DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, MOBILE DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 2288
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

CESAM-RD-M **May 29, 2019**
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. SAM-2018-01204-RCV

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

PROPOSED IMPACTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A RAIL LINE, ON ESTUARINE AND FORESTED WETLANDS ADJACENT TO THE ESCATAWPA RIVER, MOSS POINT, JACKSON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: This District has received an application for a Department of the Army (DA) permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 403). Please communicate this information to interested parties.

APPLICANT: **Jackson County Port Authority (JCPA)**
Attention: Ms. Sandy Feathers
PO Box 70
Pascagoula, MS 39568

AGENT: **Compton Engineering**
Attention: Ms. Lisa Morrison
1969 Market Street
Pascagoula, MS 39568

LOCATION OF WORK AND WATERWAY: **The new rail line is located in Section 19, Township 7 South, and Range 5 West of Moss Point, Jackson County, MS. The approximate center point of the proposed new rail line is located at 30.406092º latitude and -88.512811º longitude. The new rail begins at approximately 30.251207º/-88.310005º on the north, and extends to 30.245655º/-88.301625º on the east. The proposed new rail line is located entirely on JCPA owned land and is bordered on the north and east by Secretary of State owned property and on the south by several private property owners.**

PROJECT PURPOSE: The basic project purpose of the proposed development is the discontinue use of a main rail line, and construction of new rail line. **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has initially determined this project to be non-water dependent.**

EXISTING CONDITIONS:
The proposed new rail line is located entirely on JCPA owned land located within the Moss Point Industrial and Technology Center (MPITC) and is bordered on the north and east by Secretary of State owned property and on the south by several private property owners. The proposed project is situated partially in an upland area and partially in estuarine and forested wetlands.

ALTERNATIVES: Alternatives such as utilization of existing rail lines, other alignments, and bridging were considered.

PROPOSED WORK: **A new rail connection is proposed to connect the existing rail line just south of the Escatawpa River and the rail line that is located within the MPITC.**

The existing rail includes 22 crossings over roadways including US Highway 90. The proposed project includes discontinuing use of the section of rail that extends from near the Pascagoula River and crosses through downtown Pascagoula and Moss Point and instead utilizing existing rail that runs between Bayou Casotte and the Escatawpa River and crosses through the Moss Point Industrial and Technology Center (MPITC).

The proposed construction length of the new rail line through estuarine wetlands is approximately 3,576 linear feet, and approximately 1,115 linear feet through forested wetlands. The width of the proposed fill area is approximately 45.5 feet resulting in 162,708 square feet of estuarine impacts and 50,732 square feet of forested wetlands impacts. The total wetland impact is approximately 213,440 square feet or 4.89 acres of impact. Approximately 20,589 cubic yards of fill material will be used during construction of the rail through the estuarine wetlands and forested wetlands. Water circulation patterns could be altered which could result in changes to the areas adjacent to the rail line footprint. JCPA will construct the rail with culverts to facilitate tidal flow in the area. Location of these culverts have not been assessed by the applicant.

AVOIDANCE & MINIMIZATION: **The proposed construction method will be to fill the alignment from the south end working towards the north and using the previously filled area to access further along the alignment, so the areas outside of the fill area will not be impacted. Silt fence will be placed along the project footprint to prevent fill from moving outside of the project area. The applicant states that further minimization of wetland impacts will be carried out by best management practices. <u>The USACE has not verified the accuracy or adequacy of the applicant's avoidance and minimization at this time.</u>**

MITIGATION: T**he applicant is proposing to provide compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to 2.55 acres of low quality palustrine forested wetland. The mitigation would be provided by the purchase of the required wetland mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank servicing the location of the project. Other mitigation for tidal estuarine wetlands (3. 73 acres) will be accomplished by enhancing forested wetlands that have been overgrown with exotic invasive species. Enhancement will include removing the invasive species and maintaining the mitigation area for a period of five years. The enhancement ratio proposed is 3: 1 which would result in approximately**

11.2 acres of wetlands being improved. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has not verified the adequacy of this mitigation proposal at this time.

