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REGULATION SERVICES
GOM OCS REGION

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(S)

No(s). ES/SR 97-147A, 97-148A, and 97-149A

Assessment of the Environmental Impacts
of the Proposal(s) to Remove Platform A, A-Aux., and Caisson No. 4 in
West Cameron Area, Block 44
Lease OCS-G 6566
by Forest Oil Corporation

Date Submitted: March 2, 1998

Commencement Date: March 1998

Prepared by

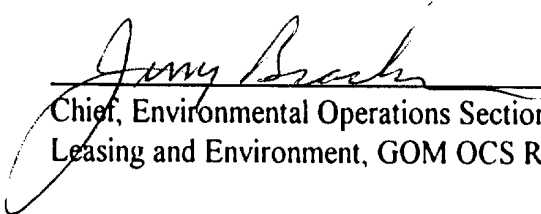
Richard T. Bennett, Biologist

NOTED - SCHEXNAILDRE

SITE-SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/FONSI/EIS DETERMINATION

Forest Oil Corporation's application to remove Platform A, A-Aux., and Caisson No. 4 in West Cameron Area, Block 44, OCS-G 6566, has been reviewed. Our SEA's, ES/SR 97-147A, 97-148A, and 97-149A, on the subject action are complete and results in a Finding of No Significant Impact. Based on the conclusions of the SEA, there is no evidence to indicate that the proposed action will significantly (40 CFR 1508.27) affect the quality of the human environment.

Preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. Mitigation are recommended to ensure environmental protection, consistent environmental policy and safety as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended; or measures needed for compliance with 40 CFR 1500.2(f) regarding the requirement for Federal agencies to avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment.


Chief, Environmental Operations Section
Leasing and Environment, GOM OCS Region

3/5/88
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) (USDOJ, 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 (GOM) 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 the Minerals Management Service (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 activities and evaluates the removal's potential impacts. Mitigation measures are contained in this document to lessen 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(s) is necessary.

I. DESCRIPTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Forest Oil Corporation proposes to remove Platform A, A-Aux., and Caisson No. 4 in West Cameron Area, Block 44, Lease OCS-G 6566. The structure(s) is/are located in water depth(s) of 34 feet and lie(s) approximately 7 miles south of Cameron Parish, Louisiana . According to the operator explosives will not be used for the structure removal(s). The operator plans to remove the structure(s) by severing the legs/piles and caisson using a sand cutter 16 to 20 feet below the mud line.

A discussion of the legal and regulatory mandates to remove abandoned oil and gas structures from Federal waters can be found in the PEA referenced in the Introduction. According to the operator, the reserves are depleted and there is no further use for the facilities.

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

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

II. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION(S)

Alternatives to the proposed structure removal(s) with mitigation originally submitted are:

A. NON-REMOVAL OF THE STRUCTURE(S)

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 and easement. Therefore, non-removal does not appear to be a valid alternative.

B. REMOVAL OF THE STRUCTURE(S) AS PROPOSED WITH ADDED MITIGATION

Measures which Forest Oil Corporation proposes to implement to limit potential environmental effects are discussed in the structure removal application. Outer Continental Shelf Operating Regulations, Notices to Lessees and Operators, and other regulations and laws were identified throughout this assessment as existing mitigation for potential environmental effects associated with the proposed structure removal application. Additional information can be found in the Programmatic Environmental Assessment mentioned in the Introduction.

The following mitigative measures will be included in MMS's approval of the proposed to ensure environmental protection, consistent environmental policy, and safety as required by the NAPA:

Our review indicates that there are pipelines in the vicinity of the proposed actions that may pose a hazard to your proposed operations. Therefore, please be advised that you will take precautions in accordance with Notice to Lessees and Operators No. 83-3, Section IV.B, prior to performing operations.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In accord with *The National Environmental Policy Act (NAPA) of 1969, as amended (Pub. L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended by Pub. L. 94-52, July 3, 1975, Pub. L. 94-83, August 9, 1975, and Pub. L. 97-258, § 4(b), Sept. 13, 1982)* and the Council on Environmental Quality (SEQ.) implementing regulations 40 CFR Sec. 1502.15 *Affected Environment*, the following potential environmental effects were identified from the proposed action. Mitigative measures are included to eliminate or reduce the potential effect from the proposed activities to a level of insignificance as described in 40 CFR Sec. 1508.27

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A discussion of environmental geology, geologic hazards, meteorological conditions, physical and chemical oceanography, water quality and air quality can be found in the PEA referenced in the Introduction. The proposed structure-removal activities are not in an area of sediment instability (mud flows, slumps, or slides). Environmental effects to the physical environment have been considered, but potential impacts from the proposed activities were deemed insignificant (40 CFR 1508.27) and are not discussed in this SEA.

B. BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

A discussion of coastal habitats, protected, endangered and threatened species (birds, marine mammals, and sea turtles), and sensitive marine habitats are discussed in the PEA referenced in the Introduction. The PEA referenced in the Introduction delineates sensitive areas along the Texas coastline where whooping cranes and brown pelicans could be adversely impacted by structure-removal support activities.

A discussion of marine mammals occurring across the GOM and an assessment of the potential impacts of structure-removal activities on marine mammals can be found in the PEA (USDOI, MMS, 1987). Fritts et al. (1983) conducted aerial surveys across a 9,514 sq mi 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 utilize no explosives, no impacts are expected on marine mammals.

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 referenced in the Introduction (USDOI, 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 (Teas, 1995) indicate that sea turtles may 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 utilize no explosives, no impacts are expected on sea turtles.

Other environmental effects to the biologic environment have been considered, but potential impacts from the proposed activities were deemed insignificant (40 CFR 1508.27) and are not discussed further in this SEA.

C. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A discussion of socioeconomic, commercial and recreational fisheries, archaeologic resources, military warning areas, explosive dumping areas, navigation and shipping areas, pipelines, cables, other minerals uses, and health and human safety can be found in the PEA referenced in the Introduction.

Our review indicates that there are pipelines in the vicinity of the proposed action that may pose a hazard to your proposed operations. Therefore, please be advised that you will take precautions in accordance with Notice to Lessees and Operators No. 83-3, Section IV.B, prior to performing operations.

Other environmental effects to the socioeconomic concerns have been considered, but potential impacts from the proposed activities were deemed insignificant (40CFR 1508.27) and are not discussed further in this SEA.

D. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

A discussion of unavoidable adverse impacts can be found in the PEA referenced in the Introduction. 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 referenced in the Introduction. No public comments have been received regarding the proposed structure-removal operations.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

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

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SPECIAL REFERENCE(S)

- Fritts, T.H., A.B. Irvine, R.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.
- Teas, Wendy, G. 1995. 1994 Semi-annual Report of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network. Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the United States. January - June 1994. National Marine Fisheries Service. Southeast Fisheries Center, Miami Laboratory, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL.
- U.S. Department of the Interior. Minerals Management Service. 1995. Final Environmental Impact Statement. Gulf of Mexico Sales 169, 172, 175, 178 and 182: Central and Western Planning Areas. OCS EIS/EA MMS 95-0058. Washington, D.C. Available from NTIS, Springfield, VA. Volume I, and Volume II.
- 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.

VII. PREPARERS

Author: Richard T. Bennett - Biologist

Typist: Joanne Waite - Secretary

VIII. APPENDICES

A. FOREST OIL CORPORATION CORRESPONDENCE

B. FISHERMEN'S CONTINGENCY FUND OFFICE HANG SITE MAPS

APPENDIX A
FOREST OIL CORPORATION CORRESPONDENCE

Rush

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
MEMORANDUM

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MAR 2 1998

3/02/98

Office Management Services

To: Chief, Environmental Operations Section, Leasing and Environment, Gulf of Mexico Region (MS 5440)

From: Chief, Office of Structural and Technical Support, Field Operations, Gulf of Mexico Region (MS 5210)

Subject: Platform Removal

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OPERATOR: Forest

Control No. 97-147^A thru 97-149^A

PLATFORM	AREA/BLOCK	LEASE
<u>A</u>	<u>WC 44</u>	<u>OCS-G 6566</u>
<u>Caiss. No 4</u>	<u>WC 44</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>A-Aux</u>	<u>WC 44</u>	<u>"</u>

Shore Base: Intracoastal City, LA

The attached application is forwarded to your office so that the finding of no significant impact can be prepared. Since explosives will not be used in this removal operation, an Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation Documentation is not required. There are/ ~~are no~~ existing pipeline(s) within 500 feet of the proposed removal location. Should you require any additional information please contact Mr. Arvind Shah at Extension 2894.

