



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

CESAM-RD-I-N

June 28, 2008

PUBLIC NOTICE NO. SAM-2008-00872-CJH

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND  
STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

PROPOSED PORT EPES CARBON ALLOY SYNTHESIS FACILITY  
EPES, SUMTER COUNTY ALABAMA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: This District has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344). This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons to assist in developing facts on which a decision by the Corps can be based. Please communicate this information to interested parties.

**APPLICANT:** United States Steel Corporation  
Attn: Mr. Scott Unruh  
5700 Valley Road  
Fairfield, Alabama 35064

**AGENT:** TTL, Inc.  
Attn: Kimberly Harruff  
2743 B Gunter Park Drive, West  
Montgomery, Alabama 36109

**LOCATION:** The subject site is approximately 350 acres located north of Port of Epes Highway and south of the Tombigbee River in Epes, Sumter County, Alabama. The site is located in Sections 28 and 29, Township 20 North, Range 1 West, as shown on the Epes East, Alabama 7.5 Minute USGS Topographic Map (Photo revised 1986). The project area is located at latitude 32° 40' 42" North and longitude 88° 5' 59" West. It is located within the Hydrologic Unit Code 03160106 of the Middle Tombigbee-Lubbub River Basin.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** The project area has been leased for agricultural (cattle) and passive recreation (hunting and fishing) purposes for the past eleven years. Directly adjacent (east) to the port, a portion of the property has been leased for the stockpiling and transportation of aggregate. Historically, the site has also been impacted by the construction of Port Epes. Further impacts include chalk mining and the stockpiling of waste (woodchips, mining overburden, aggregate, and other industrial debris) materials on-site. Drainage ditches have been excavated adjacent to the stockpiled material and continue north until they merge with an intermittent stream.

**WORK:** The applicant, U.S. Steel (USS), proposes to construct a carbon alloy synthesis facility. The facility will be located in Port Epes, on the banks of the Tombigbee River in Sumter County, Alabama. USS will initially invest \$150 million (Phase I) to construct a carbon alloy synthesis facility that will process coal into a material called Cokonyx™. Phase I as proposed is a 450,000

square-foot facility will produce 250,000 tons of Cokonyx™ carbon alloy material per year. Depending on the business market, USS may eventually increase production and invest another \$300 million to expand the processing facility and construct three additional 270,000 square-foot buildings at the Port Epes facility which may require a phase II project.

Cokonyx™ will be used as a substitute for traditional coke (an essential ingredient in the steel making process). The Cokonyx™ process is more efficient than existing coke production facilities. The USS Fairfield steel production plant obtains coke from overseas markets that have been plagued with rising prices. Producing the coke alternative in Alabama for use at the USS plant located in Fairfield, Alabama will reduce steel production costs and potentially increase the United States' competitiveness in the global steel marketplace.

The coke alternative process uses recaptured gases to produce steam and generate electricity. USS officials state that the operation will include a cogeneration facility to be completed during future construction phases that will provide power for its operation and Alabama Power Company.

The USS facility requires a location that can be serviced by both rail and water. The Port Epes area fulfills this need and allows for coal to be delivered by barge and the finished carbon alloy material to be transported by rail to the USS Fairfield facility. Barge service would not be used during initial phases but may be important during future operations. The use of water and rail as the primary means of transporting raw and finished materials will eliminate a secondary construction impact of widening State Highway 11 to accommodate heavy truck traffic associated with the facility. USS anticipates a minimal increase of truck traffic associated with facility operations.

Sumter County is located in the Black Belt region of Alabama. The Black Belt region is one of the most economically depressed regions in Alabama and has not yet benefited from Alabama's booming automotive industry. In addition, this County is typified by a primarily agricultural landscape with low-density communities, declining populations, substandard housing and high rates of crime, with poor access to education and medical care. Sumter County's unemployment rate was 6.3 percent in March 2008, higher than the state average of 4.1 percent.

The USS facility would be the largest industrial project in the Black Belt region. The facility would create 250 temporary construction jobs and initially 75 full-time jobs. If expansion occurs as planned, a total of 235 full-time positions will be created, with an average salary of about \$50,000 per year. Additionally, USS would set up worker training programs at West Alabama University in Livingston.

