

Draft Environmental Assessment

**Catahoula Parish Police Jury  
Duty Ferry Road Realignment**

FEMA-4102-DR-LA

Catahoula Parish, Louisiana

Public Assistance

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**FEMA**

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
BMP	Best Management Practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EA	Environmental Assessment
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
EO	Executive Order
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
HFCs	Hydrofluorocarbons
HHS	Department of Health & Human Services
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Conservation System
LDEQ	Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
LDWF	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
LPDES	Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation & Management Act
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act

NO <sub>2</sub>	Nitrogen Dioxide
N <sub>2</sub> O	Nitrous Oxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Services
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
O <sub>3</sub>	Ozone
Pb	Lead
PA	Public Assistance Program
PFCs	Perfluorocarbons
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Particulate Matter ≤ 2.5 micrometers
PM <sub>10</sub>	Particulate Matter ≤ 10 micrometers
PNP	Private Non-Profit
RCRA	Resource Conservation & Recovery Act
RHA	Rivers and Harbors Act
ROW	Right of Way
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SO <sub>2</sub>	Sulfur Dioxide
SF <sub>6</sub>	Sulfur Hexafluoride
TDLC	Tensas Delta Land Company
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USCB	United States Census Bureau
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USDOT	US Department of Transportation
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound
WMA	Boeuf Wildlife Management Area

## **SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND and AUTHORITY**

During the declared disaster incident period (January 8 to 17, 2013) heavy rainfall from a severe storm caused flood damage throughout Catahoula Parish, including roads under responsibility of the Parish Police Jury Highway Department. A 72 feet long x 16 feet wide x 16 feet deep portion of Duty Ferry Road was washed out by floodway from the adjacent Ouachita River (Latitude 31.918129, Longitude -91.849475). Section 406 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Public Assistance Program (PA) to assist in funding the repair, restoration, reconstruction, or replacement of public facilities damaged as a result of a declared disaster. FEMA's implementing regulations for the PA Program are found in 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 206. The Catahoula Parish Police Jury submitted the DR-4102-LA, Project Worksheet 00035 to the US Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance Grant Program for assistance with a proposed Duty Ferry Road relocation project in Catahoula Parish Louisiana. The location maps can be found in Appendix A.

In accordance with FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). (Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act 2005).

This EA has been conducted in accordance with NEPA and the associated CEQ regulations, as well as FEMA's own regulations implementing NEPA, Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands 1980; and Environmental Considerations 1980). The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Duty Ferry Road Realignment project. FEMA will use the findings in this EA to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

## **SECTION TWO - PURPOSE AND NEED**

### **2.1 PURPOSE**

The mission of FEMA's PA Grant Program is to provide assistance to state, Tribal and local governments, and certain types of Private Non-Profit (PNP) organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President.

Through the PA Grant Program, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain PNP organizations. The PA Grant Program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

## **2.2 NEED**

During the storm, floodwater eroded the riverbank, washing out a 105 feet long x 12 feet wide x 25 feet deep portion Duty Ferry Road (31.918129, -91.849475). As a result, the reduced width of the road impedes the passage of vehicles which threatens the safety of citizens that use this section of the roadway. The road continues to deteriorate, as the Ouachita River continues to wash away the adjacent riverbank. Due to the dangerous condition of this roadway, public safety vehicles are prohibited from traveling on this thoroughfare. The purpose and need for this project is to improve public safety along this section of Duty Ferry Road. This will allow the community and public safety vehicles to support day to day operations and timely respond to emergency situations.

## **SECTION THREE - ALTERNATIVES**

### **3.1 EXPLANATION OF ALTERNATIVES**

NEPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of a proposed action and any reasonable alternatives on the human and natural environment. Therefore, a key step in the environmental assessment process is to identify a range of reasonable alternatives to be studied in detail in the EA. This step is commonly referred to as an alternatives development and screening process. Its purpose is to identify reasonable alternatives to the proposed action to allow for meaningful subsequent comparison of how these alternatives may affect the human and natural environment. This section describes alternatives proposed and considered in addressing the purpose and need.

This EA presents an analysis of three alternatives: Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative), Alternative 2 (Proposed Action Alternative), and Alternative 3 (Considered Action Alternative). Alternative 3 was eliminated from further consideration in this EA because it does not meet the project's purpose and need.

### **3.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to upgrade and improve Duty Ferry Road and drainage crossings. Without this infrastructure, the community would continue to suffer from road instability and costly washouts. This will isolate residents from emergency services and access to the Wildlife Management Area. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need, but will continue to be evaluated throughout this EA and serve as a baseline comparison of impacts from other action alternatives.

### **3.3 PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the applicant intends to permanently relocate a structurally compromised section of Duty Ferry Road adjacent to the Ouachita River. The affected section of road will be moved approximately 125 feet (38.1 m) north of the existing Right Of Way (ROW) along an existing field road that is currently being used to bypass the damaged section of Duty Ferry Road.

The proposed realignment will require grading and shaping to expand the temporary road to meet codes and standards for the 3,000 ft. long by 18 ft. wide roadway with a 50 ft. wide ROW along the route shown in Figure X (begin: 31.91784, -91.85069; end: 31.91403, -91.84478). The proposed road length is necessary to bypass wetlands located between the damaged section of road near the river and the temporary road location.

The project entails the grubbing and removal of shrubs and saplings from the ROW to allow for site preparation and grading, the addition and compaction of between 1-3 feet (30.4-91.4 cm) of base material to elevate the improved roadway topped with 6 inches (15.2 cm) of compacted surface aggregate, and the installation of culverts at three (3) locations; Culvert 1 (12 in. x 30 ft.; 31.918885, -91.84803), Culvert 2 (24 in. x 30 ft.; 31.91824, -91.84676), and Culvert 3 (24 in. x 30 ft.; 31.91804, -91.84621). The culverts will be placed at the existing ground level and fill will be placed on top to meet the grade of the roadway. The project will also require the installation of silt fencing to prevent erosion during construction, installing filter fabric into any drainage area, re-seeding and mulching of disturbed areas. The abandoned road would be barricaded on both ends of the compromised section to prevent access. Gates would be added as a permanent measure of road closure. Gates would be placed along the ROW to prevent access to restricted areas of farmland from the work-around. In accordance with the Servitude for Roadway document, the Applicant will replace four (4) gates on the Grantor's property adjacent to the servitude area and replace the fence on both sides of the road.

Base material will be sourced from a nearby area located within the Boeuf Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The proposed Borrow Area measures 1.18 acres (0.47 ha). Borrow Area parameters are as follows: northeast corner: 31.90687, -91.833460; northwest corner: 31.90692, -91.833886; southeast corner: 31.905996, -91.833499; southwest corner: 31.905982, -91.833924. The proposed road realignment will support the need of the project by improving public safety along this section of Duty Ferry Road. The preliminary design alignment can found in Appendix D.

### **3.4 ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED**

The Catahoula Parish Police Jury considered the option of repairing the roadway at its current location and stabilizing it by adding rip/rap to the lower embankment. This alternative would not alleviate the issue of the roadbed undermining from riverbank failure. The road surface would continue to erode which would exacerbate over time and ultimately severing access to the remaining section of Duty Ferry Road. Therefore, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration and will not be discussed any further in this EA as it does not meet the purpose and need.

## **SECTION FOUR - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS**

This section describes the potential impacts of the proposed action on environmental resources and historic properties, and describes proposed mitigation that will address those impacts.

## **4.1 PHYSICAL RESOURCES**

### **4.1.1 Air Quality**

The Clean Air Act (CAA), in accordance with 40 CFR part 50, requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set, and states adopt, National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six principle or “criteria” air pollutants. These pollutants include: Carbon Monoxide (CO), Lead (Pb), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), Particulate Matter with a diameter less than or equal to ten micrometers (PM<sub>10</sub>) and less than 2.5 micrometers (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), and Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>).

The EPA has designated specific areas as NAAQS Attainment or Non-Attainment areas. Attainment areas are those areas that meet ambient air quality standards and non-attainment areas are areas that do not meet quality standards for a specific pollutant. All of Catahoula Parish is currently designated as an Attainment Area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (EPA, 2010).

### **4.1.2 Climate Change**

Executive Order (E.O.) 13514, Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance, signed on 5 October 2009, directs federal agencies to reduce GHG emissions and address climate change in NEPA analyses (U.S. President 2009). It expands upon the energy reduction and environmental performance requirements of E.O. 13423, Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management, which it replaces.

A handful of important, non-condensable gases, plus water vapor, significantly contribute to the currently observed warming trend in world climate through the trapping of outbound radiation within the lower atmosphere (troposphere), a phenomenon commonly called the “greenhouse effect.” An increase in the atmospheric concentration of these greenhouse gases (GHGs), beginning with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, has resulted in a global temperature increase of approximately 1.5°F since 1880 (IPCC 2014).

E.O. 13514 identifies numerous energy goals in several areas, including GHG management, management of sustainable buildings and communities, and fleet and transportation management. The GHGs covered by this E.O. are: carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and perfluorocarbons (PFCs). These GHGs have varying heat-trapping abilities and atmospheric lifetimes (U.S. President 2009). In addition, on 23 January 2012, FEMA issued a written statement, FEMA Climate Change Adaptation Policy Statement (2011-OPPA-01), affirming the directive of E.O. 13514 and enacting as policy measures to “integrate climate change adaptation considerations” into its programs and operations (DHS 2012). Guidance by CEQ also addresses climate change considerations in NEPA evaluations (CEQ 2014).

E.O. 13653, preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change, was signed by President Obama on 1 November 2013 (U.S. President 2013). This E.O. was issued with the purpose of preparing “the Nation for the impacts of climate change by undertaking actions to enhance climate preparedness and resilience.” Its main focus is the fostering of cooperation

among the federal government and other groups, including state and local governments, as well as tribal, private-sector, and non-profit entities, in order to achieve the E.O.'s stated purpose. Cooperation is to be facilitated through coordinated planning and the adaptation of federal programs to "help safeguard our economy, infrastructure, environment, and natural resources," in addition to improving climate preparedness and resilience.

One of the specific requirements of E.O. 13653 is that all federal agencies "reform policies and Federal funding programs that may, perhaps unintentionally, increase the vulnerability of natural or built systems, economic sectors, natural resources, or communities to climate change related risks." In response to this directive, FEMA has begun augmenting its flood risk information to reflect potential sea level rise, considering climate change in hazard mitigation planning, and affording grantees the opportunity to incorporate climate resilience measures in alternate projects (DHS 2013, 2014a).

The "No Action" alternative would involve no project and, therefore, would cause no short- or long-term increases or reductions in GHG emissions.

The proposed alternative would include short-term increases in GHG emissions, especially CO<sub>2</sub>, from the burning of fossil fuels (diesel) by internal combustion engines during site preparation and construction. GHG emission reductions could be made by keeping running times for fuel-burning equipment to a minimum and properly maintaining their engines. Reducing vehicle transit times through better roads also would decrease traffic-related GHG emissions.

### **4.1.3 Geology and Soils**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) online Web Soil Survey indicates the project location is made up primarily of Sterlington silt loam, with smaller areas of Hebert silt loam, undulating, occasionally flooded and Perry silty clay loam (USDA, 2013a). The Sterlington series consists of deep, well drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in silty alluvium. The Hebert series consists of very deep, somewhat poorly drained, moderately slowly permeable soils that formed in silty alluvium. The Perry series consists of very deep, poorly drained, very slowly permeable soils that formed in clayey alluvium (USDA, 2013b).

The project area is defined by the EPA as the Arkansas/Ouachita River Holocene Meander Belts ecoregion of the Mississippi Alluvial Plain. This ecoregion is characterized by flat plains and river meander belts with levees, point bars, oxbows, and abandoned channels; large rivers and some smaller low-gradient streams, channelized in many places (EPA 2016).

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) was passed in 1981 as part of the Agriculture and Food Act (Subtitle I of Title XV, Section 1539-1549). The FPPA is intended to minimize the impact federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. It assures that, to the extent possible, federal programs are administered to be compatible with state, local units of government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to geology or soils. However, the area would continue to be at risk of erosion and road washout and in some areas seasonal flooding.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, construction activities will not be deep enough to impact underlying geologic resources. However, these construction activities will disturb soil as part of the site development. This action will not result in conversion of any Prime, or State-wide and locally important farmlands (NRCS letter dated October 3, 2016; Appendix C). The proposed site is generally flat but because of the proposed project's size, soils exposed from site preparation actions would be subject to erosion thus, silt fence and/or other required storm water quality best management practices will be required by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) during construction.

## **4.2 WATER RESOURCES**

### **4.2.1 Waters of the United States and Wetlands**

The United States Army Corps Engineers (USACE) regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, pursuant to §§ 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 U.S.C. § 1344). Section 402 of the CWA, entitled National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), authorizes and sets forth standards for state administered permitting programs regulating the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters within the state's jurisdiction (33 U.S.C. § 1342). The USACE also regulates the building of structures in waters of the U.S. pursuant to §§ 9 and 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (RHA) (33 U.S.C. § 403). Executive Order (E.O.) 11990, Protection of Wetlands, directs Federal agencies to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the values of wetlands for federally funded projects (42 F.R. 26961, May 25, 1977). Wetlands are identified as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions (E.O. 11990, § 7[c]). FEMA regulations for complying with E.O. 11990 are found at 44 CFR Part 9, Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enforces the CWA and regulates discharges to waters of the United States through permits issued under the NPDES permitting program. On August 27, 1996, Louisiana assumed the NPDES from EPA Region VI, thus becoming a state delegated to administer the NPDES Program (EPA 2013, LDEQ 2011). Having assumed NPDES responsibilities, Louisiana may directly issue NPDES permits and has primary enforcement responsibility for facilities in this state, with certain exceptions such as Indian Country Lands (EPA 2013, LDEQ 2011). Louisiana administers the NPDES Program and surface water discharge permitting system under the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) program (LDEQ 2011). LPDES requires permits for the discharge of pollutants/wastewater from any point source into waters of the state (LAC 33: IX). The term "point source" is defined as "any discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, including but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container, ... vessel, or other floating craft from which pollutants are or may be discharged" (40 C.F.R. § 122.2; LAC 33:IX, Chapter 23, §2313). Prior to assumption of the program, permittees were

required to hold both a valid state and federal permit. Today, all point source discharges of pollutants to waters of the state of Louisiana are required to hold an LPDES permit issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ, 2011).