The applicant has applied for certification from the State of Mississippi in accordance with Section 401(a)(1) of the Clean Water Act, and upon completion of the required advertising, a determination relative to certification will be made by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) will be consulted for properties listed in or eligible for the National Register, which would be affected by the proposed work. Copies of this notice are being sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and Division of Archeological Services for further consultation and comments. Previous investigations for the facility have determined that no properties are listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP. In accordance with Appendix C of 33 CFR Part 325, the USACE has determined the permit area is the full area of development for the overall project footprint. The agent representing the applicant submitted a Cultural Resource Assessment of the current permit review area to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) for review (Project Log #11-043-18). Copies of this public notice are being sent to the SHPO.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: **Preliminary review of this application and the U.S. Department of the Interior List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants indicate the proposed activity may require additional coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The site contains the presence of dense sapling/ shrub stratum, and to the lack of any supporting habitat that might otherwise be potentially occupied by the Alabama Red-bellied Turtle, Yellow-blotched turtle, Gopher tortoise, Louisiana quillwort, Dusky gopher frog, MS Sandhill Crane, Wood Stork, or other Federally listed species that may occur temporarily or otherwise in coastal Mississippi. Coordination with the Service (#2019-j-134) was initiated on November 28, 2018. Additional coordination may need to be performed with the FWS on the proposed project.**

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts on which a decision by the USACE can be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, 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,

cultural values, fish and wildlife values, protected species, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The USACE 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 (USACE) to determine whether to issue, 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 the 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. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held for consideration of this application. Requests for public hearings shall state with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

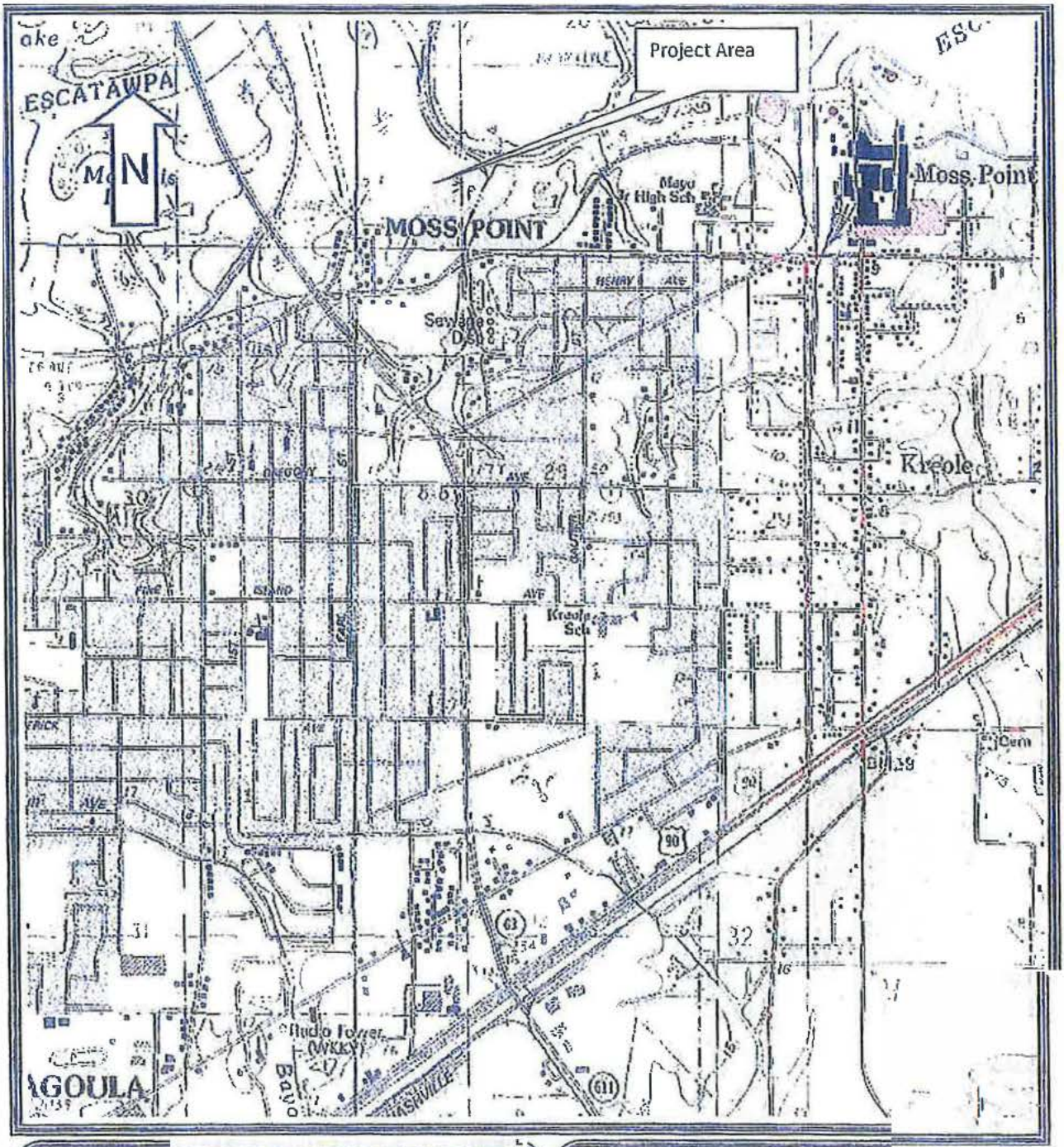
Correspondence concerning this Public Notice should refer to Public Notice Number **SAM-2019-01204-RCV** and should be directed to the District Engineer, U.S. Army Engineer District Mobile, Attention: **Mr. Rudolph C. Villarreal**, Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, with a copy to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control, **Attention: Ms. Florance Bass, P.E.**, Post Office Box 2261, Jackson, Mississippi 39225 and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, **Attention: Mr. Greg Christodoulou**, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530.