With regard to the proposed construction of the facility:

The proposed coal alloy synthesis facility and its attendant features would impact, by the placement of fill material, 4.1 acres of wetlands and 4,733 linear feet of seasonal rpw stream/drainage ditches. Additionally, a water intake structure is proposed to be placed in the south end of the Port of Epes canal. The intake structure would encroach below the ordinary high water mark with the placement of 3 pump casings and 2 support piers. The remaining 2 support piers will be above the ordinary high water mark. The pumps are planned to be vertical turbine pumps housed inside the pump casings. The intake screening for each pump will be selected to provide an acceptable method of screening a water intake structures. The total impact for the water intake structure is 0.0004 acre.

Wetlands consist of 4.1 acres of scrub/shrub and persistent emergent wetlands located in the disturbed area within the western portion of the site. The wetland areas were created by blocking the rainwater sheet flow with stockpiles that are located on a nearly level surface with a chalk substrate.

The 4,773 linear feet of seasonal rpw stream/ditches were excavated adjacent to the stockpiled materials and wetland areas. The stream/ditches continue north and east until the ditches merge with an intermittent stream. The drainage ditches were excavated to drain the wetlands to acquire more agricultural lands for cattle.

**ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS:** During the site selection process, USS considered three locations. The two sites that were not selected are located west of Columbus, Mississippi (Alternate Site #1) and south of Tuscaloosa, Alabama (Alternate Site #2).

Alternate Site #1 is west of Columbus, Mississippi at Latitude  $33^{\circ} 27' 15.44''$ N and Longitude  $88^{\circ} 34' 20.67''$ W. This location was not selected because material transportation costs were prohibitive. The economic incentives that the State of Alabama was able to offer USS to develop the facility in the Black Belt region also factored into the selection of the Port Epes site.

Alternate Site #2 is located south of Tuscaloosa, Alabama at the former International Paper facility at Latitude  $33^{\circ} 03' 33.35''$ N and Longitude  $88^{\circ} 35' 43.73''$ W. This location was positioned close to the Black Warrior River but it was not adjacent to it and did not have direct access to the river as found at Port Epes. A newly constructed residential subdivision was located adjacent to the site and USS concluded that residential neighbors may object to operations. The economic incentives that the State of Alabama was able to offer USS to develop the facility in the Black Belt region also factored into the selection of the Port Epes site.

**AVOIDANCE & MINIMIZATION:** The original site development plan was prepared prior to completion of the March 2008 Wetland Determination and Delineation report. The development plan had the buildings, stockpiles, and rail positioned more to the east of the site. The plan did not site any of the attendant features such as main office, substation, water intake structure, access roads, outbuildings, parking, and sedimentation buildings.

After reviewing the wetland report, H&M Architects/Engineers, Inc. was able to relocate the operational buildings closer to the western boundary of the site. They were able to move the building locations by moving stockpile locations north of the buildings. By moving the building and stockpile locations H&M was then able to relocate the rail lines. All of the attendant features were located directly adjacent to the main operations buildings and the sedimentation basins were located within the rail tracks. The sedimentation basins were designed not to discharge off-site and the waters will be used for dust suppression.

This careful placement of attendant features reduces the overall acreage necessary for development of the coal alloy synthesis facility. The linear footage and the quality of stream impacts were reduced. Shifting the placement of the rail will allow for the elimination of the 4.5-acre earthen-dam pond and the restoration and enhancement of the seasonal stream that flowed into the pond. Also, this allows for the creation of adjacent wetland and uplands.

**MITIGATION:** U. S. Steel proposed to place streams, wetlands, and uplands into a conservation easement. Also, U. S. Steel will enhance, restore, and create several stream sections. The U. S. Steel Corporation will place the land along the eastern side of the property in a conservation easement. The

conservation easement will protect the intermittent and perennial streams, wetlands, and uplands from future development. It was revealed during the cultural survey that a Native American mound is located at the northeast edge of the property. The conservation easement will protect this area from development. The conservation easement will protect over 10,000 linear feet of stream and about 10 acres of wetlands.

U. S. Steel will remove two stream crossings located within the proposed conservation easement by removing fill material. The bottom elevation of the stream at each crossing location will match upstream stream-bottom elevation. The stream banks will be excavated to reflect the typical ordinary high water mark that exists on either side of each crossing. Native woody and herbaceous plants will be planted in the disturbed areas.