## **4.2.2 Water Quality**

The majority of land area in Catahoula Parish is within the Ouachita River watershed. The Ouachita River forms a broad, fertile valley through Catahoula Parish. Water bodies and watercourses serve a variety of important functions, including scenic, recreation, wildlife habitat, food supply, commercial and industrial uses, and drinking water supplies. The rivers and many of the streams contain healthy populations of native fish.

Groundwater is Catahoula Parish's primary source of drinking water (Sargent, 2011). It moves underground through aquifers, which are water-bearing strata of permeable rock, sand, or gravel. Maintaining good quality and adequate quantities of groundwater are important considerations for preserving the public health and safety. Potential groundwater pollutants include seepage from improperly designed or malfunctioning septic tanks and leaching fields for wastewater, leakage from underground gas and oil tanks, and improperly disposed of chemical or radioactive materials.

The No Action Alternative, would have no effect on water quality, wetlands or other waters of the U.S., and would not require permits under Section 404 of the CWA or Section 10 of the RHA.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the USACE has indicated in a letter dated September 3, 2013, that a Department of the Army Section 404 permit will not be required for the proposed work, since the project area identified is not considered a jurisdictional wetland or other waters of the United States. However, jurisdictional waters have been identified adjacent to portions of the project site. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map (USFWS, 2016) identifies a forested wetland located adjacent and south east of the proposed realignment (Appendix A). Applicant is required to resubmit to the USACE for additional evaluation of permit requirements if there are any changes to the approved plans or project boundary submitted in original plans (see Appendix A). In order to minimize indirect impacts (erosion, sedimentation, dust and other construction-related disturbances), the contractor shall implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) that meet LDEQ permitting specifications for storm water discharge regulated under §§ 401 and 402 of the CWA, and include the following into the daily operations of the construction activities: silt screens, barriers (e.g., hay bales), berms/dikes, and or fences to be placed where and as needed.

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will also be required because the site construction will be greater than 1 acre. The construction contractor shall use Best Management Practices (BMPs). Graded soil and waste materials will be managed in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

### 4.2.3 Floodplain

EO 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires federal agencies “to avoid to the extent possible, the long and short term adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of the floodplain, and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.” FEMA’s implementing regulations are at 44 CFR Part 9, which includes an eight step decision-making process for compliance with this part.

In accordance with EO 11988, the latest FIRMs were examined during preparation of this EA. The project is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)/AE zone, area of 100-yr flooding, per Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel 2200470050C, dated April 5, 1988 (FEMA, 1988) (Appendix A).

Practicable alternatives to locating the proposed action in the floodplain were identified and evaluated. Various practicability factors were considered including feasibility, social concerns, hazard reduction, mitigation costs, and environmental impacts.

The 8-Step review is incorporated here as part of the Environmental Assessment.

Under the No Action Alternative, the Duty Ferry Road alignment would remain the same. As a result, this section of Duty Ferry Road would continue to deteriorate and collapse into the Ouachita River during flood events. The potential for continued road instability and future washouts will be costly to the parish and isolate residents from emergency services and access to the WMA.

The proposed alternative was reviewed for possible impacts associated with occupancy or modification to a floodplain. This alternative would realign a section of Duty Ferry Road away from the Ouachita River. This action would maintain access to the WMA by eliminating the risk of future roadway washouts. Due to the local topography and the character of the proposed site, impacts to the nature of the floodplain itself have been determined to be negligible. The proposed construction would not affect the functions and values of the 100-year floodplain since the result is not expected to impede or redirect flood flows, etc. The proposed project must be designed to maintain the existing hydrology of the floodplain.

Per 44 C.F.R. 9.11(d)(6), no project should be built to a floodplain management standard that is less protective than what the community has adopted in local ordinances through their participation in the NFIP. The Applicant would be required to coordinate with the local floodplain administrator regarding floodplain permit(s) prior to the start of any activities.

The Floodplain Management Checklist (Eight-Step Planning Process for Floodplains) has been completed in compliance with 44 CFR Part 9. The steps of the checklist are as follows:

Step 1 – Determine if the proposed action is located within the base floodplain: The proposed project is located within the 100-year floodplain.

Step 2 - Early Public Notice (Preliminary Notice): The public will be notified of the proposed project through the local newspaper, the Catahoula News Booster.

Step 3 – Identify and evaluate alternatives to locating in the base floodplain: The extent of the floodplain makes it impracticable to move this section of Duty Ferry Road beyond the floodplain.

Step 4 - Identify impacts of proposed action associated with occupancy or modification in floodplain: This action represents an investment in the floodplain that will be at risk in future flood events and potentially supports direct and indirect floodplain and some wetland development. Realignment of the roadway/new construction within the floodplain and near a state wildlife management area reduces beneficial floodplain values such as natural flood and erosion control, enhancement of biological productivity and diversity. However, the proposed project will be designed to maintain the existing hydrology of the floodplain.

A review of the natural environment and social concerns aspects of the proposed project indicates that realigning the roadway is the only practicable alternative and that no other practicable alternative has been identified outside the special flood hazard area. This roadway supports existing development and structures.

Step 5 – Design or modify the proposed action to minimize threats to life and property and preserve its natural and beneficial floodplain values: The proposed action shall be in accordance with local floodplain ordinances with applicable codes and standards applied to mitigate and minimize adverse effects (compliance with minimum National Flood Insurance Program standards and requirements). Construction shall be designed to maintain current existing conditions within the floodplain.

Step 6 – Re-evaluate the proposed action: The proposed action is the chosen practicable alternative based upon a review of possible adverse effects on the floodplain, the inclusion of measures to mitigate and minimize harm from floods, and community socioeconomic expectations.

Step 7 – Findings and Public Explanation (Final Notice): The NEPA Notice of Availability will serve as the Final Notice for this project.

Step 8 – Implement the action: The proposed project will be implemented once final approval has been received from all agency stakeholders and the public has been given sufficient time to comment upon the proposed action.

In support of this project, the Floodplain Administrator for the Catahoula Parish Police Jury indicated in a letter dated August 31, 2016 that the placement of culverts at the locations described in the scope of work will not adversely affect the floodplain. This support is contingent upon the project complying with all applicable codes, standards, IBC and NFIP requirements. A copy of the letter and reference to the Ordinance are available in Appendix D of this report.

## **4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **4.3.1 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat**

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and the habitats in which they are found. Section 7 of the ESA requires federal agencies, in consultation with the USFWS and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat of such species.

The project area is immediately adjacent to the Boeuf Wildlife Management Area which consists of a total of 50,971 acres located 10 miles southeast of Columbia, LA. Major access routes to Boeuf WMA are Louisiana Highways 4, 559, 133 and 848. The majority of the area was purchased by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) through the Conservation Fund in three components between 1977 and 1981 totaling 38,444 acres. The Tensas Delta Tract was purchased through the State Duck Stamp Fund and a purchase agreement with the Tensas Delta Land Company (TDLC) between 1993 and 1998 and totaled approximately 10,000 acres. The remaining acreage, The Topan Tract, was purchased in mid-2000.

The topography is flat and poorly drained with numerous backwater lakes, sloughs, and bayous. The majority of this area is subject to frequent flooding from Boeuf River and Bayou LaFourche. Boeuf River is the only stream and borders the eastern boundary of the management area for approximately 47 miles. Eight bayous are located on the area and their combined length encompasses approximately 30 miles of waterways. There are 26 lakes located on this area totaling approximately 1800 acres. All lakes and bayous at Boeuf are subject to annual overflow. A large portion of Boeuf WMA consists of prior-converted farmland that has been partially reforested in bottomland hardwoods and approximately 4000 acres along with an 1800 acre green tree reservoir are managed extensively in moist soil and shallow water for waterfowl and shorebirds.

The forest overstory is a relatively closed stand of mixed bottomland hardwoods. On the higher elevations the predominant tree species are willow oak, Nuttall oak, post oak, cedar elm, sweetgum, green ash, persimmon, and honey locust. Important species in the lower elevations are overcup oak, bitter pecan, cypress, and tupelo gum. Understory species include rattan, *Rubus* sp., *Crataegus* sp., swamp dogwood, *Vitis* sp., deciduous holly, *Smilax* sp., baccharis, poison ivy, and many herbaceous species. Invasive species include several nuisance aquatics.

A number of threatened and endangered species can be found within the habitats located inside and surrounding the WMA. Per site assessment reconnaissance located in Appendix B, no bald eagle, red cockaded woodpecker, Louisiana Black Bear, or other threatened or endangered species were observed in the project area during the site assessment. The borrow area for the project is located entirely on the property of the WMA. On a site visit conducted with the applicant, the applicant conveyed that permission to utilize the borrow area was given by the WMA to enhance duck habitat.

The USFWS Information, Planning and Conservation System (IPaC) database (USFWS, 2015) indicated that the project area contained suitable habitat for the following Louisiana federally protected species: Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*), Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), and Louisiana Black Bear (*Ursus americanus luteolus*) are federally listed endangered species that are known to occur in Catahoula Parish. The Louisiana Black Bear frequents this area and reported sightings are on the increase. Bald Eagles are observed frequently in this area and nesting is documented in the surrounding area.

Boeuf WMA is visited by many neo-tropical and shorebird bird species annually and home to large numbers of passerine and wading birds. The areas managed for waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds along with the numerous sloughs and waterways offer excellent waterfowl hunting and viewing opportunity.

The most popular game species are white-tailed deer, waterfowl, squirrels/rabbits, and turkey. Dove, woodcock, and snipe hunting opportunities are also available. Several dove fields, planted annually in brown-top millet are available to area users. Freshwater fish including largemouth bass, crappie, sunfish, and catfish are popular with area users.

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker makes its home in mature pine forests. Longleaf pines (*Pinus palustris*) are most commonly preferred, but other species of southern pine are also acceptable. The Red-cockaded Woodpecker excavates cavities exclusively in living mature pine trees, generally over 80 years old

The Sprague's Pipit can be found in shortgrass prairies. They breed in relatively dry grassland, especially native prairie, avoiding brushy areas and cultivated fields. They winter in similar shortgrass habitats including pastures and prairies, and grassy patches within fields of crops such as alfalfa.

The Pallid Sturgeon can be found close to the bottom of large, silty rivers with swift currents. The preferred habitat is comprised of sand flats and gravel bars

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to threatened or endangered species or critical habitat, or fish and wildlife species.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, FEMA has determined that the proposed construction is not likely to affect any federally listed and endangered species. Per site assessment conducted by FEMA EHP staff on 10/25/2016 through 10/28/2016: The project site has been previously used as a road as indicated in historical aerial imagery from 1999. The 1957 aerial photograph does not show the existence of the service road nor the wetland area on the riverside of the project area. The existing site conditions at the time of the site visit were very dry with no rain occurring for several weeks prior to the site visit. The project site appeared to be recently bush hogged. The applicant is required to coordinate with Boeuf Wildlife Management Area 30 days prior to initiating any construction related activities to ensure the continued conservation of protected species and their habitats. Through this coordination, the applicant must adopt seasonal avoidance measures to avoid disturbance and incidental takes.

### **4.3.2 Migratory Birds**

The project area is located in the flyaway zone for migratory birds. Migratory bird species are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA), as amended, which provides federal protections for migratory birds, their active nests, eggs, and parts from harm, sale, or other injurious actions. The act contains no “take” provisions that enforce these protections. Consultation with the USFWS is required if an action is determined to cause a potential take of migratory birds and determines measures to minimize or avoid these impacts. The USFWS Office of Migratory Bird Management maintains a list of migratory birds (50 CFR 10.13).

In conjunction with this, The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) prohibit any form of possession or taking of both bald and golden eagles. The statute imposes criminal and civil sanctions as well as an enhanced penalty provision for subsequent offenses. Further, the BGEPA provides for the forfeiture of anything used to acquire eagles in violation of the statute. The statute excludes from its prohibitions the use of eagles or eagle parts for exhibition, scientific, and Indian religious uses.

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) resides near lakes, reservoirs, rivers, marshes and coasts. The golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) favors open country, especially around mountains.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to migratory birds.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the proposed Duty Ferry Road realignment/new construction is not likely to impact migratory birds. The project area provides year round habitat for migratory bird species; namely the bald eagle. The applicant is required to coordinate with Boeuf Wildlife Management Area 30 days prior to initiating any construction related activities to ensure the continued conservation of protected species and their habitats. Through this coordination, the applicant must adopt seasonal avoidance measures to avoid disturbance and incidental takes. Thus, FEMA has determined that the project will not have an adverse impact on migratory species.

## **4.4 Cultural Resources**

### **4.4.1 Regulatory Setting**

The consideration of impacts to historic and cultural resources is mandated under § 101(b)(4) of NEPA as implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 1501-1508. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account their effects on historic properties (i.e., historic and cultural resources, including American Indian Cultural Sites) and allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment. Additionally, it is the policy of the federal government to consult with Indian Tribal Governments on a Government-to-Government basis as required in E.O. 13175 (U.S. President 2000). FEMA has chosen to address potential impacts to historic properties through the “Section 106 consultation process” of NHPA as implemented through 36 C.F.R. Part 800.

In order to fulfill its § 106 responsibilities, FEMA has initiated consultation on this project in accordance with the Statewide Programmatic Agreement (Statewide Agreement;

[https://www.fema.gov/pdf/hazard/hurricane/2005katrina/LA\\_HMGP%20PA.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/pdf/hazard/hurricane/2005katrina/LA_HMGP%20PA.pdf)) dated 17 August 2009, and amended on 22 July 2011, between the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), LA GOHSEP, the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the Caddo Nation, the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (DHS 2009). The Statewide Agreement was created to streamline the § 106 review process.

The “Section 106 process” outlined in the Statewide Agreement requires the identification of historic properties that may be affected by the proposed action or alternatives within the project’s area of potential effects (APE). Historic properties, defined in § 101(a)(1)(A) of NHPA, include districts, sites (archaeological and religious/cultural), buildings, structures, and objects that are listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historic properties are identified by qualified agency representatives in consultation with interested parties. Below is a consideration of various alternatives and their effects on historic properties.

