

Louisiana Coastal Area Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River

*Neighborhood Focus Meeting
29 April 2010
St. James Parish Courthouse*



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US Army Corps of Engineers
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Agenda

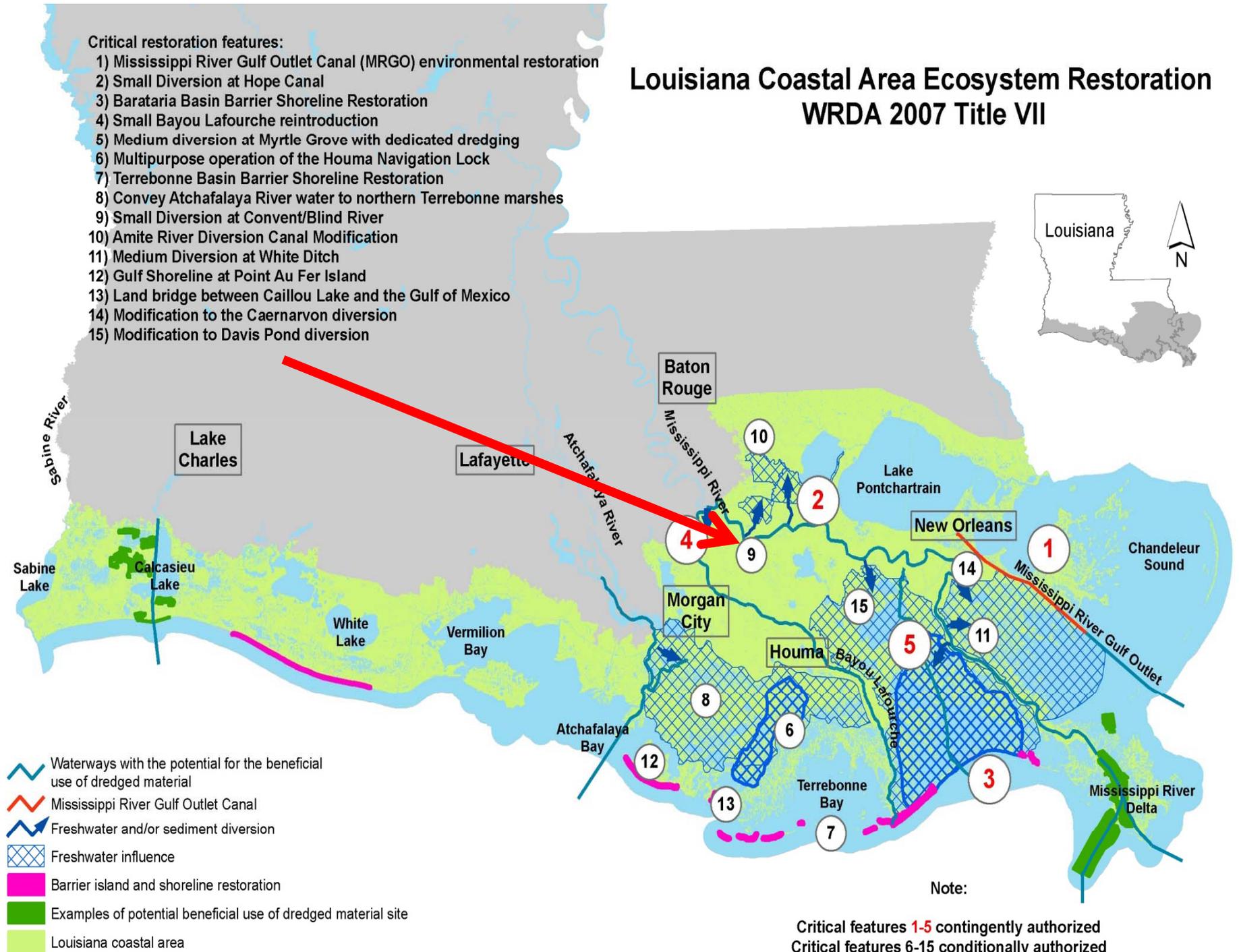
- Welcome and Introductions
- Opening Remarks
- LCA Program Overview
- Convent/Blind River Study Overview
- Proposed Alternative for Diversion
- Discussion



Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration WRDA 2007 Title VII

Critical restoration features:

