



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

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP10-WC01-10  
CESAM-PD-EC

April 27, 2010

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
AND  
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
HURRICANE AND STORM DAMAGE REDUCTION PROJECT  
FOR  
WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District is seeking Federal authorization to conduct a hurricane and storm damage reduction project for Walton County, Florida. Walton County's shoreline located in the Florida's panhandle is receding; the protective dunes and high bluffs are being destroyed by hurricane and storm forces that are occurring more frequently than before. The impacts of these storms to property and environmental resources are considerable and can possibly be reduced through a beach restoration and stabilization project which also includes environmental restoration opportunities associated with the beach and dune system. A feasibility study was authorized by a resolution of both the United States Senate and House of Representatives, which reads as follows:

Resolution Adopted July 15, 2002, by The United States Senate:

*"Resolved by the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate, That in accordance with Section 110 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1962, the Secretary of the Army is requested to review the feasibility of providing beach nourishment, shore protection and related improvements in Walton County, Florida, in the interest of protecting and restoring the environmental resources on and behind the beach, including the feasibility of providing shoreline and erosion protection and related improvements consistent with the unique characteristics of the existing beach sand, and with consideration of the need to develop a comprehensive body of knowledge, information, and data on coastal area changes and processes as well as impacts from federally constructed projects in the vicinity of Walton County, Florida."*

Resolution Adopted July 24, 2002, by The United States House of Representatives:

*"Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That in accordance with Section 110 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1962, the Secretary of the Army is requested to review the feasibility of providing beach nourishment, shore protection and environmental restoration and protection in the vicinity of Walton County, Florida."*

The non-federal sponsor is the Walton County Board of Commissioners. Their central point of contact is the Director of Beach Management for the Walton County Tourist Development Council (TDC).

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

**WATERWAY AND LOCATION:** Walton County, Florida

**PROJECT AREA LOCATION:** Walton County is located approximately 103 miles east of Pensacola, Florida and 98 miles west of Tallahassee, Florida. The beaches of Walton County encompass approximately 26 miles of shoreline extending from the City of Destin in Okaloosa County, Florida (about six miles to the east of East Pass) to the Walton/Bay County line near Phillips Inlet (Figure 1). The western two-thirds of Walton County are comprised of a coastal peninsula extending from the mainland, and the eastern third is comprised of mainland beaches. Choctawhatchee Bay lies north of the peninsula. Walton County includes 11.9 miles of state-designated critically eroding areas and three State of Florida park areas that cover approximately six miles of the 26-mile shoreline.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The Walton County upland cross-section is defined by dune elevations ranging from +9.5 to +33 feet NAVD88 and a natural berm elevation of +5.5 feet NAVD88. The study region was divided into five study reaches based on structural development and state park areas as illustrated in Figure 2. The historical and 2004 beach surveys were used to develop 11 representative profiles which characterize the existing condition for the five study reaches. The representative profiles were identified based on similarity in shape of the upper beach profile (dune height and width, berm width, foreshore beach slope, and profile volume) and shape of the offshore profile.

The selected plan recommended for construction consists of the five construction reaches (Figure 2). The project will be composed of a 50-foot berm width, a 25-foot berm and an additional 25 feet of advanced nourishment in all construction reaches. The project will also feature added dune width in all construction reaches of either 10 or 30 feet. It is estimated that the necessary beach fill requirements will be 3,350,000 cubic yards (cy). Re-nourishments will be on a 12-year cycle with predicted volumes to be approximately 2,000,000 cy. Approved borrow sources lie offshore within the State of Florida waters. The typical cross-sections for the selected plan are illustrated in Figure 3. When dune construction is complete, the dune will be planted with at least three species of dune vegetation to create a dune that matches the surrounding natural dune patterns in the area. Upon reconstruction immediate steps will be taken to plant and stabilize the dune for rapid stabilization. This will be accomplished through the use of sand fences and dune plants. The dune plants will be planted to cover 60-80% of the total area. The vegetation will consist of local dominant species that populate nearby natural dune systems. The selection of the

dune vegetation will consist of species that are most widely used for dune restoration and are readily available from local nurseries and suppliers. The selection will be coordinated with local experts familiar with dune ecosystems in the immediate area.