On May 16, 2016, FEMA Historic Preservation Staff (HP) consulted the NRHP database, the Louisiana Division of Archaeology (LDOA), Louisiana Cultural Resources Map (LDOA Website), and conducted a review of historic maps, project files, and historic aerial photography. Additionally, on October 25, 2016, FEMA HP staff conducted a Phase I archeological investigation of the APE. This data was evaluated by FEMA using the National Register Criteria.

#### **4.4.2.1 Archaeology**

On May 16, 2016, FEMA plotted the geographic coordinates of the Duty Ferry Road location against various data sets, including the NRHP database and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology’s (LDOA), Louisiana Cultural Resources Map, the Louisiana Cultural Resources Management Bibliography, LDOA Site Forms, and pertinent site and survey reports regarding previous investigations within one (1) mile of the archaeological APE (LDOA 2016).

FEMA verified that the APE is not located within a listed historic district and that no previously recorded archaeological sites were present within the APE.

#### **4.4.2.2 Standing Structures**

FEMA Historic Preservation staff consulted the NRHP database and Louisiana Cultural Resources Map on May 16, 2016, and determined that the APE is not located within a listed or eligible historic district or within the view-shed of a property individually listed in the NRHP. Additionally, during Phase I archeological investigation of the APE on October 25, 2016, it was confirmed that there are no standing structures located within the APE.

The no action alternative does not include any FEMA undertaking; therefore FEMA has no further responsibilities under § 106 of the NHPA.

Under the Proposed Action, the applicant proposes to conduct work in two (2) locations: the Duty Ferry Road ROW APE which encompasses 33.58 Acres/13.5 ha and the Borrow Area APE which encompasses 1.39 acres (0.56 ha).

A review of this alternative was conducted in accordance with FEMA's Statewide Agreement. Although there are no recorded sites within the APE, based on the local site distribution pattern, it is within an area of high probability. Considering the local topography, and the location of the APE on the cut bank of the river, the potential for the presence of archaeological sites is considered to be high.

As a result of this identification and evaluation on September 02, 2016, FEMA submitted a letter entitled: FEMA-4102-DR-LA, PW #35, Duty Ferry Road Relocation to SHPO, the Caddo Nation, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana with a determination of No Historic Properties Affected as a result of the proposed undertaking; dependent on the condition of Negative Findings following a Phase I Archaeological Survey:

FEMA shall ensure that an Archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior Professional Qualification Standards performs a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey pursuant to the State of Louisiana Division of Archaeology Guidelines.

SHPO concurrence with this determination was received September 12, 2016. Tribes did not object within the regulatory timeframes; therefore, in accordance Stipulation VIII.E(1) of the 2009 Statewide PA as amended and 36 CFR part 800.5(c)1, FEMA may proceed with funding the undertaking assuming concurrence.

In fulfillment of FEMA's condition of Negative Findings following a Phase I Archaeological Survey, FEMA HP staff conducted a Phase I archeological investigation of both the Duty Ferry Road ROW and Borrow Area APEs on October 25, 2016. All Fieldwork adhered to the guidelines provided by the Louisiana Division of Archaeology (<http://www.crt.state.la.us>). Although a limited amount of historic materials were recovered during shovel testing within the Duty Ferry Road ROW APE, the deposits identified did not meet the criteria of an archaeological site as defined by LDoA. Therefore, FEMA has satisfied the condition of the aforementioned September 02, 2016 consultation. FEMA will produce a draft and final Negative Findings report that meets Louisiana Division of Archaeology's report standards. Additionally, the applicant must comply with the NHPA conditions described in this document (Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act and Inadvertent Discovery Clause).

In summary, FEMA has determined that there would be a negligible effect on the Cultural Resources component of the human environment from implementing the proposed alternative.

#### **4.5 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES - Environmental Justice**

EO 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) mandates that federal agencies identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. Socioeconomic and

demographic data for the project area were analyzed to determine if a disproportionate number of minority or low-income persons have the potential to be adversely affected by the proposed project.

Socioeconomic and demographic data for residents in the project vicinity was analyzed to determine if a disproportionate number of minority or low-income persons have the potential to be affected. A minority population is identified where either: the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis (CEQ 1997).

The federal statistical definition of poverty is based on U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) thresholds that are revised periodically by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Federal Register under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2).

The population of Harrisonburg, as of the 2010 U.S. Census was 348, down from 746 at the 2000 U.S. Census. The population of Catahoula Parish, as of the 2010 U.S. Census was 10,407. For the purpose of evaluating low income and minority populations, census statistics for Catahoula Parish and Harrisonburg, were considered; statistics for the State of Louisiana are provided for comparison and context (USCB, 2010).

Low-income households are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as those households with incomes at or below 80 percent of area median household income. For the period 2010-2014, the median household income was estimated at \$ 44,991 for the State of Louisiana, \$35,093 for Catahoula Parish; and \$30,982 for the Harrisonburg community. Approximately 17.1% of Harrisonburg's population live below the poverty threshold, compared to 20.9% of Catahoula Parish, and 19.6% of the population of Louisiana. Racial/ethnic minorities make up a significant percentage of state, parish and community populations in Louisiana. The White non-Hispanic population makes up 43.4 %, 67.8%, and 64.3% of the state, parish, Harrisonburg populations, respectively. Black non-Hispanic populations make up 33.0%, 31.9% and 37.0% of the state, parish and Harrisonburg populations, respectively. Hispanic or Latino populations (of any race) constitute 4.6%, 1.1%, and 0% of the state, parish, and Harrisonburg populations respectively. Finally, Asian populations constitute 1.9%, 0.2%, and 0% of the state, parish, and Harrisonburg populations, respectively (USCB, 2010).

In compliance with E.O. 12898, the following key questions were addressed with regard to potential Environmental Justice concerns:

- Is there an impact caused by the proposed action? Yes
- Is the impact adverse? No
- Is the impact disproportionate? No
- Has an action been undertaken without considerable input by the affected low-income and/or minority community? No

Under the No Action Alternative, the present realignment of Duty Ferry Road would continue to be susceptible to damage during flood events. The general public and first responders would have limited or no access to portions of the LDWF – WMA. Repetitive road failures would also continue to be an undue economic hardship for the parish. There would be no disproportionately high or adverse impact on minority or low-income portions of the population; all populations would continue to be equally affected.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there will be no disproportionately high or adverse impact on minority or low-income portions of the populations – all populations will benefit from road accessibility.

## **4.6 POTENTIAL HAZARDS**

### **4.6.1 Hazardous Materials**

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) mandates control over the treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. Subtitle D of the RCRA addresses the management of non-hazardous solid waste.

The only potentially hazardous materials that may have an impact on this project location are volatile organic compounds (VOC). The VOCs that may effect this location are gasoline or oil that may have been absorbed in the road base. The road base that will be removed from the existing road for realignment will most likely be taken to the town garage for recycle and re-use. Considering the low levels of these VOCs that are likely to be in the road base along this stretch, this recycling would have a negligible impact on the environment.

Under the No Action Alternative, minor impacts could be expected if the road continues to be damaged and washed away into the river. The road contaminants may travel far once they enter the river.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no hazardous materials, wastes, or substances, including contaminated soil or groundwater, have been identified at the proposed site. If hazardous constituents are unexpectedly encountered in the project area during the proposed construction operations, appropriate measures for the proper assessment, remediation and management of the contamination should be initiated in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local rules and regulations.

Project construction may involve the use of hazardous materials (e.g., petroleum products, cement, caustics, acids, solvents, paints, electronic components, pesticides/herbicides and fertilizers, treated timber), and may result in the generation of small amounts of hazardous wastes. Best management practices and appropriate measures to prevent, minimize, and control spills of hazardous materials should be taken, and any hazardous and non-hazardous wastes generated disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local requirements. All construction activities are required to be coordinated with LDEQ prior to initiating any work.

## **4.6.2 Noise**

The EPA has developed the Levels Document for federal noise-emission standards, identifying major sources of noise and determining appropriate noise levels for activities that would infringe on public health and welfare. In this document, EPA identifies a 24-hour exposure level of 70 decibels as the level of environmental noise which will prevent any measurable hearing loss over a lifetime. Likewise, levels of 55 decibels outdoors and 45 decibels indoors are identified as preventing activity interference and annoyance. These levels of noise are considered those which will permit spoken conversation and other activities such as sleeping, working and recreation, which are part of the daily human condition (EPA, 1974). Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Transportation has established acceptable noise levels and ranges for construction equipment (USDOT, 2006).

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impact to noise levels.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, construction activities would temporarily increase noise levels in the vicinity of the project area. To reduce noise levels during that period, construction activities must follow local ordinance and will take place during normal business hours. Equipment and machinery installed at the project site will meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations.

## **4.6.3 Traffic**

The project is located in a remote section of the parish. There are few alternate routes should there be traffic restrictions in this area.

Under the No Action Alternative, major impacts could be possible if another flooding event occurs with road washout severe enough to close the road. Due to the threat to public safety, this impact could have severe implication if someone requires medical attention while the road is closed.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to traffic may occur, due to the movement of construction vehicles and workers to and from the site. The demolition and reconstruction of the road would require transporting construction equipment and supplies, although efforts to recycle much of the construction debris may reduce the volume. Regardless, added trips with heavy equipment at the beginning and end of each construction day can be anticipated. Additional passenger car trips would also be necessary to transport workers and inspection staff to and from the site throughout the construction phase. These trips would be a minor addition to local traffic volumes and would not likely cause congestion.

Construction traffic should be closely monitored and controlled as appropriate. All construction activities should be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with local, State, and Federal health and safety requirements. To alert motorists and pedestrians of project activities, appropriate signage and barriers should be used during construction, and control of the construction area should be managed through the use of fencing or other appropriate methods.

## 4.7 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations state that cumulative impacts represent the "impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions." Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 C.F.R. § 1508.7).

In its comprehensive guidance on cumulative impacts analysis under NEPA, the CEQ notes that: "[t]he range of actions that must be considered includes not only the project proposal, but all connected and similar actions that could contribute to cumulative effects" (CEQ, 1997). The term "similar actions" may be defined as "reasonably foreseeable or proposed agency actions [with] similarities that provide a basis for evaluating the environmental consequences together, such as common timing or geography." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.25(a)(3); see also 40 C.F.R. §§ 1508.25(a)(2) and (c).

Not all potential issues identified during cumulative effects scoping need be included in an EA. Because some effects may be irrelevant or inconsequential to decisions about the proposed action and alternatives, the focus of the cumulative effects analysis should be narrowed to important issues of national, regional, or local significance. To assist agencies in this narrowing process, CEQ lists seven (7) basic questions, including: (1) is the proposed action one of several similar past, present, or future actions in the same geographic area; (2) do other activities (governmental or private) in the region have environmental effects similar to those of the proposed action; (3) have any recent or ongoing NEPA analyses of similar actions or nearby actions identified important adverse or beneficial cumulative effect issues; and, (4) has the impact been historically significant, such that the importance of the resource is defined by past loss, past gain, or investments to restore resources (CEQ, 1997, Table 2-1).

It is normally insufficient when analyzing the contribution of a proposed action to cumulative effects to merely analyze effects within the immediate area of the proposed action (CEQ, 1997, pg. 12). Geographic boundaries should be expanded for cumulative effects analysis, and conducted on the scale of human communities, landscapes, watersheds, or airsheds. Temporal frames should be extended to encompass additional effects on the resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern. A useful concept in determining appropriate geographic boundaries for a cumulative effects analysis is the project impact zone; i.e., the area (and resources within that area) that could be affected by the proposed action. The area appropriate for analysis of cumulative effects will, in most instances, be a larger geographic area occupied by resources outside of the project impact zone.

FEMA has determined that the incremental effects of the other infrastructure recovery and improvement actions are likely to be similar to the impacts and effects described in this EA for the present proposed action, in that the effects to socioeconomic resources are expected to be beneficial, and effects to other similar resources expected to be either non-existent, or minimal and temporary. The road relocation would not result in increased capacity, nor are there any plans for future land use development in the area.

FEMA has further determined that the incremental impact of the present proposed project, when combined with the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, are neither cumulatively considerable nor significant.

## **SECTION FIVE - PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

To meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Catahoula Parish and FEMA EHP has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate historic and environmental resources that might be affected by proposed road demolition, construction, mitigation or other actions associated with the realignment of Duty Ferry Road. As part of its goal to ensure that good management decisions are made, FEMA and the Catahoula Parish Police Jury Office invites the public to review and comment on the Draft EA and Draft FONSI and to provide the Catahoula Parish Police Jury Office and FEMA with information it may not have considered in its assessment.

The Notice of Availability of this Draft EA will be advertised by public notice in the Catahoula News Booster. Copies of the EA will be available locally at the Catahoula Parish Police Jury Office located at 301 Bushley Street, Room 104, Harrisonburg, LA 71340 or the Catahoula Parish Library located at 300 Bushley Street, Harrisonburg, LA 71340 during the hours of 8:00am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. Also, the Draft EA will be available for review on FEMA's website (<https://www.fema.gov/resource-document-library>). A 15-day public comment period will commence on the initial date of the public notice.

Comments on the Draft EA can be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VI, c/o Alan Hermely, 800 North Loop 288, Denton, TX 76209, or by email: FEMA-R6-EHP@fema.dhs.gov, or by fax: 940-297-0152.

## **SECTION SIX - AGENCY COORDINATION**

As part of the development of the EA, federal and state resource protection agencies were contacted. Responses received to date are included in Appendix A and are listed below.

- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Baton Rouge, LA
- United States Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg, MS
- United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS) State Office, Alexandria, LA

FEMA has received no objections to the project as proposed subsequent to these notifications. Comments and conditions received from the agencies have been incorporated into this Environmental Assessment.

In accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, the applicant will be responsible for acquiring any necessary permits prior to commencing construction at the project site.

## SECTION SEVEN - CONDITIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Construction of the proposed improvements at the proposed location was analyzed based on the studies, consultations, and reviews undertaken as reported in this EA. The findings of this EA conclude that no significant adverse impacts to geology, groundwater, floodplains, public health and safety, hazardous materials, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, or cultural resources are anticipated from the proposed action at the proposed site under the Proposed Action Alternative.

During project construction, short-term impacts to soils, surface water, air quality, and noise are anticipated and conditions have been incorporated to mitigate and minimize the effects. Project short-term adverse impacts would be mitigated using BMPs, such as silt fences, proper vehicle and equipment maintenance, and appropriate signage. No long-term adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposed project. Therefore, FEMA finds the proposed action meets the requirements for a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) under NEPA and the preparation of an EIS will not be required.

