



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT
7400 LEAKE AVENUE
NEW ORLEANS LA 70118-3651

June 3, 2024

Regulatory Division
Western Evaluation Branch

Project Manager:
Frederick J. Conerly
(504) 862-2277
Frederick.j.conerly@usace.army.mil

Application #: MVN-2021-00405-WFF

PUBLIC NOTICE

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: [] 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), and/or [] Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. Section 408).

Kurthwood Drop Zone Vernon PARISH

NAME OF APPLICANT: Department of the Army- Fort Johnson, c/o: Gulf South Research Corporation, LLC, attn.: Mr. Beau C. Rapier, 8081 Innovation Park Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70820.

LOCATION OF WORK: Located in Fort Johnson, within the Kurthwood Drop zone footprint, in Vernon Parish Louisiana, (latitude: 31.3079533, longitude: -93.1587738), as shown within the attached drawings. (Hydrologic Unit Code 08080203, Calcasieu Basin)

CHARACTER OF WORK: The proposed work will prepare the roughly 1,042- acre site to mimic an agricultural setting. This will be achieved in two phases, phase one requires the installation of four sediment control structures within the Kurthwood Drop zone footprint. The combined footprint of the control structures will be 2-acres and would consist of an earthen embankment with an 3H:1V slope, drainpipes, and an anti-seep collar constructed at the base of each structure. Emergency overflow for heavy rain events would be constructed at each basin and consist of concrete riprap and divert excess water over the constructed basins through an adjacent channel. Phase two requires the clearing of roughly 746-acres of pine plantation within the drop zone footprint and modifying the drainage by installing terraces, check dams and drop pipes where necessary. Once completed the site will be revegetated with herbaceous species and maintained via bush-hogging. It is anticipated that approximately 1.75-acres of forested wetlands and 21,958 linear feet of waters of the U.S will be permanently impacted. If a Department of the Army permit is warranted, the applicant has proposed to mitigate unavoidable wetlands impacts at an approved and acceptable mitigation bank within the N.O. District.

MITIGATION: The applicant proposes to avoid direct impacts and minimize secondary impacts (to wetlands) to the maximum extent practicable. For compensation for unavoidable wetland impacts, the applicant proposes to use a Corps approved mitigation bank within the watershed of impact.

The comment period on the requested Department of the Army Permit will close **20 days** from the date of this 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 request, and must be submitted so as to be received before or by the last day of the comment period. Letters and/or comments concerning the subject permit application must reference the Applicant's Name and the Permit Application Number and can be preferably emailed to the Corps of Engineer's project manager listed above or forwarded to the Corps of Engineers at the address above, **ATTENTION: REGULATORY DIVISION, RGW, Fred Conerly**. Individuals or parties may also request an extension of time in which to comment on the proposed work by mail or preferably by emailing the specified project manager listed above. Any request for an extension of time to comment must be specific and substantively supportive of the requested extension and received by this office prior to the end of the initial comment period. The Branch Chief will review the request and the requester will be promptly notified of the decision to grant or deny the request. If granted, the time extension will be continuous and inclusive of the initial comment period and will not exceed a total of 30 calendar days. This public notice is also available for review online at <https://go.usa.gov/xennJ>

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. Further, all factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, including the potential cumulative effects associated with the proposed project.

The New Orleans District is presently unaware of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places at or near the proposed work but is pending further review in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. The possibility exists that the proposed work may damage or destroy presently unknown archeological, scientific, prehistorical, historical sites, or data. As deemed necessary, copies of this public notice will be sent to the State Archeologist, State Historic Preservation Officer, and federally listed tribes regarding potential impacts to cultural resources.

Our initial finding is that the proposed work would have no effect on any species listed as endangered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, nor affect any habitat designated as critical to the survival and recovery of any such species.

Based on the Information Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool for Endangered Species in Louisiana, as signed on January 27, 2020, between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it has been determined that the project would have no effect to any species listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, nor affect any habitat designated as critical to the survival and recovery of any such species, except for a may affect, not likely to adversely affect determination for the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The applicant's proposal will not result in the destruction, alteration, and/or disturbance 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 LA Department of Environmental Quality before a Department of the Army permit is issued.