All Comments should be received no later than 30 days from the date of this Public Notice. If you have any questions concerning this publication, you may contact the project manager at (251) 690-3246, or at rudolph.c.villarreal@usace.army.mil. Please refer to the above Public Notice number**.**

For additional information about our Regulatory Program, please visit our web site at www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx.

MOBILE DISTRICT
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Enclosures



COMPTON ENGINEERING, INC.
Engineering, Surveying, and Environmental Services
156 Nixon Street
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530
Phone: (228) 432-2133 Fax: (228) 432-8149
E-mail: compton@comptonengineering.com

Site: Tiger Grant – Project Area
Moss Point, Jackson County, MS

Figure Title: **Topographic Map – Project Area** (Map Source: MyTopo Map Pass. USGS 7.5 Minute Series, Pascagoula North Quadrangle, 1982)

Appendix ID:
B



SAM-2018-01204-RCV

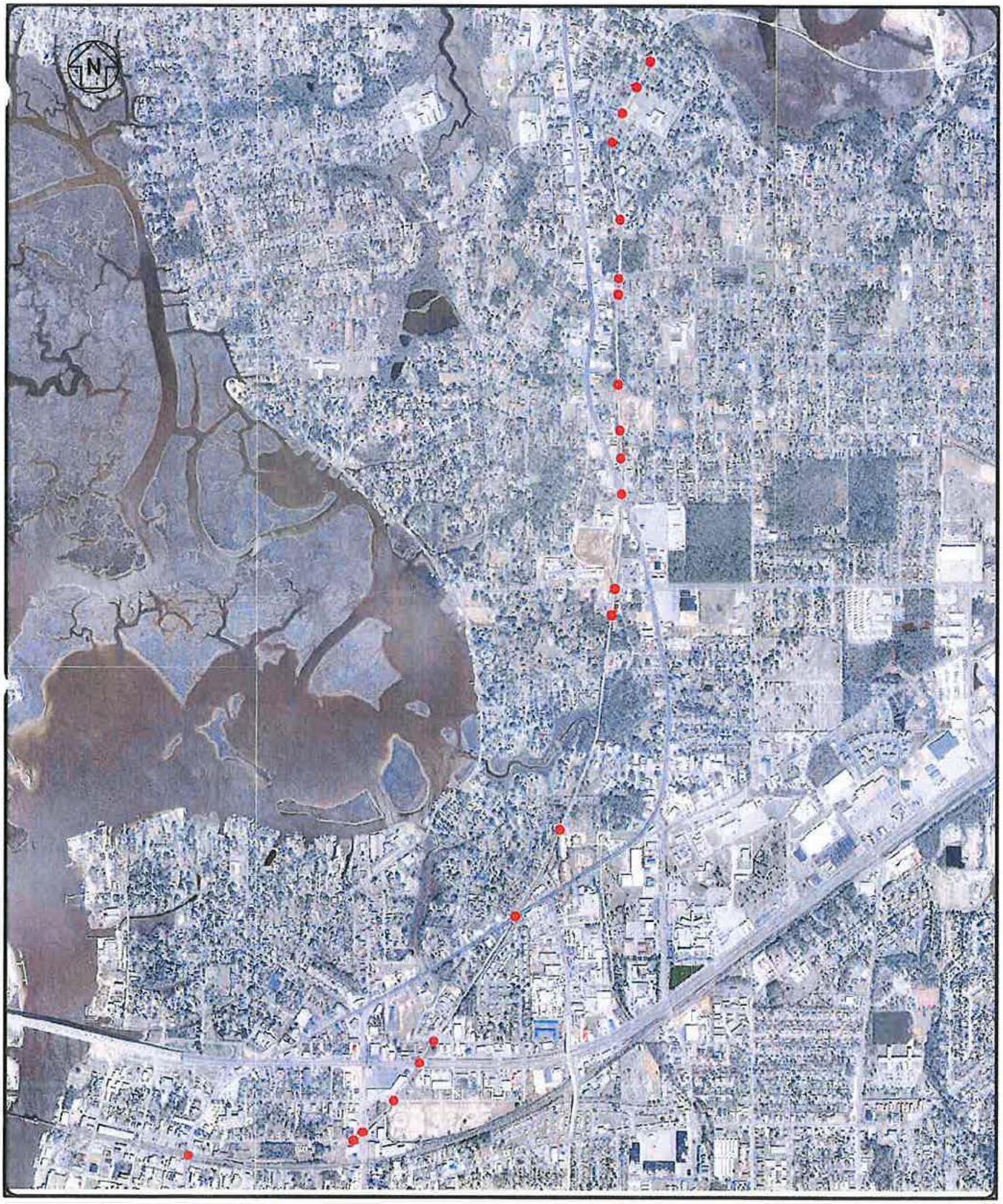


N

COMPTON ENGINEERING, INC.
Engineering, Surveying, and Environmental Services
156 Nixon Street
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530
Phone: (228) 432-2133 Fax: (228) 432-8149
E-mail: compton@comptonengineering.com

Site: North Rail Connector
Moss Point, Jackson County, MS

Figure Title: **Aerial Imagery** (Map Source: Google Earth, Imagery date 8/25/15)

