JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE

February 15, 2016

United States Army
Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Regulatory Branch
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, La. 70160-0267

(504) 862-2548/ FAX (504) 862-2574
Project Manager
Johnny Duplantis
Permit Application Number
MVN-2015-02209-WPP

State of Louisiana
Department of Environmental Quality
Post Office Box 4313
Baton Rouge, La. 70821-4313
Attn: Water Quality Certifications

(225) 219-3225/FAX (225) 325-8125
Project Manager
Elizabeth Johnson
WQC Application Number
WQC # 160204-02

Interested parties are hereby notified that a permit application has been received by the New Orleans District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to: [X] Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 3, 1899 (30 Stat. 1151; 33 USC 403); and/or [X] Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (86 Stat. 816; 33 USC 1344).

Application has also been made to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, for a Water Quality Certification (WQC) in accordance with statutory authority contained in Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, Title 30, Chapter 11, Part IV, Section 2074 A(3) and provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (P.L.95-17).

PROPOSED GRAND LAKE RESTORATION, IBERIA PARISH

NAME OF APPLICANT: Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Atchafalaya Basin Program, Post Office Box 44487, Baton Rouge, 70802.

LOCATION: Located at Latitude 29.99472, Longitude -91.44444, in Grand Lake, Louisiana, in Iberia Parish. The project is located within the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway, Hydrologic Unit 08080101.

DESCRIPTION: This project aims to remove sediment accretion in Grand Lake caused by a 2011 channel breach. Additionally, a nearby natural waterway, Little Bayou Pigeon will be dredged as part of this project to provide access to the lake and minimize mobilization costs for completing two closely located projects. Proposed removal of sediment accretion from Grand Lake and Bayou Pigeon would enhance/restore water quality and depth to Grand Lake for marine life refuge during times of low and/or hypoxic water conditions. Spoil generated from these two projects would be used beneficially to augment natural delta-building processes on the Louisiana coast. The sediment will be transported by pipeline along the adjacent canal and deposited into the Atchafalaya River, which will allow the sediment to be transported by natural river flow towards the Louisiana coast. This will allow sediment that would otherwise be locked in the Atchafalaya Basin to reach areas such as the Atchafalaya and Wax Lake Deltas, where natural sediment deposition is beneficially building land. Temporary waterbottom impacts are unavoidable. All proposed dredging would be performed in open water to avoid impacts to vegetated wetlands.

The comment period for the Department of the Army Permit and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality WQC will close **20 days** from the date of this joint public notice. Written comments, including suggestions for modifications or objections to the proposed work, stating reasons thereof, are being solicited from anyone having interest in this permit and/or this WQC request and must be mailed so as to be received before or by the last day of the comment period. Letters concerning the Corps of Engineers permit application must reference the applicant's name and the Permit Application Number, and be mailed to the Corps of Engineers at the address above, **ATTENTION: REGULATORY BRANCH**. Similar letters concerning the Water Quality Certification must reference the applicant's name and the WQC Application number and be mailed to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality at the address above.

The application for this proposed project is on file with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and may be examined during weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Copies may be obtained upon payment of costs of reproduction.

Corps of Engineers Permit Criteria

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, federal, state, and local agencies and officials, Indian Tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine whether to make, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

No properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are near the proposed work. The possibility exists that the proposed work may damage or destroy presently unknown archeological, scientific, prehistorical, historical sites, or data. Copies of this notice are being sent to the State Archeologist and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Our initial finding is that the proposed work would neither affect any species listed as endangered by the U.S. Departments of Interior or Commerce, nor affect any habitat designated as critical to the survival and recovery of any endangered species. Utilizing Standard Local Operating Procedure for Endangered Species in Louisiana (SLOPES), dated October 22, 2014, between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Office, the Corps has determined that the proposed activity would have no effect on any listed species.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The applicant's proposal would result in the destruction or alteration of 36.40 acre(s) of EFH utilized by various life stages of red drum and penaeid shrimp. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

If the proposed work involves deposits of dredged or fill material into navigable waters, the evaluation of the probable impacts will include the application of guidelines established by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Also, a certification that the proposed activity will not violate applicable water quality standards will be required from the Department of Environmental Quality, before a permit is issued.

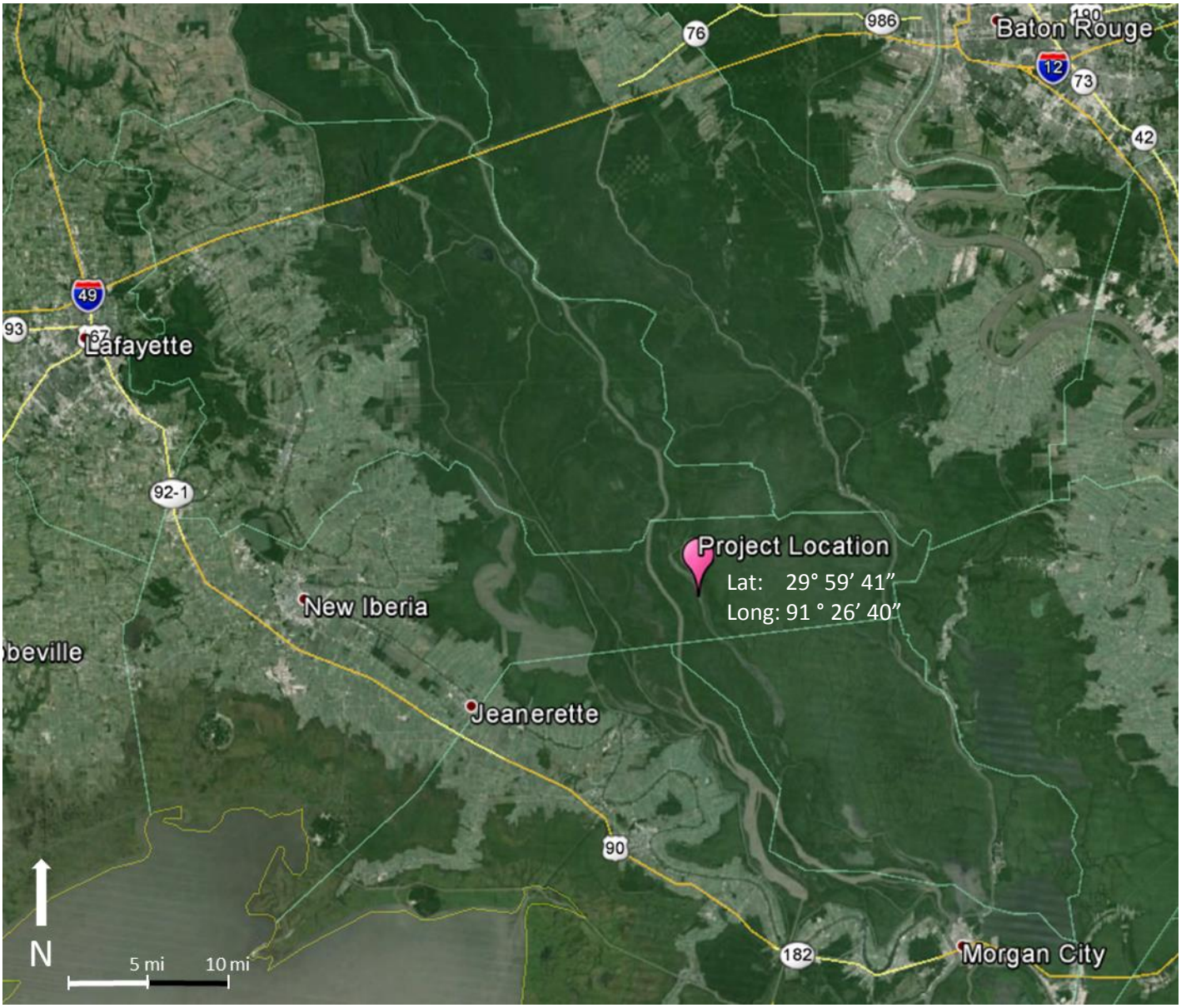
Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any other parties whom you deem likely to have interest in the matter.

