per our telephone conversations of May 3, 1989, the original proposal for removal, completed approximately one month ago, has not been received by the M.M.S. This single well removal, to be done non-explosively, is scheduled for the period May 5/6, 1989.

Taking into consideration that explosives will not be utilized for the removal, and that we have already scheduled the work based upon our prior submittal, we respectfully request your verbal approval for the project followed by your normal written approval. Please advise at your earliest convenience. Denied A.Sh.

Very truly yours,

WAINOCO OIL & GAS COMPANY

E. D. Cole
Vice President - Production

5/4/89

EDC/maw

Attachment

cc: W. W. Kilgore
Laredo Construction, Inc.

Ray Gaspin

I. Responsible Party

- A. Lease Operator Name Wainoco Oil & Gas Company
- B. Address 1200 Smith Street, Suite 1500
Houston, TX 77002-4367
- C. Contact Person and Telephone Number E. D. Cole
(713) 658-9900
- D. Shore base N/A

II. Identification of Structure to be Removed

- A. Platform Name OCS-G 7789 #1
- B. Location (Lease, Area, Block, and Block Coordinates) W. Delta Block 20
Lat. 29° 10' 18" Long. 89° 40' 22" X = 2529932.23 Y = 107485.90
- C. Date Installed (Year) 3/88
- D. Proposed Date of Removal (Month/Year) 4/89
- E. Water Depth 41'

III. Description of Structure to be Removed

- A. Configuration (Attach a Photograph or a Diagram)
- B. Size 36" X 1" W.T. Conductor
- C. Number of Legs/Casings/Fillings 1

D. Diameter and Wall Thickness of Legs/Casings/Pillings 36" Diameter

1" Wall/16" Diameter 75 #/ft./10-3/4" Diameter 45.5 #/ft.

E. Are Piles Grouted? yes Inside or Outside? inside

F. Brief description of soil composition and condition sand/mud

IV. Purpose

Brief discussion of the reason for removing the structure Abandoned Well

V. Removal Method

A. Brief description of the method to be used cut by mechanical cutter

5 meters or more below mud line (jet sand cutter)

B. If explosives are to be used, provide the following:

1. Kind of Explosives None

2. Number and Sizes of Charges _____

a. Single Shot or Multiple Shots? _____

b. If multiple shots, sequence and timing of detonations _____

3. Bulk or Shaped Charge? _____

a. Depth of Detonation Below Mud Line _____

b. Inside or Outside Piling? _____

C. Pre-Removal Monitoring Techniques

1. Is the use of scare charges or acoustic devices proposed? No

If yes, provide the following:

a. Number and Kind _____

b. Size of Charges _____

c. Brief description of how, where, and when scare charges or
 acoustic devices will be used _____

2. Will divers or acoustic devices be used to conduct a pre-removal
 survey to detect presence of turtles and marine mammals? No

If yes, briefly describe the proposed detection method _____

D. Post-Removal Monitoring Techniques

1. Will transducers be used to measure the pressure and impulse of the
 detonations? No

2. Will divers be used to survey the area after removal to determine any effects on marine life? Yes

VI. Biological Information

If available, provide the results of any recent biological surveys conducted in the vicinity of the structure. If available, describe any recent observations of turtles or marine mammals at the structure site.

None known

Please send three copies of the application to:

Regional Supervisor
Field Operations (OSTS)
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123