- 1) Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Canal (MRGO) environmental restoration
- 2) Small Diversion at Hope Canal
- 3) Barataria Basin Barrier Shoreline Restoration
- 4) Small Bayou Lafourche reintroduction
- 5) Medium diversion at Myrtle Grove with dedicated dredging
- 6) Multipurpose operation of the Houma Navigation Lock
- 7) Terrebonne Basin Barrier Shoreline Restoration
- 8) Convey Atchafalaya River water to northern Terrebonne marshes
- 9) Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River
- 10) Amite River Diversion Canal Modification
- 11) Medium Diversion at White Ditch
- 12) Gulf Shoreline at Point Au Fer Island
- 13) Land bridge between Caillou Lake and the Gulf of Mexico
- 14) Modification to the Caernarvon diversion
- 15) Modification to Davis Pond diversion



Note:

Critical features 1-5 contingently authorized
Critical features 6-15 conditionally authorized

Study Area

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Pontchartrain Basin
-  Project Area

Upland Sub-Basin

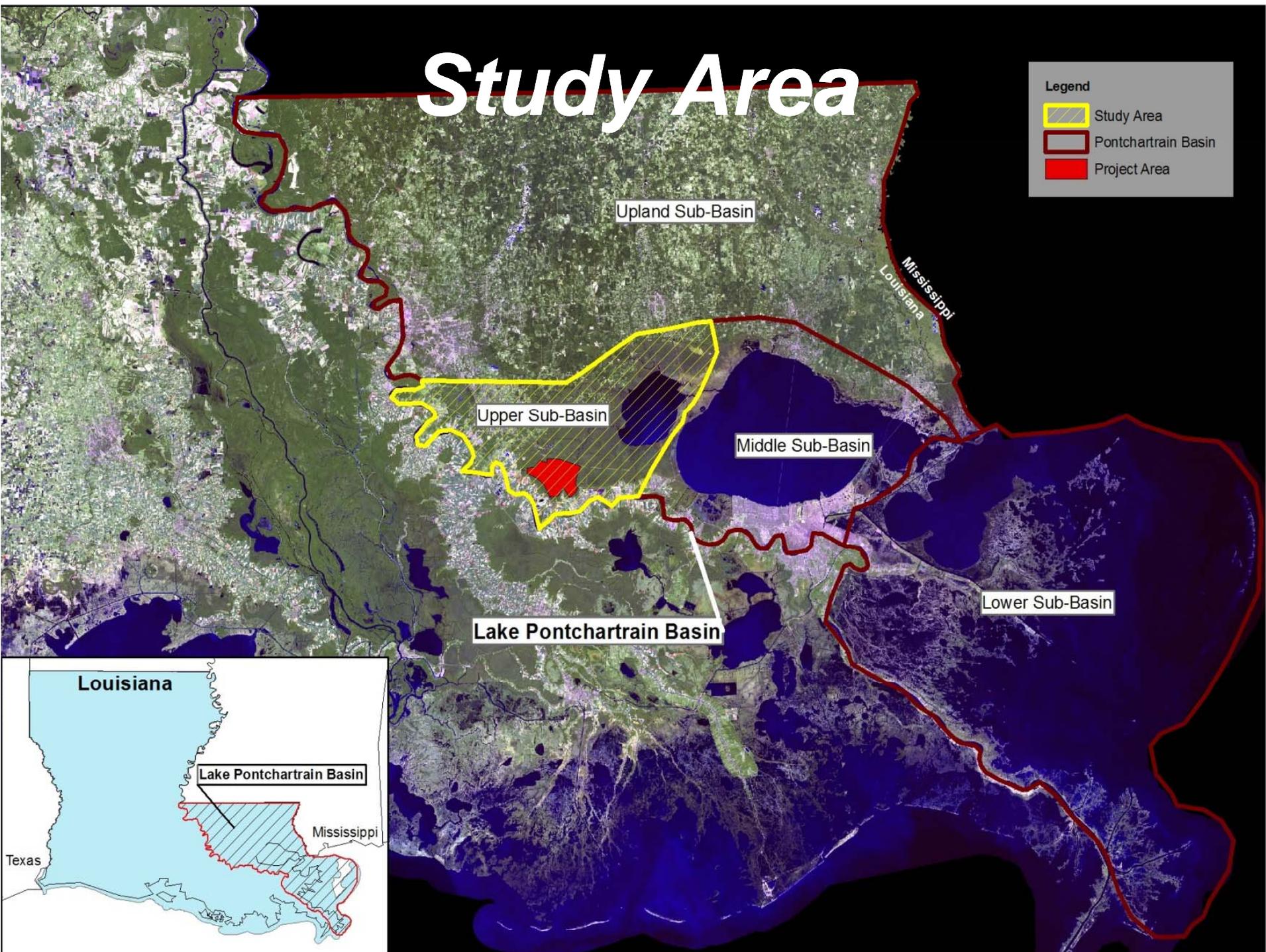
Mississippi
Louisiana

Upper Sub-Basin

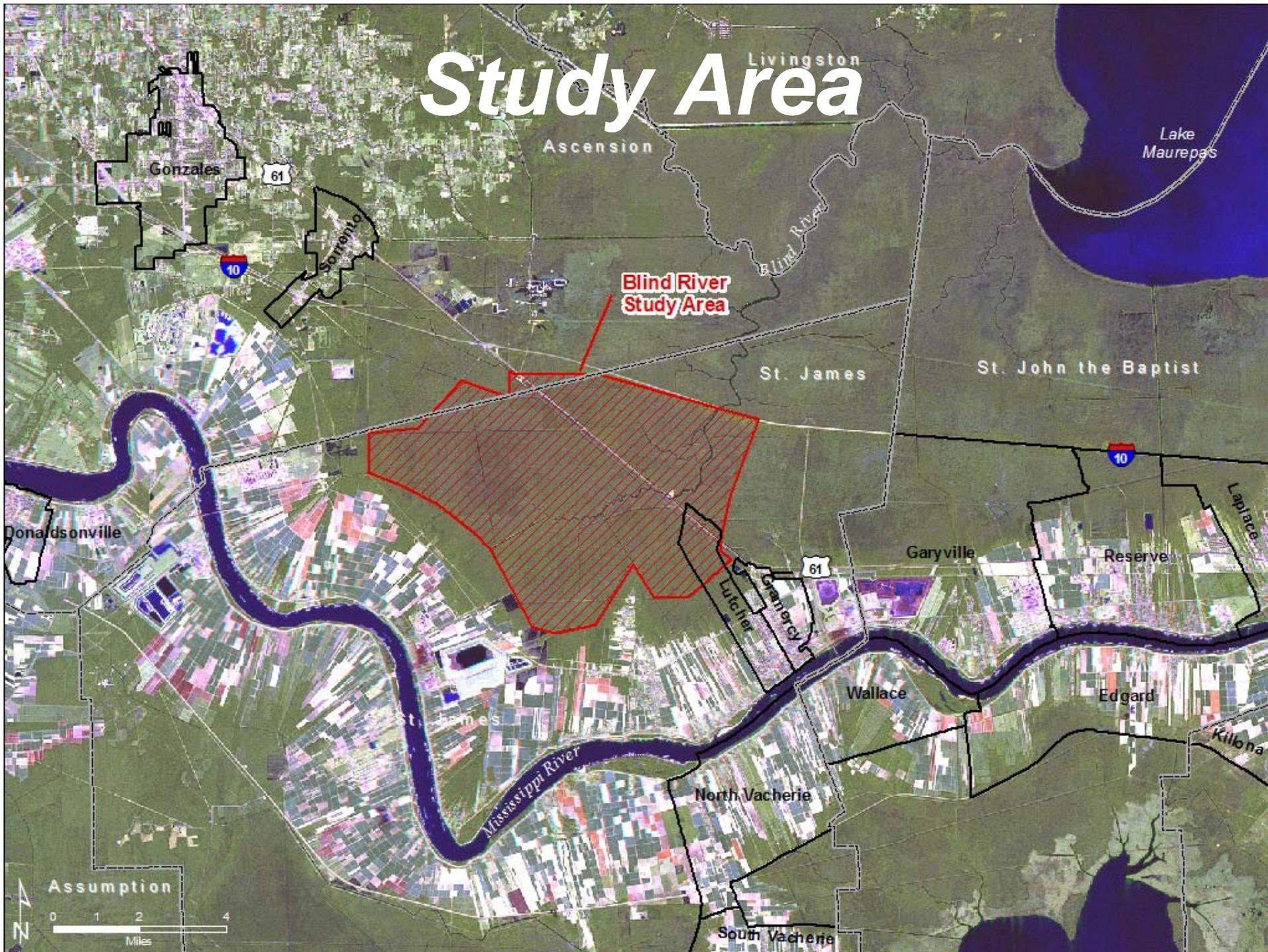
Middle Sub-Basin

Lower Sub-Basin

Lake Pontchartrain Basin



Study Area



Existing Conditions

- Mississippi River Levees have eliminated periodic floods that provided freshwater, sediment and nutrients to the study area
- Study area includes suitable habitat for endangered species:
 - ▶ West Indian Manatee
 - ▶ Gulf Sturgeon



