



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT  
7400 LEAKE AVE  
NEW ORLEANS LA 70118-3651

Regional Planning and Environmental  
Division South  
Environmental Planning Branch

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana, Project  
Buffalo Cove Management Unit  
Management Unit Feature  
Element 10**

**Introduction.** This Public Notice is issued in accordance with provisions of Title 33 CFR Parts 336.1(b)(1) and 337.1, which establish policy, practices, and procedures to be followed on federal actions involving the disposal of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

**Project Authority.** The proposed action is an element of the Buffalo Cove Management Unit (BCMU), one of two "pilot" management units authorized for the Management Unit feature of the Mississippi River and Tributary, Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana, project (ABFS). The ABFS Management Unit feature was authorized by the Flood Control Act of May 15, 1928 (Public Law 391, 70th Congress), as amended by Section 601(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-662), in accordance with the recommendations set forth in Paragraph 3 of the Report of the Chief of Engineers dated February 28, 1983. Sections 103 and 906(e) of Public Law 99-662 further establish the cost-sharing requirements for the Management Unit feature of the ABFS project. The authority of the ABFS has been further amended by Congress in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 1988, Public Law 100-202, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 1991, Public Law 101-514, and by section 315 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000, Public Law 106-541, and by the WRDA of 2007, Public Law 110-114. Paragraph 3 of the Chief's Report recommended authorization of the project known as the ABFS, which includes features to provide public access, environmental protection, flood control through flowage and developmental control, water management, canal closures and water circulation improvements, and recreational development in the Lower Atchafalaya Floodway. Although the Chief's Report recommended authorization to acquire flowage easements, those easements had been authorized by Congress in a prior Flood Control Act.

The Management Unit feature of the ABFS project authorizes the construction of two "pilot" management units. The first of the "pilot" units is the BCMU; the second "pilot" unit is the Henderson Lake Management Unit. The three other management units that are conditionally authorized are Beau Bayou, Flat Lake, and Cocodrie Swamp. Construction of these latter management units, under the authorization, is held in abeyance until such



time as the "pilot" units are constructed, operated, monitored and evaluated to determine the operational success of each of the "pilot" units in the restoration of historic overflow conditions to benefit the aquatic ecosystem. After an appropriate period of evaluation and analysis, a recommendation is to be made to the Chief of Engineers requesting his/her decision regarding the implementation of the three conditionally authorized management units.

**Location.** Located in Iberia Parish, Louisiana, between Interstate 10 and US Highway 90, BCMU is located between Lake Fausse Pointe and the Atchafalaya River. The proposed work is occurring northwest of the Attakapas Wildlife Management Area (**Figure 1**).

**Background.** In November 2003, Environmental Assessment (EA) #366 entitled "Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Buffalo Cove Management Unit, Water Circulation Improvements and Sediment Management Unit" was prepared to identify and evaluate an array of water management elements in the BCMU. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on March 15, 2004. Since that time, all 11 elements have been implemented (Bayou Eugene, 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9-1, 9-2, 12, 14, 15, 16). The final constructed elements of the original array (3, 12, 14 and 16) were completed in 2015 and the unit remains in monitoring phase (**Figure 2**).

Element 10 was included as part of the original plan formulation for the water circulation improvements and sediment management features that were addressed in EA #366. EA #366 identified the circulation problems in the vicinity of Element 10, and it discussed the goal and objective of Element 10. Element 10, however, was not part of the final selected plan for EA #366. Due to time constraints and the inability to obtain engineering data necessary for design, Element 10 was tabled to be revisited later under the National Environmental Policy Act so that Element 10 could be better planned and designed before presentation to the public. It was originally understood by CEMVN and the collaborating resource agencies that Element 10 was necessary for project goals within BCMU because north to south flow from Buffalo Cove Lake was highly restricted. Because Element 10 occurs as the southern-most element for improved drainage, it remains recognized, and monitoring data support, that improving north-south flow via Element 10 would also increase the function of other BCMU elements to the north (i.e., upstream).