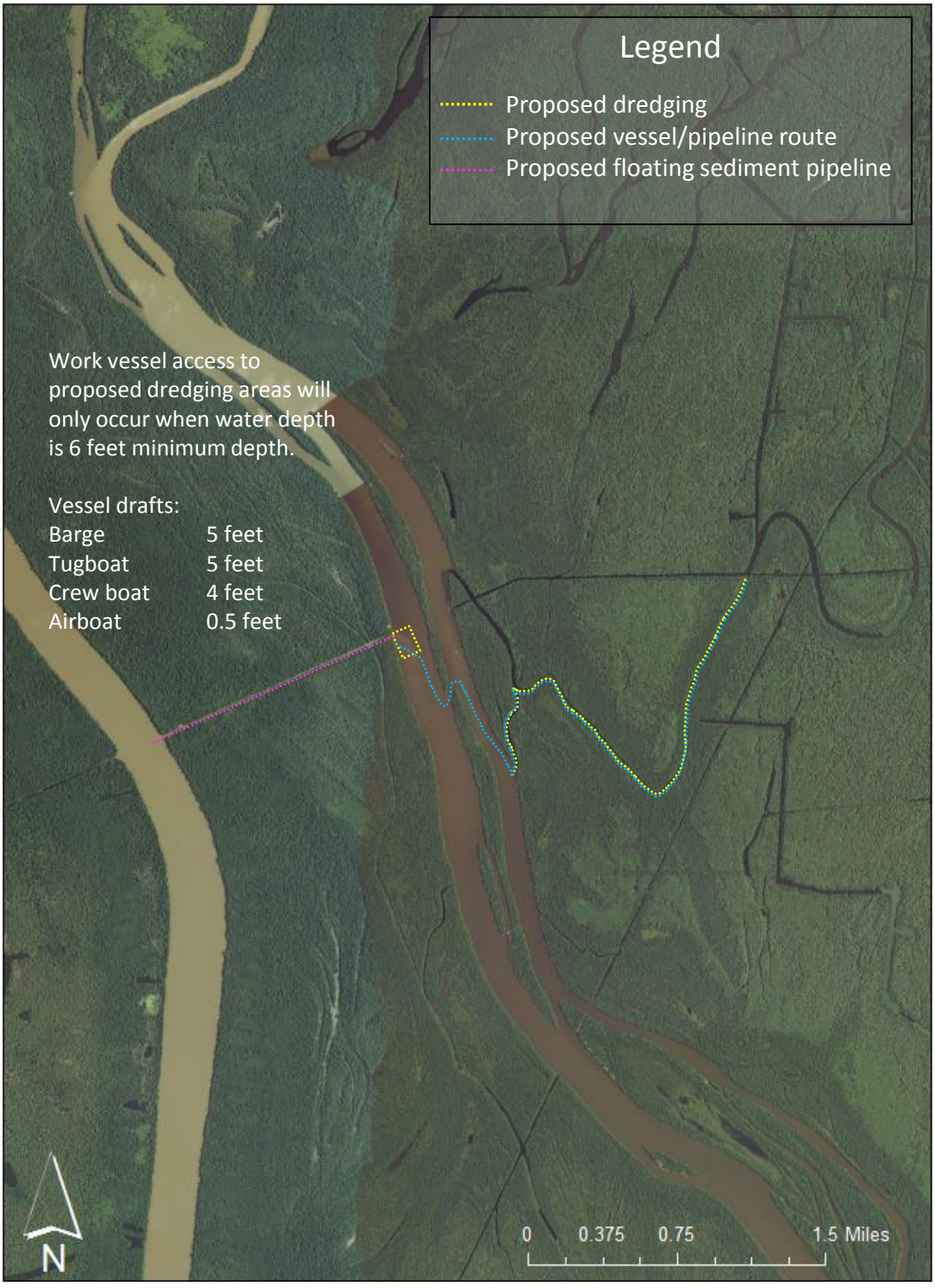
Darrell S. Barbara
Chief, Western Evaluation Section
Regulatory Branch