Based upon the studies, reviews, and consultations undertaken in this EA, several conditions must be met and mitigation measures taken by Catahoula Parish prior to and during project implementation:

1. The applicant would be responsible for keeping all excavated areas periodically sprayed with water and all equipment maintained in good working order. All construction vehicles would be limited to 15 mph to minimize pollution/fugitive dust.
2. In order to minimize impacts to waters of the U.S., the Parish is required to implement BMPs that meet the LDEQ permitting specifications for storm water discharge regulated under Section 402 of the CWA. This includes designing the site with specific construction measures to reduce or eliminate run-off impacts. Examples of BMPs include, but are not limited to: control measures are properly selected, installed and maintained; maintenance of control measures is performed prior to anticipated storm events; when sediment escapes the site, it is removed at a frequency necessary to minimize off-site impacts; litter, construction debris, and construction chemicals exposed to storm water are prevented from becoming a pollutant source; and sediment traps, silt fences, vegetative buffer strips, or equivalent sediment controls are implemented for all down slope boundaries.
3. If the project results in a discharge to waters of the State, submittal of a Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System application may be necessary. LDEQ has stormwater general permits for construction areas equal to or greater than one acre. The LDEQ Water Permit Division must be contacted to determine whether the proposed improvements require one of these permits. All precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities. All precautions should be observed to protect the groundwater of the region.
4. The abandoned section of the Duty Ferry roadway must be returned to pre-construction grade and planted with native vegetation to reduce any potential erosion, and to restore floodplain and wetland values.

5. Any changes or modifications to the proposed project would require a revised USACE determination. Off-site locations of activities such as borrow, disposals, haul-and detour-roads and work mobilization site developments may be subject to the Department of the Army permit requirements.
6. If any threatened or endangered species are identified at the project site during construction activities, the Applicant is to notify Boeuf Wildlife Management Area, FEMA and the USFWS immediately and stop all construction activities.
7. The applicant is required to coordinate with Boeuf Wildlife Management Area 30 days prior to initiating any construction related activities to ensure the continued conservation of protected species and their habitats. Through this coordination, the applicant must adopt seasonal avoidance measures to avoid disturbance and incidental takes.
8. Applicant must coordinate with the local floodplain administrator and obtain required permits prior to initiating work. All coordination pertaining to these activities and applicant compliance with any conditions should be documented and copies forwarded to the state and FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files.
9. If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification of the LDEQ Single Point of Contact at (225) 219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.
10. Construction traffic should be closely monitored and controlled as appropriate. All construction activities should be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with local, State, and Federal health and safety requirements. To alert motorists and pedestrians of project activities, appropriate signage and barriers should be used during construction, and control of the construction area should be managed through the use of fencing or other appropriate methods.
11. To reduce noise levels during that period, construction activities must follow local ordinance and must take place during normal business hours. Equipment and machinery installed at the project site will meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations.
12. If human bone or unmarked grave(s) are present within the project area, compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) is required. The applicant shall notify the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction where the remains are located within twenty-four hours of the discovery. The applicant shall also notify FEMA and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology at 225-342-8170 within seventy-two hours of the discovery (Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act).
13. If during the course of work, archaeological artifacts (prehistoric or historic) are discovered, the applicant shall stop work in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The applicant shall inform their, GOSHEP State Applicant Liaison and Hazard Mitigation Assistance contacts at FEMA, who will in turn contact FEMA Historic Preservation (HP) staff. The applicant will not proceed with work until FEMA HP completes consultation with the SHPO, and others as appropriate (Inadvertent Discovery Clause).

## SECTION EIGHT - LIST OF PREPARERS

### Document Preparers:

This EA has been prepared by Catahoula Parish Police Jury and FEMA.

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Executive Order No. 11990. Protection of Wetlands, May 24, 1977, 42 C.F.R. 26961

Executive Order No. 12898. Environmental Justice for Low Income and Minority Populations. 1994, 59 C.F.R. 7629.

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7 U.S.C. 4201 et seq. Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981.

16 U.S.C. 470 et seq. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Public Law 102 575, as amended.

16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq. Endangered Species Act of 1973.

16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006. Public Law 94-265.

33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq. Clean Water Act of 1972.

36 CFR Part 800, Protection of Historic Properties, (incorporating amendments effective August 5, 2004).

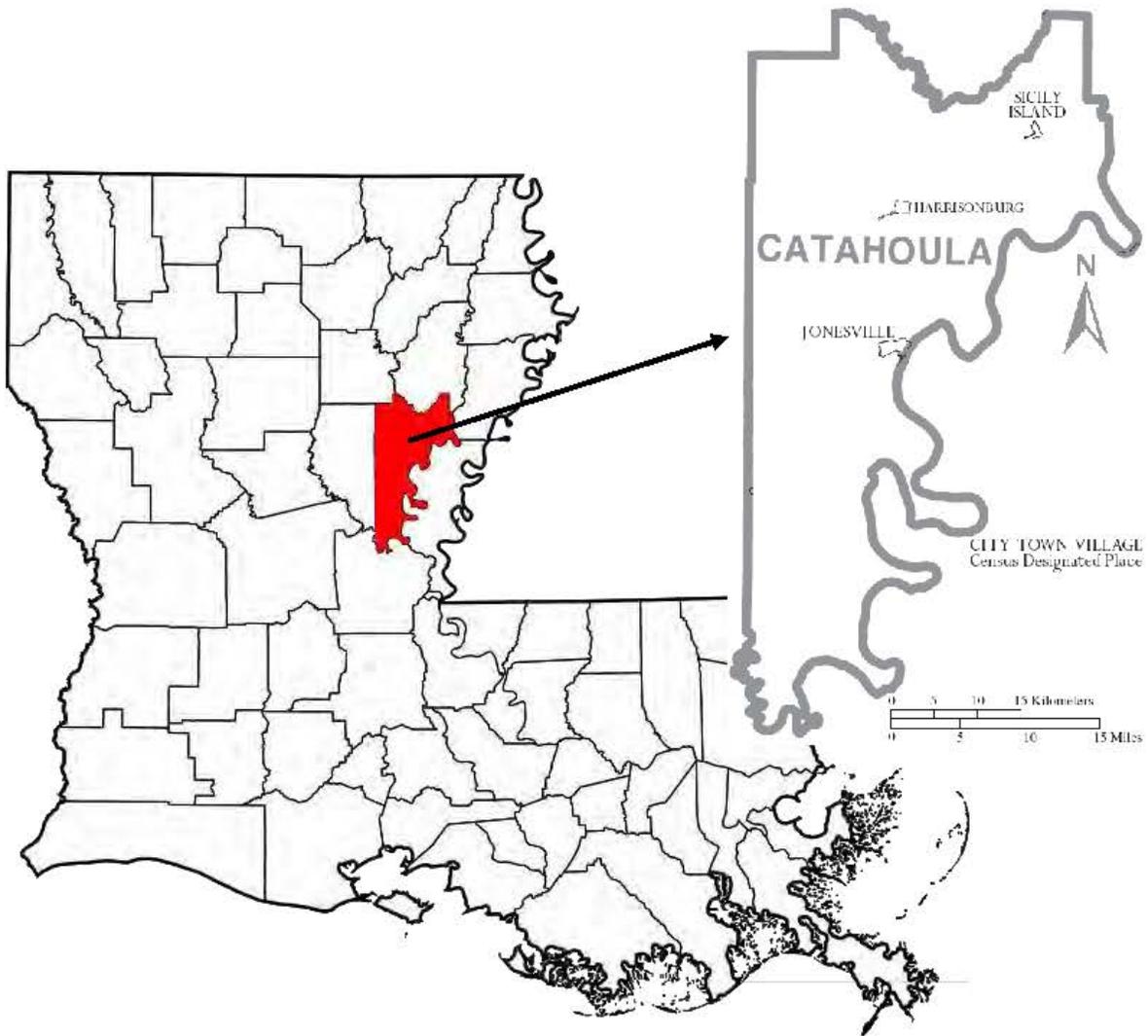
40 CFR 50. National Primary & Secondary Ambient Air Quality Standards. 1971 as amended 1998

42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq. Clean Air Act of 1970.

42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Public Law 91-190, as amended.

50 CFR 10.13. Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended.

## Appendix A: Maps

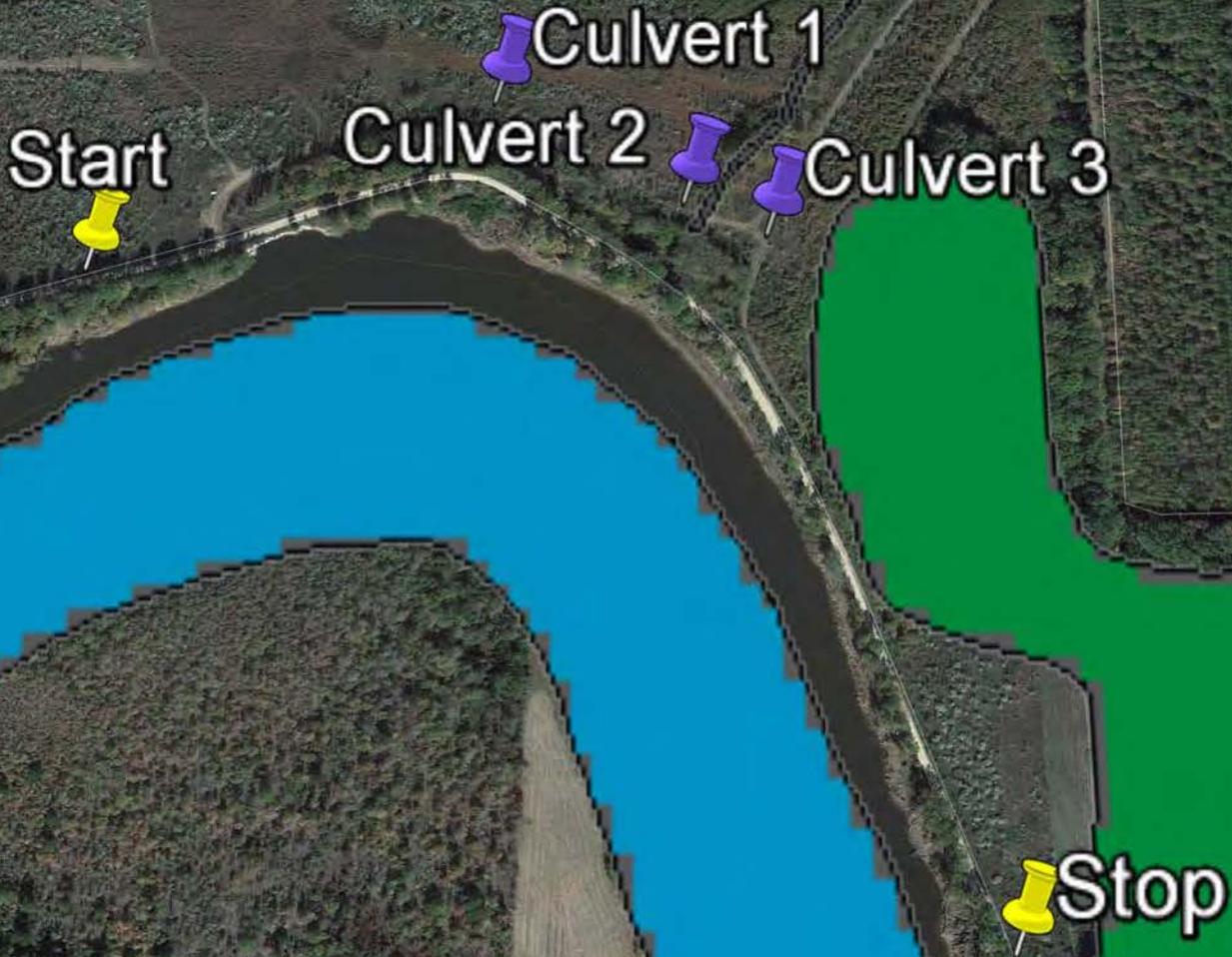


Catahoula Parish Map (Source: Wikipedia, 2016)

# Duty Ferry Road Realignment - DR 4102

**Legend**

-  Culvert
-  Feature 1



# Borrow Pit Location

Duty Ferry Road Realignment

## Legend

-  Line Measure
-  Project Limits

 Project Limits

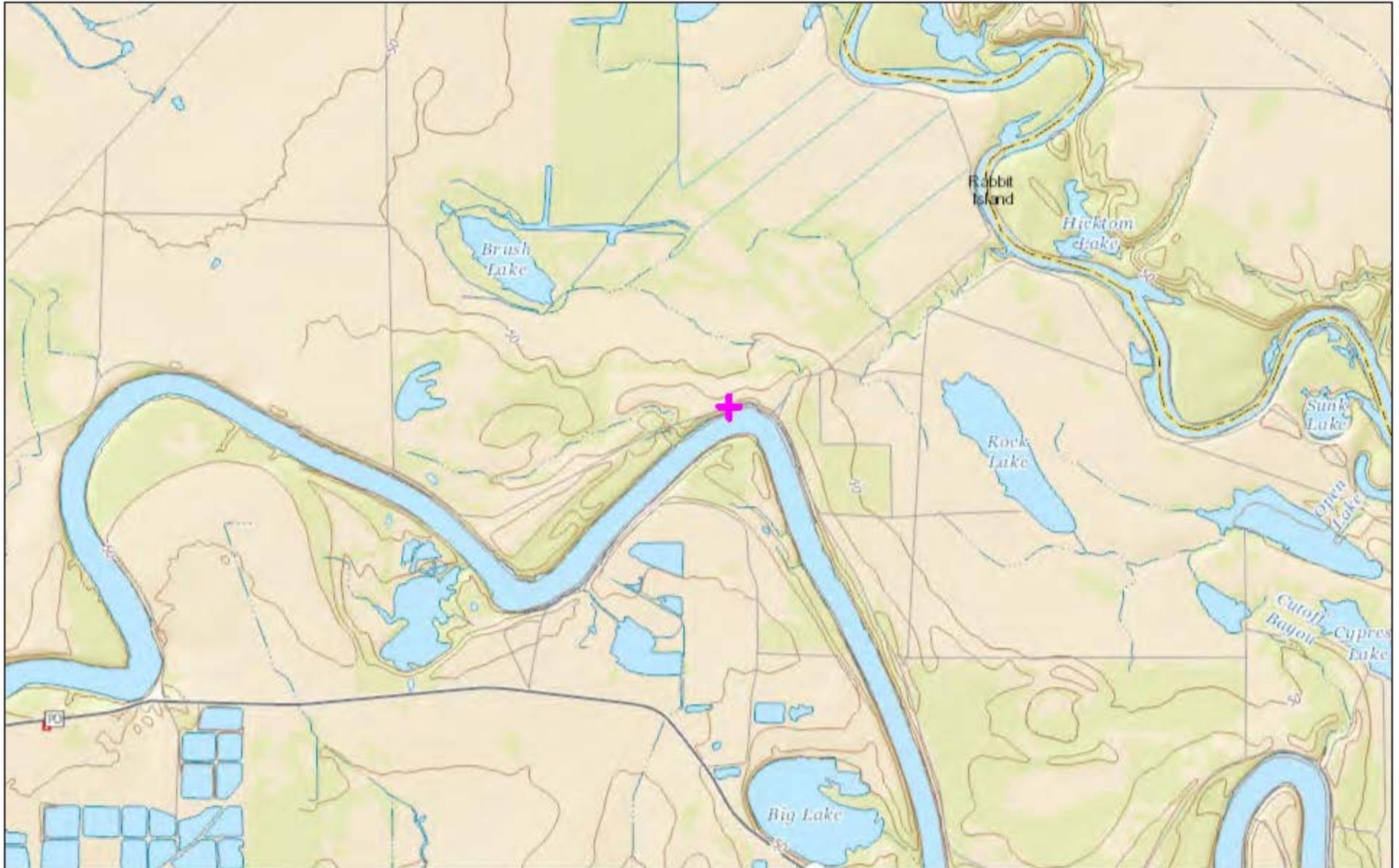
 Project Limits

NW corner: 31.906921, -91.833886  
NE corner: 31.90687, -91.83346  
SW corner: 31.905982, -91.833924  
SE corner: 31.905996, -91.833499