**Project Description.** The proposed action (Element 10) consists of three sub-components designed to improve/restore circulation patterns within a historic flow corridor of approximately 2 miles in the south/central area of BCMU. Excavation of three elevated areas has been identified; however, excavation is not required the entire length of the flow corridor. The corridor begins in the north at the southern end of Buffalo Cove Lake and terminates in the south near Poncho Chute. On average, a hydrologic connection currently exists along the flow corridor during high water events for approximately 2 months of the year.



The proposed cuts would restore hydrologic connectivity to 12 months each year and improve water circulation for approximately 7-8 months during elevated stages. In order to minimize stagnation during warm summer months, it is necessary to remove spoil banks from two access canals (10A and 10C) and one elevated ridge (10B,) which would improve hydrologic connection between Buffalo Cove Lake and the Ice Box, and reconnect flow downstream to the Atchafalaya River (**Figure 3**). The proposed construction is consistent with the goals of the management unit for improving flow, circulation and water quality, and preserving high quality wetlands within the BCMU. Increased velocity and circulation would minimize existing stagnant conditions. Sediment accretion would also be minimized and dissolved oxygen would be improved within Buffalo Cove Lake and the adjacent swamp.

In total, approximately 18.2 acres would be impacted by dredging (6.8 acres) and disposal (11.4 acres) activities (**Table 1**). Approximately 4.4 acres of existing open water bottoms, 12.3 acres of low quality bottomland hardwood (i.e., Willow) forest, and approximately 1.5 acres of low-moderate quality mixed Cypress-Tupelo-Willow would be directly impacted.

The contract would allow for a contractor option to windrow or chip and bury woody debris within the dredged material disposal areas or the contractor may choose to coordinate with Iberia Parish and burn the material on site. By order of operation, the trees are often buried. The trees are removed before excavation and subsequent spoil placement begins. They are windrowed to minimize volume and to compact the debris and avoid displacement during high water events.

**10A** - 10A would provide a hydrologic connection between Buffalo Cove Lake and the area known locally as the Ice Box. The hydrologic connection would be achieved by cuts in the north and south spoil banks of an unnamed canal that connects to Mile Point Bayou. The cut would be located approximately 3,600 feet southwest of the confluence of Mile Point Bayou/West Fork with the unnamed canal in the immediate vicinity of 29° 58'55.16N and 91° 31'02.06W. The proposed cut is 75 feet wide by 1,310 feet long with 1:3 side slopes (**Figures 4-5, Table 2**). Total impacts for sub-element 10A would total approximately 2.3 acres.

Up to 13,300 cubic yards of dredged material would be stacked beyond a 25 foot wide berm at a width no greater than 175 feet, and placement activities would impact no more than 3.7 acres and would not exceed 6 feet in height from existing conditions. Gaps of 25 feet would be designated as no fill zones on each spoil bank every 250 feet to allow for lateral circulation. Impacts associated with 10A are not expected to exceed 6.0 acres.

The combined impacts associated with dredging activities would be approximately 2.3 acres. Approximately 1.0 acre of black willows, 0.5 acres of a thin stand of cypress, and 0.8 acres of shallow open water would be excavated within the cut.



The combined impacts associated with fill activities would be approximately 3.7 acres. Approximately 2.0 acres of black willow, 1.0 acre of cypress, 0.7 acres of shallow open water would be impacted by work associated with dredged material placement.

**10B** - The proposed action in 10B would improve a hydrologic connection between the northern and southern portions of an area known locally as the Ice Box. The connection enlargement would be achieved by a cut in a ridge that ties into Chico Pass that over time has increasingly constricted flow. The cut would be located approximately 1,800 feet southeast of the confluence of Chico Pass with the ridge in the immediate vicinity of 29° 58'55.15N and 91° 31'02.06W. The proposed cut is 75 feet wide by 500 feet long with 1:3 side slopes and would total 0.9 acres. Up to 5,100 cubic yards of dredged material would be stacked beyond a 25-foot wide berm at a width no greater than 175 feet and would not exceed 6 feet in height from existing conditions. Gaps of 25 feet would be designated as no fill zones along the spoil bank every 250 feet to allow for lateral circulation. Impacts associated with 10B are not expected to exceed 2.3 acres.