Any person may request, (preferably by email to the project manager, or 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 invited 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 Branch
Regulatory Division

Enclosures



Figure 2-2. Preferred Alternative - Alternative 1

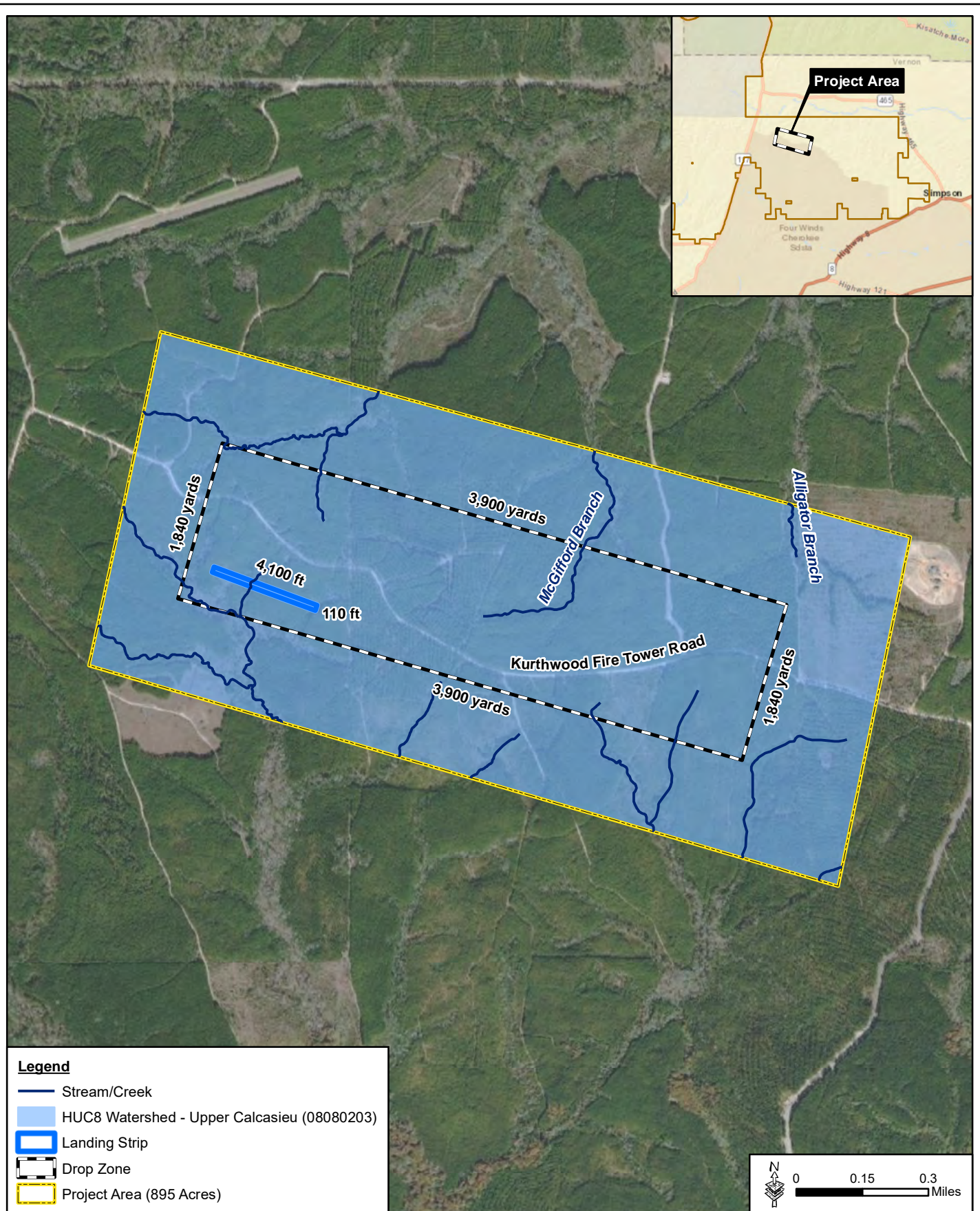


Figure 3-1. Surface Water Features – Alternative 1

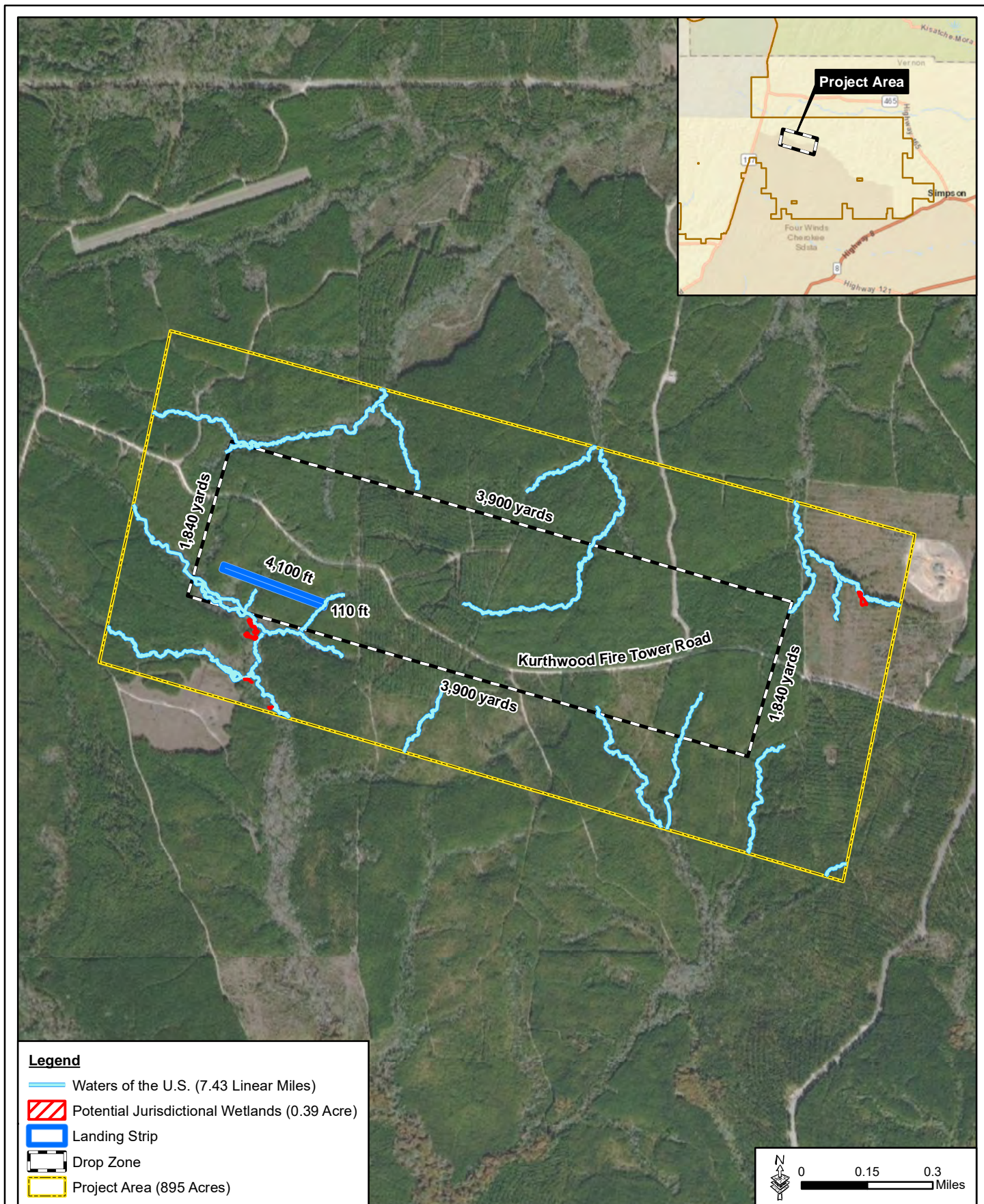