Attachments

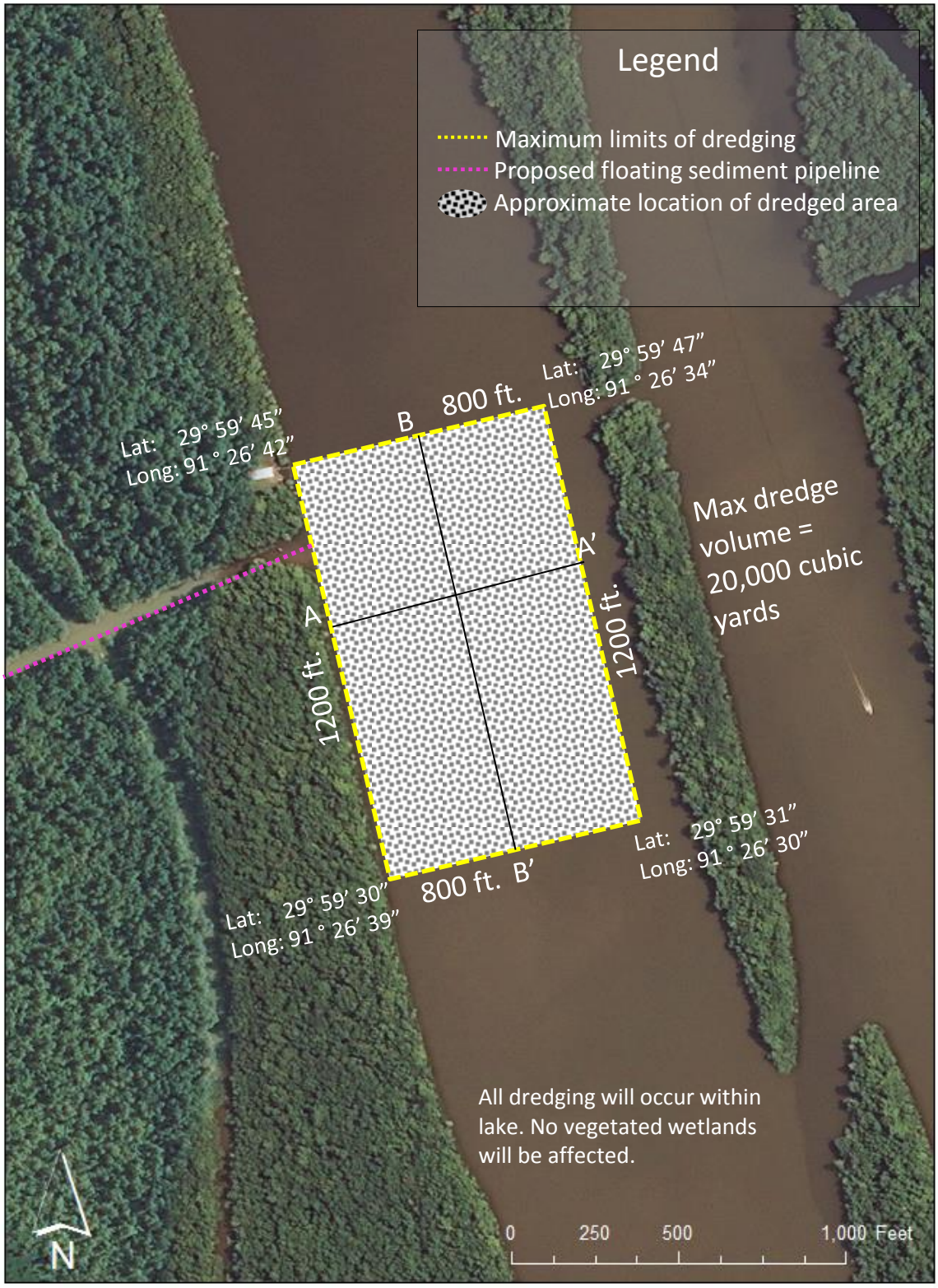
Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Vicinity Map



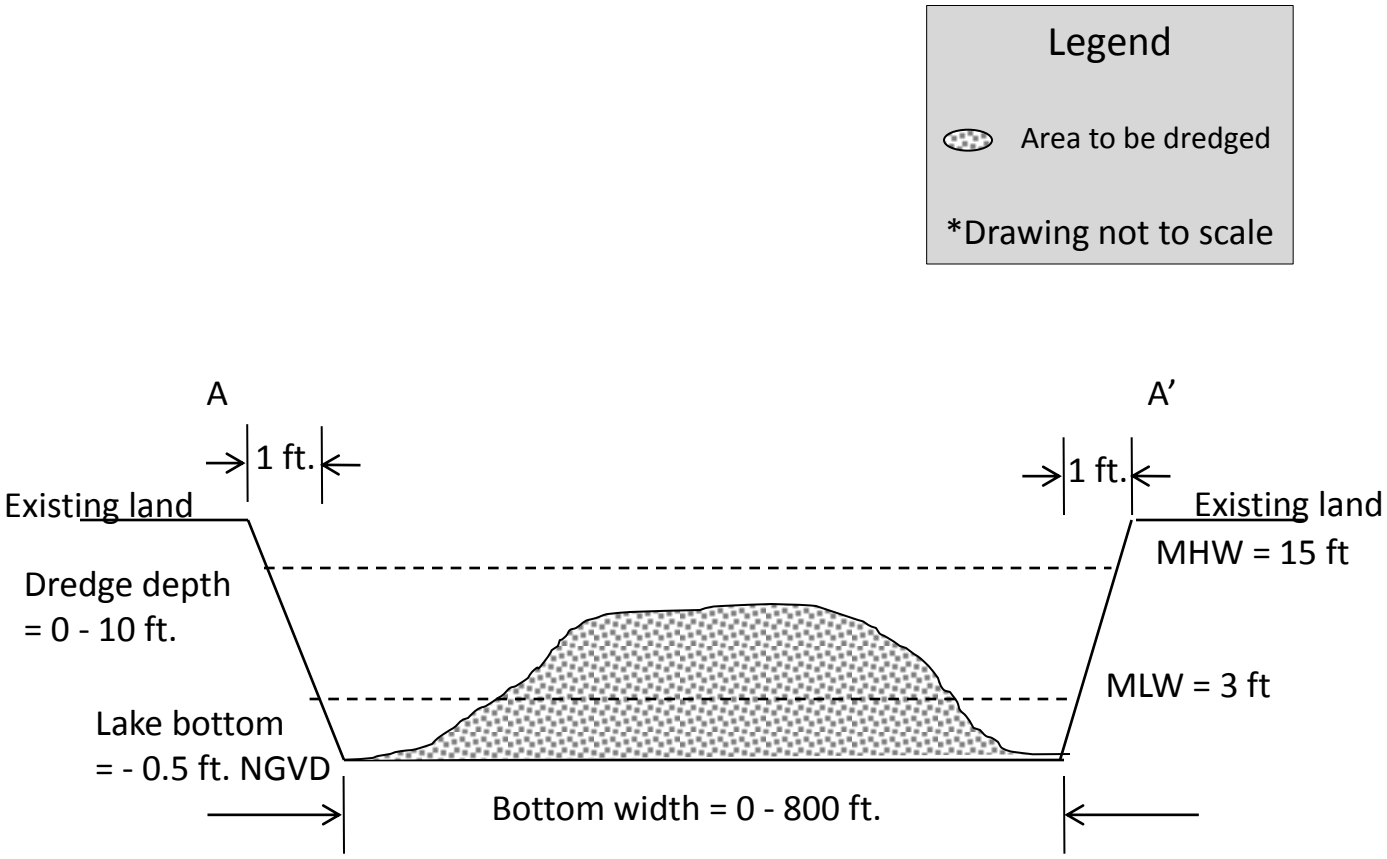
Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project Overview Map



Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Grand Lake Dredging



Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Grand Lake Dredging - Typical Section



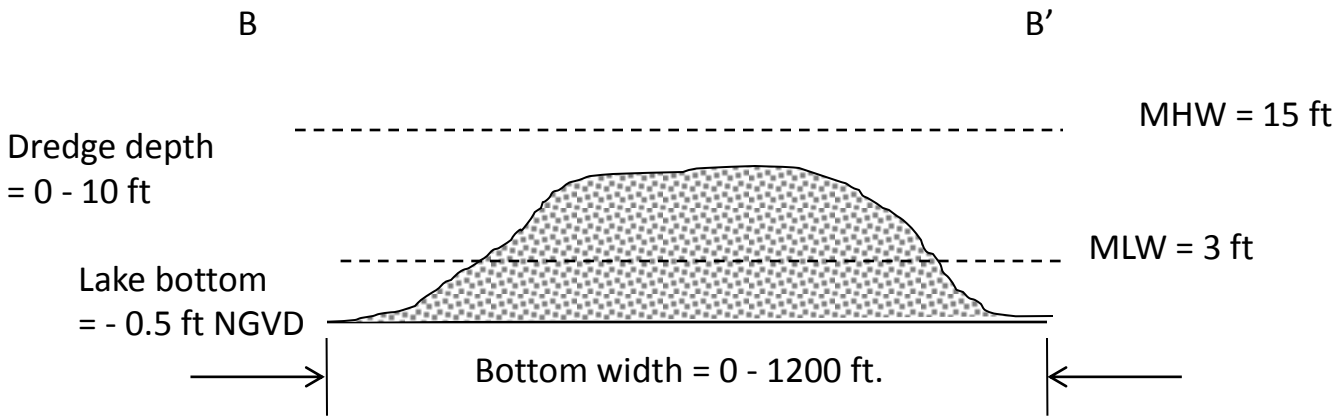
NOTE: All dredging will occur within lake. No vegetated wetlands will be affected.

Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Grand Lake Dredging - Typical Section