**Borrow Pit**

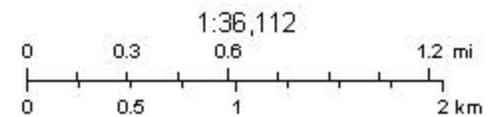


# Duty Ferry Road Realignment - DR 4102

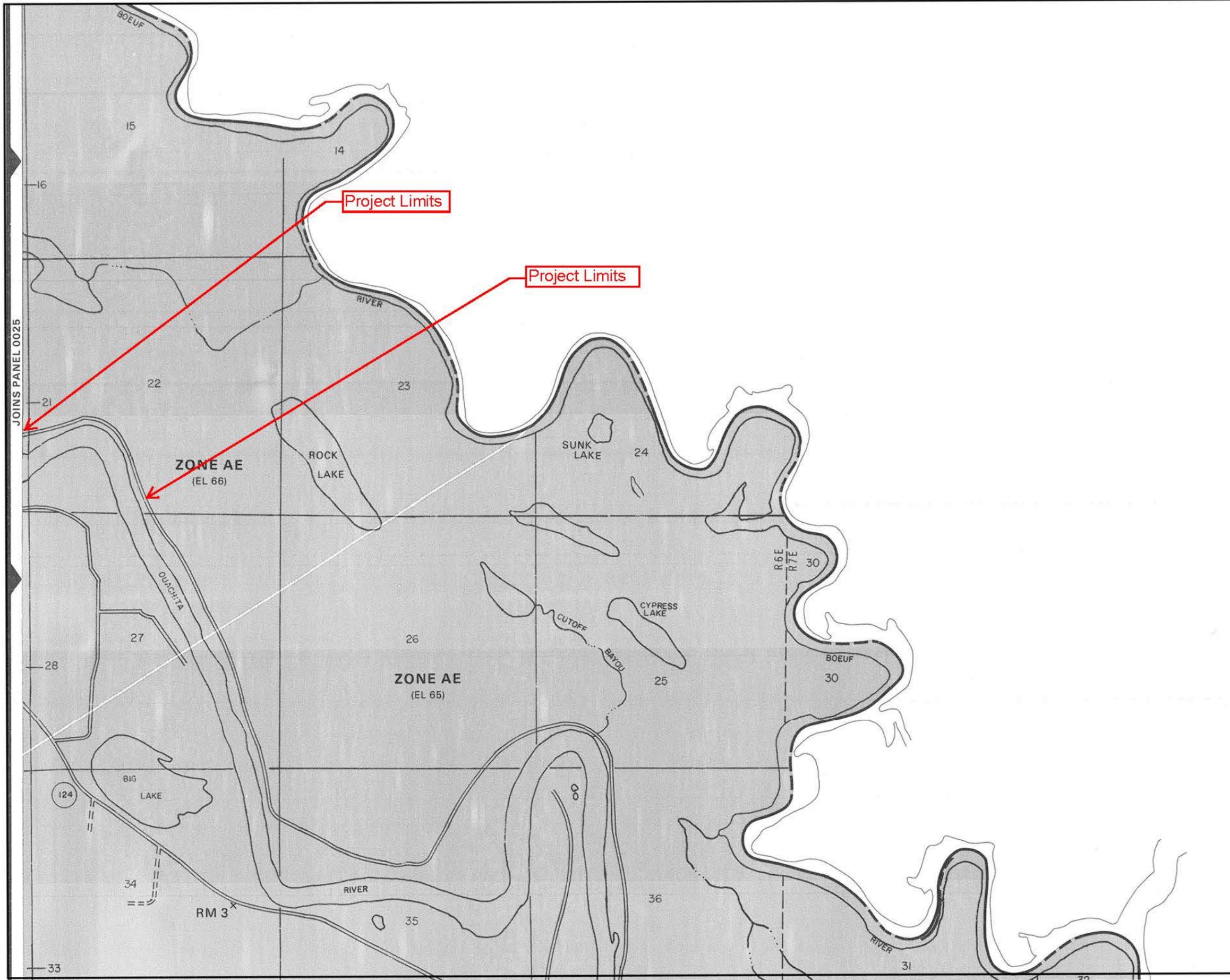


November 17, 2016

 Search Result (point)



USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, National Elevation Dataset, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography



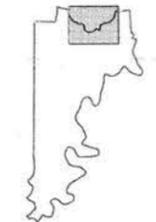
APPROXIMATE SCALE  
 2000 0 2000 FEET

**NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM**

**FIRM  
 FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP**

**CATAHOULA PARISH,  
 LOUISIANA  
 UNINCORPORATED AREAS**

**PANEL 50 OF 325**  
 (SEE MAP INDEX FOR PANELS NOT PRINTED)



PANEL LOCATION

**COMMUNITY-PANEL NUMBER  
 220047 0050 C**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:  
 APRIL 5, 1988**



Federal Emergency Management Agency

This is an official copy of a portion of the above referenced flood map. It was extracted using F-MIT On-Line. This map does not reflect changes or amendments which may have been made subsequent to the date on the title block. For the latest product information about National Flood Insurance Program flood maps check the FEMA Flood Map Store at [www.msc.fema.gov](http://www.msc.fema.gov)

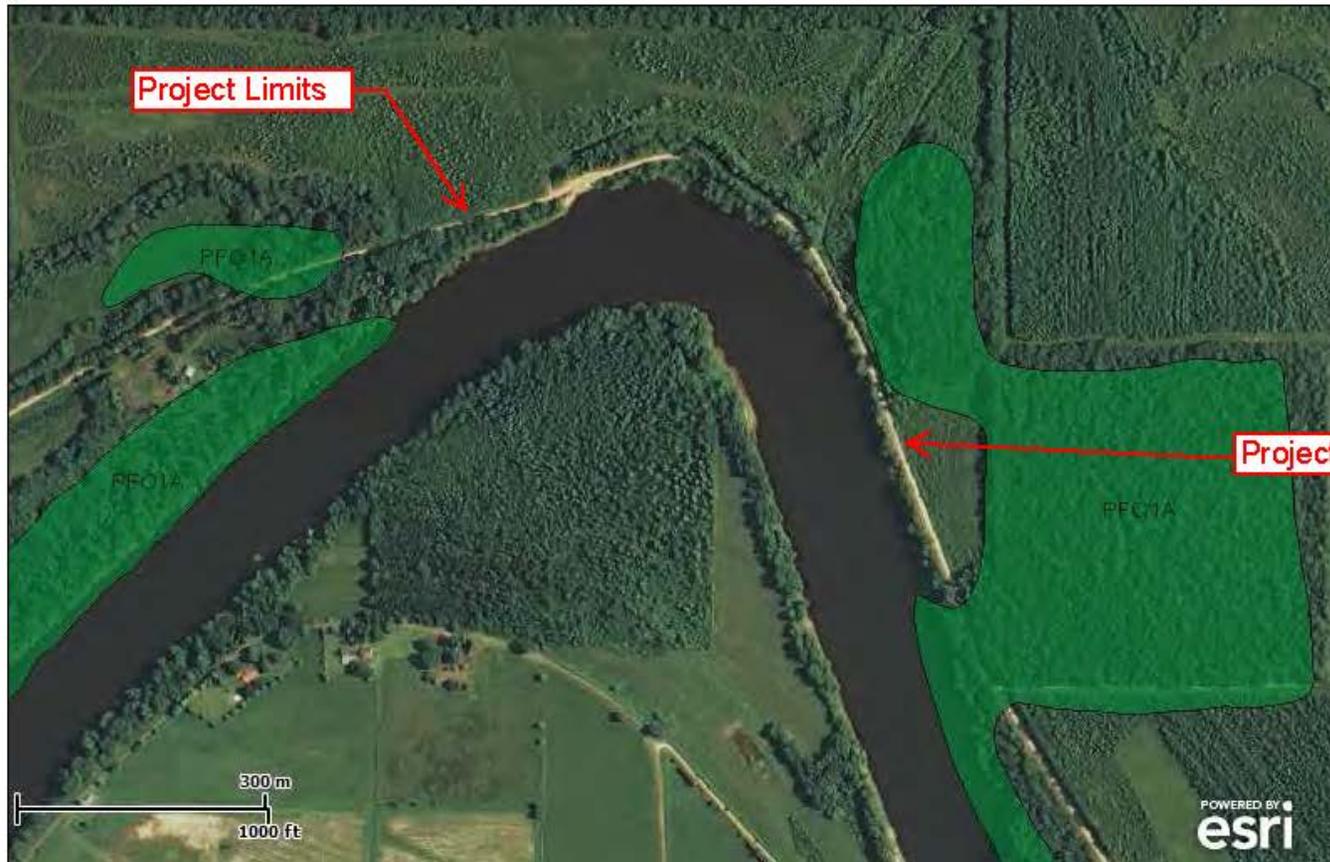


U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# National Wetlands Inventory

NWI Map

Oct 22, 2015



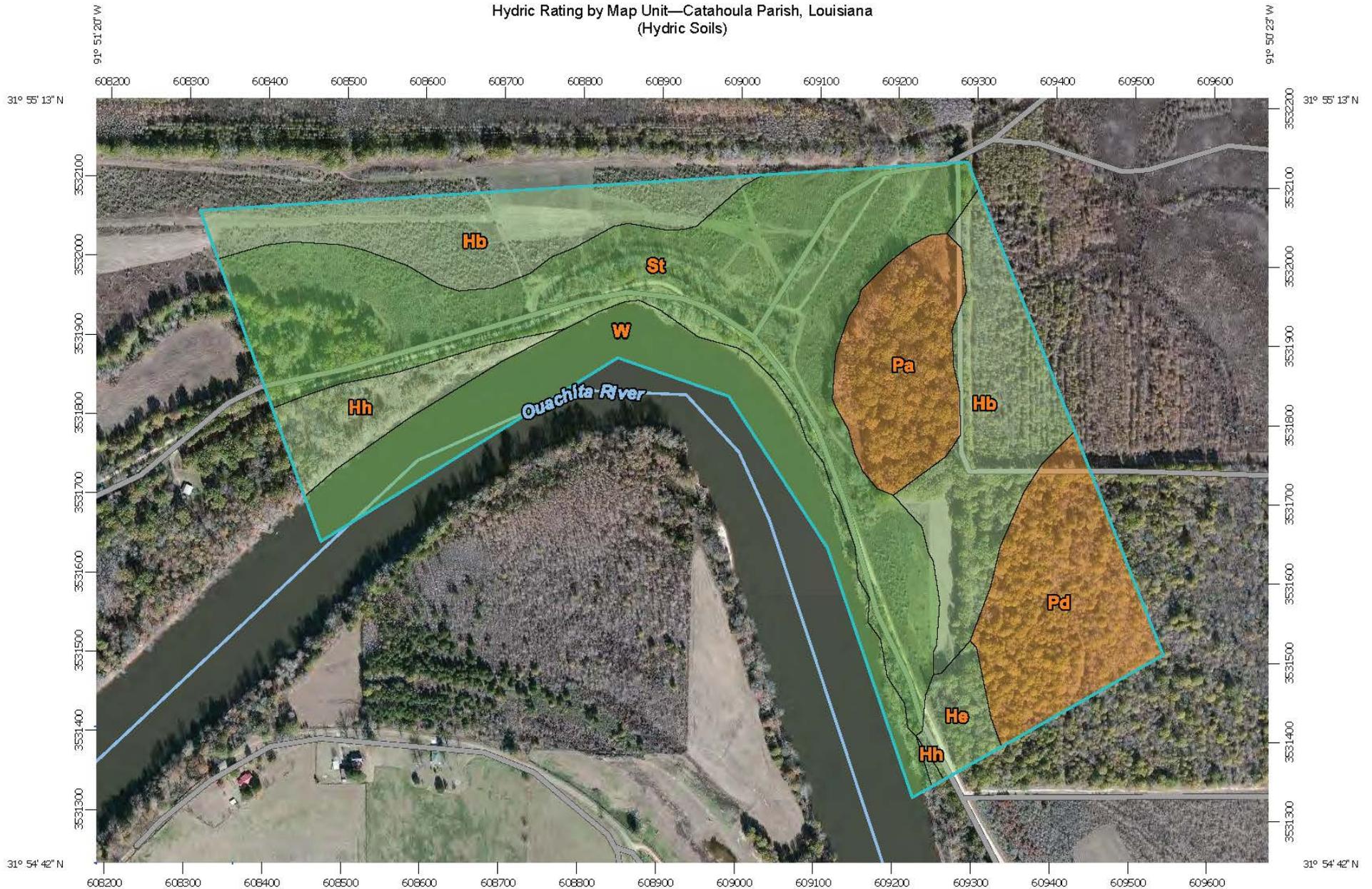
## Wetlands

- Freshwater Emergent
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub
- Estuarine and Marine Deepwater
- Estuarine and Marine
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine
- Other

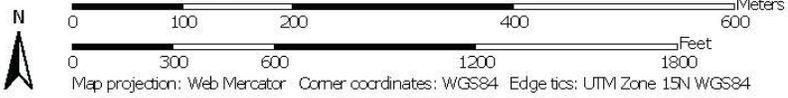
This map is for general reference only. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for the accuracy or currency of the base data shown on this map. All wetlands related data should be used in accordance with the layer metadata found on the Wetlands Mapper web site.