U. S. Steel proposes to restore the seasonal stream that enters the property along the southern boundary and flows into an earthen-dam pond. The slopes will be reduced in the section of the stream that flows into the pond. An engineered stream creation/restoration will be provided for the channel that was destroyed during pond construction. Additional wetlands will be created or enhanced along the stream. Native wetland vegetation will be planted and a 50-foot upland buffer will be created to protect the wetland and stream. The stream will be designed to reduce water flow during major rain events, increase water oxygenation, filter sediment and provide wetland habitat. Approximately 1,679 linear feet of stream will be enhanced, restored or created. Additionally, about 1.5 acres of wetlands and 2 acres of upland buffer will be created. The Corps is currently reviewing the Applicants Mitigation Plan and will verify data sheets and calculation mitigation sheets submitted to ensure correctness and sufficiency in offsetting the functional loss of jurisdictional waters.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the proposal on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and use of important resources. The benefit which reasonable may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors and their cumulative effects relevant to the proposal will be considered, including conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, 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, property ownership, and in general the needs and welfare of the people.

To evaluate the impacts of this proposal, the Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted, in writing, setting forth sufficient detail in order to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition. Comments will be considered to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit. To make this decision, an Environmental Assessment is prepared in accord with the National Environmental Policy Act; impacts are assessed on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest.

This notice is being sent to appropriate State and Federal agencies, including the Alabama Historical Commission Office (AHC) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Division of Archeological Services, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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

An initial search of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for Sumter County was done to ascertain the presence of historical properties within the project area. As such, a Phase 1 archaeological survey and evaluation was conducted by the University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Research from February 28, through March 4, 2008. The report was sent to the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC). They assigned it file # AHC 08-0551. Any eligible sites will be protected by a conservation easement.

The Applicant's Agent performed an in-office review as well as an on the ground survey to ascertain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list of federally protected plant and animal species that may occur in Lee County subject site. This report was submitted to the USFWS on March 13, 2008. In a fax to the Applicant dated May 22, 2008, USFWS Project Number 2008-TA-0503, the USFWS advised the proposed project activities would have no significant impact on federally listed species/critical habitat, or fish and wildlife resources.

Other impacts from fill activities will be evaluated by applying Environmental Protection Agency 404(b)(1) guidelines. After review of public comments, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) will determine if the proposal complies with or operated and maintained in a manner consistent with the Clean Water Act.

Any correspondence concerning this publication should refer to this Public Notice SAM-2008-00872-CJH and should be directed to the following address:

District Engineer

U. S. Army Engineer District, Mobile  
Regulatory Division, Birmingham Field Office  
Attn: Cindy J. House-Pearson  
218 Summit Parkway, Suite 222  
Homewood, Alabama 35171

with a copy to the :

Director  
Alabama Department of Environmental Management  
Post Office Box 301463  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463

All comments should be received no later than 30 days from the date of issuance of this Public Notice.

Enclosed to assist you with your review are: Location map; Site Map; Corps Jurisdictional Waters map; Proposed Impacts map; and Alternative Analysis maps.

