

Louisiana Wetland Rapid Assessment Method

Regulatory Branch
New Orleans District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
October 20, 2015



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Agenda

- Welcome
- Regulatory Background
- Louisiana Wetland Rapid Assessment Method
- Path Forward
- Questions and Answers



Background

- **Section 107 of the FY15 Appropriations Act prohibited use of funds by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement or enforce the New Orleans District Modified Charleston Method.**
- **Ratio Matrix interim method**
 - ▶ In use since March 2015
 - ▶ An interim methodology for determining compensatory wetland mitigation
 - ▶ Compensation ratio is derived by matching impact site wetland quality to the mitigation project type



Desired Attributes of New Method

1. Incorporate input from science-based documentation and technical journals
2. A desktop evaluation with field data provided by Jurisdictional Determinations
3. Consistent and repeatable results among all users
4. Documents evaluation of project impacts and mitigation requirements
5. Applicable to all regional wetland types
6. Capable of mixing mitigation strategies

***Deliver a new methodology that is
supportive and sustainable***



Development Timeline

Apr. 2015

- Guidance received on path forward/assessment method fundamentals

Jul. 2015

- Completed preliminary draft of Louisiana Wetland Rapid Assessment Method (LRAM)

Aug. to Sept. 2015

- Interagency Review Team review and assessment of draft method

Oct. 12, 2015

- Initiation of 45-day public notice soliciting comments
- Concurrent peer review by ERDC and other Corps Districts



LRAM Model Elements

- Categorizes priority of habitats based on scientific literature published by the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program (LNHP)
- Habitat condition factors are written utilizing field data collected during model development and literature review from the LNHP and are selected based on specific field data, typically contained within jurisdictional determination data forms
- Does not contain a cumulative impacts or out-of-basin factor
- Contains a mitigation type for preservation
- Allows an increase in credit to every acre of restoration and enhancement from the inclusion of buffers and uplands.



LRAM Structure



- Structured within a Microsoft Excel Workbook
- Consists of three spreadsheets
 1. Impact-Bank
 2. MitBank
 3. Impact-PRM



LRAM: Impact-Bank Sheet

- **Four Factors for determining project impacts**
 1. Wetland Status
 2. Habitat Condition
 3. Hydrologic Condition
 4. Impact Type

- **Identify level of impacts to four factors as either high, medium or low**

- **Mitigation Bank Selections**
 1. Mitigation Bank
 2. Mitigation Kind

- **Identify watershed basin and acreage of impact**



LRAM: MitBank

▪ **Compensatory mitigation projects evaluated by nine factors:**

1. Mitigation Type
2. Project Site Management
3. Habitat Kind
4. Project Implementation
5. Development Impacts
6. Oil & Gas Impacts
7. Size
8. Corridor
9. Buffer and Upland Inclusions



LRAM: Impact-PRM

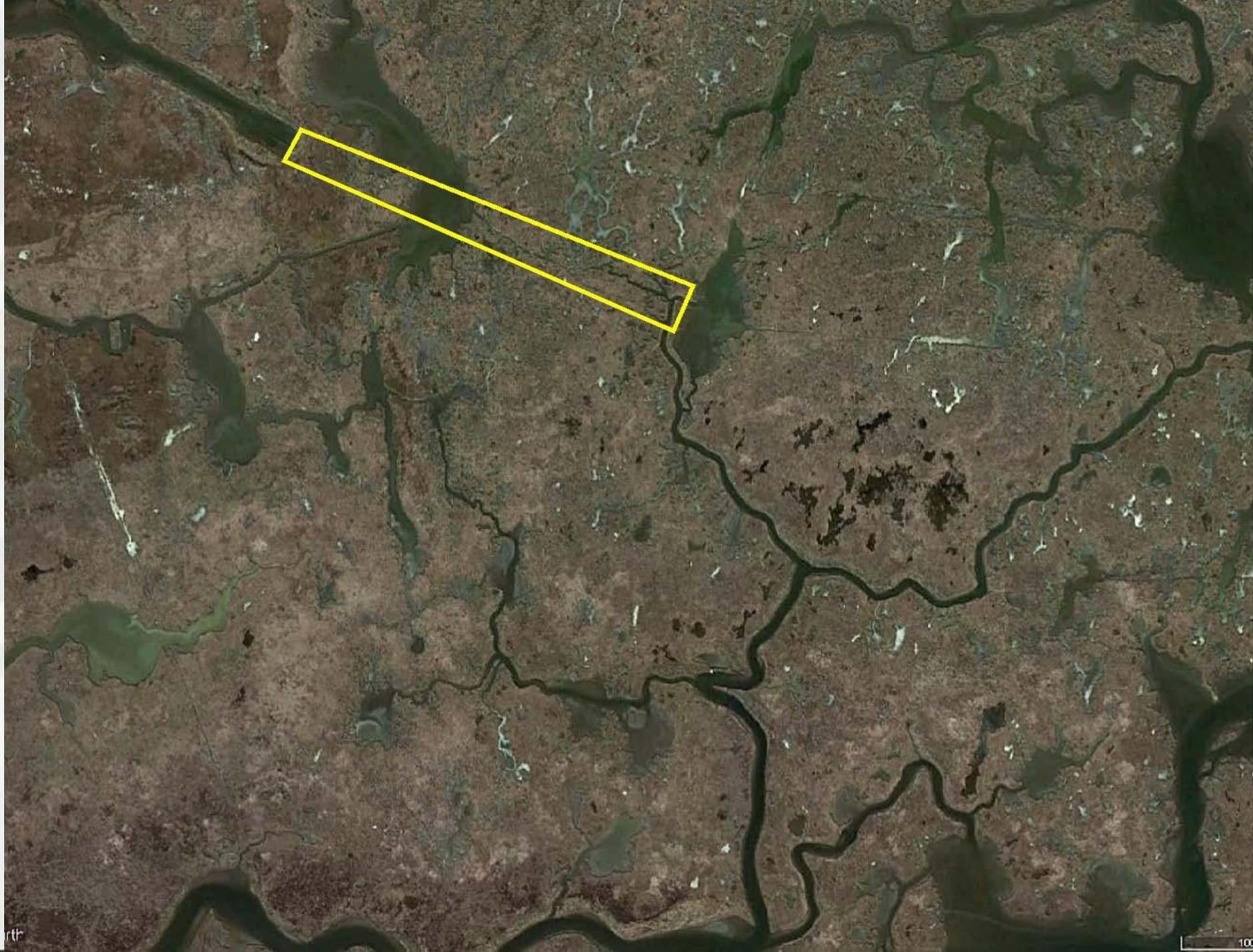
- Allows user to evaluate a permittee-responsible mitigation project
- Applies same factors from the LRAM Impact-Bank and MitBank worksheets



