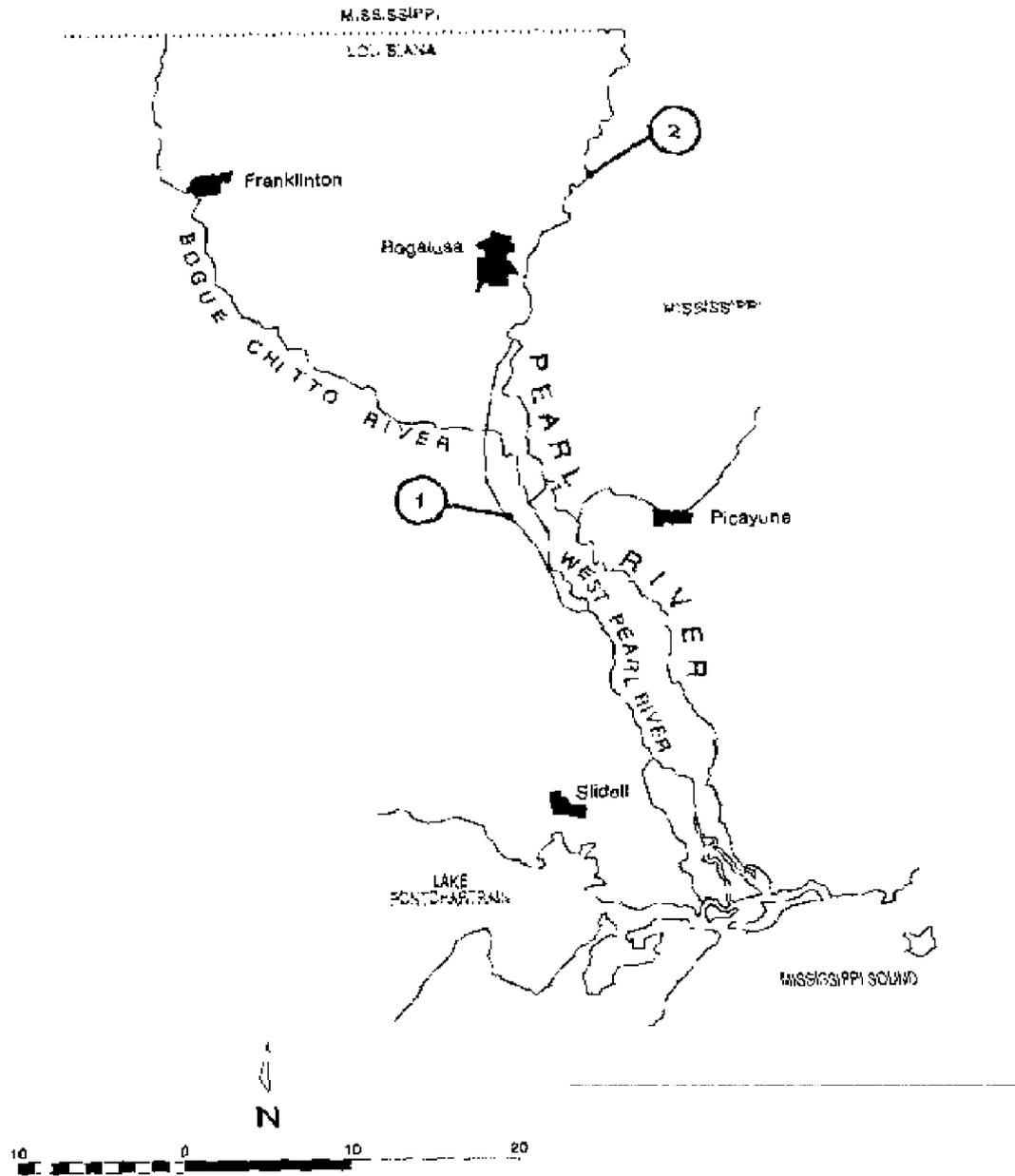
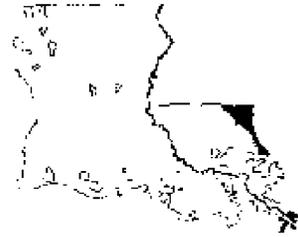


Pearl River Basin





Bald cypress and tupelo gum swamp along the Pearl River

Projects



Navigation

- 1 Pearl River Waterway, Mississippi and Louisiana
- 2 Pearl River

Pearl River Basin

Introduction

The basin, located in the eastern part of Louisiana, is bounded by the state of Mississippi on the north and east and by the Lake Pontchartrain Basin on the south and west. Improvements in the basin have been authorized for the purposes of navigation and associated uses. In recent years, commercial traffic in the basin has decreased, and improvements are mainly used for recreational purposes.

Projects

Pearl River (Vicksburg District)

Under one of the Corps' special authorizations, Section 3 of PL 14, 79th Congress, a 150-foot-wide channel was snagged and cleared in the 65-mile reach between Bogalusa, Louisiana, and Columbia, Mississippi, for small boat navigation. Work on the project was carried out in 1968, 1969, and 1970 at a cost of \$279,000, including \$64,000 contributed by local interests.