Arvind Shah
Felix Dyhrkopp

Enclosure

Note: Scheduled removal start date 3/20/1998

cc:

LE

97-147
-148
-149



FOREST OIL CORPORATION

1600 Broadway • Suite 2200
Denver, Colorado 80202 (303) 812-1400

FEDERAL EXPRESS

February 26, 1998

Mr. Arvind Shah
U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394

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RE: REVISED APPLICATION FROM (7/16/97), APPROVED ON (8/25/97)
APPLICATION FOR PLATFORM/STRUCTURE REMOVAL
WEST CAMERON BLOCK 44, LEASE OCS-G 6566
PLATFORM "A" Complex Identification #23712-01
NUMBER 4 CAISSON STRUCTURE Complex Identification #23712-02
AUXILIARY STRUCTURE, Complex Identification #23712-03

Dear Mr. Shah:

Forest Oil Corporation herein re-applies to the Regional Supervisor in triplicate for the removal of Platform "A" (Complex ID #23712-01), the No. 4 Caisson (Complex ID #23712-02) and the Auxiliary Structure (Complex ID #23712-03), in West Cameron Block 44. FOC previously submitted on (7/16/97) and approved on (8/25/97) a structure removal application by using 50 lb. or less of explosives. FOC would like to withdraw the previous application and replace it with this application dated (2/26/98) using a sand cutter to remove the structure. WC Block 44 Platform "A" is a one 4-pile, four legs and three well strings, No. 4 Caisson is a freestanding Caisson with one well, the Auxiliary Structure is a one 4-pile, four legs all structures located in 182' of water. Please be advised that FOC is scheduled to commence removal operations on or about March 20, 1998.

Enclosed is information required in accordance with the provisions of 30 CFI 250.143. Should you have any questions or require additional information please feel free to call me at (303) 812-1656.

Sincerely,
FOREST OIL CORPORATION

L.E. Fontenot
Supervisor-Regulatory/Environmental/Safety Affairs

cc: Mr. Kassim Kassim
District Supervisor
MMS/ Lake Jackson District

**PROPOSED OCS PLATFORM/STRUCTURE REMOVAL
WEST CAMERON 44 "AUX" PLATFORM, FACILITY ID # 23712-03**

I. Responsible Party

- A. Lease Operator Name FOREST OIL CORPORATION
- B. Address 900 SOUTH COLLEGE, SUITE 300
LAFAYETTE, LA 70503
- C. Contact Person and Telephone Number BILLY MYERS
(318) 264-0510

II. Identification of Structure to be Removed

- A. Platform Name OCS-G 6566, WEST CAMERON BLOCK 44 "AUX"
- B. Location (Lease, Area, Block, and Block Coordinates) OCS-G 6566
WEST CAMERON 44 "AUX"
LAT.: 29° 37' 56.79" LONG.: 93° 32' 13.15"
- C. Date Installed (Year) 1990
- D. Proposed Date of Removal (Month/Year) APRIL/1998
- E. Water Depth 34 feet

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III. Description of Structure to be Removed

- A. Configuration (Attach a Photograph or a Diagram)
- B. Size 48' x 43'
- C. Number of Legs/Casings/Pilings 4-LEGS, 4-PILING
- D. Diameter and Wall Thickness of Legs/Casings/Pilings
LEGS - 34" X 2" PILES - 30" x 1"

Are Piles Grouted? NO Inside or Outside? NA

E. Brief description of soil composition and condition SANDY SILT AND SILTY FINE SAND @ -16 to -20 FEET BELOW MUDLINE

IV. Purpose

Brief discussion of the reason for removing the structure. RESERVES DEPLETED AND THERE IS NO FURTHER USE FOR THE FACILITIES

V. Removal Method

A. Brief description of the method to be used. DECK AND EQUIPMENT WILL BE REMOVED. SAND SLURRY CUTTERS WILL BE USED TO SERVER THE JACKET PILES AT 16 FOOT BELOW THE MUDLINE. ALL COMPONENTS WILL BE LOADED ON A MATERIAL BARGE AND BROUGHT TO SHORE.

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

1. Kind of Explosives NA
2. Number and Sizes of Charges NA
 - a. Single Shot or Multiple Shots NA
 - b. If multiple shots, sequence and timing of detonations. NA
3. Bulk or Shaped Charge? NA
 - a. Depth of Detonation Below Mud Line NA
 - b. Inside or Outside Piling? INSIDE

C. Pre-Removal Monitoring Techniques

1. Is the use of scare charges or acoustic devices proposed?

_____ NA _____

If yes, provide the following:

- a. Number and Kind _____ NA _____
b. Size of Charges _____ NA _____
c. Brief description of how, where, and when scare charges or
acoustic devices will be used. _____ NA _____

2. Will divers or acoustic devices be used to conduct a pre-removal
Survey to detect presence of turtles and marine mammals?