Existing Conditions

- Maurepas Swamp is one of the largest freshwater swamps in Louisiana
- Serves as a buffer between the open water areas of Lake Maurepas and developed areas to the west



Problem Statement

- Poor swamp health and ecosystem degradation caused by:
 - Tree mortality
 - Change in water chemistry
 - Impacts to fish and wildlife species
 - High restoration costs and ineffectiveness
 - Vulnerability to hurricanes and conversion to open water



Project Opportunities

- Increasing the flow of freshwater through the swamp will provide opportunities to:
 - ▶ Enhance and improve water quality in the Blind River
 - ▶ Enhance and improve water quality and water fluctuation in the swamp
 - ▶ Enhance and improve recreational opportunities in the Maurepas Swamp and Blind River



Project Goal

- Reverse the trend of degradation in the southeast portion of the Maurepas Swamp
- Contribute towards achieving and sustaining a coastal ecosystem that can support and protect the environment, economy, and culture of southern Louisiana



Planning Objectives

- Promote water distribution in the swamp
- Facilitate swamp building
 - At a rate greater than swamp loss due to subsidence and sea level rise
- Establish water fluctuation in the swamp
 - Improve bald cypress and tupelo productivity, seeding germination, and survival
- Improve fish and wildlife habitat in the swamp and Blind River



Planning Constraints

- Do not adversely impact the MR&T flood control project
- Do not negatively impact authorized navigation projects
- Do not violate Louisiana Scenic River Designation for the Blind River
- Do not conflict with the Maurepas Swamp Wildlife Management Area



Planning Constraints

- Do not violate Regulatory Water Quality Standards
- Operation will be constrained by Mississippi River water stage
- Operation will be constrained by Lake Maurepas water elevation



Initial Array of Alternatives

- 13 preliminary alternatives were developed
- 8 preliminary alternatives were screened out based on:
 - ▶ consistency with project goals
 - ▶ effectiveness in contributing to planning objectives
 - ▶ unavoidable cultural resources
 - ▶ cost effectiveness
- Final alternatives include:
 - ▶ No Action
 - ▶ 5 Alternatives



Final Array of Alternatives

- **No Action**
- **Alternative 2** – 3000 cfs Diversion at Romeville
- **Alternative 4** – 3000 cfs Diversion at South Bridge
- **Alternative 4B** – 3000 cfs Diversion at South Bridge with split flows
- **Alternative 6** – Two 1500 cfs Diversions at Romeville and South Bridge



Plan Selection Criteria

National Ecosystem Restoration Plan (NER)

- Plan that reasonably maximizes ecosystem restoration benefits compared to cost and is a cost-effective plan

Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP)