Slidell flooding from the Pearl River in 1983



Marshes in the Lower Pearl River Basin

Slidell, Louisiana, and Pearlinton, Mississippi (Vicksburg District). The Slidell, Louisiana, and Pearlinton, Mississippi, flood control study evaluated the feasibility of various alternatives that would provide relief for the area. Major flooding from the Pearl River was experienced in the Slidell area in 1979, 1980 and 1983. During these floods, minor flooding was also experienced in the Pearlinton area. The feasibility report, which was approved by the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors in April 1986, recommended a 15-mile levee system for the Slidell area. No feasible plan was developed for the Pearlinton area. The Slidell levee system with its appurtenant structures will protect the area from flooding associated with a 200-year event on the Pearl River and provide the same level of protection against hurricane surges. The report of the Chief of Engineers, which was transmitted to the Secretary of the Army in 1987, concurred in these findings. The recommended plan was authorized by the 1985 Supplemental Appropriation Act (PL 99-88) and the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (PL 99-662). A local cooperation agreement was signed in 1986. The project sponsor is the St. Tammany Levee District. Engineering and design studies are on hold pending

demonstration by the local sponsor that they can provide their share of the project cost.

West Pearl River Waterway, Mississippi and Louisiana (Vicksburg District)

The existing navigation project on the West Pearl River was authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1935. The project was completed in 1956 and provided navigation from its mouth to the vicinity of Bogalusa, Louisiana, a distance of about 58 miles. The channel was constructed to a depth of 7 feet with a bottom width of 100 feet in the river section and 80 feet wide in the canal section. The Pools Bluff and Bogue Chitto Sills were constructed to control water levels in the navigation channel. Three locks with inside dimensions of 65 by 310 feet (chamber dimensions) were provided in the 20.2-mile sections.

In the early 1970s, commercial traffic declined to the extent that continued maintenance of the channel and canal dimensions could not be justified; therefore, maintenance dredging of the navigation project was suspended and the lock structures were placed in a caretaker status. However, at the request of local interests in Slidell and Bogalusa, Louisiana,

the economic and environmental feasibility of maintaining the project to authorized dimensions was reevaluated. The results indicated that maintenance of the waterway was economically justified. Maintenance funds to initiate dredging to reopen the existing waterway were provided in 1988. Dredging began in 1989, but was discontinued because of environmental problems. Dredging of the proposed channel, to provide for commercial navigation to the vicinity of Bogalusa, is expected to begin as soon as compliance with Federal and state regulations is achieved.

Programs and Surveys

Flood Plain Information Reports

Bogalusa (Vicksburg District). A flood plain information report for the Bogalusa area was completed and published in 1973.

Flood Insurance Studies

A flood insurance study is underway for the town of Pearl River, Louisiana.

Surveys

Pearl River Basin, Mississippi and Louisiana (Vicksburg District). Studies in the Pearl River Basin by the Corps of Engineers are being conducted in response to eight Congressional study resolutions (dated 1963 through 1979) concerning flood control and navigation. A Pearl River Basin study was initiated by the Mobile District in fiscal year 1980. A reconnaissance report for the entire basin was completed by the Mobile District in 1981. Public workshops were held at various locations throughout the basin in 1981 to discuss the results of this reconnaissance report.

Several floods occurred in the Pearl River Basin in the spring of 1983, with severe damages occurring in Jackson, Monticello, Tylertown, Foxworth, Carthage, and Columbia, Mississippi, and Slidell and Franklinton, Louisiana. Approximately \$25 million and \$5.5 million of urban damages were incurred by Jackson and Slidell, respectively, during the 1983 flood. The

interim flood control study was basin-wide in scope and focused on flooding problems in the Jackson area, as well as Slidell and Bogalusa, Louisiana; and Pearlinton, Carthage, Columbia, Picayune, and Monticello, Mississippi; and the Bogue Chitto subbasin. Primary needs investigated include urban and rural flood damage prevention.

Pearl River in the Vicinity of Walkiah Bluff, Mississippi and Louisiana (Vicksburg District).

An evaluation of low flow problems along the Pearl River and Holmes Bayou is being conducted under the authority of Section 307(d) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1990. The purpose of Section 307(d) of WRDA 1990 is to establish a demonstration program for determining the feasibility of wetland restoration, enhancement, and creation. These evaluations focus on the problems along the Pearl River and Holmes Bayou between Wilson Slough and the West Pearl River in the vicinity of Walkiah Bluff. Wilson Slough continues to capture more of the low flows from the Pearl River to the extent that the channel around Walkiah Bluff bendway is completely dry. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality is serving as the non-Federal sponsor for these evaluations. A final report is scheduled for completion in September 1996.

Lower Pearl River Basin Flow Distribution

(Vicksburg District). The study was authorized by Congressional resolution in 1979 and concerns enhancement of ecological conditions and ensuring adequate water supply to the Pearl River Basin. Funds of \$200,000 to initiate and complete reconnaissance phase studies were provided by Congress in 1988.

The study area originates at Pool's Bluff Sill south of Bogalusa, Louisiana, and continues along two separate, but connected river systems. The West Pearl flows approximately 44 miles and empties into the Rigolets, the principal outlet from Lake Pontchartrain into Lake Borgne. The East Pearl River flows approximately 45 miles, forming the state boundary between Mississippi and Louisiana, and empties into Lake Borgne. Currently, during periods of low flow, essentially all flow entering the East Pearl River is diverted away

from this river to the west, primarily through Wilson Slough and Holmes Bayou. These arteries empty into the West Pearl River. Specific problems and needs addressed include commercial navigation, water quality, water supply, wastewater capacity, fish and wildlife, recreation and saltwater intrusion. Potential solutions evaluated include construction of water control structures at several locations and channel improvements. Studies found that the primary output of flow distribution alternatives is recreation. Reconnaissance studies which the study not progress to the feasibility phase were completed in 1989.



Great Egret in the brackish marsh of the Lower Pearl River