User Remarks:

Hydric Rating by Map Unit—Catahoula Parish, Louisiana  
(Hydric Soils)



Map Scale: 1:6,810 if printed on A landscape (11" x 8.5") sheet.



Hydric Rating by Map Unit—Catahoula Parish, Louisiana  
(Hydric Soils)

### MAP LEGEND

**Area of Interest (AOI)**

 Area of Interest (AOI)

**Soils**

**Soil Rating Polygons**

-  Hydric (100%)
-  Hydric (66 to 99%)
-  Hydric (33 to 65%)
-  Hydric (1 to 32%)
-  Not Hydric (0%)
-  Not rated or not available

**Soil Rating Lines**

-  Hydric (100%)
-  Hydric (66 to 99%)
-  Hydric (33 to 65%)
-  Hydric (1 to 32%)
-  Not Hydric (0%)
-  Not rated or not available

**Soil Rating Points**

-  Hydric (100%)
-  Hydric (66 to 99%)
-  Hydric (33 to 65%)
-  Hydric (1 to 32%)
-  Not Hydric (0%)
-  Not rated or not available

**Water Features**

 Streams and Canals

**Transportation**

-  Rails
-  Interstate Highways
-  US Routes
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads

**Background**

 Aerial Photography

### MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:24,000.

Warning: Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.

Enlargement of maps beyond the scale of mapping can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement. The maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a more detailed scale.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Web Soil Survey URL: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>  
Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Catahoula Parish, Louisiana  
Survey Area Data: Version 10, Sep 28, 2015

Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: Dec 2, 2010—Feb 13, 2011

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

## Hydric Rating by Map Unit

Hydric Rating by Map Unit— Summary by Map Unit — Catahoula Parish, Louisiana (LA025)				
Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Hb	Hebert silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	3	25.6	22.7%
He	Hebert silty clay loam	15	2.7	2.4%
Hh	Hebert silt loam, undulating, occasionally flooded	20	5.4	4.8%
Pa	Perry silty clay loam	85	9.9	8.7%
Pd	Perry clay, occasionally flooded	85	13.3	11.8%
St	Sterlington silt loam	0	40.1	35.6%
W	Water	0	15.9	14.1%
<b>Totals for Area of Interest</b>			<b>112.9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Description

This rating indicates the percentage of map units that meets the criteria for hydric soils. Map units are composed of one or more map unit components or soil types, each of which is rated as hydric soil or not hydric. Map units that are made up dominantly of hydric soils may have small areas of minor nonhydric components in the higher positions on the landform, and map units that are made up dominantly of nonhydric soils may have small areas of minor hydric components in the lower positions on the landform. Each map unit is rated based on its respective components and the percentage of each component within the map unit.

The thematic map is color coded based on the composition of hydric components. The five color classes are separated as 100 percent hydric components, 66 to 99 percent hydric components, 33 to 65 percent hydric components, 1 to 32 percent hydric components, and less than one percent hydric components.

In Web Soil Survey, the Summary by Map Unit table that is displayed below the map pane contains a column named 'Rating'. In this column the percentage of each map unit that is classified as hydric is displayed.

Hydric soils are defined by the National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils (NTCHS) as soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part (Federal Register, 1994). Under natural conditions, these soils are either saturated or inundated long enough during the growing season to support the growth and reproduction of hydrophytic vegetation.

The NTCHS definition identifies general soil properties that are associated with wetness. In order to determine whether a specific soil is a hydric soil or nonhydric soil, however, more specific information, such as information about the depth and duration of the water table, is needed. Thus, criteria that identify those estimated soil properties unique to hydric soils have been established (Federal Register, 2002). These criteria are used to identify map unit components that normally are associated with wetlands. The criteria used are selected estimated soil properties that are described in "Soil Taxonomy" (Soil Survey Staff, 1999) and "Keys to Soil Taxonomy" (Soil Survey Staff, 2006) and in the "Soil Survey Manual" (Soil Survey Division Staff, 1993).

If soils are wet enough for a long enough period of time to be considered hydric, they should exhibit certain properties that can be easily observed in the field. These visible properties are indicators of hydric soils. The indicators used to make onsite determinations of hydric soils are specified in "Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States" (Hurt and Vasilas, 2006).

### References:

Federal Register. July 13, 1994. Changes in hydric soils of the United States.

Federal Register. September 18, 2002. Hydric soils of the United States.

Hurt, G.W., and L.M. Vasilas, editors. Version 6.0, 2006. Field indicators of hydric soils in the United States.

Soil Survey Division Staff. 1993. Soil survey manual. Soil Conservation Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 18.

Soil Survey Staff. 1999. Soil taxonomy: A basic system of soil classification for making and interpreting soil surveys. 2nd edition. Natural Resources Conservation Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 436.

Soil Survey Staff. 2006. Keys to soil taxonomy. 10th edition. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

## Rating Options

*Aggregation Method:* Percent Present

*Component Percent Cutoff:* None Specified

*Tie-break Rule:* Lower

## Appendix B: Site Photographs



Right of way, west side of proposed road, facing NE



Existing conditions of proposed road, facing E



Ouachita River from ROW, facing SSW



Ouachita River bluff from existing Duty Ferry Road, facing SE



Ouachita River cut bank, NW



Overview of borrow area, E



Existing vegetation near right of way, S



Existing vegetation near right of way, SE



Existing vegetation near right of way, E

## Appendix C: Agency Consultations



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

VICKSBURG DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

4155 CLAY STREET

VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39183-3435

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

August 25, 2016

Operations Division

**SUBJECT:** Determination of Permit Requirements – Catahoula Parish Police Jury, Duty Ferry Road, Relocation Project, Extension, Louisiana; MVK-2013-355

Mr. Ellis Boothe  
Post Office Box 258  
Harrisonburg, Louisiana 71340

Dear Mr. Boothe:

I refer to your letter requesting a determination of Department of the Army permit requirements on the subject project site. The activity is located in section 22, T11N-R6E, Catahoula Parish, Louisiana, as depicted on the enclosed map (enclosure 1).

Based upon the information provided, we have determined that a Department of the Army Section 404 permit will not be required for the proposed work, since the project area identified is not considered a jurisdictional wetland or other waters of the United States. However, please be advised jurisdictional waters have been identified adjacent to portions of the project site (enclosure 2). If there are any changes to the original plans or project boundary please resubmit the activity for additional evaluation of permit requirements. For your information, I have enclosed a copy of the basis of our determination (enclosure 3) and appeals form (enclosure 4).

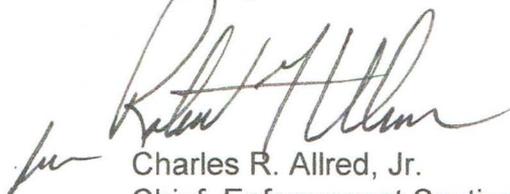
This approved jurisdictional determination is applicable for a period not to exceed five (5) years from the date of this letter unless superseded by law or regulation.

This determination of Department of the Army regulatory requirements does not convey any property rights, either in real estate or material or any exclusive privileges, and does not authorize any injury to property or invasion of rights or local laws or regulations, or obviate the requirement to obtain State or local assent required by law for the activity discussed herein.

The decision regarding this action is based on information found in the administrative record, which documents the District's decision-making process, the basis for the decision, and the final decision.

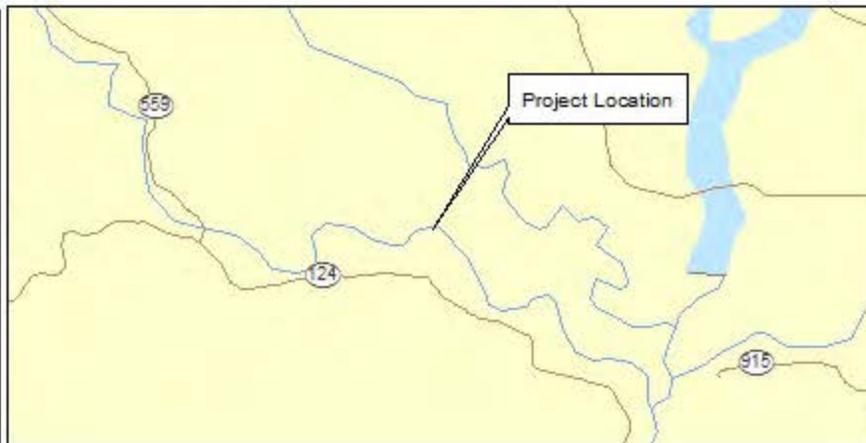
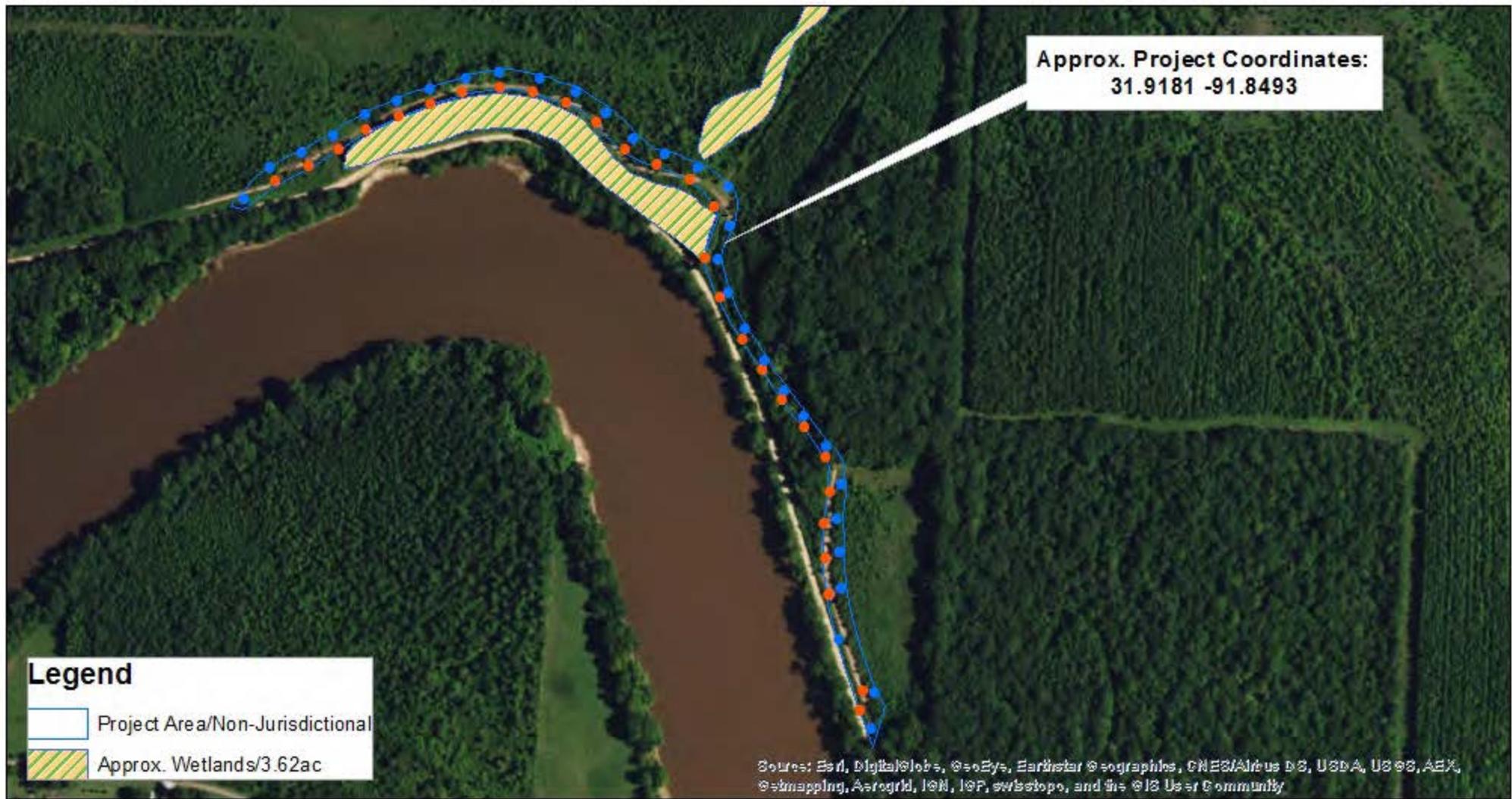
If we may be of any further assistance in this matter, please contact Mr. Robert Ulmer of this office, telephone (601) 631-5637, fax (601) 631-5459, or e-mail address: [regulatory@usace.army.mil](mailto:regulatory@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles R. Allred, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Charles R. Allred, Jr.  
Chief, Enforcement Section  
Regulatory Branch

Enclosures



**August 25, 2016**  
**MVK-2013-355**  
 Applicant:  
 Catahoula Parish Police Jury  
 Proposed Work:  
 Road Relocation Site  
 Location:  
 Section 21, T11N-R08  
 Extension, Quadrangle  
 Catahoula Parish, LA  
 Map Background:  
 NAIP Aerial Imagery (2010)  
**Preliminary**  
**Jurisdictional Determination**  
 Prepared by:  
 Robert G. Ulmer, Jr.