Figure 3-5. Wetlands – Alternative 1

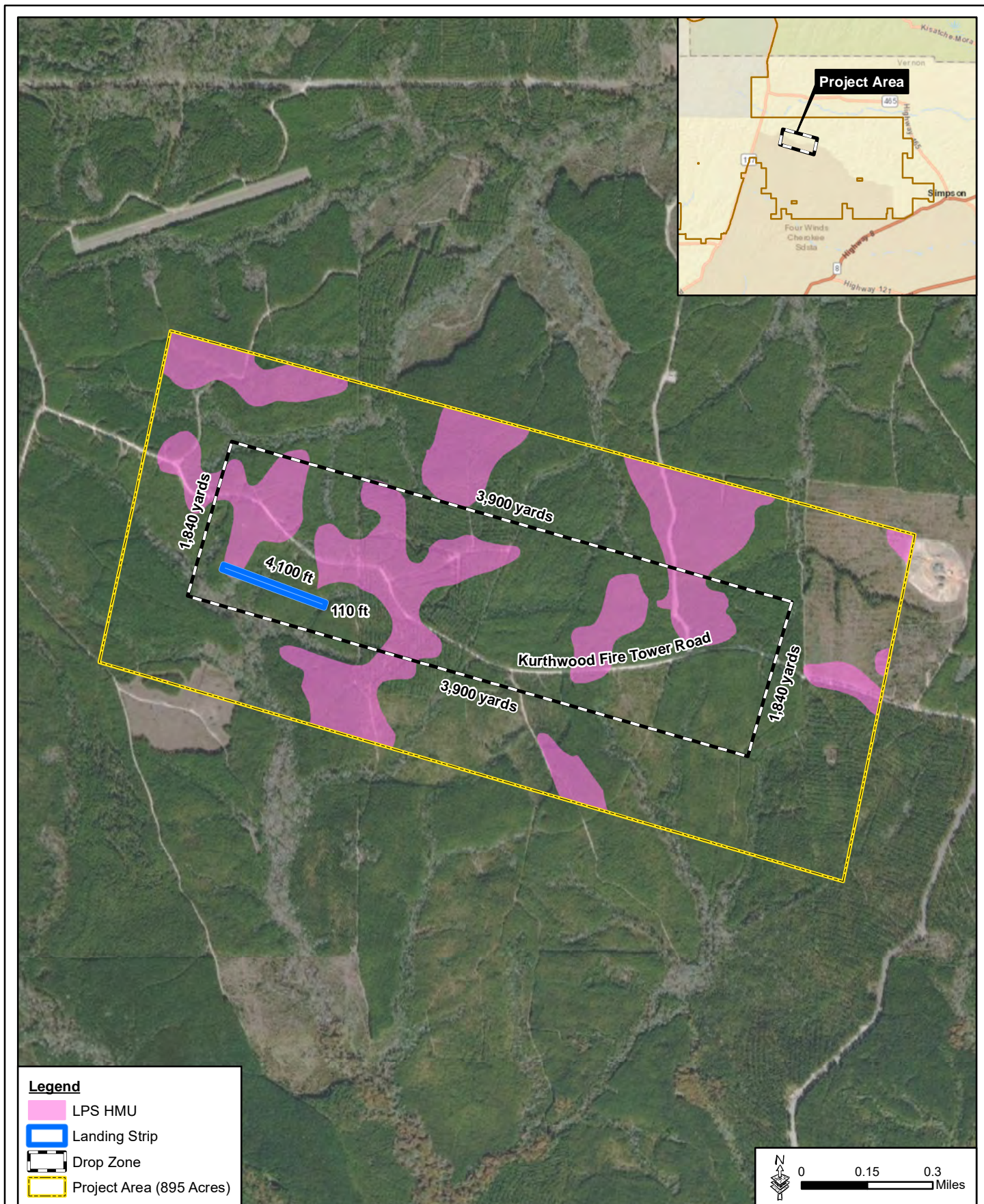


Figure 3-12. LPS HMU within Proposed Action Area – Alternative 1