Legend

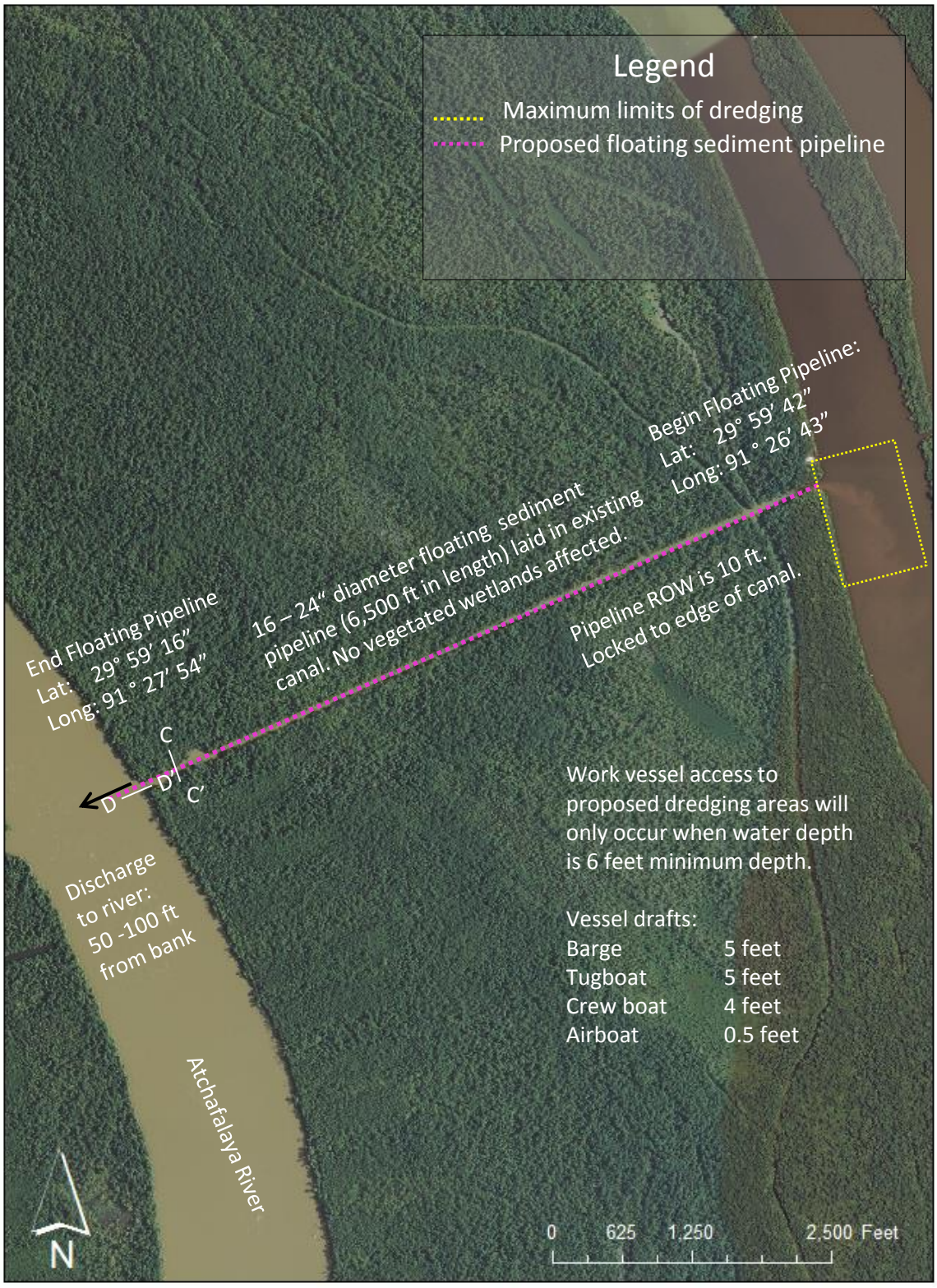
Area to be dredged

*Drawing not to scale

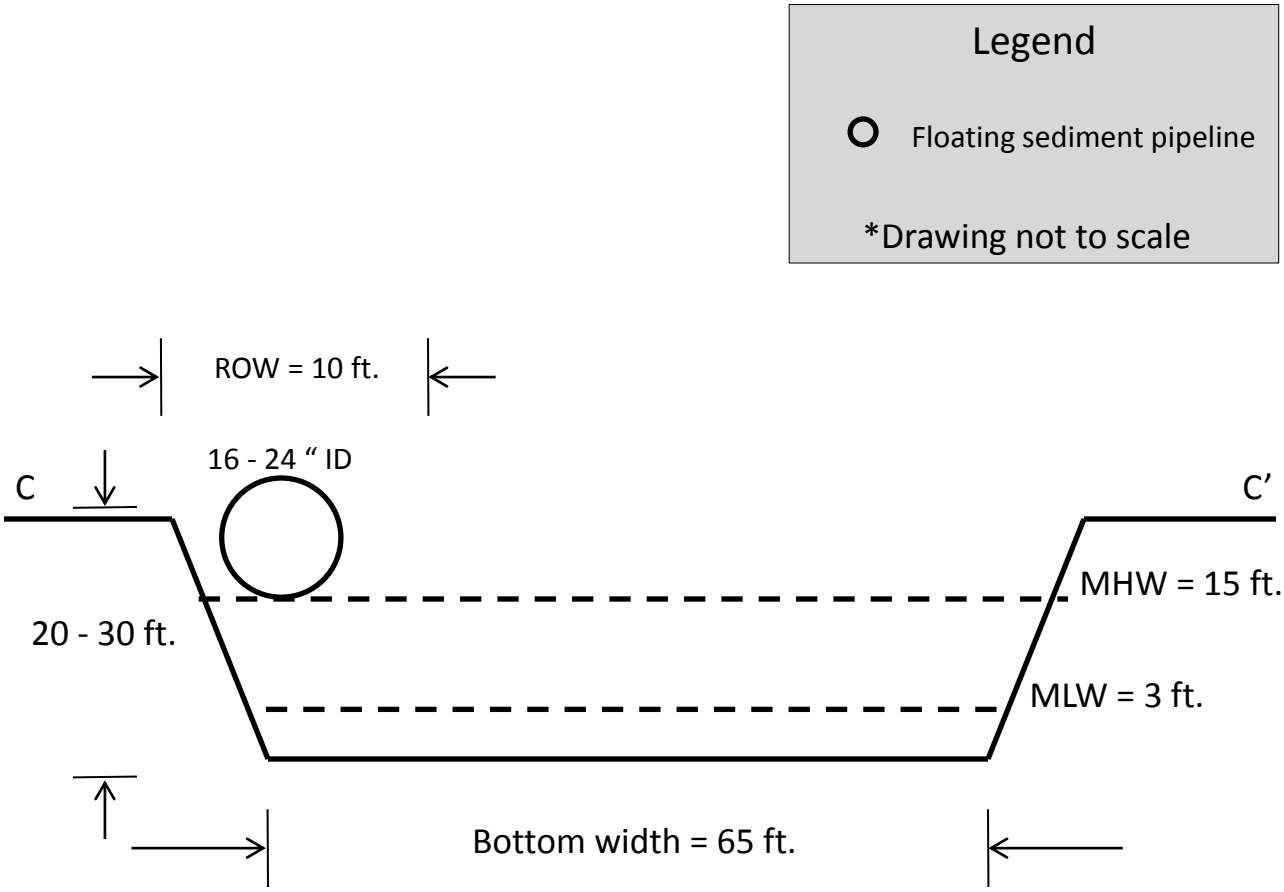


NOTE: All dredging will occur within lake. No vegetated wetlands will be affected.

Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Grand Lake Disposal Plan



Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Sediment Pipeline Discharge - Typical Section