**US Army Corps of Engineers**

**Regulatory Branch**  
**Enforcement Section**

0 620  
 Feet

# CATAHOULA PARISH POLICE JURY

P. O. BOX 258  
HARRISONBURG, LOUISIANA 71340

*"Catahoula Cur - The Official State Dog"*

August 31, 2016

LIBBY FORD  
PRESIDENT

DELORES MCENTYRE  
VICE-PRESIDENT

PATTI C. MIZELL  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

\*\*\*\*\*

BEN OTWELL  
374 TEW LAKE ROAD  
WARD 1 • JONESVILLE, LA 71343

KALINE PATTEN  
P. O. BOX 133  
WARD 2 • SICILY ISLAND, LA 71368

JUDY DUHON  
204 MOREA ROAD  
WARD 3 • OLLA, LA 71465

HAROLD SONES  
P.O. BOX 162  
WARD 4 • HARRISONBURG, LA 71340

DELORES MCENTYRE  
871 TAUNTON ROAD  
WARD 5 • JONESVILLE, LA 71343

LIBBY FORD  
200 UNCLE JOHNIE ROAD  
WARD 6 • JONESVILLE, LA 71343

RICKIE CRUMPTON  
501 SEVENTH STREET  
WARD 7 • JONESVILLE, LA 71343

DEBRA JONES-HAWKINS  
703 FRITZ STREET  
WARD 8 • JONESVILLE, LA 71343

JACKIE PAULK  
20630 Hwy. 124  
WARD 9 • JONESVILLE, LA 71343

\*\*\*\*\*

Regular Monthly  
Meetings 2nd & 4th  
Mondays each Month  
at 6:00 p.m.

Michael Powell, Sr.  
FEMA Region VI  
Emergency Management Program Specialist  
800 N Loop 288  
Denton, TX 76209

RE: 06-LA-4102-PW-00035  
Duty Ferry Road Relocation Project  
Catahoula Parish

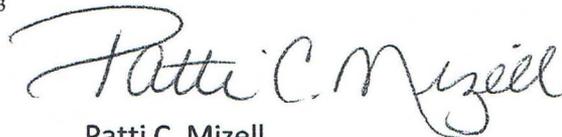
Dear Mr. Powell,

In reference to the above project located in Catahoula Parish, the placement of culverts at the following locations will not adversely affect the floodplain.

1. 12"x30' culvert – GPS location 31.918885N – 91.84803 W
2. 24"x30' culvert – GPS location 31.91824N – 91.84676W
3. 24"x30' culvert – GPS location 31.91804N – 91.84621W

If you need any further information, please contact this office.

Sincerely,



Patti C. Mizell  
Floodplain Administrator  
Catahoula Parish Police Jury

**From:** [Bianca London, Bianca](#)  
**To:** [michael.lindsey@la.usda.gov](#)  
**Cc:** [Spann, Tiffany](#); [Holmes, Leschina](#); [Myers, Megan](#); [Emery, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** NEPA Solicitation of Views Request: Catahoula Parish Police Jury, Duty Ferry Road Relocation  
**Date:** Friday, September 30, 2016 4:13:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [SOV, Map, Duty Ferry Road Relocation.pdf](#)  
[Image001.png](#)  
[NRCS-CPA-106\\_Duty\\_Ferry\\_Road\\_Relocation.pdf](#)  
[Duty\\_Ferry\\_Rd\\_relocation\\_project\\_proposed\\_location\(7-27-16\).kml](#)  
**Importance:** High

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
1500 Main St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802



September 30, 2016

MEMORANDUM TO: Michael Lindsey  
USDA-NRCS State Soil Scientist

SUBJECT: NEPA Scoping Notification/Solicitation of Views  
Catahoula Parish Police Jury, Duty Ferry Road Relocation Project  
FEMA DR-4102-LA, PW0035

Dear Mr. Lindsey:

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is mandated by the U.S. Congress to administer Federal disaster assistance pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), PL 93-288, as amended. The Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Public Assistance Grant Program to provide funds to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. FEMA is considering providing funding for the attached project in relation to the declared disaster (FEMA DR-4102-LA) as a result of severe storms and flooding from January 8 through January 17, 2013. The scope of work and attached drawings correspond to the proposed road relocation project.

As requested by the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and the Catahoula Parish Police Jury (Applicant), FEMA proposes funding the Duty Ferry Road relocation and the associated drainage improvements. The proposed project site is located northeast of Enterprise, LA between coordinates 31.917832, -91.850824 and 31.914745, -91.845099. A 72 feet long by 16 feet wide by 16 feet deep portion of Duty Ferry Road was washed out by flooding from the adjacent Ouachita River (31.918129, -91.849475). This washout reduced the width of the road and impeded the passage of vehicles. The proposed scope of work involves removing pine and various hardwood trees to allow for site preparation and grading, installing culvert filter fabric into any drainage area, re-seeding and mulching disturbed areas, and rebuilding and replacing gravel base on the roadway to current codes and standards. The proposed work would support the need of the Applicant by improving public safety along the specified section of Duty Ferry Road.

To ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Executive Orders (EOs), and other applicable Federal regulations, FEMA-EHP will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA). To assist us in preparation of the EA, we request that your office review the attached documents for a determination as to the requirements of any formal consultations, regulatory permits, determinations, or authorizations.

Please respond within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of this scoping notification. If our office receives no comments at the close of this period, we will assume that your agency does not object to the project as proposed.

Comments may be emailed to [bianca.kinglondon@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:bianca.kinglondon@fema.dhs.gov) or mailed to the attention of Bianca King London, Environmental & Historic Preservation Department, at the address above.

For questions regarding this matter, please contact Bianca King London, Environmental Protection Specialist at (225)202-5463.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Spann-Winfield,  
Deputy Environmental Liaison Officer  
Region VI – LRO

Distribution: NRCS (Michael Lindsey)



October 3, 2016

Ms. Bianca King London  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
1500 Main St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802

RE: NEPA Solicitation of Views Request: Catahoula Parish Police Jury  
Duty Ferry Road Relocation

Dear Ms. London:

I have reviewed the above referenced project for potential requirements of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) and potential impact to Natural Resource Conservation Service projects in the immediate vicinity.

Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use and are completed by a federal agency or with assistance from a federal agency. For the purpose of FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land.

The project map and narrative submitted with your request indicates that the proposed construction areas are of small acreage extent (i.e., 10 acres or less per linear mile or 3 acres where there is an existing bridge or interchange) and therefore is exempt from the rules and regulations of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)—Subtitle I of Title XV, Section 1539-1549. Furthermore, we do not predict impacts to NRCS work in the vicinity.

For specific information about the soils found in the project area, please visit our Web Soil Survey at the following location: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Please direct all future correspondence to me at the address shown below.

Respectfully,

Acting for:  
Kevin D. Norton  
State Conservationist



# FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Region 6 EHP  
800 North Loop 288  
Denton, Texas 76209

September 2, 2016

Mr. Phillip E. Boggan II  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism  
P.O. Box 44247  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

**RE: Section 106 Review Consultation, FEMA-4102-DR-LA, PW #35**

**Applicant:** Catahoula Parish Police Jury

**Undertaking:** Duty Ferry Road Relocation

**Location:** Duty Ferry Road, Start: (31.91784, -91.85069); Stop: (31.91403, -91.84478); Culvert 1 (12 in. x 30 ft.): (31.918885, -91.84803); Culvert 2 (24 in. x 30 ft.): (31.91824, -91.84676); Culvert 3 (24 in. x 30 ft.): (31.91804, -91.84621)

**Determination:** No Historic Properties Affected

Dear Mr. Boggan:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be providing funds authorized under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288, as amended, in response to Disaster Declaration FEMA-4102-DR-LA, dated February 22, 2013. FEMA, through its Public Assistance (PA) Program, proposes to fund the above referenced Undertaking as requested by the Applicant. FEMA is initiating Section 106 review, in accordance with the Louisiana State-Specific Programmatic Agreement among FEMA, the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas (ACTT), the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana (CTL), the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO), the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians (JBCI), the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI), the Seminole Tribe of Florida (STF), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) regarding FEMA's HMGP dated January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 (2011 LA HMGP PA) and providing the SHPO and Tribes with the opportunity to consult on the proposed Undertaking.

**Background**

During the incident period, from January 8 to January 17, 2013, severe storms and flooding affected major portions of Louisiana, including Catahoula Parish. Heavy rainfall from the severe storms and riverine flooding on the Ouachita River saturated and eroded the riverbank, causing a major section of the road to fail. Due to the failure, the road was no longer passable and was a safety hazard to

local motorists. In order to bypass the failed section of the roadway, the Catahoula Parish Police Jury Highway Department (Applicant) created a temporary road along an existing two-track dirt road on private property to the north and east of the failure.

### **Project Description**

As a least cost alternative to repairing the failed section of roadway, the applicant has proposed to permanently relocate Duty Ferry Road along the temporary road which is currently being used. The proposed realignment will require grading and shaping to expand the temporary road to meet codes and standards for the 3,000 ft. long by 18 ft. wide roadway with a 50 ft. wide right of way along the route shown in the attached map (Start: 31.91784, -91.85069; Stop: 31.91403, -91.84478). The project entails the grubbing and removal of trees from the right of way to allow for site preparation and grading, the addition and compaction of base material and surface aggregate, and the installation of culverts at the three locations; Culvert 1 (12 in. x 30 ft.): (31.918885, -91.84803), Culvert 2 (24 in. x 30 ft.): (31.91824, -91.84676), and Culvert 3 (24 in. x 30 ft.): (31.91804, -91.84621). The culverts will be placed at the existing ground level and fill will be placed on top to meet the grade of the roadway. The project will also require the installation of silt fencing to prevent erosion during construction, installing filter fabric into any drainage area, re-seeding and mulching of disturbed areas.

### **Area of Potential Effect**

In accordance with Stipulation VIII.A of the 2009 LA Statewide PA, FEMA has determined that the Area of Potential Affect (APE) for the proposed undertaking shall include the area within a 50 meter (164 ft.) buffer of the center line of the proposed right of way. This includes all areas where ground disturbing activities will occur. Vehicles and equipment will be staged from the existing roadway. *See APE Map.*

### **Identification of Historic Properties**

The regulation found at 36 CFR 800.4(b) (1) states that federal agency officials shall make a “reasonable and good faith effort” to identify historic properties. FEMA conducted research using the Louisiana Division of Archaeology’s Cultural Resource database and associated site files, photographs, and maps to identify historic properties within the vicinity of the APE. There has been no systematic survey and there are no known sites within the APE. There are several previously recorded sites within one mile of the APE.

- **16CT146** - The Jim Ruddle site, located on the natural levee along Duty Ferry Road approximately one half mile west of the proposed project. Recorded in the late 1970’s, 16CT146 is a moderately dense earth midden containing ceramics, lithics, shell, and faunal bone fragments. It is currently used as an agricultural field. However, in situ deposits may remain intact at depth and the site is considered eligible.
- **16CT219** - Also known as NWR-CT-5, the site is a low density lithic scatter along the east bank of the Ouachita River, approximately 0.75 miles south-southeast of the project area. It has been highly disturbed and is considered destroyed.

- **16CT220** - Also known as NWR-CT-6, the site is located immediately to the south of 16CT219. The site contains a moderate density midden containing lithics and ceramics. The landowner reported finding celts in the area.
- **16CT15/16CT137** – McDuffy Mounds is a large multi-component mound complex just under one mile to the south of the project area, along Big Lake, a former oxbow of the Ouachita River. The site(s) have been the subject on numerous investigations in the past. At the time they were recorded, the mounds were actively being impacted by agricultural development. While the mounds have largely been destroyed, substantial portions of the site(s) may remain intact and the site(s) are considered potentially eligible.

Although there are no recorded sites within the APE, based on the local site distribution pattern, it is within an area of moderately high probability. Considering the local topography, and the location of the APE on the cut bank of the river, the potential for the presence of archaeological sites is considered moderate to high.

### **Findings of Effect**

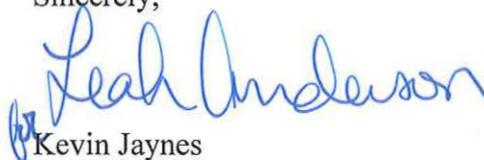
Based on information gathered through this review process, FEMA has made a determination of **No Historic Properties Affected** as a result of the proposed undertaking, under the condition of Negative Findings following a Phase I Archaeological Survey.

*FEMA shall ensure that an Archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior Professional Qualification Standards performs a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey pursuant to the State of Louisiana Division of Archaeology Guidelines.*

We respectfully request concurrence with this determination. A copy of the archaeological survey report will be provided upon completion of the survey. An aerial map, topographical map, APE map, and cultural resources map showing the project locations are attached.

Your timely review of this project is greatly appreciated. Should you need additional information please contact James A. Leamy III, FEMA Historic Preservation Specialist, at 940-297-0207 or at [james.leafyiii@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:james.leafyiii@fema.dhs.gov).