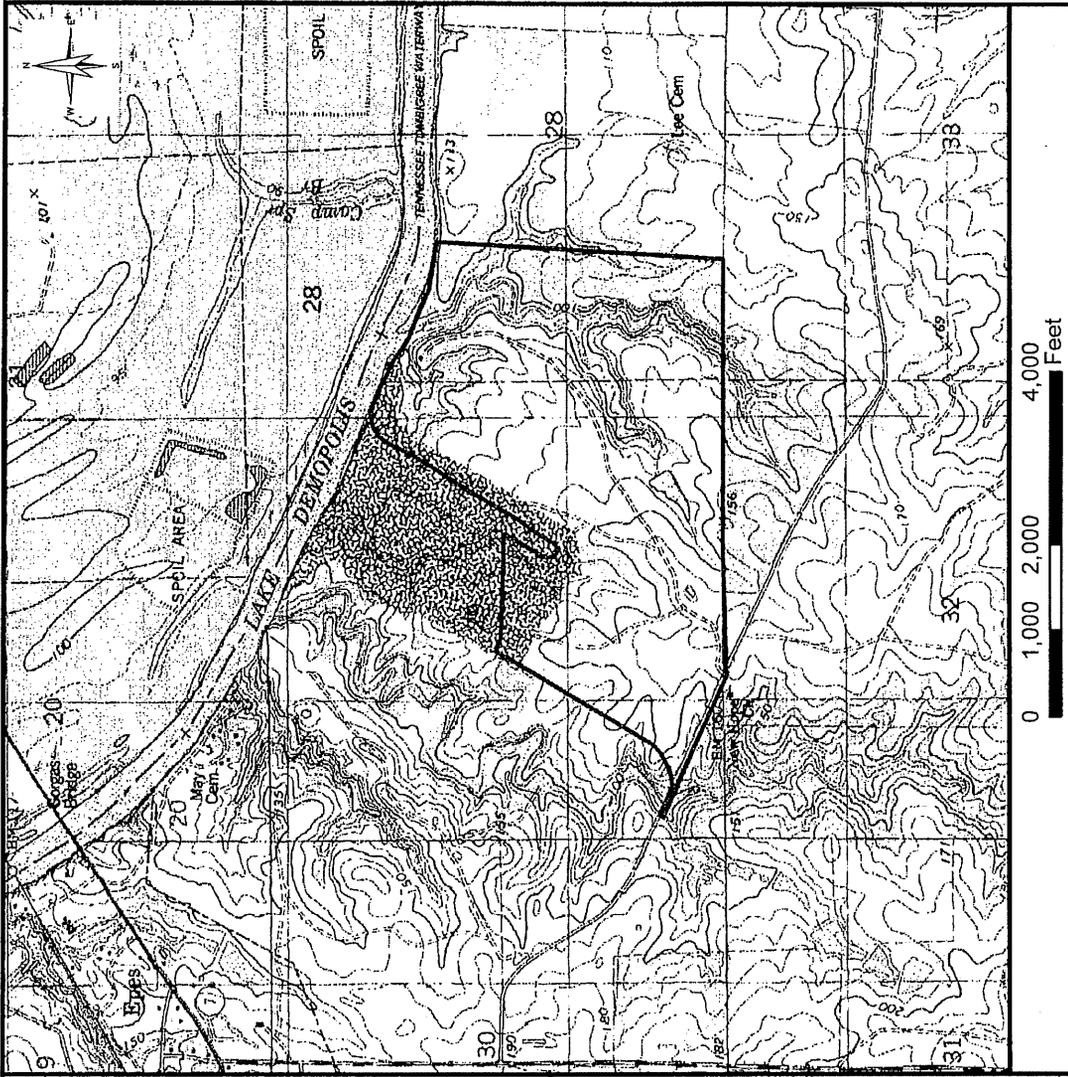
If you have any questions concerning this Public Notice, you may contact the Mobile District Regulatory Division, Birmingham Field Office at 205-290-9096 and ask to speak with the project

manager, Cindy House-Pearson. Please reference the above public notice number when calling and/or in your written correspondence.

For additional information about the Mobile District's Regulatory Program, please take a moment to visit our web site at [www.sam.usace.army.mil/RD/reg](http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/RD/reg), while there please take a moment to complete our customer satisfaction survey. Your responses are appreciated and will allow us to improve our services.

Encls

MOBILE DISTRICT  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineer

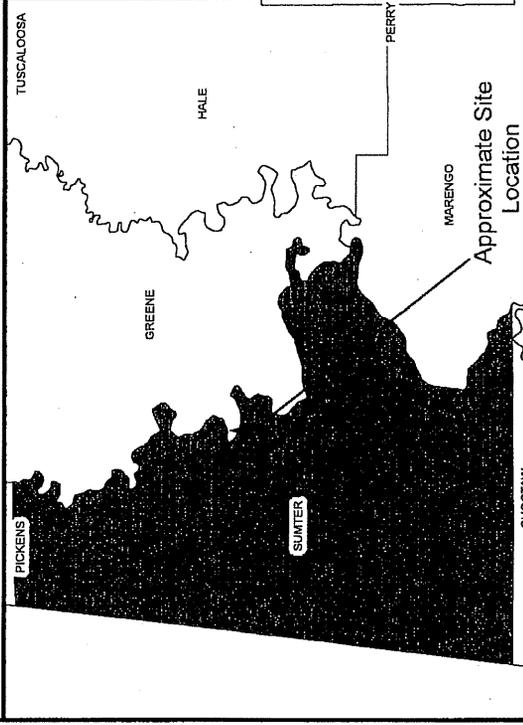
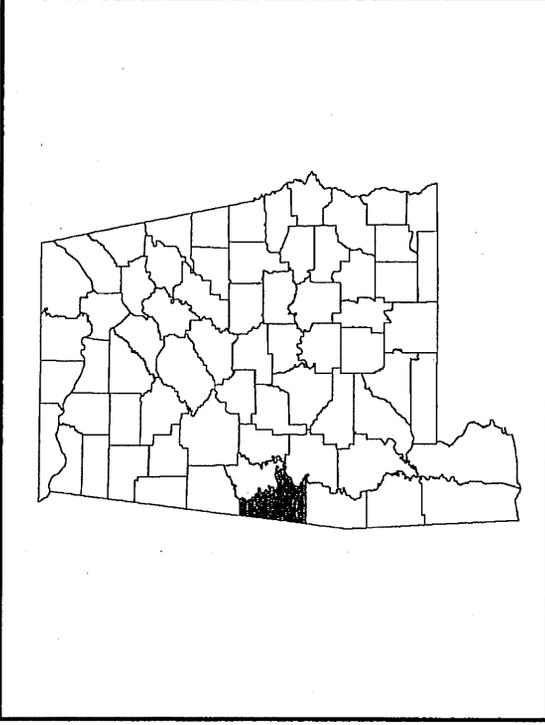