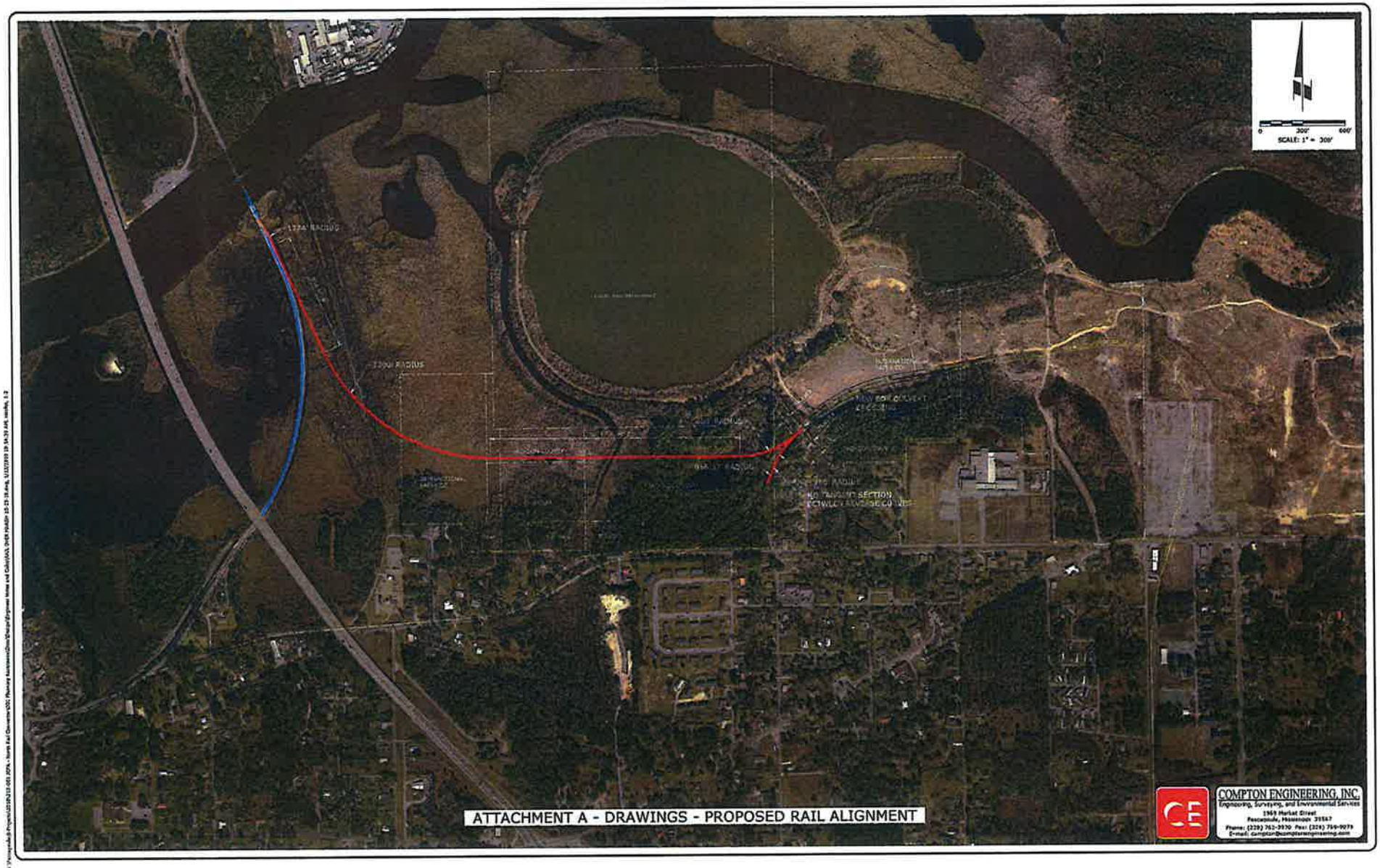


COMPTON ENGINEERING, INC.
Engineering, Surveying, and Environmental Services
1969 Market Street
Pascagoula, Mississippi 39567
Phone: (228) 762-3970 Fax: (228) 769-9079
E-mail: compton@comptonengineering.com