A large scale reconnaissance level geophysical, lithological and granulometric grain size investigation was undertaken off Walton County, Florida. Sub-bottom profiles were used to locate prospective core locations to identify high quality sand sources for beach nourishment. Vibracores and selected seismic records were interpreted to confirm the proposed borrow contains suitable beach compatible sediment. The borrow sediments are characterized as well sorted medium sand 0.25 - 0.50 mm. Borrow area B-4 shown on Figure 4 is the borrow site that was selected with some 10,000,000 cy proven by these initial investigations. This volume covers the recommended plan placement and the four planned subsequent re-nourishments for the next 50 years. The B-4 borrow area is most centrally located and offers the best source for the initial project construction and future re-nourishments. Based on the extensive geotechnical investigations, this borrow site has been demonstrated to be the most suitable source and has sand of color, size, and composition generally similar to that of the native beach. All materials used for beach nourishment will be excavated by hopper dredge, transported to the placement area offshore and pumped into the beach template. Small bulldozers will be used on land to shape the material to the design template (Figure 3).

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION:** Pursuant to the requirements of the Clean Water Act, State Water Certification is required for the proposed action. Water quality certification is being requested for a period of ten years. Upon completion of the required comment period and the State of Florida permitting requirements, a decision relative to water quality certification will be made by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

**COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY:** Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act, the proposed action is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program to the maximum extent practicable. Upon completion of the required comment period and the State of Florida permitting requirements, a decision relative to coastal zone consistency will be made by DEP.

**USE BY OTHERS:** The proposed action is not expected to create significant impacts on land and water use plans.

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS:**  
The impacts associated with the dredging of the borrow site and beach placement activities have been addressed in the recent Draft 2010 Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Walton County, Florida Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Project, Walton County, Florida. A copy of the Draft EA is available for review at the following website: [www.sam.usace.army.mil/Pd1.htm](http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Pd1.htm).

**SECTION 404(b)(1) EVALUATION REPORT:** An evaluation of water quality impacts associated with the proposed action was prepared in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Impacts associated with this action include a temporary increase in turbidity and suspended solids concentrations in and adjacent to the disposal areas, short-term elimination of benthic organisms and localized short-term degradation of esthetics near the disposal area. A Draft 404(b)(1) Evaluation Report has been prepared is available for review at the follow website:  
[www.sam.usace.army.mil/Pd1.htm](http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Pd1.htm).

**ENDANGERED/THREATENED SPECIES:** There are several listed endangered and/or threatened species that would be affected by the proposed action. The known list of threatened or/and endangered species (T/E) and their critical habitats in the vicinity of the project include: sea turtles, Gulf sturgeon and associated critical habitat, piping plover, Choctawhatchee beach mouse (CBM) and associated critical habitat, and West Indian manatee. Previous coordination by the local sponsor (Walton county) has been conducted for the local Walton County Beach Nourishment Project in the same area, with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). This coordination resulted in the preparation of a biological opinion (BO), which indicated that although the action may affect sea turtles, piping plover, and the CBM, it is their opinion that the effects of the proposed activities are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these species and not likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat for the CBM. It has also been determined that the action is not likely to affect the West Indian manatee.

The Gulf sturgeon and their associated critical habitat fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Previous consultation with NMFS for the local Walton County plan has indicated that similar actions were not likely to adversely affect Gulf sturgeon and is not likely to adversely affect Gulf Sturgeon critical habitat.

The Corps has initiated coordination with these agencies for the selected Federal plan to assure avoidance of any conflicts with these or other known threatened and endangered species and their critical habitats. Areas where the known species are suspected will be monitored before, during and after dredged disposal activities.

**ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT:** Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) is defined as waters and substrates necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity, the designation and conservation of EFH seeks to minimize adverse effects on habitat caused by fishing and non-fishing activities. The NMFS has identified EFH habitats for the Gulf of Mexico in its Fishery Management Plan Amendments. These habitats include estuarine areas, such as estuarine emergent wetlands, seagrass beds, algal flats, mud, sand, shell, and rock substrates, and the estuarine water column.

During dredging and placement activities most of the motile benthic and pelagic fauna, such as crab, shrimp, and fish, should be able to avoid the disturbed area and should recover shortly after the activity is completed. The selected borrow area is characterized as sandy bottom and does not contain any hard-bottoms, coral reefs, oyster beds, or seagrasses. No long-term direct impacts to managed species are anticipated.

However, it is reasonable to anticipate some non-motile and motile invertebrate species will be physically affected through the dredging and placement operations. These species are expected to recover rapidly after the dredging and disposal operations are complete.

Based on the above assessment of the project in relation to impacts to fisheries resources, the overall impact to identified species is considered negligible given the relatively small area. This action is being coordinated with the NMFS, Habitat Conservation Division pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (PL 94-265).

**CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSIDERATION:** In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and other relevant cultural resource laws, recommendations and actions are being coordinated with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (FLSHPO). The borrow area was surveyed for cultural resources in May and June of 2007 in which the survey found no cultural resources eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Historic Properties). The shoreline will be reconstructed to historic dimensions. The nature of the work is such that the deposition will have no effect on historic properties. In addition, the nature of the project precludes any visual effects to historic properties. Based on this information, and the nature of the project, the Mobile District, as lead Federal agency, has determined that the project will have no effect on historic properties as per 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1).

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

**EVALUATION:** The decision whether to proceed with the proposed action would be based on an evaluation of the overall public interest. That decision would reflect the national concerns for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits that may be expected to accrue from this proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to proceed, and the conditions under which the activity would occur, would be determined by the outcome of this general balancing process. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal would be considered. Among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the public.

**April 27, 2010**

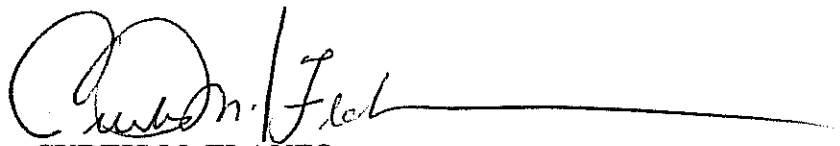
The proposed action would proceed unless it is found to be contrary to the overall public interest. Inasmuch as the proposed work would involve dredging and discharge of materials into navigable waters, specification of the proposed placement sites associated with this Federal project is being made through the application of guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army. If these guidelines alone prohibit the specification of any proposed disposal site, any potential impairment of the maintenance of navigation, including any economic impacts on navigation and anchorage that would result from the failure to use this site would also be considered.

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

Region 4, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Field Representative, Fish and Wildlife Service  
Regional Director, National Park Service  
Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service  
Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District  
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

Other Federal, State, and local organizations, affiliated Indian Tribe interests, and U.S. Senators and Representatives of the State of Florida are being sent copies of the notice and are being asked to participate in coordinating this proposed work.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Any person who has an interest that may be affected by the proposed activity may request a public hearing. Any comments or requests for a public hearing must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within 30 days of the date of this public notice. A request for a hearing must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected. You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any other parties who may have an interest in the proposed activities. Correspondence concerning the public notice should refer to Public Notice No. FP10-WC01-10 and should be directed to the Commander, U.S. Army Engineer District, Mobile, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, ATTN: CESAM-PD-EC. For additional information please contact Mr. Larry Parson at (251) 690-3139.