The combined impacts associated with dredging activities would be approximately 0.9 acres. Approximately 0.4 acres of black willows, and 0.5 acres of shallow open water would be excavated within the cut.

The combined impacts associated with the footprint of placement activities would be approximately 1.4 acres. Approximately 0.9 acres of black willow, 0.5 acres of shallow open water would be impacted by work associated with dredged material placement.

**10C** – The proposed action in 10C would provide a hydrologic connection between the southern portion of the Ice Box to Chicot Pass and the Texaco/Enterprise Pipeline Canal, both of which eventually connect with the Atchafalaya River. The cut would occur in the immediate vicinity of 29° 58'34.06N and 91° 29'54.87W. The proposed cut is 75 feet wide by 2,150 feet long with 1:3 side slopes and would total 3.7 acres. Up to 22,000 cubic yards of dredged material would be stacked beyond a 25-foot wide berm at a width of 175 feet and would not exceed 6 feet in height from existing conditions. Gaps of 25 feet every 250 feet would be designated as no fill zones on the spoil bank to allow for lateral circulation. Total combined impacts associated with 10C are not expected to exceed 9.9 acres.

The combined impacts of dredging activities would be approximately 3.7 acres. Up to 3.0 acres of bottomland hardwoods and 0.7 acres of shallow open water would be excavated within the cut.

The combined impacts of placement activities would be approximately 6.2 acres. Up to 5.0 acres of bottomland hardwoods would be cleared for dredged material placement in addition to 1.2 acres of shallow open water.

**Status of Environmental Assessment #441.** Element 10 will be evaluated in EA #441 and released for 30-day public review concurrently with this public notice. Environmental



compliance for the proposed action would be achieved upon coordination of this EA and draft FONSI with appropriate agencies, organizations, and individuals for their review and comments; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) confirmation that the proposed action would not be likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species; Louisiana Department of Natural Resources concurrence with the CEMVN determination that the proposed action is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program; receipt of a Water Quality Certificate from the State of Louisiana; public review of the Section 404(b)(1) Public Notice; signature of the Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation; receipt of the State Historic Preservation Officer Determination of No Effect on cultural resources; receipt and acceptance or resolution of all USFWS Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act recommendations; and review/concurrence by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality on the air quality impact assessment documented in the EA. The draft FONSI will not be signed until the proposed action achieves environmental compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as described above.

**Coordination.** The following is a partial list of agencies to which a copy of this notice is being sent:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Coast Guard, Eighth District
- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer

This notice is being distributed to these and other appropriate Congressional, Federal, Tribal, state, and local interests, environmental organizations, and other interested parties.

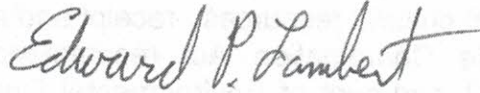
**Evaluation Factors.** Evaluation includes application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through 40 CFR 230.

**Public Involvement.** Interested parties may express their views on the disposal of material associated with the proposed action or suggest modifications. All comments postmarked on or before the expiration of the comment period for this notice will be considered.

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by deposition of excavated or dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth

the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by the proposed action.

You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any parties who may have an interest in the proposed action. For further information regarding the proposed action, please contact Steve Roberts at (504) 862-2517 or at [steve.w.roberts@usace.army.mil](mailto:steve.w.roberts@usace.army.mil).