Section, Township, and Range:  
 Sections 28 and 29, T. 20N, R. 1W

Latitude: 32° 40' 42" N  
 Longitude: 88° 5' 59" W

**Figure 1**  
**Topographic Map**

1986 Epes East, Alabama USGS Quadrangle Obtained From  
 The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service



**TTL**

2743-B Gunter Park Drive W ■ Montgomery, Alabama 36109  
 334.244.0766 ■ Fax 334.244.6688

U.S. Steel Corporation  
 Port Epes, Sumter County, Alabama  
 USACE Individual Permit Application  
 TTL Project Number: 600108009



Approximate Location of Property Boundary

Proposed Site Development



Section, Township, and Range: Sections 28 and 29, T. 20N, R. 1W

Latitude: 32° 40' 42" N

Longitude: 88° 5' 59" W

U.S. Steel Corporation  
 Port Epees, Sumter County, Alabama  
 USACE Individual Permit Application

Figure 2

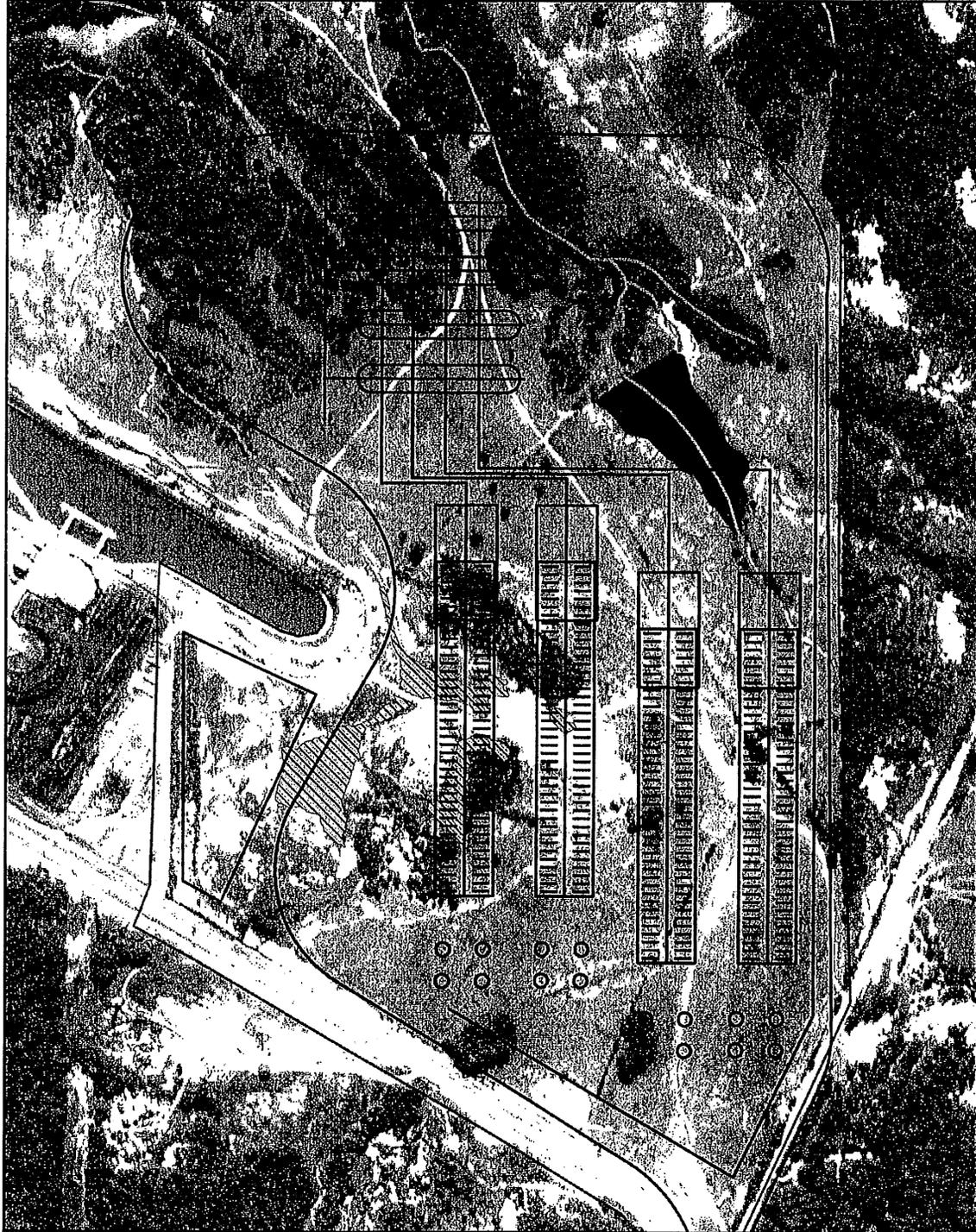
Site Development Map

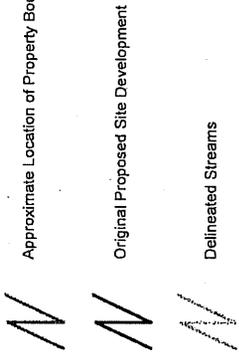


2749-B Gunter Park Drive W ■ Montgomery, Alabama 36109  
 334.244.0766 ■ Fax 334.344.6688

TTL Project Number: 600108009

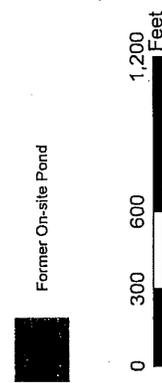
2006 Epees East, Alabama Aerial Photograph Obtained From The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service



 Approximate Location of Property Boundary	 Original Proposed Site Development	 Delineated Streams	 Delineated Wetlands	 Former On-site Pond	 0 225 450 900 Feet	Section, Township, and Range: Sections 28 and 29, T. 20N., R. 1W Latitude: 32° 40' 42" N Longitude: 88° 5' 59" W	U.S. Steel Corporation Port Epps, Sumter County, Alabama USACE Individual Permit Application	Figure 3	Original Site Plan With Delineated Wetlands and Streams	 2743-B Gunter Park Drive, W ■ Montgomery, Alabama 36109 334.244.0766 ■ Fax 334.344.8686	TTL Project Number: 600108009