  
**CURTIS M. FLAKES**  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mobile District

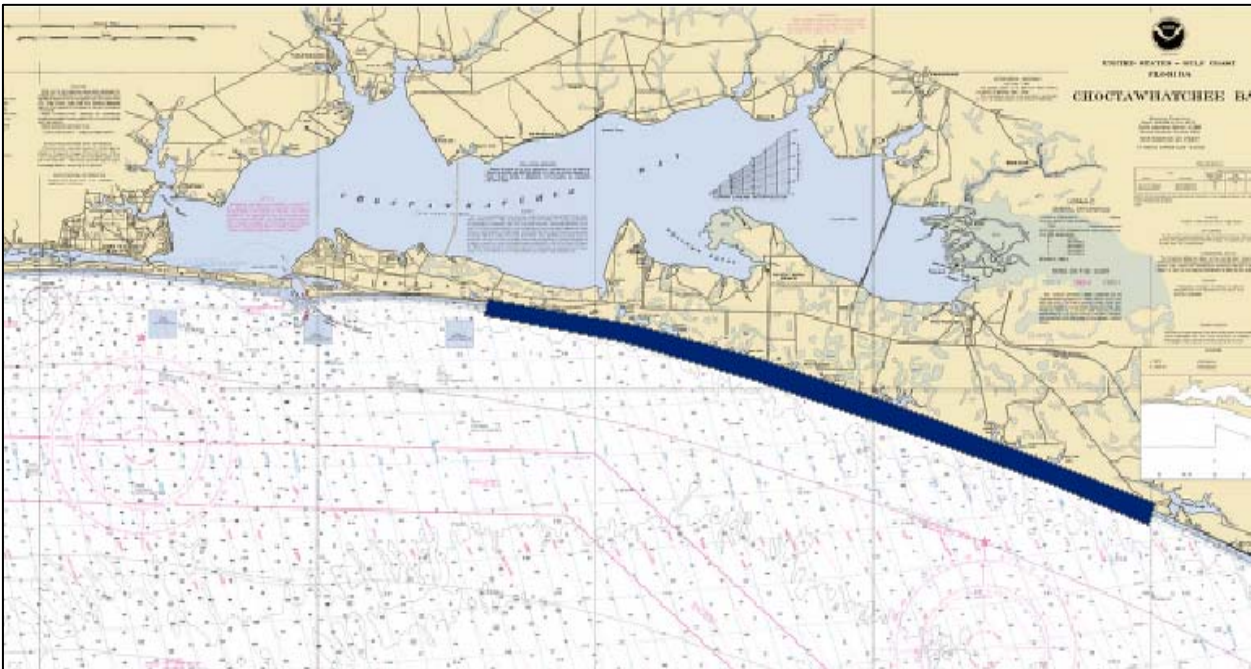


Figure 1. Location of Walton County project area

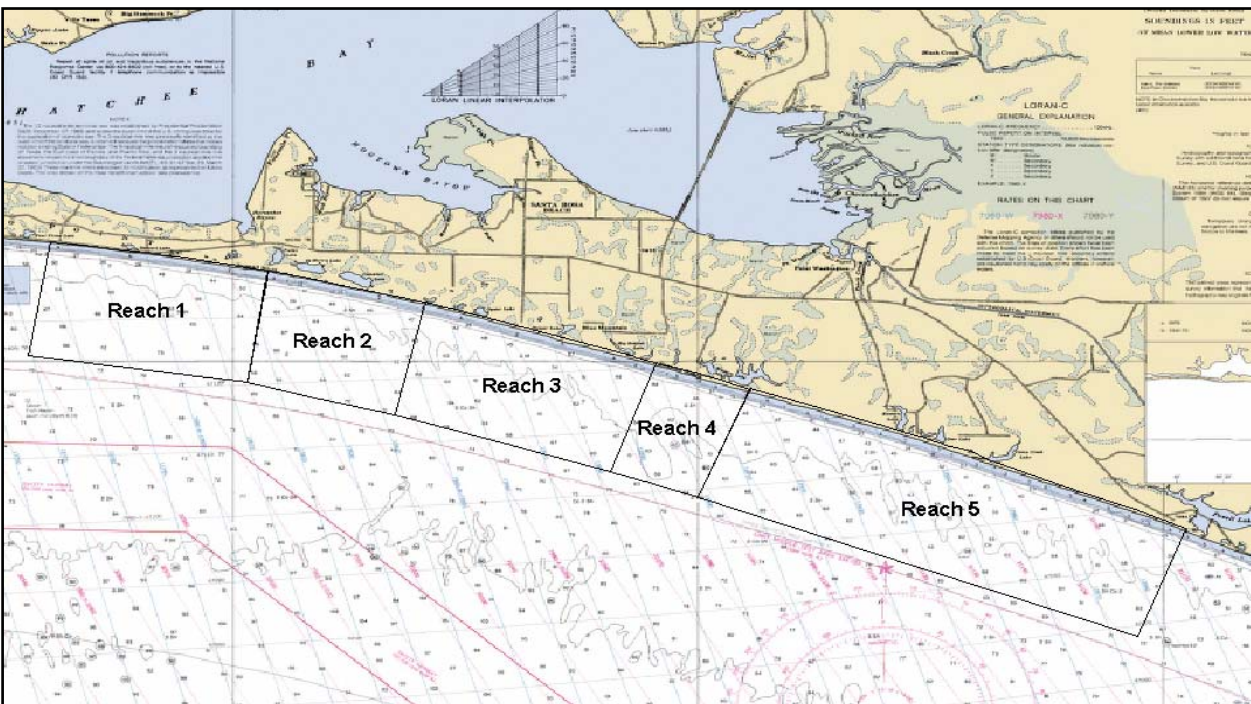


Figure 2. Location of the 5 construction reaches within the project area.

