



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, MOBILE DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 2288
MOBILE, AL 36628-0001

CESAM PD-EC
Public Notice No. FP18-JW02-06

September 20, 2018

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, MOBILE DISTRICT,
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES,
AND
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
PROPOSED MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND
PLACEMENT OF DREDGED MATERIAL
JOURDAN AND WOLF RIVERS AND BAYOU PORTAGE
NAVIGATION PROJECTS
HANCOCK AND HARRISON COUNTIES, MISSISSIPPI

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District proposes to conduct maintenance dredging activities in the Jourdan and Wolf River channels, and also the Bayou Portage channel located in the St. Louis Bay, Hancock and Harrison Counties, Mississippi, as authorized and directed by the United States Congress (**Figures 1 and 2**).

This public notice is issued in accordance with rules and regulations published in the Federal Register April 26, 1988. These laws are applied whenever dredged or fill materials may enter waters of the United States. The recipient of this notice is requested specifically to review the proposed action as it may impact on water quality, relative to the requirements of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act and Coastal Zone Management Act. Review of any other potential impacts is also requested.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The Jourdan and Wolf River channels, and the Bayou Portage channel, St. Louis Bay, Hancock and Harrison Counties, Mississippi.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTIRE AUTHORIZED PROJECT: The Jourdan and Wolf Rivers are located in St. Louis Bay within Hancock and Harrison Counties, Mississippi. The existing project was authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1907 and construction was completed in 1908. The federally authorized project at Jourdan and Wolf Rivers provides for 7-feet deep by 100-feet wide channels from the 7-foot contour in St. Louis Bay to the 7-foot contour within the Wolf and Jourdan Rivers. Approximate channel lengths are 1.6 miles for the Wolf River and 3.5 miles for the Jourdan River.

The existing Bayou Portage navigation project is located within St. Louis Bay, approximately 4 miles north of U.S. Highway 90 in Pass Christian, Harrison County, Mississippi. The Bayou Portage channel is approximately 4 ½ miles long, extending from

the 8-foot contour in St. Louis Bay to the 200 feet wide by 800 feet long turning basin in the Pass Christian Industrial Park. The channel dimensions are 8 feet deep by 100 feet wide (**Figure 3**). The existing project was authorized by Section 3 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1988, Public Law 100-676, dated November 17, 1988.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action for the Jourdan River portion of the project would involve maintenance dredging of the federally authorized channel to a depth of seven feet mean lower low water (MLLW) and a width of 100 feet, with two feet of allowable overdepth plus an additional three feet due to dredging inaccuracies. Maintenance dredging operations of approximately 500,000 cubic yards (cy) is estimated to occur over a ten-year period. Hydraulically dredged material will be placed in a previously authorized open water disposal area (**Figure 4**) within St. Louis Bay. The principal sediment types associated with the Jourdan River channel are silts and silty clays.

The proposed action for the Wolf River portion of the federally authorized project would involve maintenance dredging to a depth of seven feet MLLW and a width of 100 feet, with two feet of allowable overdepth plus an additional three feet due to dredging inaccuracies. Maintenance dredging operations of approximately 300,000 cy is estimated to occur over a ten-year period. The most suitable areas for placement of the dredged material are two previously utilized and certified disposal areas. Approximately 150,000 cy will be placed in an approved open water site (**Figure 5**) located adjacent to the channel. Approximately 150,000 cy will be placed in a confined upland placement site (**Figure 6**) by pipeline dredge. The upland placement site has been utilized for maintenance dredging of the federally authorized Bayou Portage navigation project and generally not intended as a disposal site for the Wolf River. However, with the limited capacity of the open water site, the Bayou Portage upland placement area would be utilized for this maintenance dredging event once over the next ten years. The principal sediment types associated with the Wolf River channel are silts and silty clays.