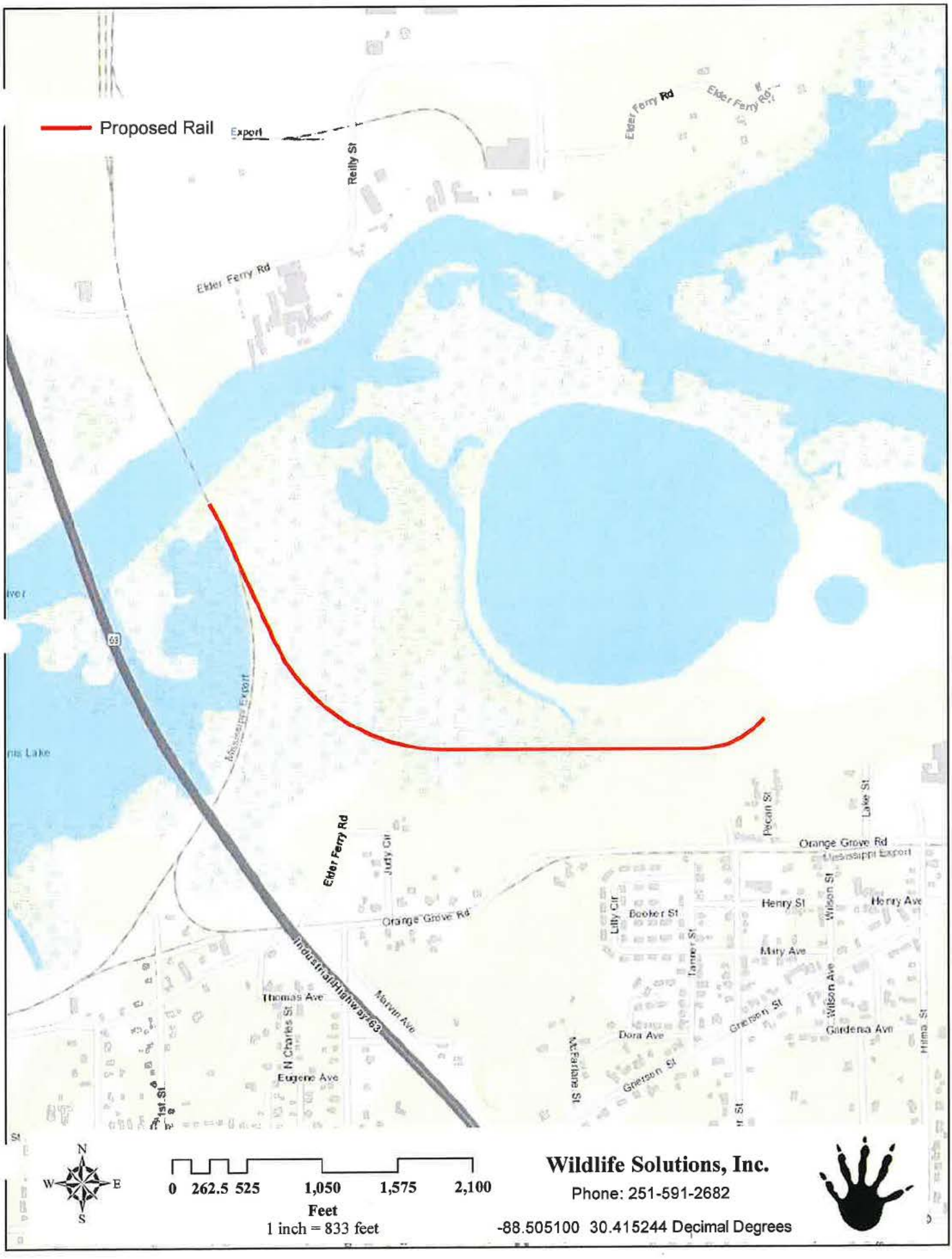
● (21) ROAD CROSSINGS THROUGH MOSS POINT & PASCAGOULA