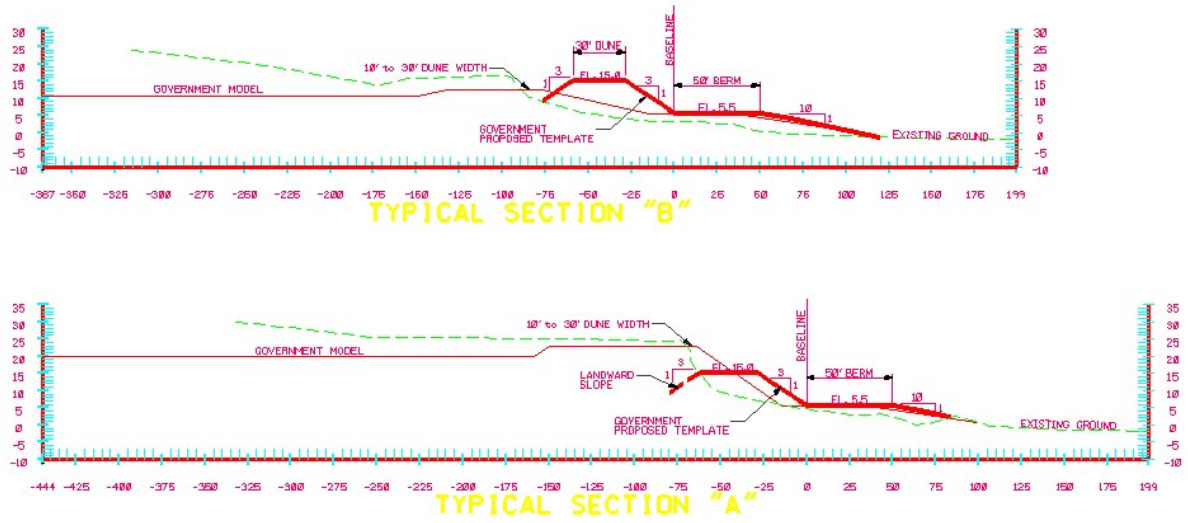


Figure 3. Selected plan typical cross sections to be constructed