Brackish Marsh Example

- 1 acre of high quality brackish marsh
- Project involves full removal through canal excavation
- Project site is tidally connected without man-made restriction of flow





A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
Louisiana Wetland Rapid Assessment Method (LRAM)										
	CEMVN Acct #									
	Acres Impacted	1								
	Watershed Basin									
		Imp 1	Imp 2	Imp 3	Imp 4	Imp 5	Imp 6	Imp 7	Imp 8	
Impact Factors	Wetland Status	RID	Pick Here	Pick Here						
		3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	Habitat Condition	High	Pick Here	Pick Here						
		3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	Hydrologic Condition	High	Pick Here	Pick Here						
		3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	Impact Type	Full/Perm	Pick Here	Pick Here						
		3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
		Sum:	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Area:	1							
	Sum x Area Affected:	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
								Σ Impacts:	12.0	
		Bank 1	Bank 2	Bank 3	Bank 4	Bank 5	Bank 6	Bank 7	Bank 8	
Bank Mit	Select Bank:	Chef Mente	Pick Here	Pick Here						
	Bank Value:	5.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Kind:	Pick Here	Pick Here	Pick Here	Pick Here	Pick Here	Pick Here	Pick Here	Pick Here	
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	Mitigation Potential:	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	Acres Required:	2.0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	



Pine Savannah Example

- 10 acre project site proposed as disposal cells
- 5 acres of project site includes high quality pine savannah
- 5 acres of project site includes pine plantation





A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Louisiana Wetland Rapid Assessment Method (LRAM)									
	CEMVN Acct #								
	Acres Impacted	10							
	Watershed Basin								
		Imp 1	Imp 2	Imp 3	Imp 4	Imp 5	Imp 6	Imp 7	Imp 8
Impact Factors	Wetland Status	RID	Degraded	Pick Here	Pick Here				
		3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Habitat Condition	High	Low	Pick Here	Pick Here				
		3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Hydrologic Condition	High	High	Pick Here	Pick Here				
		3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Impact Type	Full/Perm	Full/Perm	Pick Here	Pick Here				
		3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Sum:	12.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Area:	5	5						
	Sum x Area Affected:	60.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
								∑ Impacts:	100.0
		Bank 1	Bank 2	Bank 3	Bank 4	Bank 5	Bank 6	Bank 7	Bank 8
Bank Mit	Select Bank:	Mossy Hill	Pick Here	Pick Here					
	Bank Value:	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Kind:	InKind	Pick Here	Pick Here					
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mitigation Potential:	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Acres Required:	22.2	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!



Path Forward

Nov. 26, 2015

- 45-day Public Comment period closes

Dec. 2015 – Jan. 2016

- Compile public comments
- Conduct final model edits based on IRT and public input

Jan. 2016

- Begin use of “interim” LRAM for one year

Jan. 2017

- Issue notice seeking public comment on use of LRAM

March 2017

- Initiate use of final LRAM



How to Submit Comments

- Provide comments in writing either by e-mail at stephen.d.pfeffer@usace.army.mil or by mail to the following address:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District
CEMVN-OD-S
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267



Questions