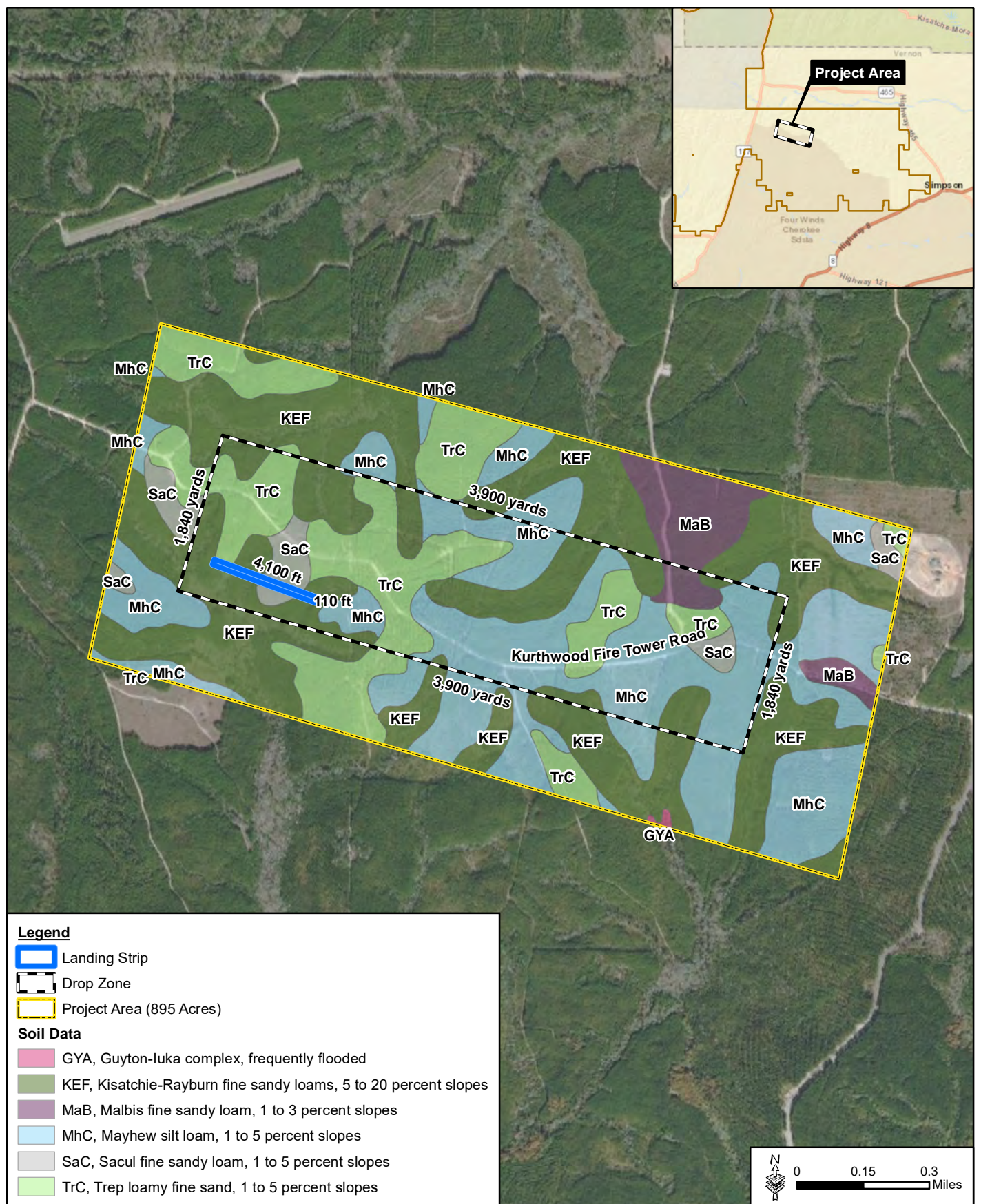


Figure 3-16. Soils – Alternative 1

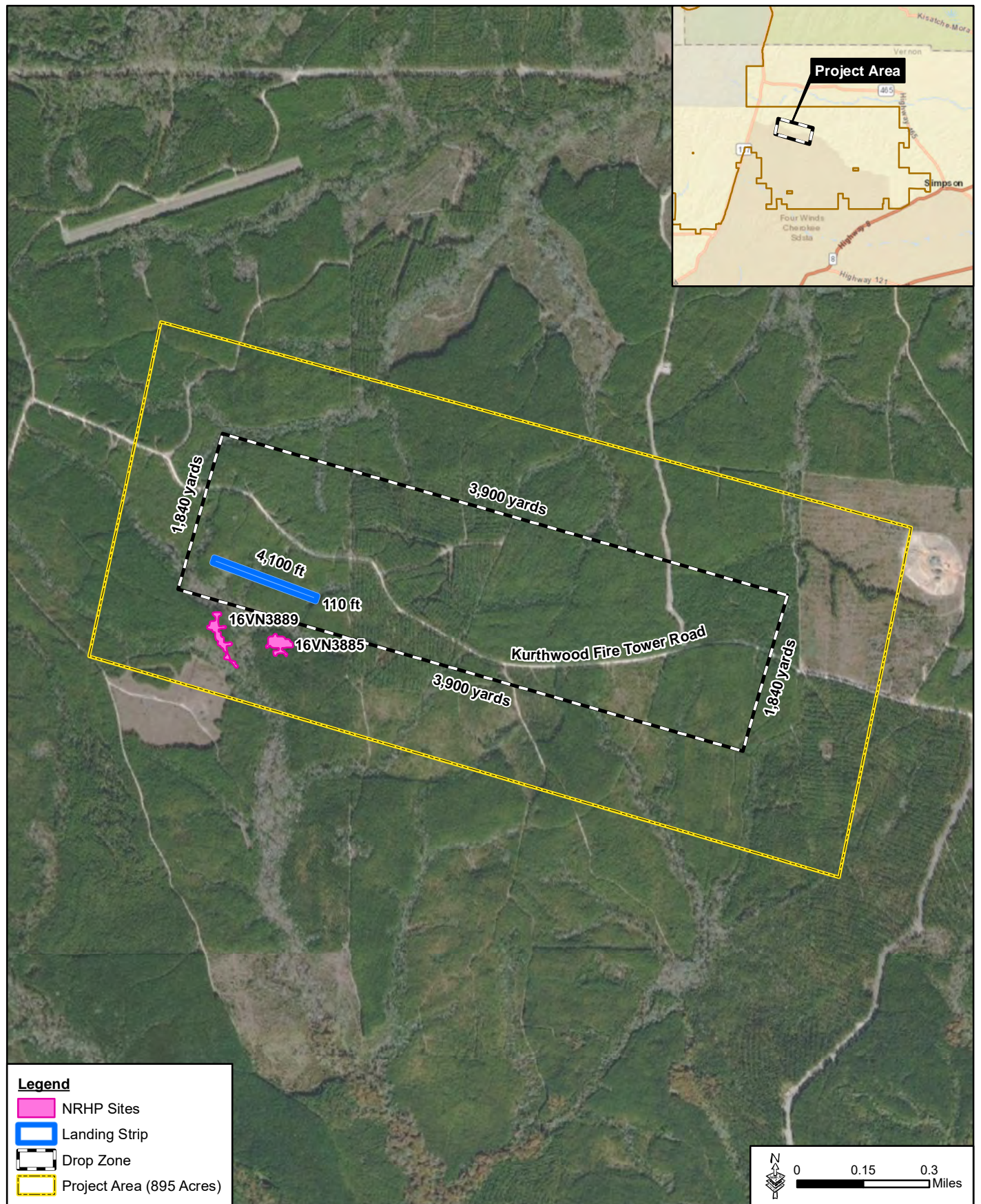