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2006 Epps East, Alabama Aerial Photograph Obtained From The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service



 Approximate Location of Property Boundary	 Revised Site Development	 Delineated Streams	 Delineated Wetlands	 Former On-site Pond	 0 300 600 1,200 Feet	Section, Township, and Range Sections 28 and 29, T. 20N, R. 1W Latitude: 32° 40' 42" N Longitude: 88° 5' 59" W	U.S. Steel Corporation Port Epes, Sumter County, Alabama USACE Individual Permit Application	<b>Figure 4</b>	<b>Revised Site Plan          With          Delineated Wetlands and Streams</b>	 2743-B Gunter Park Drive W ■ Montgomery, Alabama 36109 334.344.0766 ■ Fax 334.344.6688	TTL Project Number: 600108009
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2006 Epes East, Alabama Aerial Photograph Obtained From The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service



Wetlands

Stream Impact 1 (587 Feet)

Stream Impact 2 (3,044 Feet)

Stream Impact 3 (1,142 Feet)

Water Intake Structure

Impacts Total

Wetland - 4.1 Acres

Streams - 4,773 Feet

Water Intake Structure - 0.0004 Acre



Section, Township, and Range: Sections 28 and 29, T. 20N, R. 1W

Latitude: 32° 40' 42" N

Longitude: 88° 5' 59" W

U.S. Steel Corporation  
Port Epes, Sumter County, Alabama  
USACE Individual Permit Application