EDWARD P. LAMBERT  
Chief, Environmental Compliance Branch

COMMENT PERIOD FOR THIS PUBLIC NOTICE EXPIRES: July 18, 2018



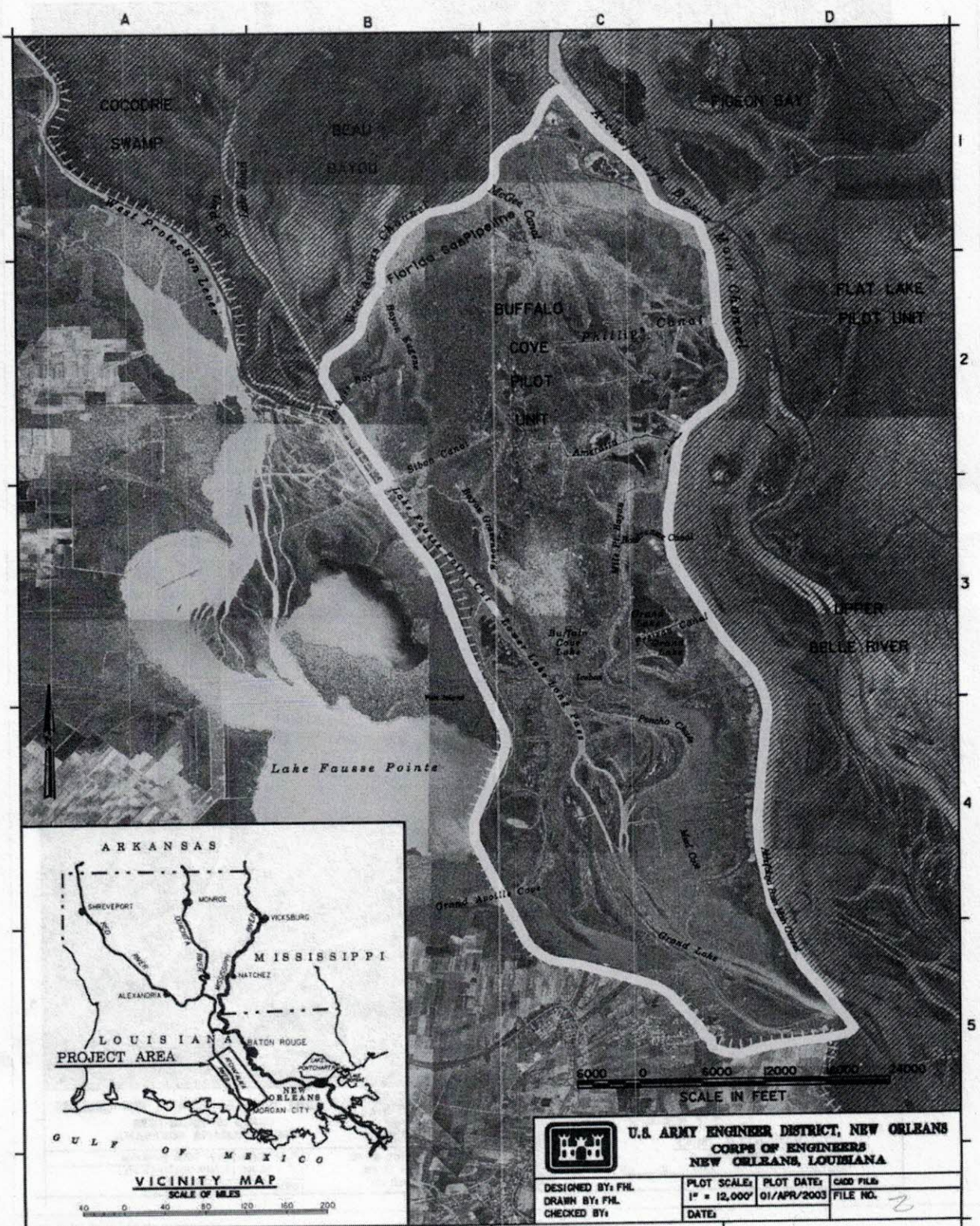


Figure 1. Located mid-way between Interstate 10 and US Highway 90, BCMU is located in the general vicinity between Lake Fausse Pointe and the Atchafalaya River