Figure 3-20. Cultural Resources – Alternative 1

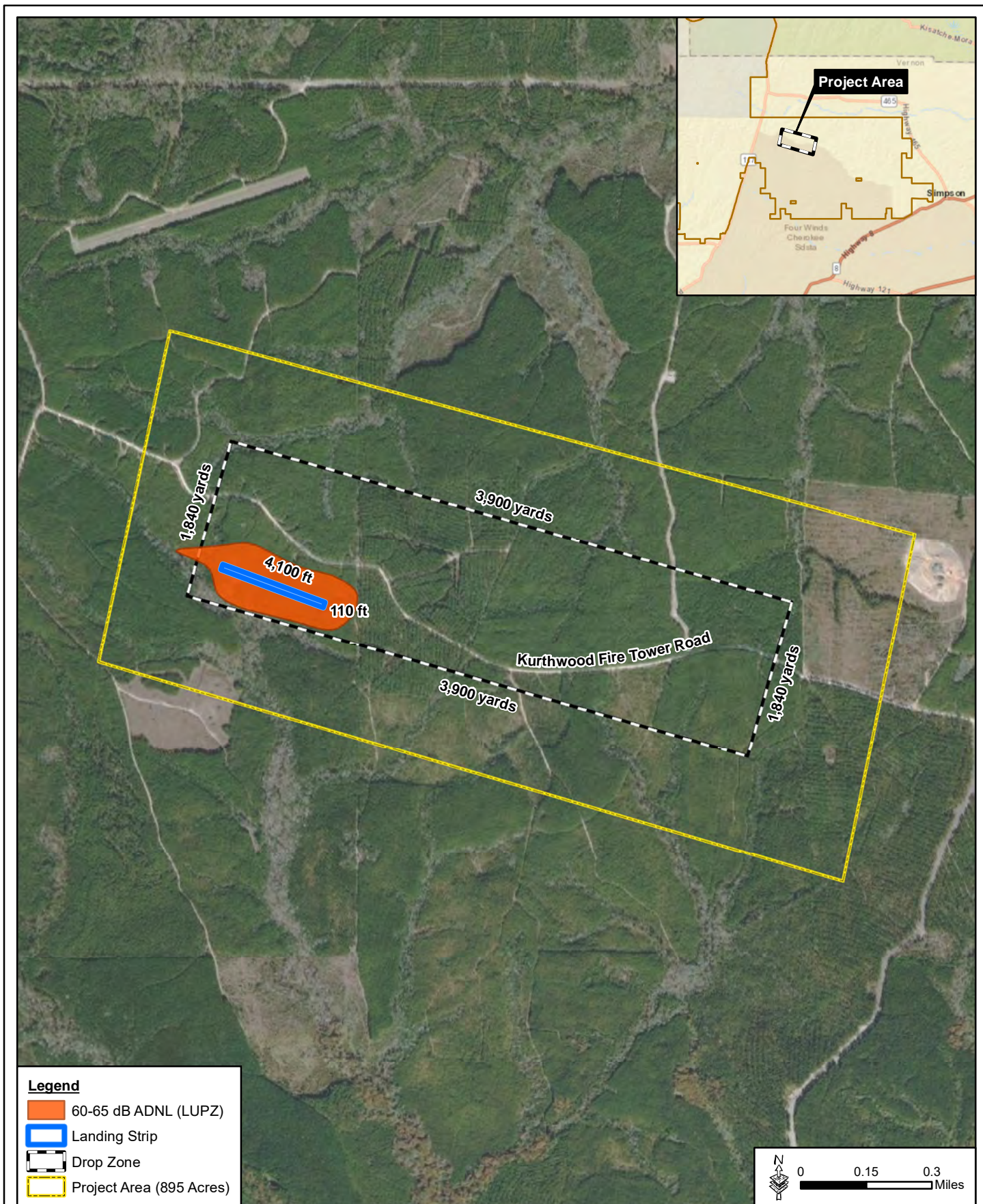


Figure 3-25. Noise Impacts – Alternative 1