The proposed action would involve maintenance dredging of the federally authorized Bayou Portage channel to a total depth of eight feet MLLW and a width of 100 feet, with 1-foot of advanced maintenance and 1-foot of allowable overdepth plus an additional 3 feet due to dredging inaccuracies. Approximately 600,000 cy of dredged material would be removed from the Bayou Portage channel over a ten year period with dredging cycles occurring approximately every three to four years. Dredged material would be removed from the Bayou Portage channel and placed in a previously certified and utilized Bayou Portage upland placement area (**Figure 6**). The disposal area is approximately 50 acres in size and is adjacent to the Pass Christian Industrial Canal. The dikes that currently exist will be rehabilitated, if necessary, and raised to elevation +22 feet MLLW. Dredged material to be removed ranges from silt, sandy silt to clayey silt.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires State water quality certification for the proposed activities. Water quality certification for a ten-year period is requested from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). MDEQ will make a decision relative to water quality for the proposed action upon completion of the required comment period.

COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY: Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act, a statement of consistency has been filed with the State of Mississippi, Department of Marine Resources (MDMR). Our review of the Mississippi Coastal Program (MCP) indicated that the project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable. MDMR will make a final decision relative to coastal zone consistency for the proposed action upon completion of the required comment period.

USE BY OTHERS: The proposed action is not expected to create significant impacts on land use plans. Use of waters within the open water disposal sites including fishing, shrimping, and recreational boating will be impacted during the maintenance activities.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS: Environmental Assessments (EAs) and Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)s addressing the proposed work for identified in this public notice have been previously prepared. Copies of these documents are on file in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, and available for review upon request. Based on comments to this public notice, the District Engineer will determine the need to incorporate those comments into and update the NEPA documents.

SECTION 404 (b)(1) EVALUATION REPORT: Water quality impacts associated with the proposed action have been identified in an evaluation report prepared in accordance with Public Law 92-500, Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines promulgated by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the CWA. The previously prepared Section 404 (b)(1) Evaluation Reports are on file in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District and available for review upon request. The reports conclude that only minor and short-term turbidity impacts would result from the implementation of the proposed action. Based on comments to this public notice, the District Engineer will determine the need to incorporate those comments and update the NEPA documents.

ENDANGERED/THREATENED SPECIES: Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service regarding potential impacts to endangered or threatened species and their critical habitat under their purview. Our preliminary review of this action indicates that the project would not likely adversely impact any listed endangered and/or threatened species or their critical habitat.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITATS: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) is defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as "those waters and substrates necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity." The designation and conservation of EFH seeks to minimize adverse effects on habitat caused by fishing and non-fishing activities. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has identified EFH for the Gulf of Mexico in its Fishery Management Plan Amendments. These habitats include estuarine areas, such as estuarine emergent wetlands, seagrass beds, algal flats, mud, sand, shell, and rock substrates, and the estuarine water column. The NMFS has management plans for brown shrimp (*Penaeus aztecus*), red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*), white shrimp (*P. setiferus*), and Spanish mackerel (*S. maculatus*) within the project area. To the extent practicable, this project will not adversely affect EFH. Due to the short duration of the proposed activity, no managed species or their habitat will be significantly impacted and benthic communities in the project area will re-colonize within a few months.

CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSIDERATION: In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, coordination with the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer is being initiated. No cultural resources are known to occur in the open-water disposal or channel areas. No sites listed on the *National Register of Historic Places* are located within the project area.

CLEAN AIR ACT: Air quality in the vicinity of the proposed action would not be significantly affected by the proposed action. The equipment and machinery would generate some air pollution during maintenance activities, such as increased particulate levels from the burning fossil fuels. However, these impacts would be minor and temporary in nature. The project area is in attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards parameters. The proposed action would not affect the attainment status of the project area or the region. A State Implementation Plan conformity determination (42 United States Code 7506(c)) is not required since the project area is in attainment for all critical pollutants.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to proceed with the proposed action will be based on evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed maintenance activities on overall public interest. That decision will reflect the national concerns for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit that reasonably may be expected to accrue from this operations and maintenance project must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable determinants. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain 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

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people. The proposed action will proceed unless it is found to be contrary to the overall public interest.

COORDINATION: Among the agencies receiving copies of this public notice are:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jackson Field Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, Habitat Conservation Division
National Marine Fisheries Service, Protected Resources Division
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
National Park Service
United States Coast Guard, District 8
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Affiliated Indian Tribal Interests
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
Mississippi Secretary of State Office

Other Federal, State, and local organizations, and United States Senators and Representatives of Mississippi are being sent copies of this notice and are invited to participate in coordinating this proposed action. You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any person who may have interest in the proposed action.