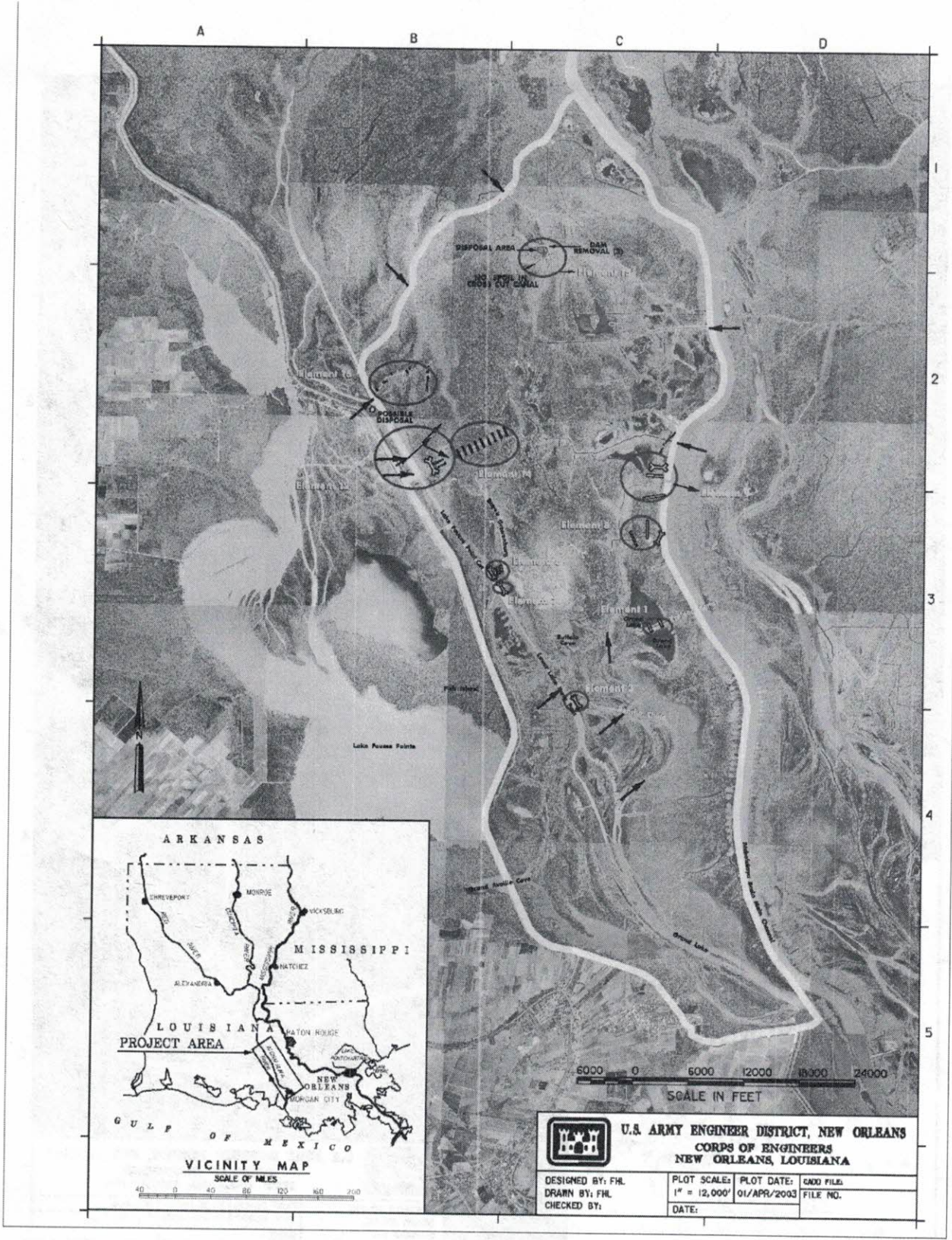


Figure 2. Original array of elements from EA #366 (now constructed).