Figure 3. Plan View and Cross-Section Map

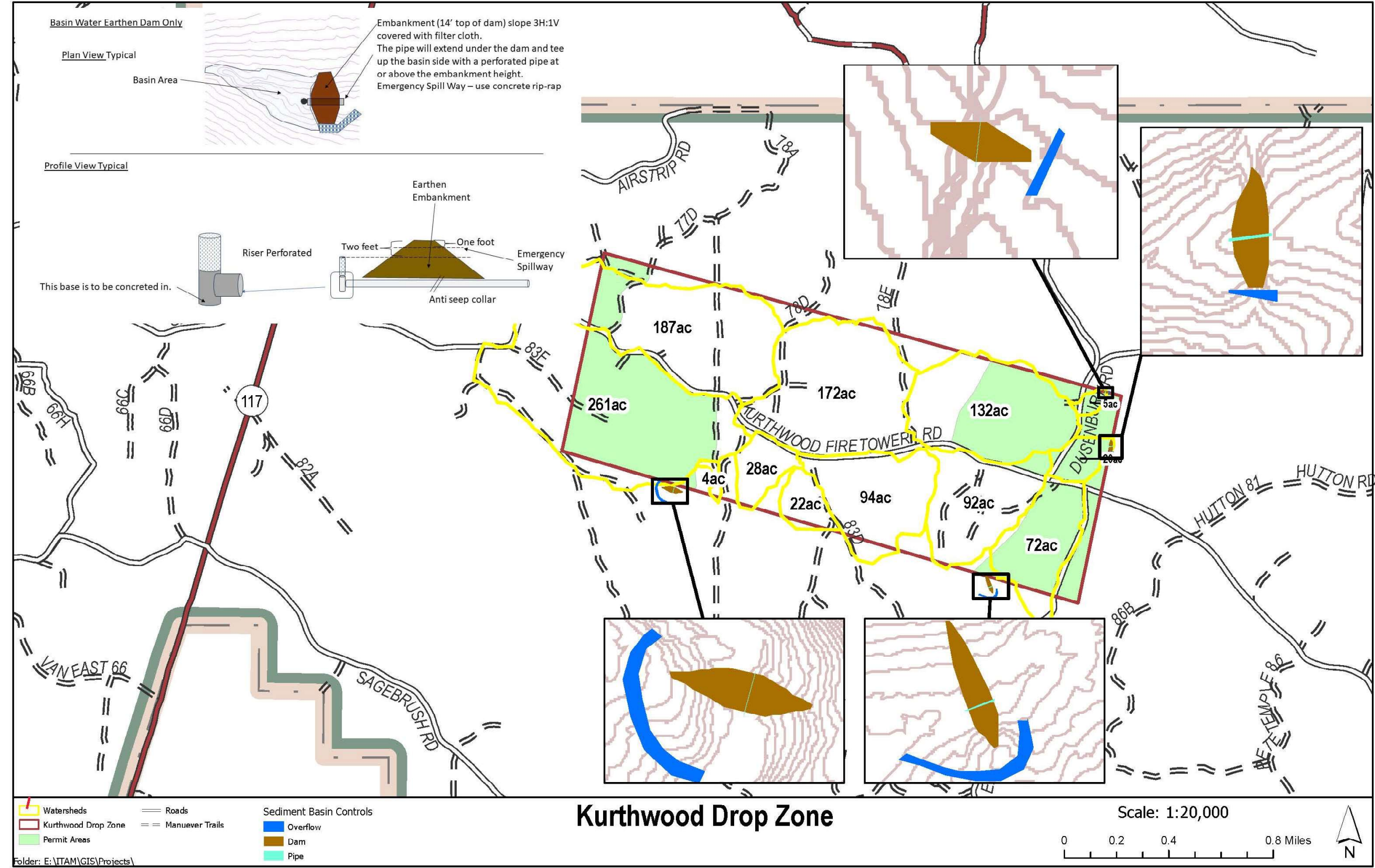


Figure 4. Wetland and Waters of the U.S. Map