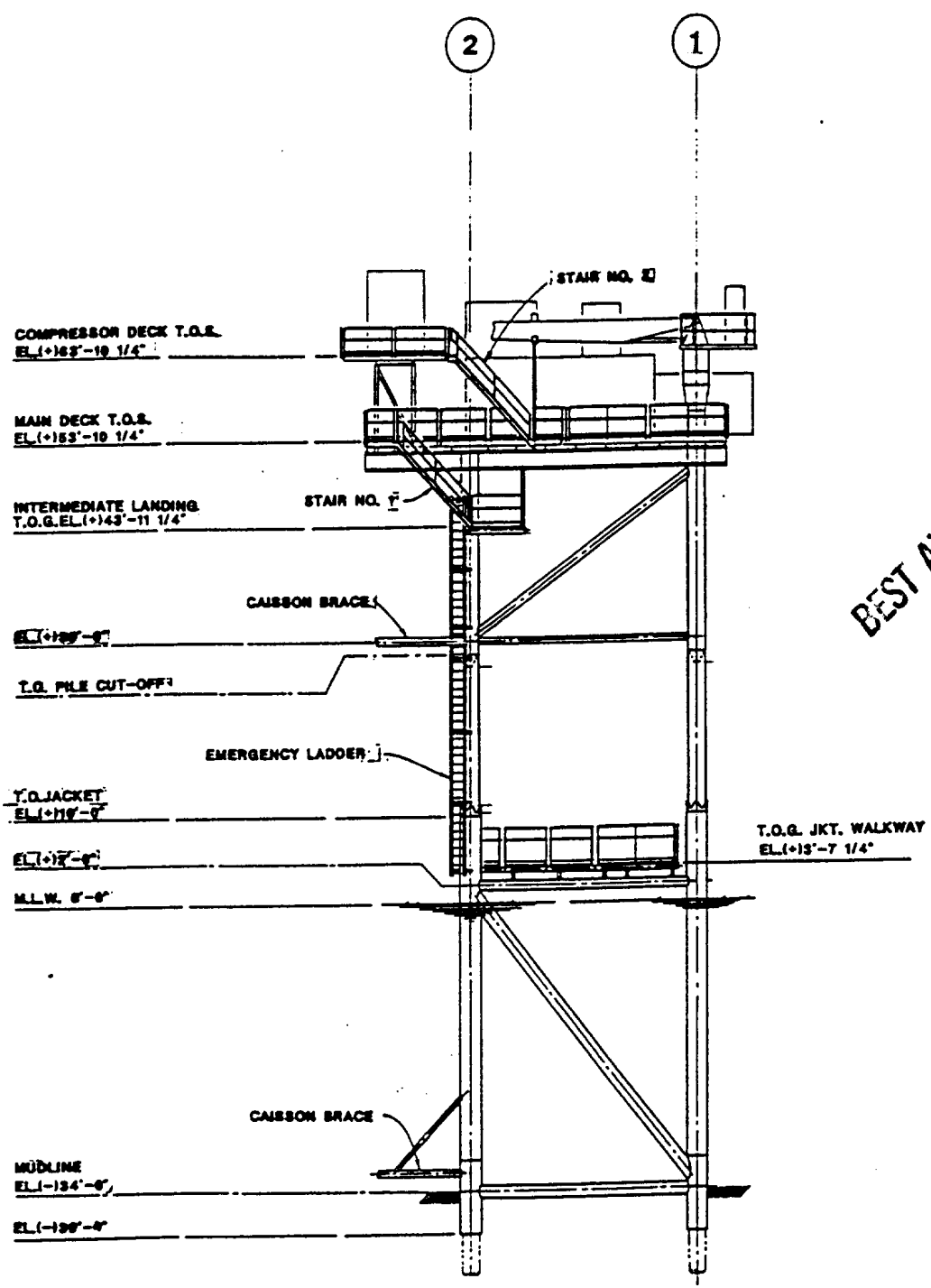
_____ NA _____

D. Post-Removal Monitoring Techniques

1. Will transducers be used to measure the pressure and
impulse of the detonations? _____ NA _____
2. Will divers be used to survey the area after removal to
determine any effects on marine life? _____ NA _____