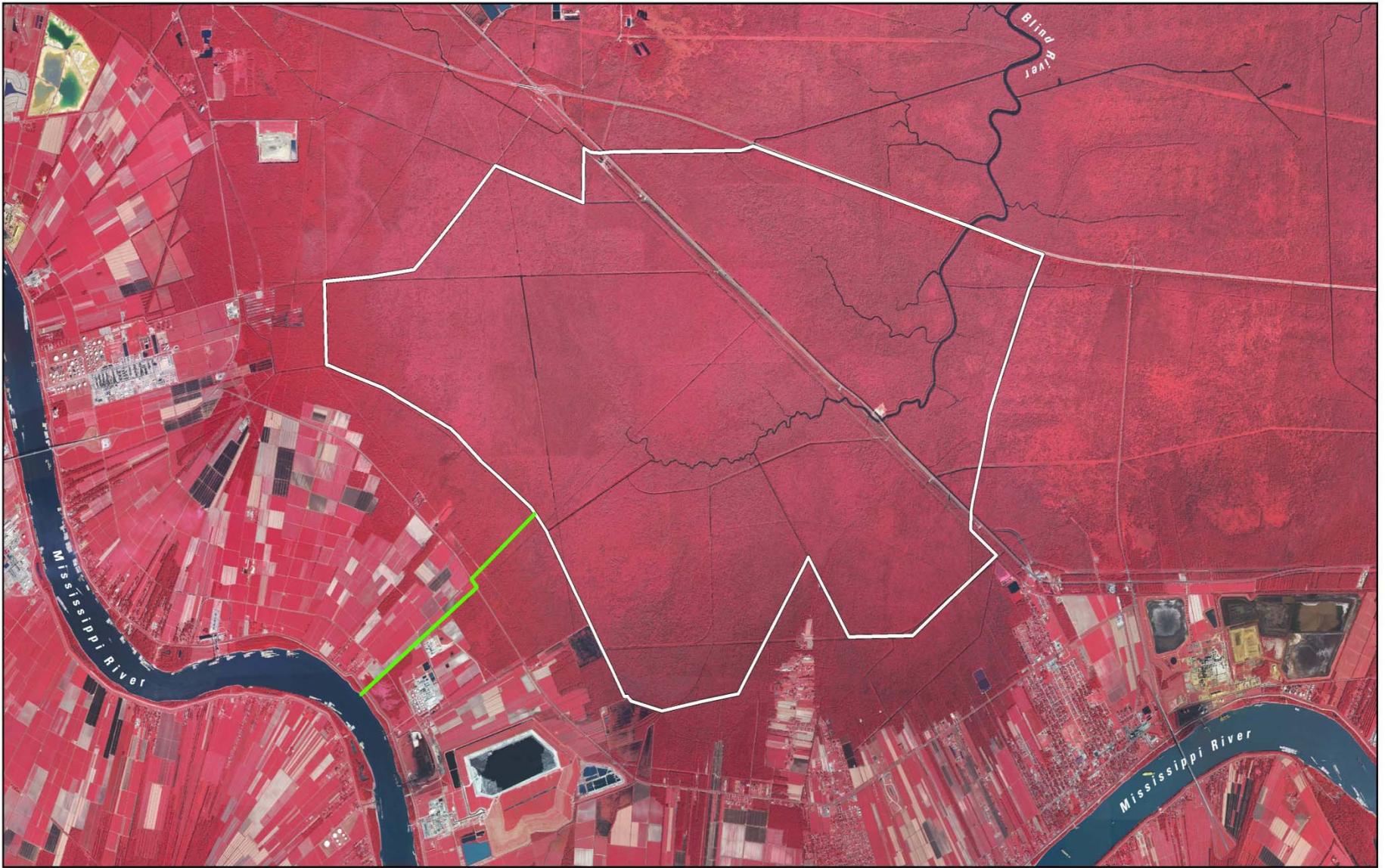
- A single alternative plan will be selected based on additional criteria or constraints for recommendation from among all those that have been considered



Plan Selection

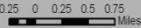
- **Alternative 2**
 - ▶ 3,000 cfs Diversion at Romeville
 - ▶ Chosen as both the NER and TSP
- **Alternative includes:**
 - ▶ Gated culvert system
 - ▶ Transfer canal along the Romeville alignment
 - ▶ Restores and improves existing berm cuts
 - ▶ 30 new 500-foot wide berm cuts
 - ▶ Up to 6 control structures at strategic locations in the swamp
 - ▶ 4 new culverts under U.S. HWY 61





 Louisiana
Project Site

 N

 0.25 0 0.25 0.5 0.75 Miles

 Romeville Diversion

 LCA Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River

Image Source:
2005 D000 Aerial Photography
Map Date: July 1, 2008
File path: \\2008040527\blindriver.mxd

Plan Selection

- Alternative 2:
 - ▶ Introduce freshwater, sediment, and nutrients to the swamp at strategic times during the year
 - ▶ Contributes to reversing the trend of deterioration in the southeast part of the Maurepas Swamp
 - ▶ Meets project goals, objectives, and is within the scope of the authorization
 - ▶ Improve over 21,000 acres of bald cypress-tupelo swamp in various stages of deterioration
 - ▶ Non-Federal sponsor fully supports this alternative

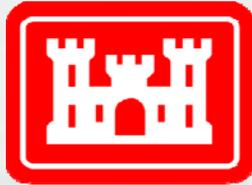


Timeline

- ***21 May 2010:*** Draft Feasibility Report available for public review
- ***15 June 2010:*** Public meeting
- ***6 July 2010:*** Public review period closes



Partner Agencies



USACE: Department of Army - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

NRCS: Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service

NMFS: Department of Commerce - National Marine Fisheries Service

USFWS: Department of the Interior - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

USEPA: Environmental Protection Agency



State of Louisiana

Office of the Governor

Office of Coastal Protection & Restoration

LA Department of Natural Resources

LA Department of Environmental Quality

LA Department of Wildlife & Fisheries



Contacts

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www.mvn.usace.army.mil

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Discussion



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