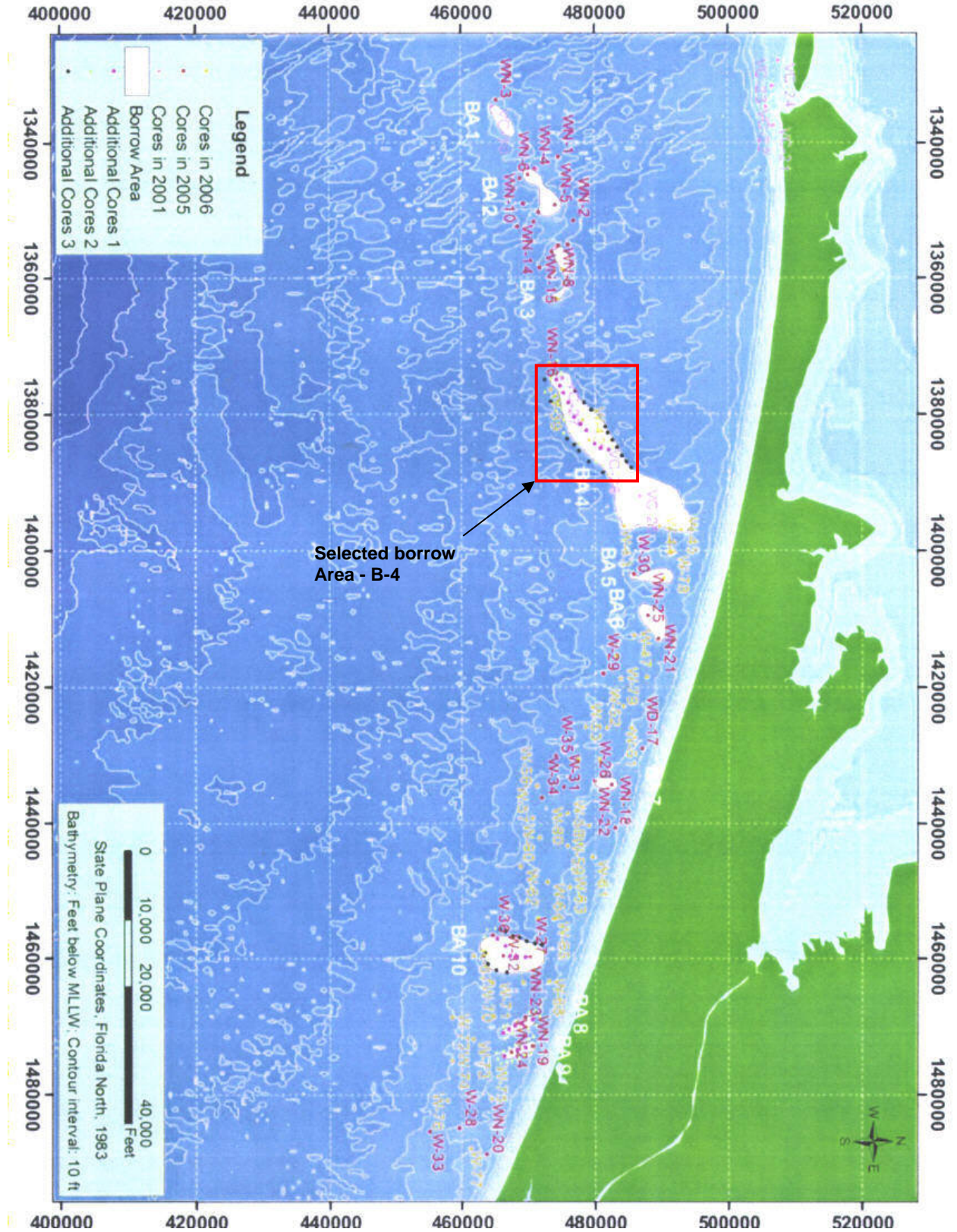


Figure 4. Borrow area investigation locations and selected borrow site.