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. **Not Available**



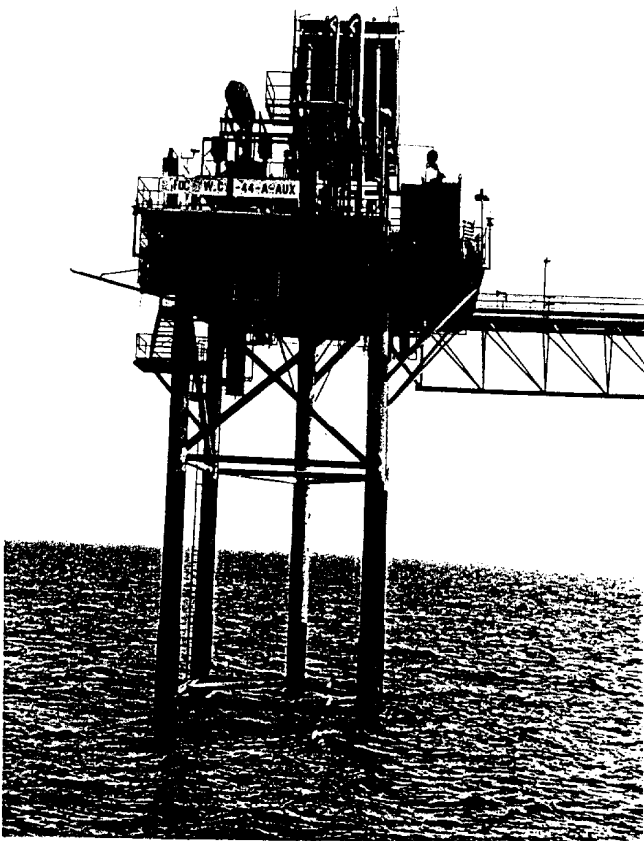
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ELEVATION @ ROW "B"

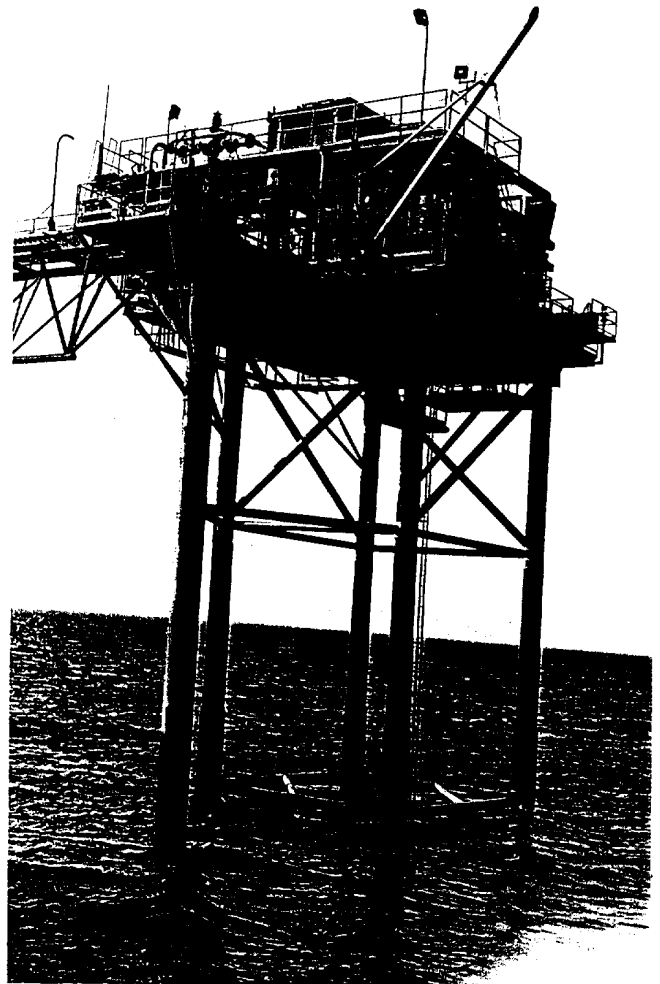
SCALE 1"=10'-0"

