Mississippi Valley Division,
Regional Planning and Environment Division South

St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana Feasibility Study

Appendix I: Attachment 3 – Project Description Constructed Refuge Pine Savanna Project

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SECTION 1

Refuge Pine Savanna Mitigation Site

1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed refuge pine savanna mitigation site (PSR-1) is located entirely within the Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (BBMNWR) in St. Tammany Parish Louisiana, (Figure I3:1-1). The site is located south and east of Bayou Bonfouca, west of the Norfolk Southern and Pontchartrain Drive (state highway 11) and north of the Lake Pontchartrain Northshore, Louisiana. The site would provide 9 acres (7.4 AAHUs) of pine savanna habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) and 50 acres (2 AAHUs) for the pine warbler (PW) within the BBMNWR. This would compensate for unavoidable wetland impacts from implementation of the levee and floodwall system and would restore up to (~)70 acres of degraded wet Long-leaf Pine Savanna Forest as compensatory mitigation for coastal zone Pine Savanna impacts from construction of the South and West Slidell levee and floodwall system under the St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana Feasibility study.

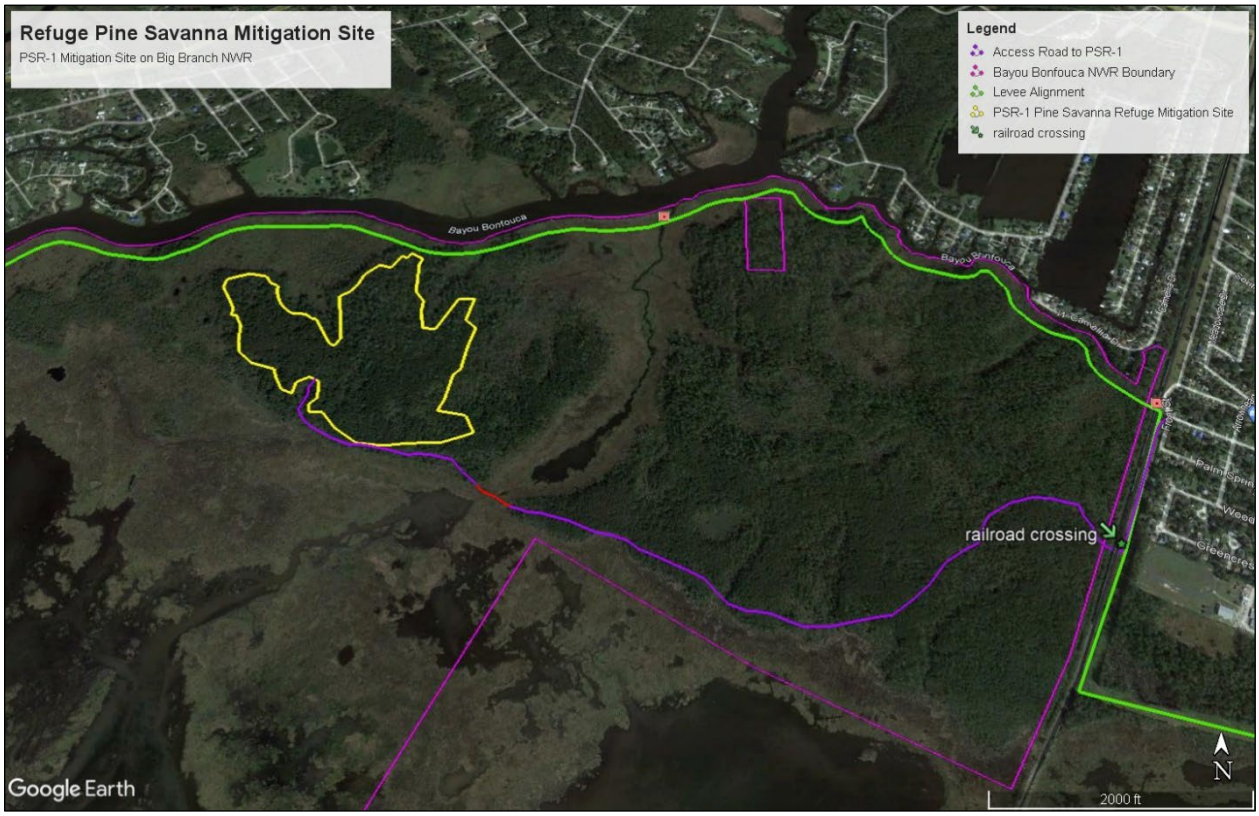

Figure I3:1-1. Refuge Pine Savanna Mitigation Site Location

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Removal of undesirable hardwood species such as Tallow, and reintroduction of fire across the entire site. Removal of undesirable hardwood species coupled with the reintroduction of frequent fires can be effective in restoring ground cover in remnant longleaf pine savannas.

Potential earthwork activities include establishing/improving an existing access road, across the existing railroad crossing westward to the PSR-1 mitigation site. A staging area would be established within areas identified for the proposed levee work in proximity to improvement of the NWR access road.

1.2.1 Site Access

Access to the project work limits would be as follows:

Access to the site from the Northeast would be from the intersection of Front Street and Sun Valley Drive, Slidell, Louisiana to be made via route LA-11 (Pontchartrain Drive). At the intersection of Front Street and Sun Valley Dr equipment/vehicles would traverse along the existing Slidell-Oak Harbor levee south parallel to the railroad and cross at the established railroad crossing. Access from the southeast can be made via route LA-11 to the existing Slidell-Oak Harbor levee traveling east and then north to the existing railroad crossing. Once across the railroad, access to the mitigation site would be via an existing dirt road traversing in a westerly direction approximately 1.8 miles the PSR-1 mitigation site.

1.2.2 Staging

A staging area for improvement of the access road to the mitigation site could be established just northeast of the existing railroad crossing within an already established/disturbed area.

1.2.3 Construction

Project construction details will be developed in PED.

1.2.4 Maintenance/Management Activities

After completion of all excavation, grading, and soil preparation activities, herbicides may be applied to the mitigation areas to help control invasive and nuisance plant species. Herbicide applications may also occur to help suppress undesirable vegetation. Throughout this period, access/maintenance roads would be maintained as necessary. Additional details would be developed in PED.

The first monitoring event would occur in the fall of the year of the initial burnings. Additional details would be developed in PED.

1.2.5 Equipment

Equipment to be used for the respective work is assumed as follows:

- Herbicide Spraying: ATVs and/or UTVs, back-packsprayers and/or boom sprayers;
- Controlled Burns: ATVs and/or UTVs, back-packsprayers and/or boom sprayers.