Sincerely,



Kevin Jaynes  
Regional Environmental Officer  
FEMA Region 6

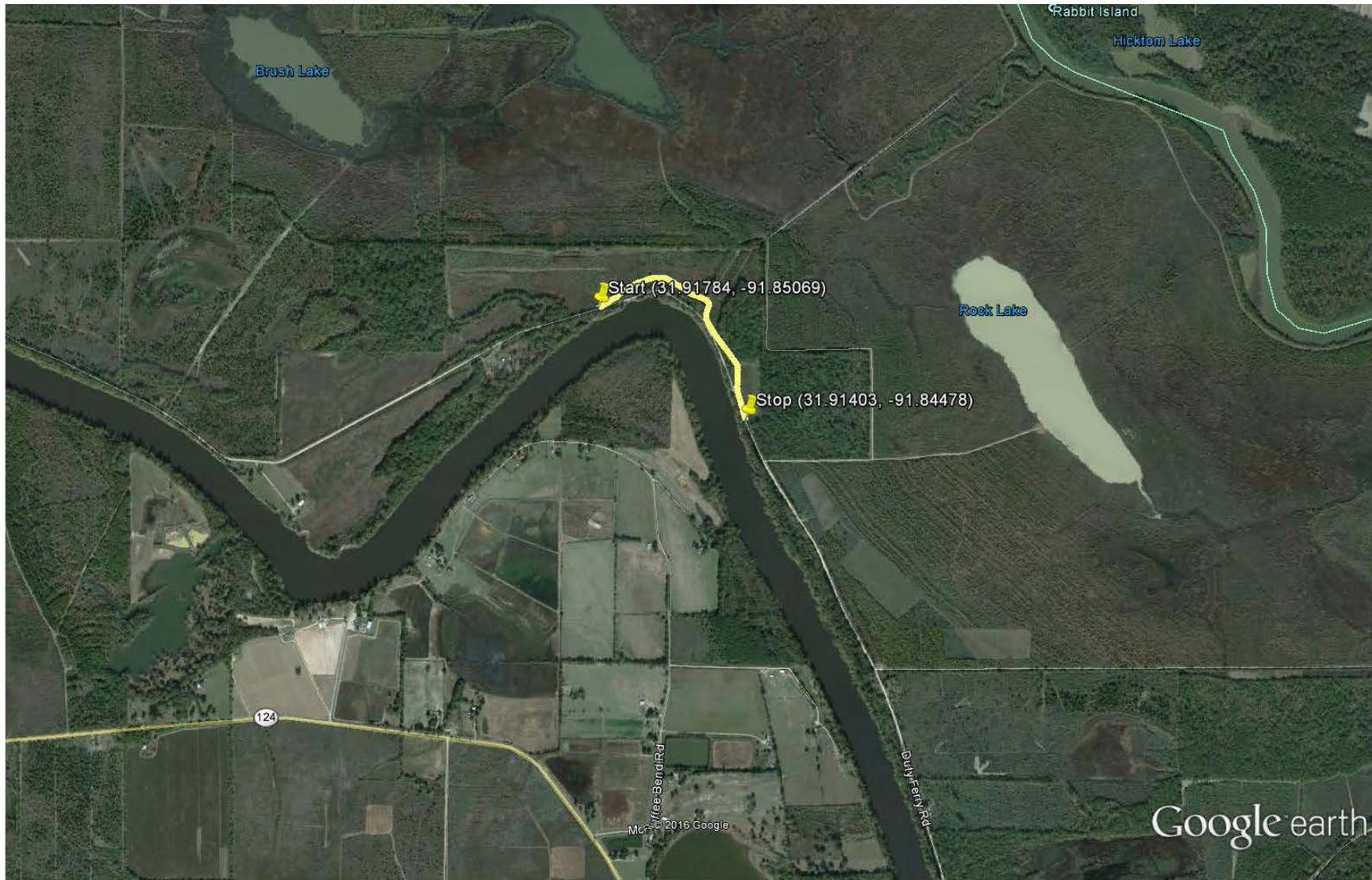


Figure 1. Aerial Location Map



Figure 2. Topographical Map

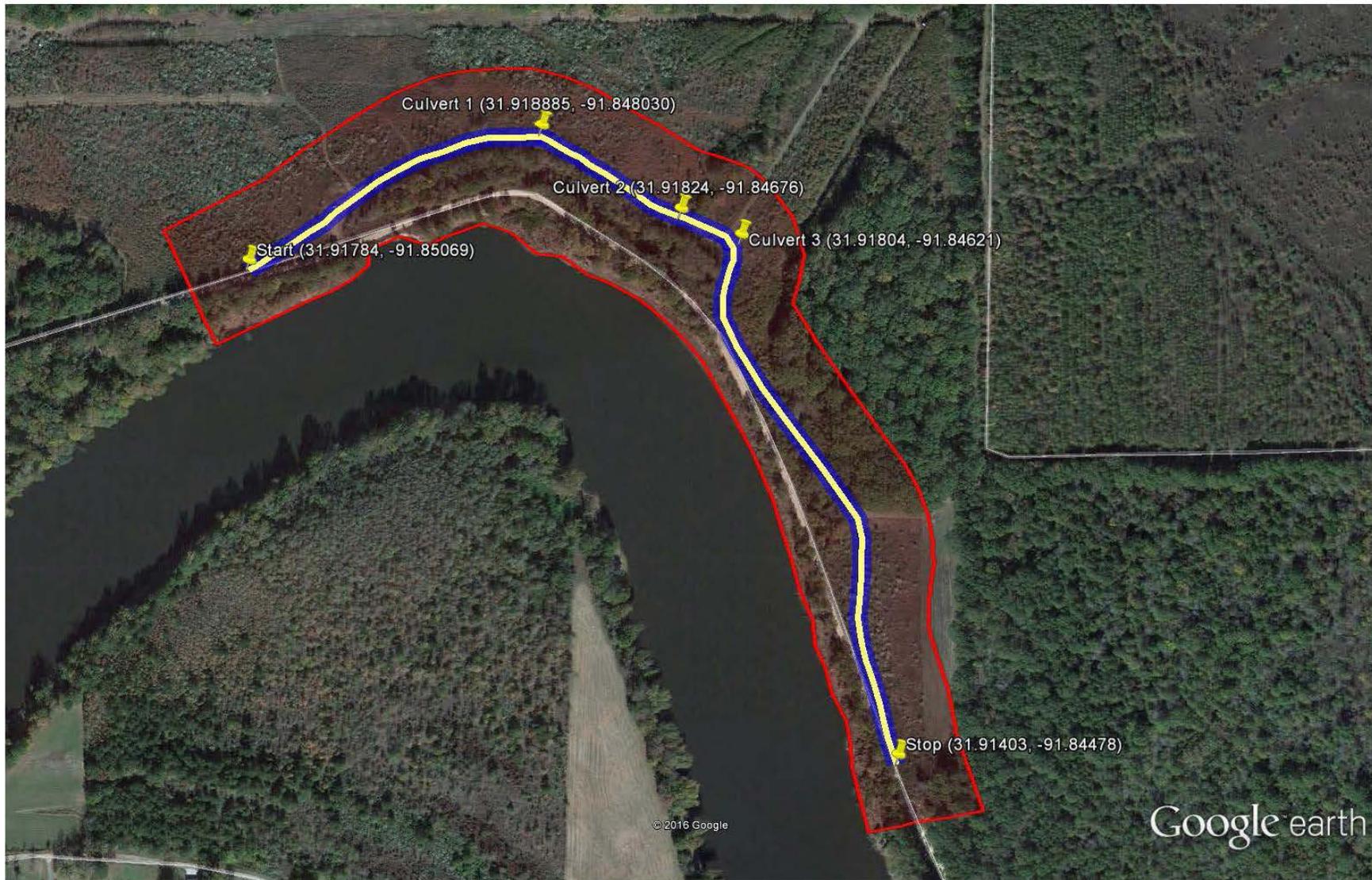


Figure 3. Aerial image showing the proposed alignment (yellow), the limits of work for the Right of Way (blue), culvert locations, and the 50 meter APE buffer (red).

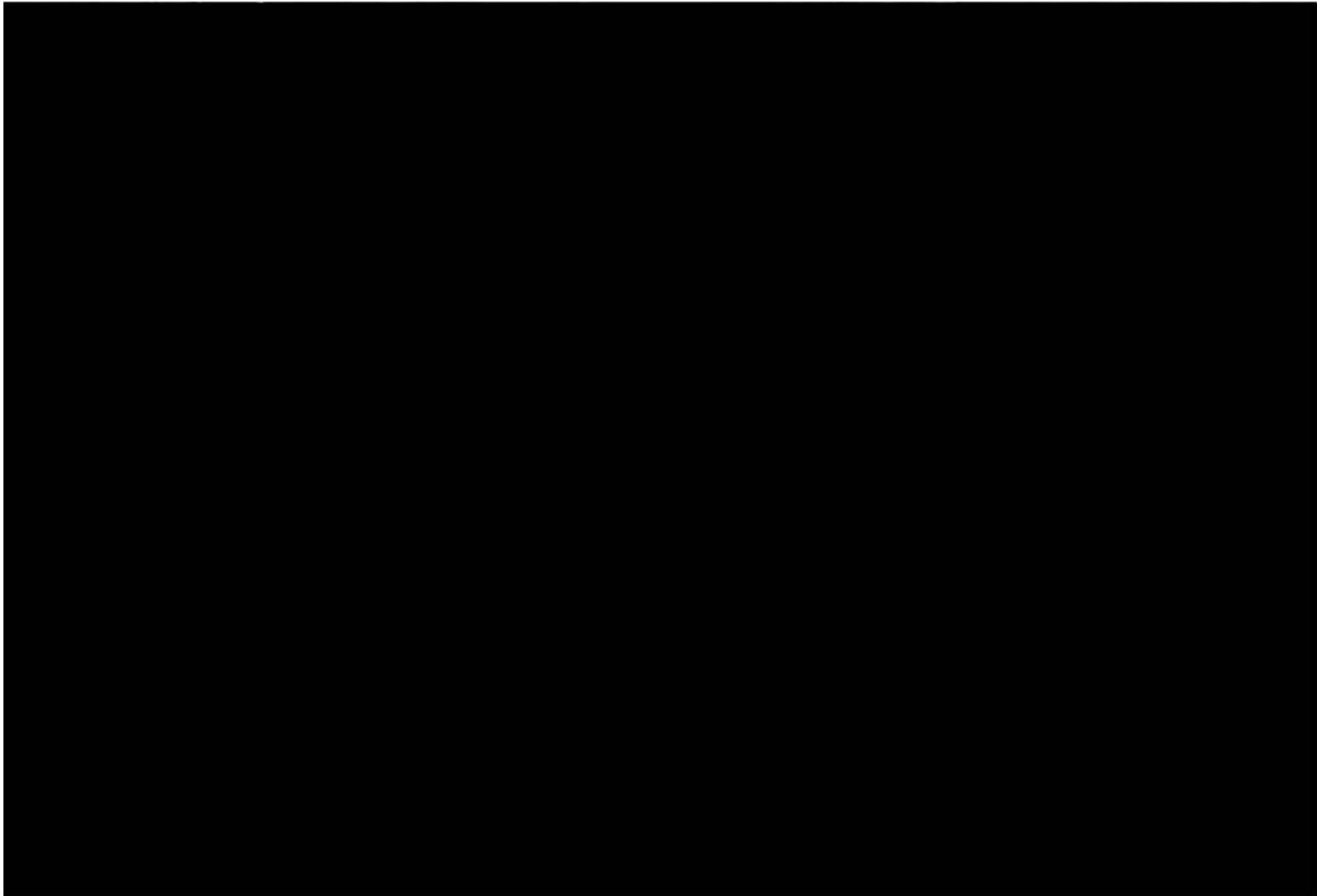


Figure 4. Cultural Resources Map

Attachment 2:

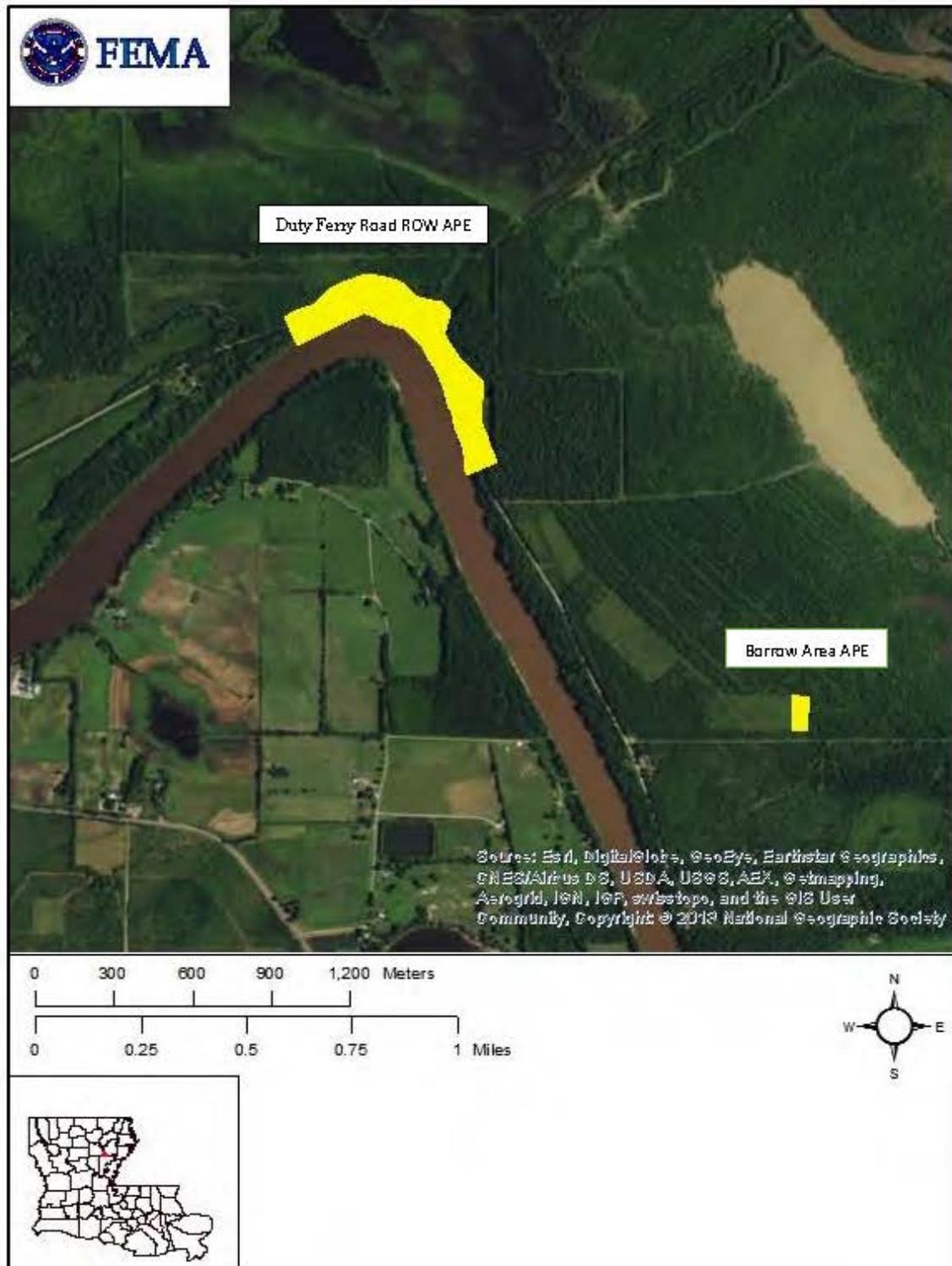


Figure 1. Aerial image showing the locations of Duty Ferry Road ROW encompassing the proposed alternative road and the Barrow Area APE encompassing the proposed borrow pit area.