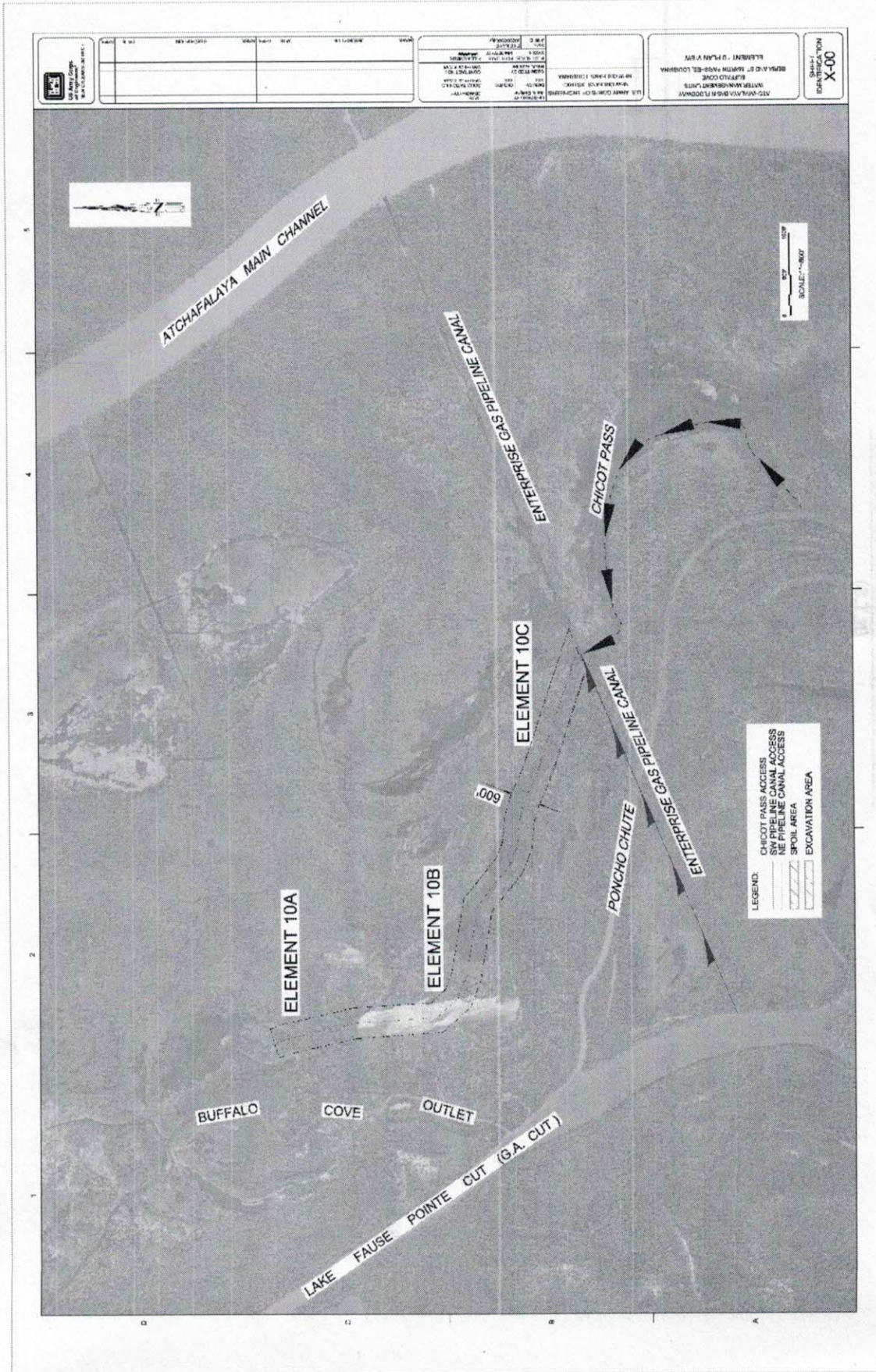
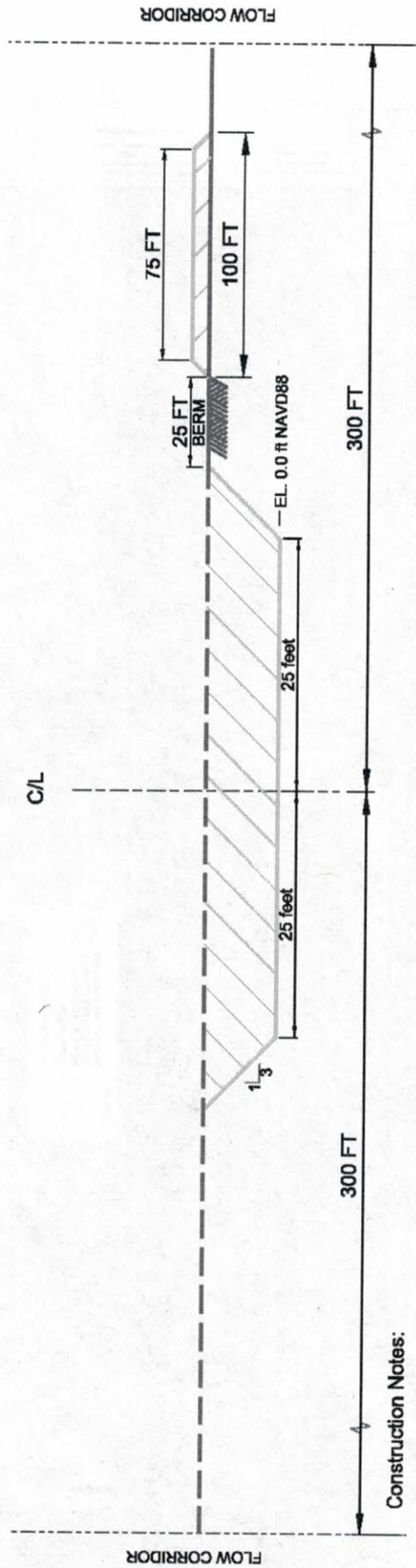