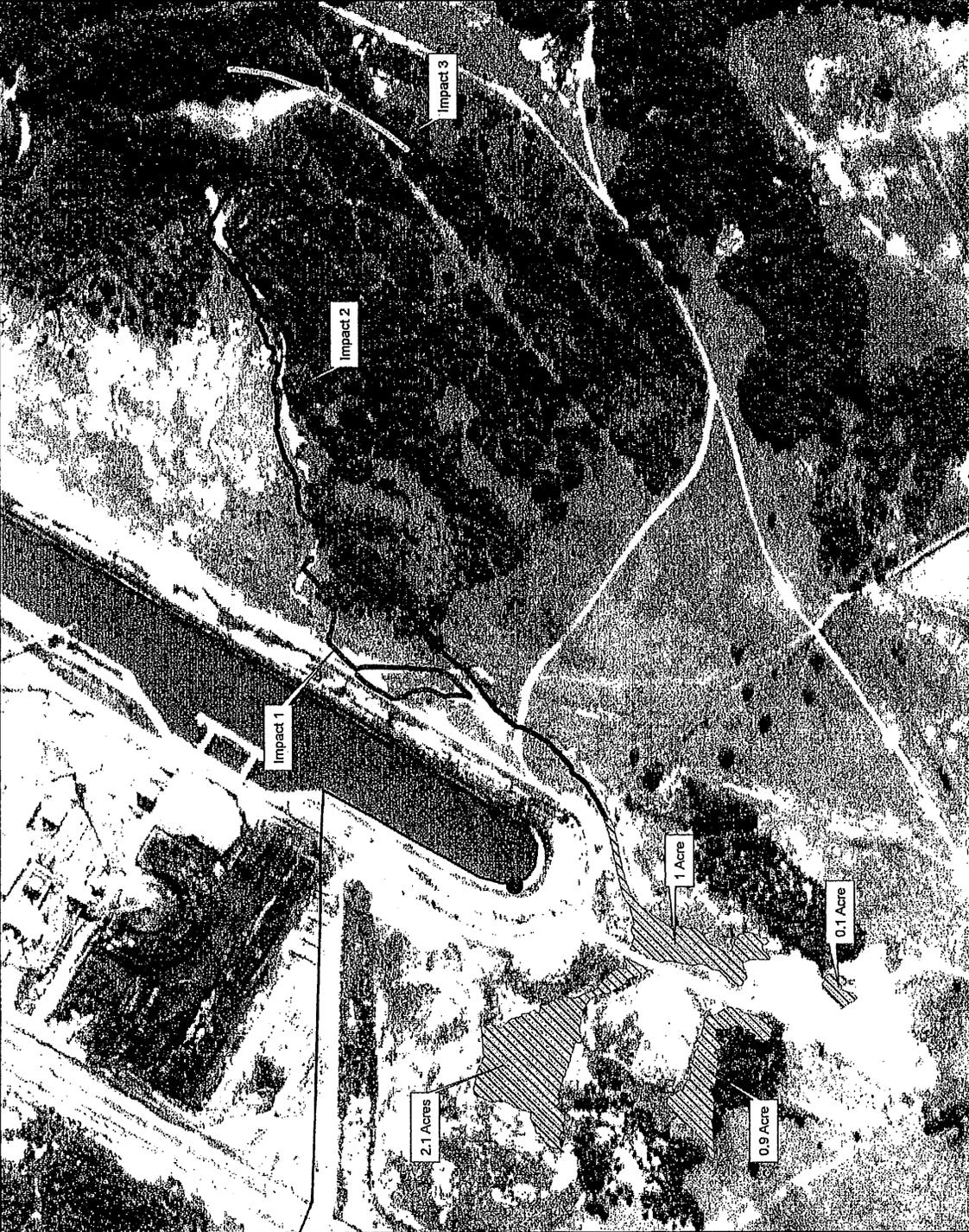
Figure 5

Wetland and Stream Impact Map



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334.244.0766 • Fax: 334.344.6668