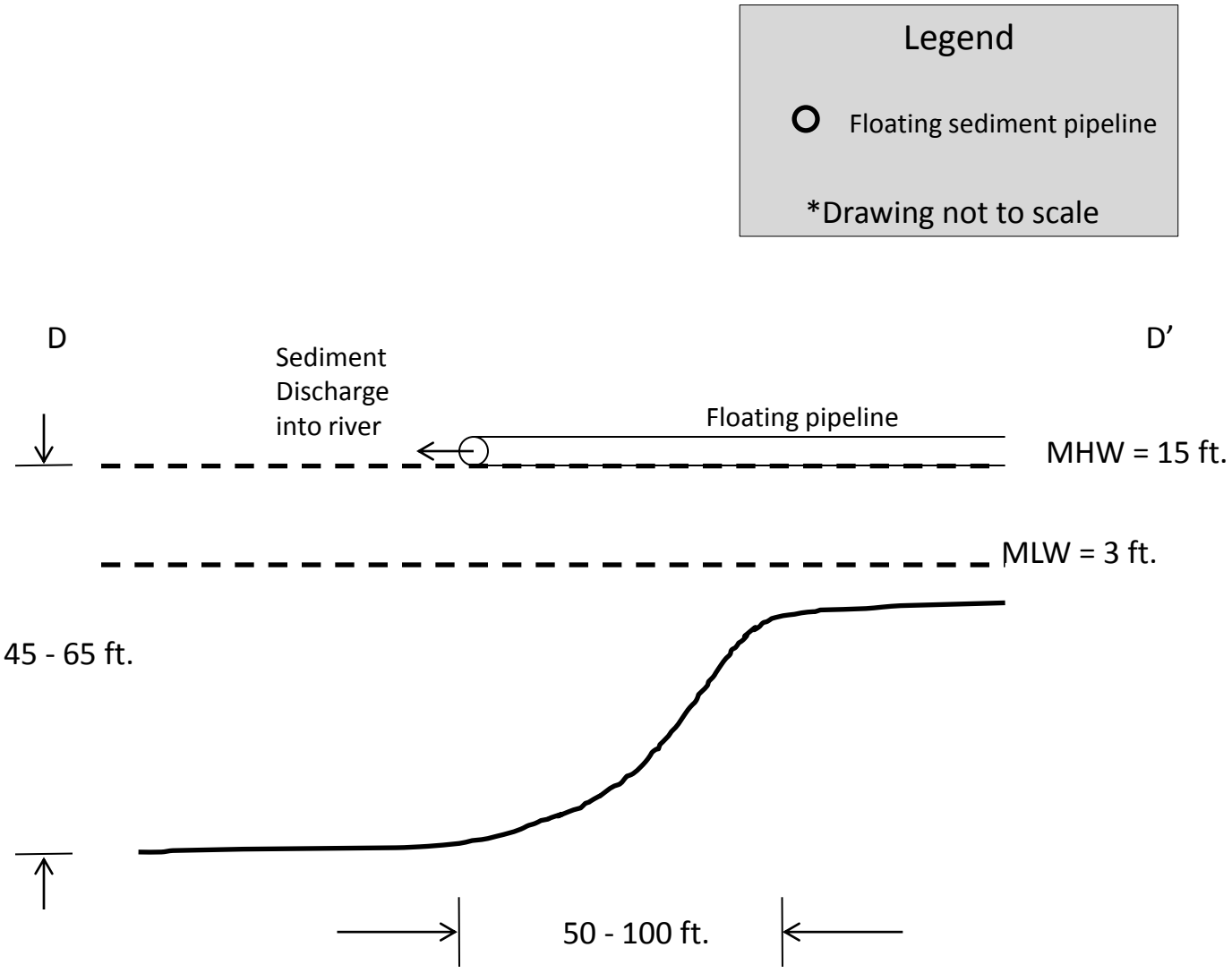


Work vessel access to proposed dredging areas will only occur when water depth is 6 feet minimum depth.

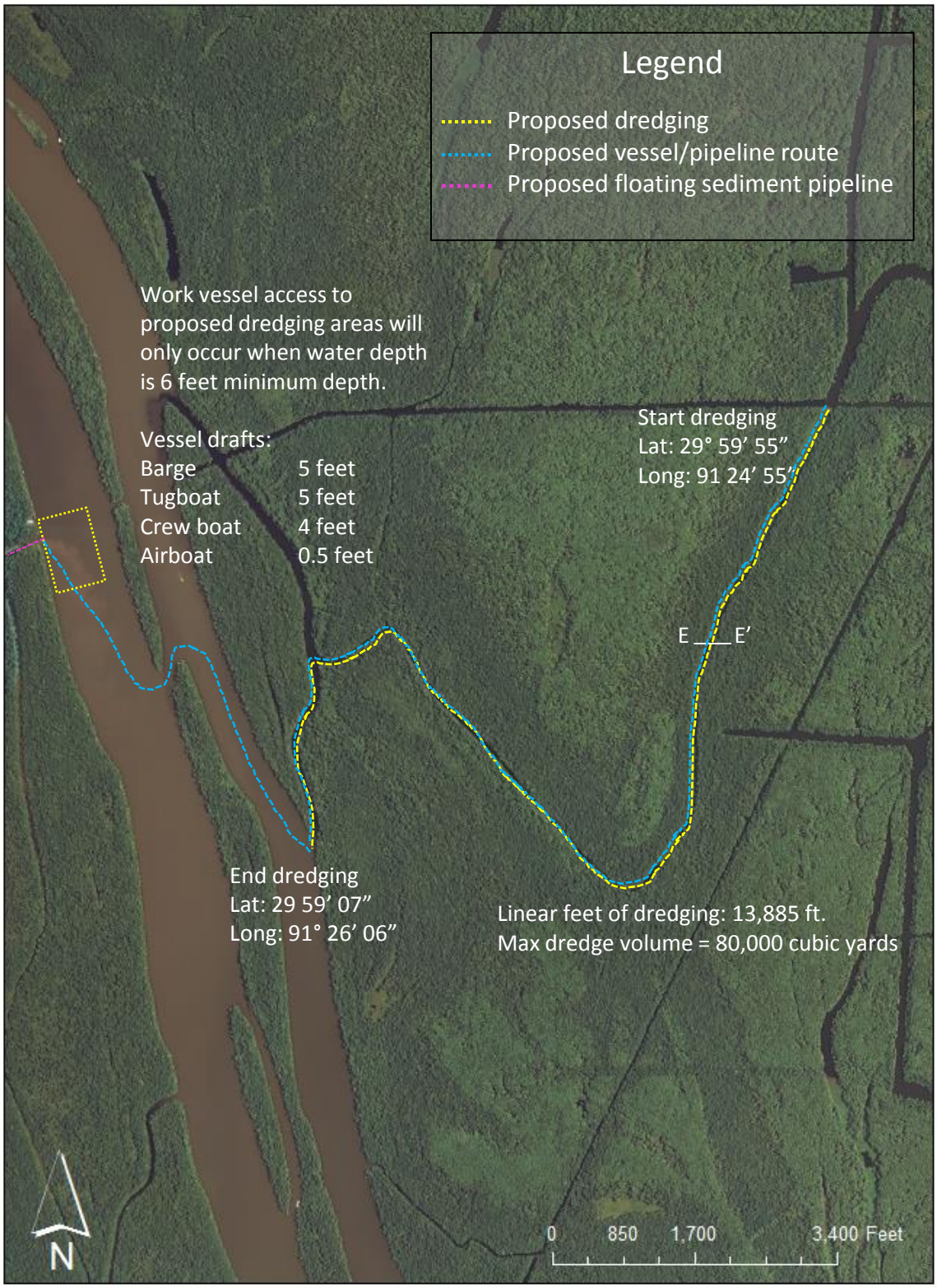
Vessel drafts:

Barge	5 feet
Tugboat	5 feet
Crew boat	4 feet
Airboat	0.5 feet

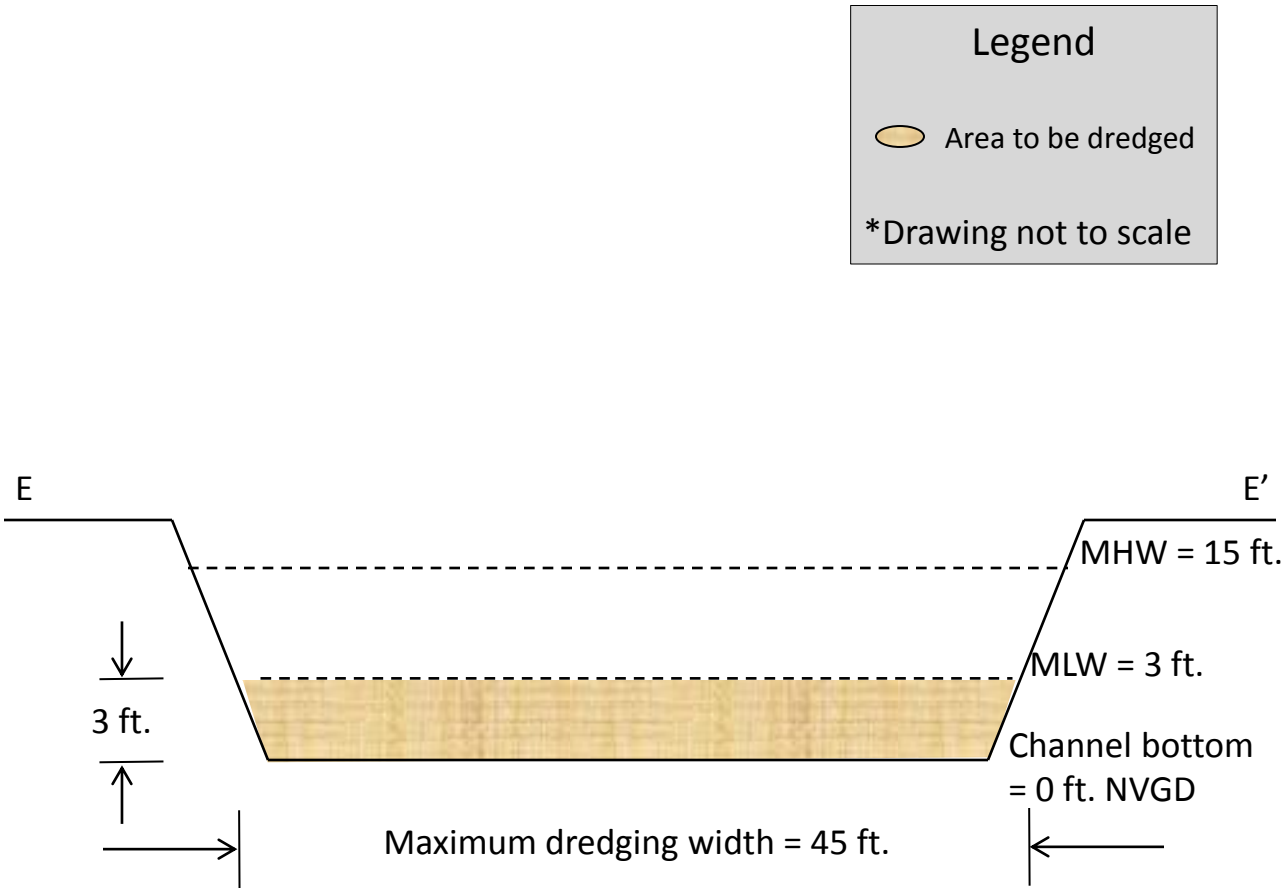
Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Sediment Pipeline Discharge - Typical Section



Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Little Pigeon Dredging



Atchafalaya Basin Program Restorative Dredging Project
Little Pigeon Dredging - Typical Section



Work vessel access to proposed dredging areas will only occur when water depth is 6 feet minimum depth.

Vessel drafts:

Barge	5 feet
Tugboat	5 feet
Crew boat	4 feet
Airboat	0.5 feet

NOTE: All dredging will occur within stream banks. No vegetated wetlands will be affected.

Atchafalaya Basin Program Depth Restoration Project

Background

A channel training breach in the Atchafalaya River in 2011 has caused rapid sediment accretion and the formation of a large sand bar in Grand Lake (Figures 1 and 2), which contains some of the last remaining deep water habitat in the Atchafalaya Basin. In addition to degrading habitat in Grand Lake, this sediment accretion has become a navigational hazard to boaters, because it has created shallow water depths in a popular fishing area where previously there was deep water.

Numerous stakeholders and government agencies are aware of the problem and have indicated their support of removing the newly deposited sandbar and restoring the lake to its pre-breach elevation. The Technical Advisory Group and Research and Promotion Board of the Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP) approved this dredging project for the FY2016 ABP Annual Plan and have identified this it as the number one priority for the program. The Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, which is in the office of the Lieutenant Governor, has also expressed concern about the rapid accretion of the Grand Lake Delta and has given their support of its removal by the Atchafalaya Basin Program.

Description of Project

This project aims to restore the lake to its pre-breach bottom elevation by dredging the newly formed sand bar in Grand Lake. Additionally, a nearby natural waterway, Little Bayou Pigeon (Figures 3 and 4) will be deepened to enhance and restore habitat and water quality. Completing both projects simultaneously will minimize mobilization costs. The combined dredging volume will be approximately 100,000 cubic yards.

Spoil generated from these two projects will be used beneficially to augment natural delta-building processes on the Louisiana coast. The sediment will be transported by pipeline along the adjacent canal and deposited into the Atchafalaya River (Figure 5), which will allow the sediment to be transported by natural river flow towards the Louisiana coast. This will allow sediment that would otherwise be locked in the Atchafalaya Basin to reach areas such as the Atchafalaya and Wax Lake Deltas, where natural sediment deposition is beneficially building land.

Per the recommendation of the ABP's Technical Advisory Group, this dredging activity is dependent upon the prior restoration the channel training blockage. The US Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to complete this work and intends to restore the blockage by approximately May 2016. The Atchafalaya Basin Program intends to begin the work described here immediately upon blockage completion.

Figure 1: A 2011 breach of an Atchafalaya River channel training feature has caused rapid habitat degradation and navigational hazards in Grand Lake.

Figure 2: DNR staff visited the newly formed sandbar on August 27, 2015.