FOREST OIL CORPORATION
WEST CAMERON BLOCK 44A AUXILIARY PLATFORM

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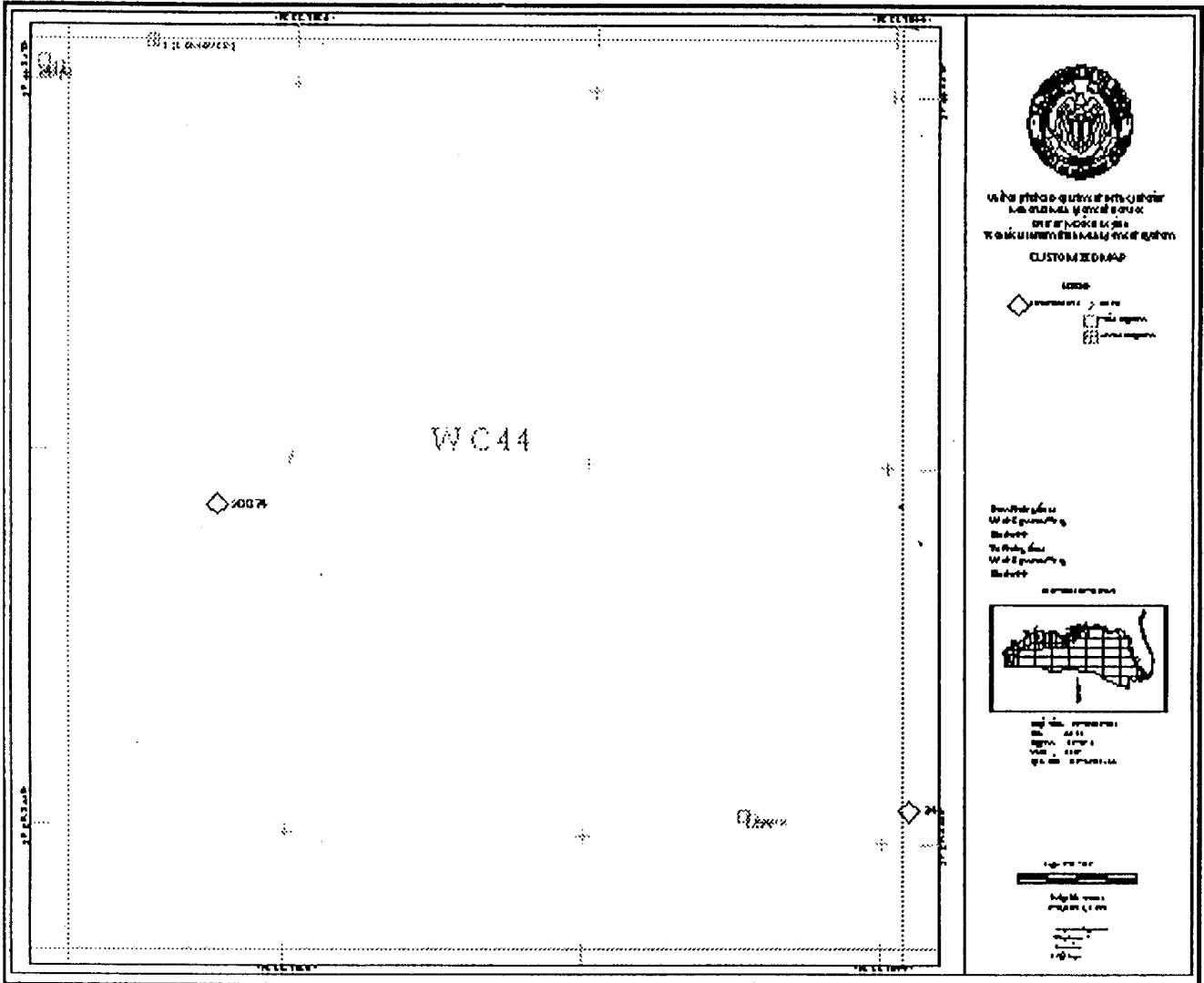
SOUTH SIDE VIEW



NORTHWEST SIDE VIEW

APPENDIX B

FISHERMEN'S CONTINGENCY FUND OFFICE HANG SITE MAPS



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DEAR

NONEXPLOSIVE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
MEMORANDUM

Rush

MAR 04 1998

MAR 2 1998

3/02/98

WB

Mineral Management Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

To: Chief, Environmental Operations Section, Leasing and Environment, Gulf of Mexico Region (MS 5440)

From: Chief, Office of Structural and Technical Support, Field Operations, Gulf of Mexico Region (MS 5210)