TTL Project Number: 600108009

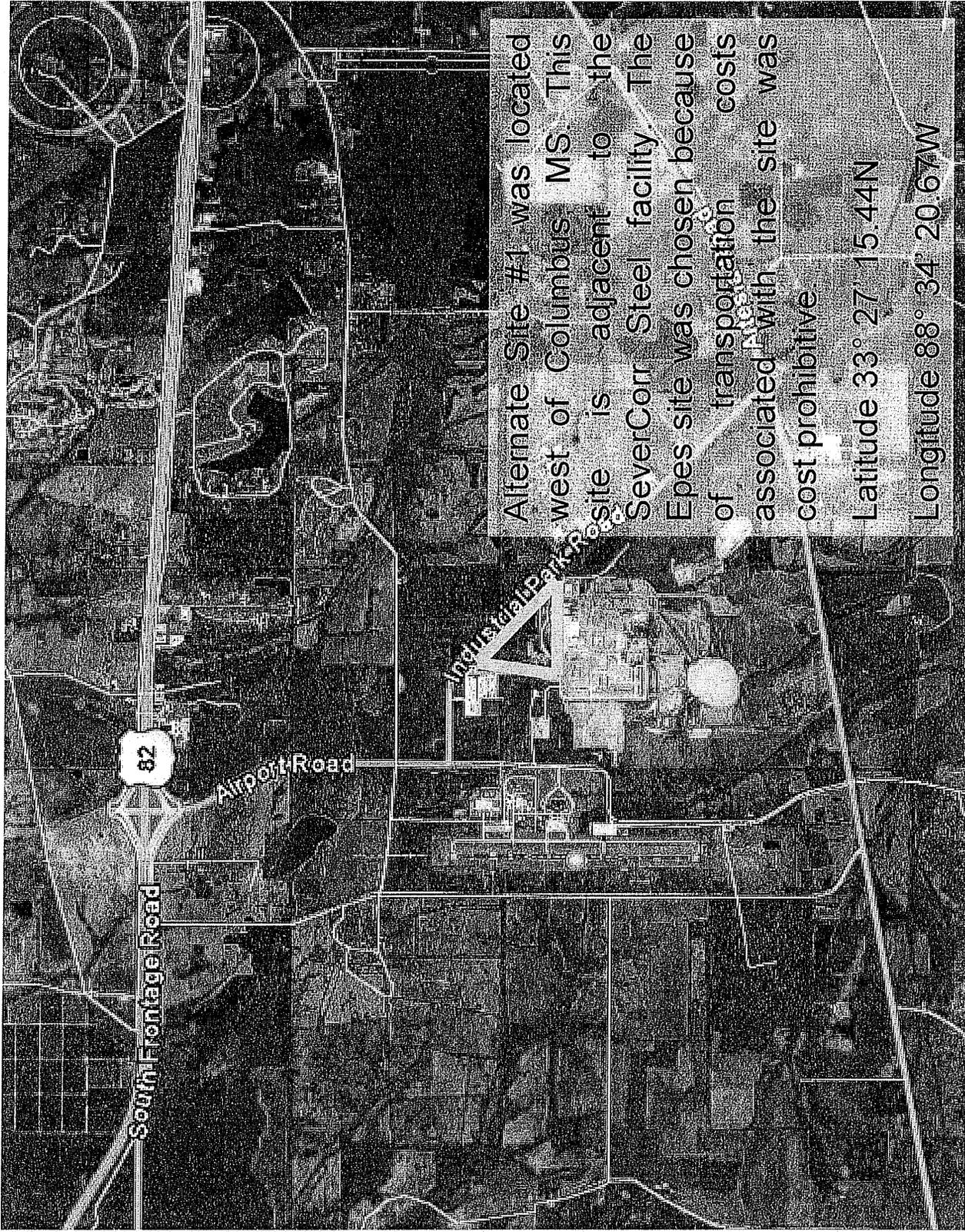


2006 Epes East, Alabama Aerial Photograph Obtained From The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service



	Conservation - Perennial 1 (CP1) (1,530 Feet)
	Conservation - Perennial 2 (CP2) (1,160 Feet)
	Conservation - Perennial 3 (CP3) (1,780 Feet)
	Conservation - Seasonal 1 (CS1) (520 Feet)
	Conservation - Seasonal 2 (CS2) (1,503 Feet)
	Restoration - Perennial 1 (RP1) (1,291 Feet)
	Restoration - Perennial 2 (RP2) (605 Feet)
	Restoration - Seasonal 1 (RS1) (1,679 Feet)
	Upland Buffer
	Created Wetlands
	Conservation Easement
	Property Boundary
	0 350 700 1,400 Feet
Section, Township, and Range: Sections 28 and 29, T. 20N, R. 1W	
Latitude: 32° 40' 42" N	
Longitude: 88° 5' 59" W	
U.S. Steel Corporation Port Epes, Sumter County, Alabama Conceptual Wetland and Stream Mitigation Plan	
<b>Figure 6</b>	
<b>Location of On-Site Mitigation</b>	
<b>TTL</b>	
2743-B Gunter Park Drive W ■ Montgomery, Alabama 36109 334.244.0766 ■ Fax: 334.244.6668	
TTL Project Number: 600106009	

2006 Epos East, Alabama Aerial Photograph Obtained From The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service



Alternate Site #1 was located west of Columbus, MS. This site is adjacent to the SeverCorr Steel facility. The Epes site was chosen because of transportation costs associated with the site was cost prohibitive.

Latitude 33° 27' 15.44N  
 Longitude 88° 34' 20.67W



International Paper Co.

Alternate Site #2 was the old International Paper facility south of Tuscaloosa, AL. The site was not selected due to the recent development of a residential subdivision adjacent to the property.

Latitude 33° 03' 33.35N

Longitude 87° 35' 43.73W

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