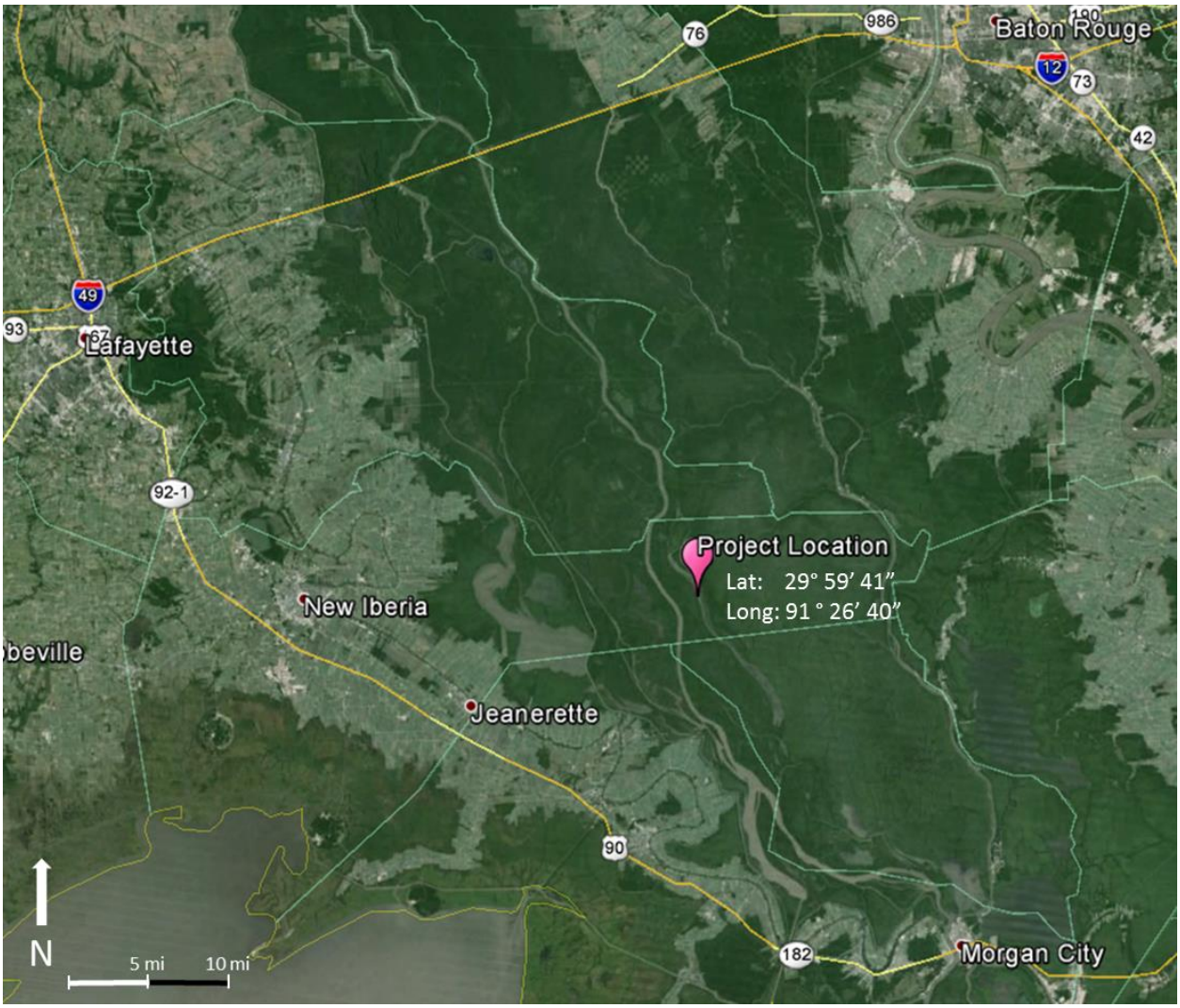


Figure 3: Location of dredging projects.

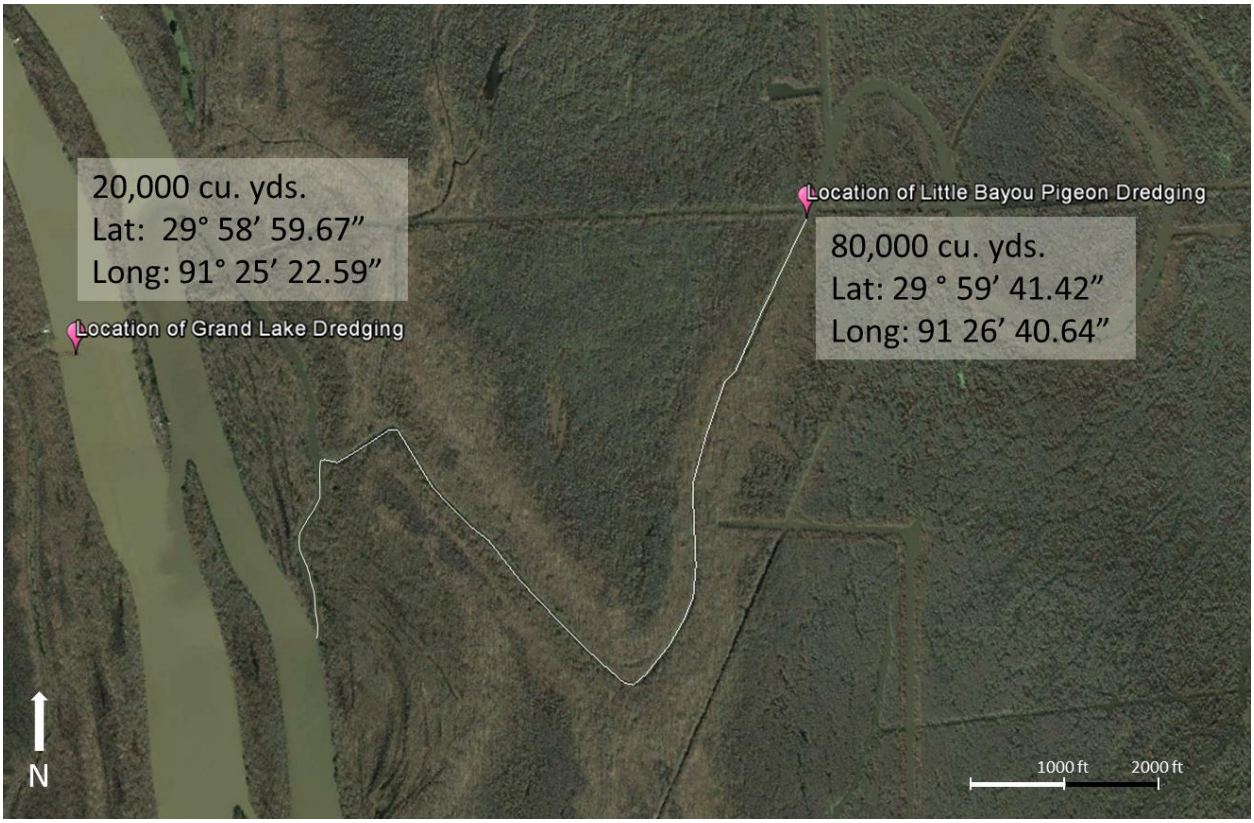


Figure 4: Locations and volumes of dredging projects. White line indicates extent of dredging of Little Bayou Pigeon.

Figure 5: Location of disposal site. Line indicates canal to be used for sediment transport.