SAM-2018-01204-RCV

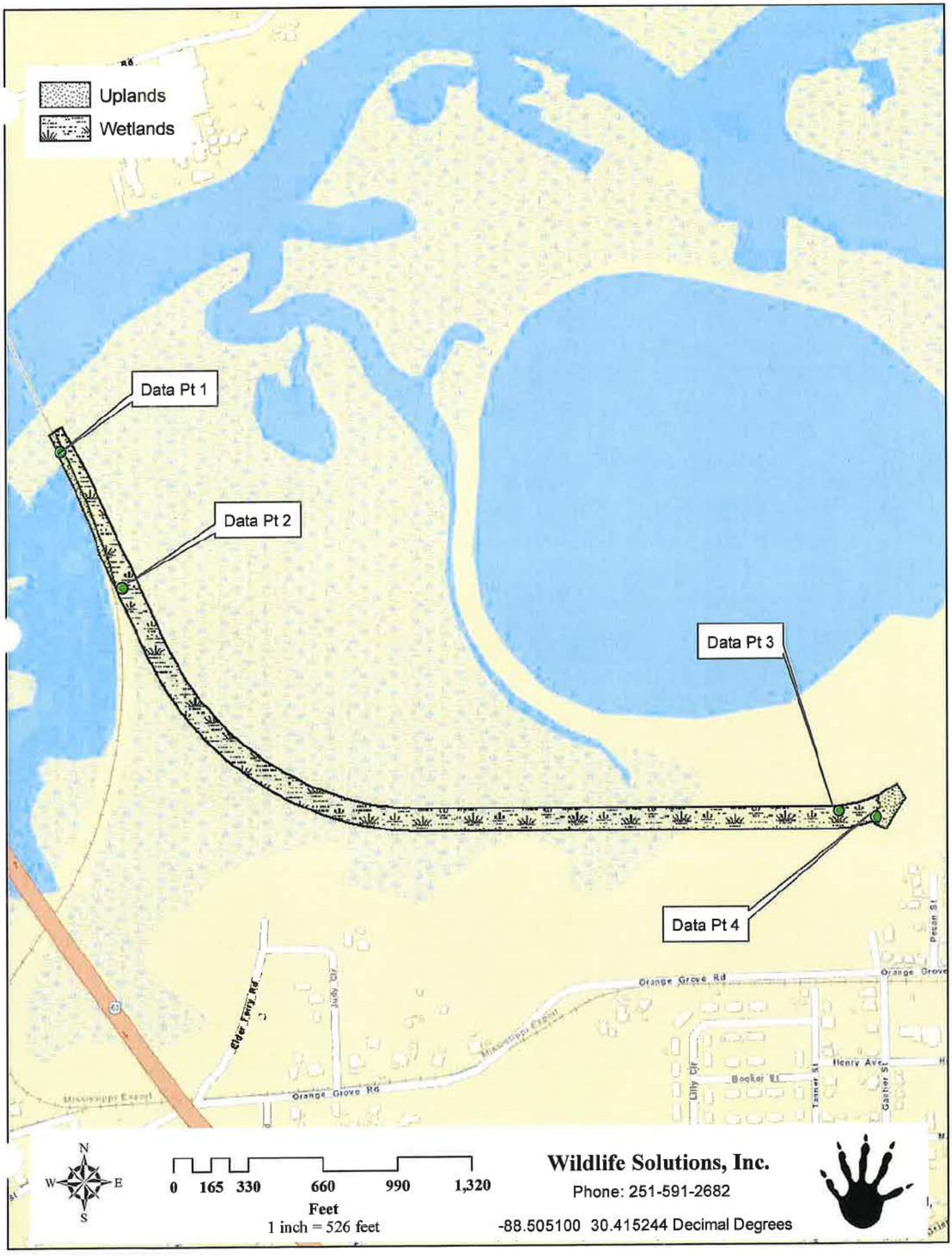
S:\Pascagoula\D-Pr... \1211-051 JCPA Misc Services - Parks\201 Estimates for Transp Impr MPITC\Dwgs\MSE RAIL SITE-01-23-19.dwg, 1/23/2019 10:47:17 AM, nicoles,