CORRESPONDENCE: Any person who has an interest that may be affected by this proposed activity may request a public hearing. Any comments or requests for a public hearing must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within 30 days of the date on this public notice. A request for a hearing must clearly set forth the interest, which may be affected, and the manner in which the interest may be affected.

Correspondence concerning the public notice should refer to Public Notice Number FP18-JW02-06 and should be directed to the Commander, U.S. Army Engineer District Mobile, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, ATTN: CESAM-PD-EC. For additional information please contact Ms. Jeannine L. Amos by email Jeannine.L.Amos@usace.army.mil or by telephone number (251) 690-3008.



CURTIS M. FLAKES
Chief, Planning and Environmental
Division



Figure 1: Authorized Project Map

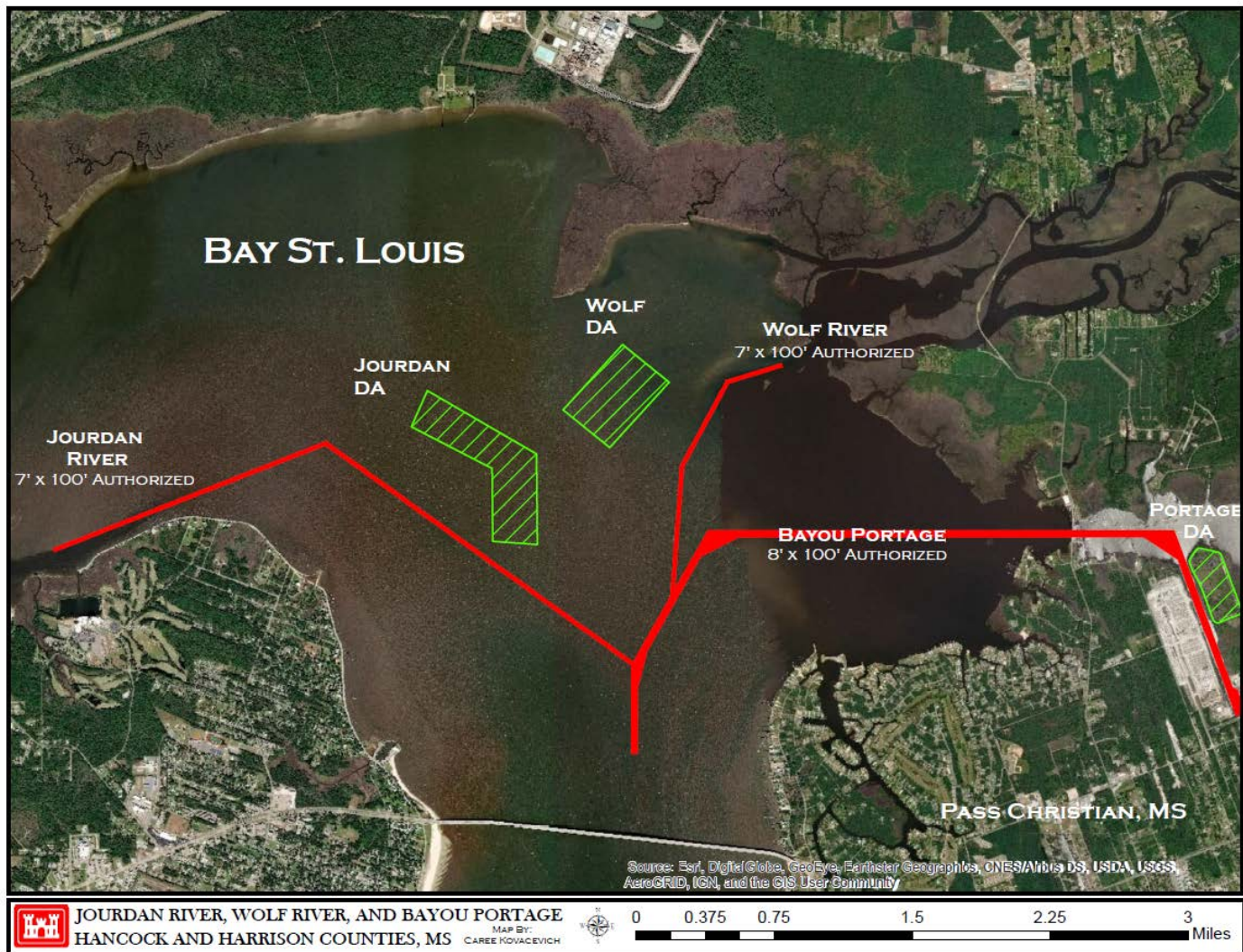


Figure 2: Project Features

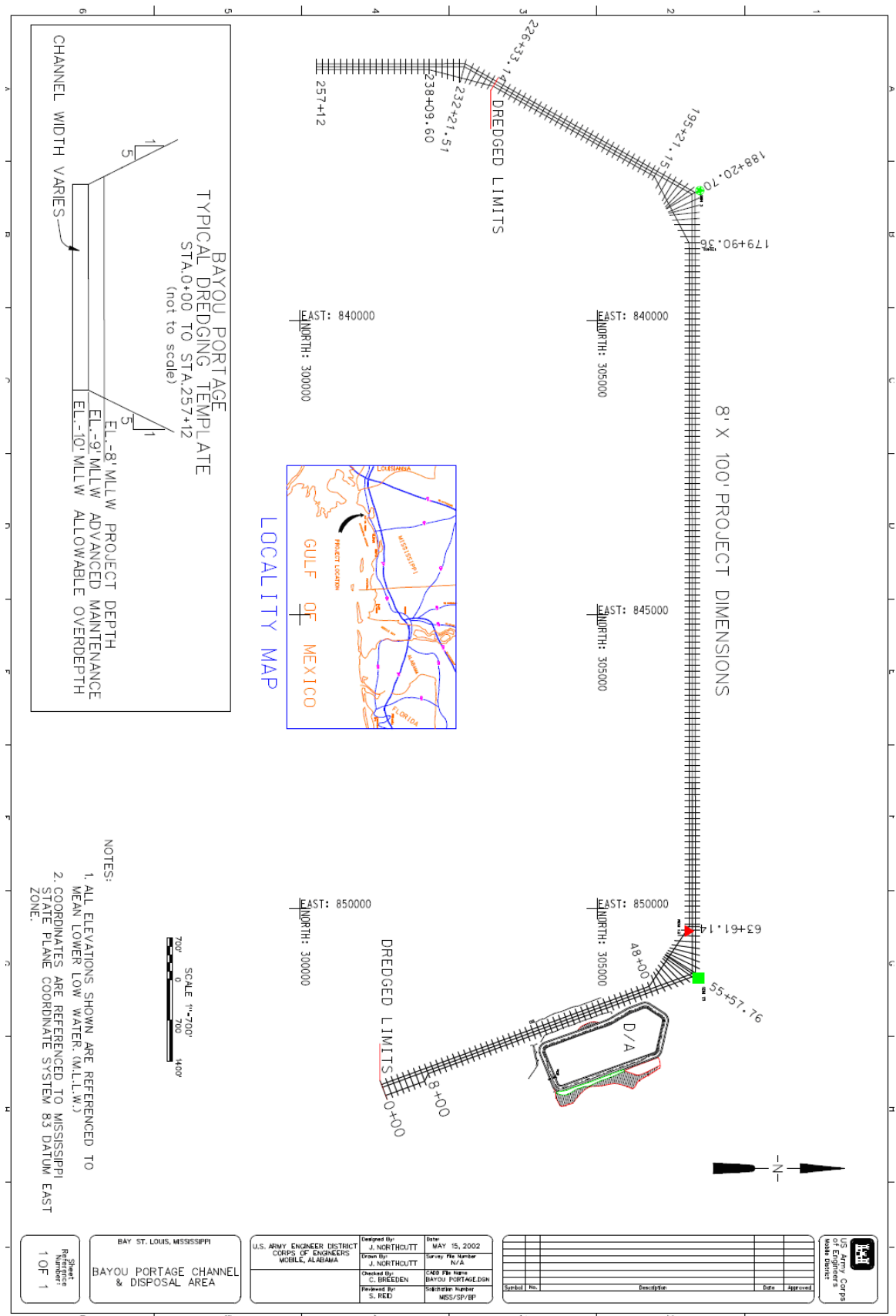


Figure 3: Bayou Portage Project Dimensions and Disposal Area

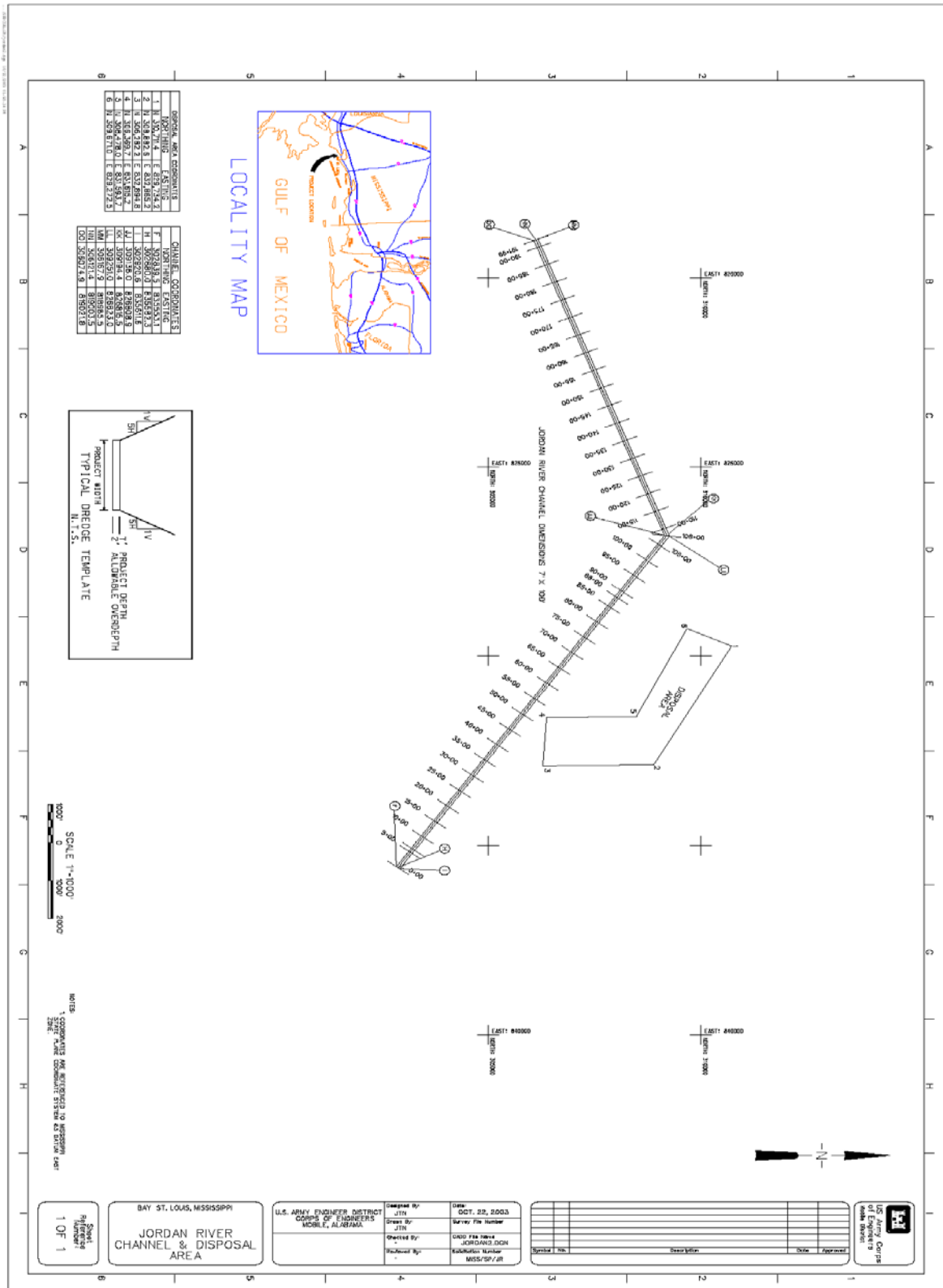