Subject: Platform Removal

OPERATOR: Forest

Control No. 97-147^A thru 97-149^A

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PLATFORM	AREA/BLOCK	LEASE
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<u>Caiss. No. 4</u>	<u>WC 44</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>A-Aux</u>	<u>WC 44</u>	<u>"</u>

Shore Base: Intracoastal City, LA

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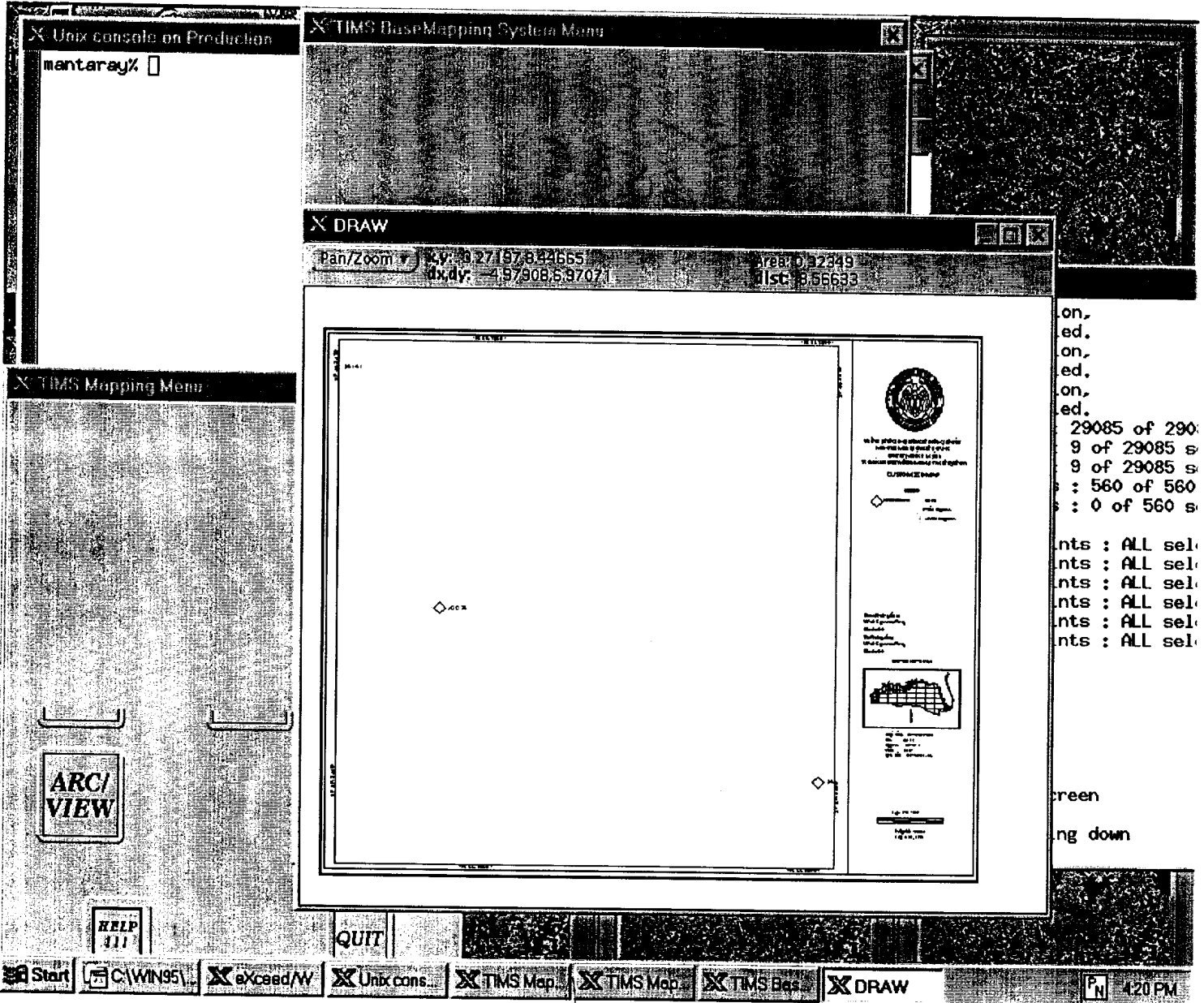
*Haug sites at
X = 1290795.
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Arvind Shah
Felix Dyhrkopp

Enclosure

cc: *X=1
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Note: Scheduled removal start date 3/20/1998



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