SAM-2018-01204-RCV



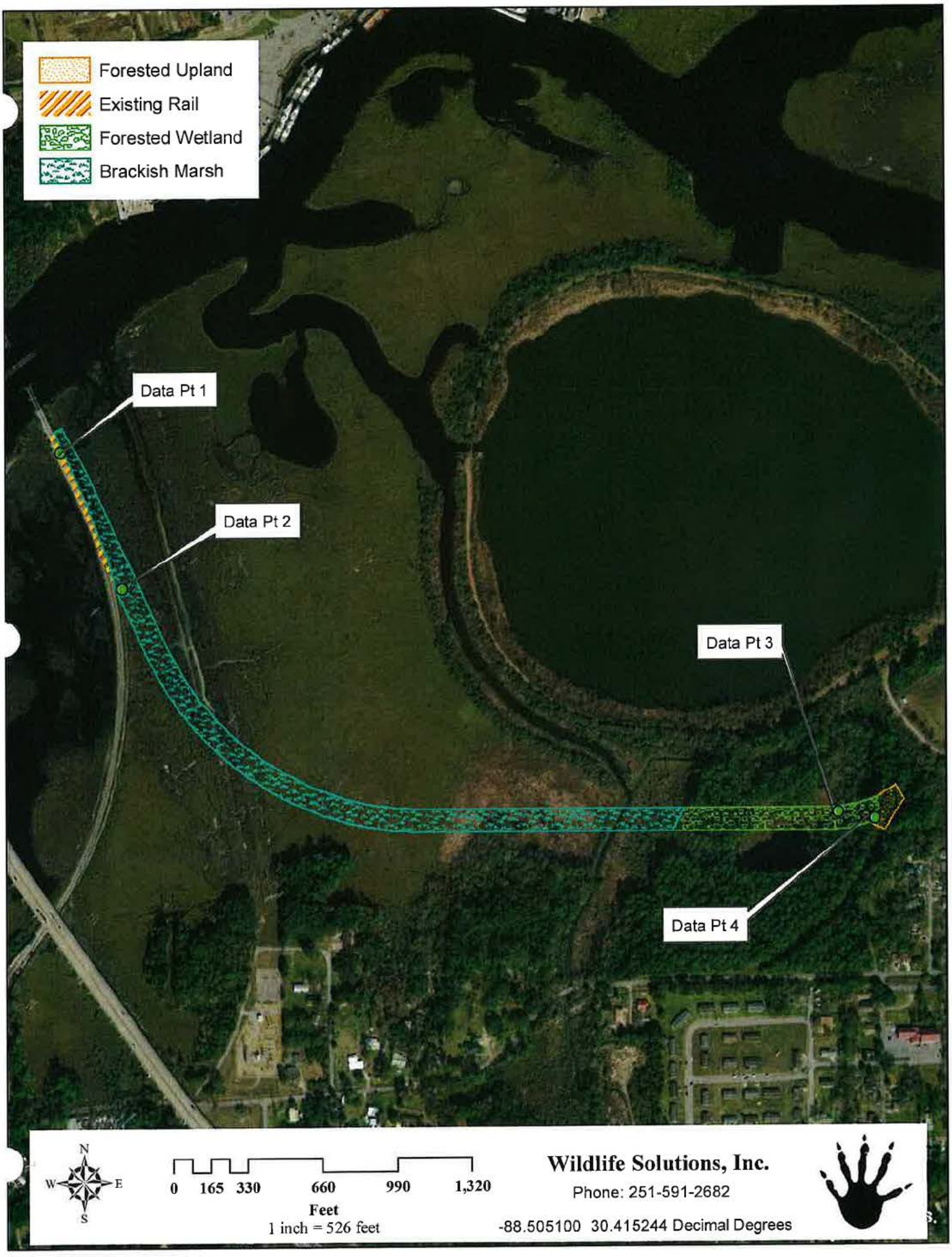
SAM-2018-01204-RCV



SAM-2018-01204-RCV



SAM-2018-01204-RCV


Forested Upland
Existing Rail
Forested Wetland
Brackish Marsh
Data Pt 1
Data Pt 2
Data Pt 3
Data Pt 4
N
W
E
S
0 165 330 660 990 1,320
Feet
1 inch = 526 feet
Wildlife Solutions, Inc.
Phone: 251-591-2682
-88.505100 30.415244 Decimal Degrees