Figure 4: Jourdan River Authorized Channel and Open Water Disposal Area

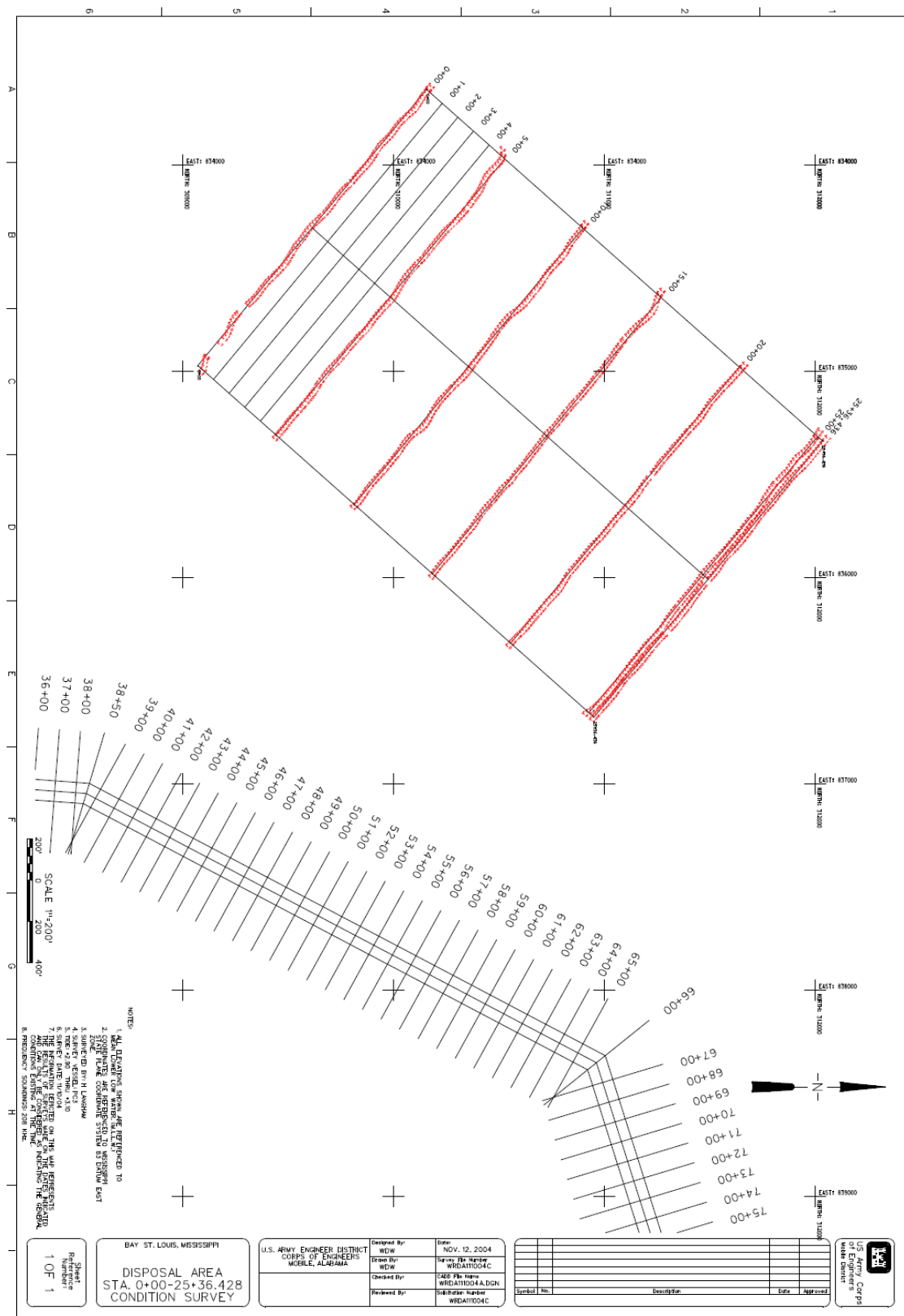


Figure 5: Wolf River Open-water Disposal Area and Channel

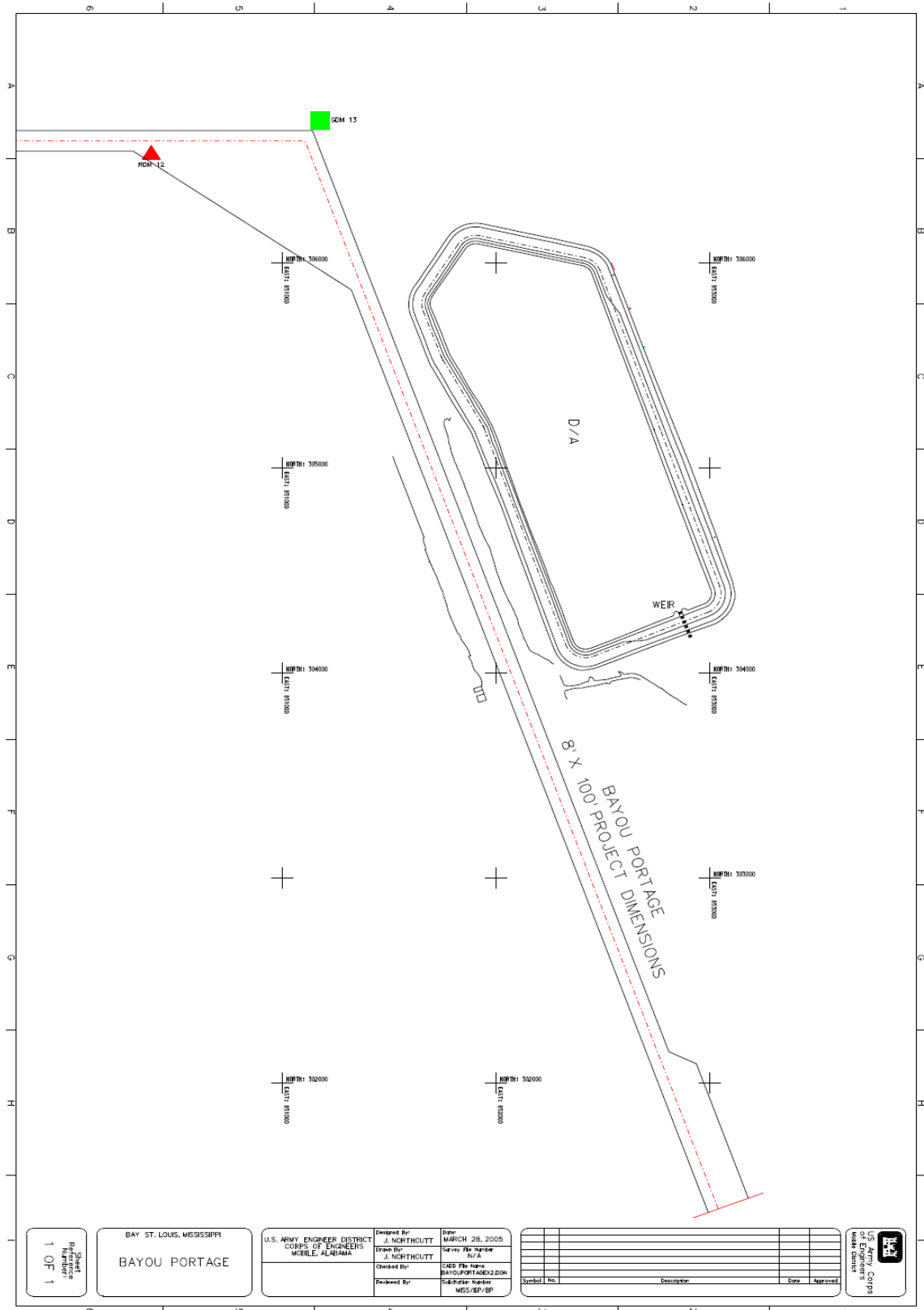


Figure 6: Wolf River and Bayou Portage Upland Disposal Area