Figure 3. Element 10 contains three subelements (10A, 10B and 10C) that improve circulation from Buffalo Cove Lake to Chicot Pass, and eventually the Atchafalaya River.



THEORETICAL FLOW CORRIDOR SECTION  
(N.T.S)



**Construction Notes:**

1. Cut dimensions shown are for all three cuts, 10A, 10B, and 10C.
2. Footprint of cut, berm, and spoil shall be cleared.
3. A 25 foot berm shall begin at top of cut. No spoil shall be placed on the berm.
4. Berm and spoil area shall be fertilized and seeded upon completion of construction.
5. Elevations are in feet , NAVD88.

Figure 4. Cross section design of for excavation and dredge disposal.



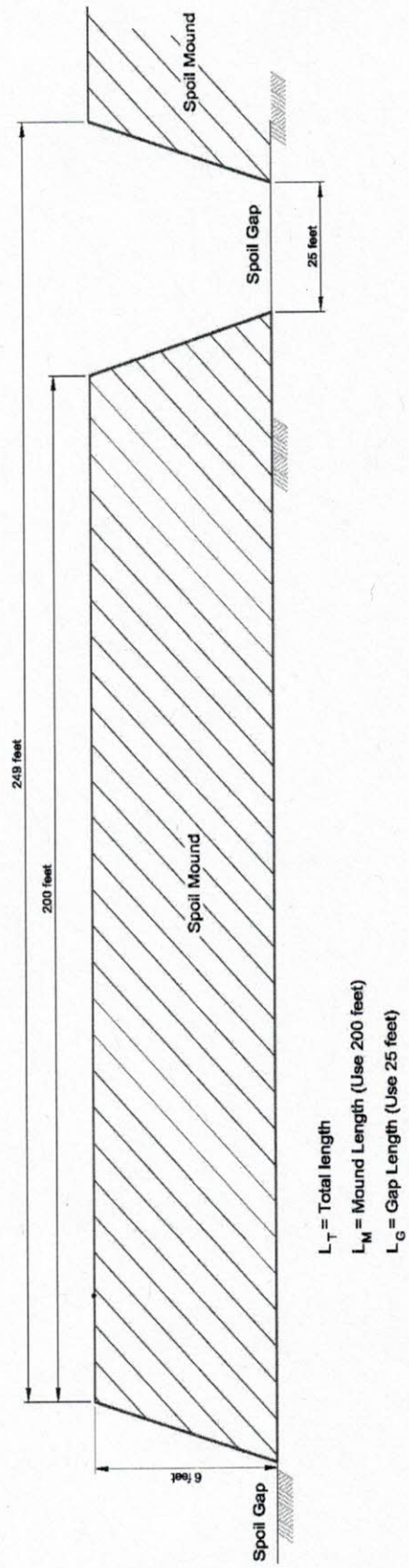


Figure 5. Cross section design for spoil placement activities.



