



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

CESAM-RD-M
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. SAM-2024-0708-APS

September 16, 2024

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS (USACE)

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL (MDEQ)

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
DMR24-000370

PROPOSED DISCHARGE OF FILL IN WETLANDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF
GAUTIER HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC TRACK COMPLEX,
GAUTIER, JACKSON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: This District has received an application for a Department of the Army (DA) permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344). Please communicate this information to interested parties.

APPLICANT: Pascagoula-Gautier School District
Attention: Weber Parker
1006 Communny Avenue
Pascagoula, Mississippi 39568

LOCATION: Wetlands Draining to Mary Walker Bayou; Gautier High School, 4307 Gautier-Vancleave Road, Gautier, Mississippi 39553; Latitude 30.407475° North, Longitude 88.662502° West.

PROPOSED WORK: The purpose of the project is to expand the existing Gautier High School (GHS) Athletic Complex to include facilities for track and field. The applicant proposes to place +/-10,000 cubic yards of fill material in 6.37 acres of pine savannah wetlands to construct a new track and field facility. Currently, the GHS Track and Field Team must travel 8.5 miles to Pascagoula High School's (PHS) running track to practice. However, PHS's track does not meet the current track and field competition standards. For these two reasons, GHS Track and Field Team is unable to host track meets and must travel to all track meets. Therefore, the Pascagoula-Gautier School District is proposing to construct a new 400-meter competition running track with a grass practice field interior. The layout of the new track has reportedly been designed to avoid waters of the U.S., including wetlands, while still fulfilling the applicant's project purpose. By expanding the existing athletic complex, the new facility would utilize existing GHS infrastructure (i.e. parking areas, access roads, etc.) effectively decreasing potential environmental impacts that would typically be associated with a new stand-alone facility. Expanding the athletic complex to include track and field amenities and a practice field would enhance GHS's athletic program and promote community engagement. The applicant proposes to provide compensatory mitigation

for unavoidable impacts to wetland habitat through the purchase of in-kind wetland mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank.

COASTAL ZONE: The applicant has applied for coastal zone (CZ) consistency in accordance with the State Coastal Zone Management Program. A determination relative to CZ consistency will be made by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

WATER QUALITY: The Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Certification Rule (Certification Rule, 40 CFR 121), requires certification for any license or permit that authorizes an activity that may result in a discharge. The applicant is responsible for requesting certification and providing required information to the certifying agency. As of the date of this public notice, the applicant has not submitted a certification request to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (certifying authority).

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Appendix C of 33 CFR 325, the undertaking defined in this notice is being considered for the potential to affect historic properties. In accordance with Appendix C of 33 CFR 325, the Corps has determined the permit area consists of the entire undertaking in waters of the United States as well as the upland areas within the footprint of the proposed area of fill. A Phase I Cultural Resources Survey has been conducted on the proposed athletic complex expansion. No significant cultural resources were identified, and it was concluded that no cultural resources are likely to be affected on the subject property. Based upon the results of the Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the subject site, the Mobile District has concluded that the proposed activities would have no effect on cultural/historic resources. The Mobile District will request concurrence with the no effect determination from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Further coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer and/or federally-recognized American Indian tribes will be performed as determined to be appropriate.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Preliminary review of this application and the U.S. Department of the Interior's List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants indicate the following federally-listed species may occur within the project area: West Indian Manatee (T), Eastern Black Rail (T), Mississippi Sandhill Crane (E), Piping Plover (T), Red Knot (T), Wood Stork (T), Alabama Red-Bellied Turtle (E), Dusky Gopher Frog (E), Gopher Tortoise (T), Loggerhead Sea Turtle (E) and Gulf Sturgeon (T). There is no designated critical habitat within the project action area. Within the project area, a field survey and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) IPaC project tool assessment were conducted by the agent. The findings from the survey and the results from the IPaC assessment concluded that the project would have no known adverse effects on species listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS. It was also reported that the subject property does not lie within or adjacent to critical habitat. At this time, the USACE, Mobile District has made the preliminary determination of no effect regarding potential effects of the project on the above-listed species or critical

habitat. Further coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NMFS will be performed as determined to be appropriate.

COMMENTS: This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts on which a decision by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can be based. 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 to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, 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, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Evaluation of the probable impacts involving deposits of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States will include the application of guidelines established by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Correspondence concerning this Public Notice should refer to Public Notice Number **SAM-2024-00708-APS** and should be directed to the District Engineer, Mobile District,

Regulatory Division, Mobile, Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, Attention: Amiee Smith, or submitted electronically at Amiee.P.Smith@usace.army.mil, 228-627-8641. Copies of all comments should be furnished to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control, Post Office Box 2261, Jackson, Mississippi 39225, and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530.

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

For additional information about our Regulatory Program, please visit our web site at www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx.

MOBILE DISTRICT
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Attachments

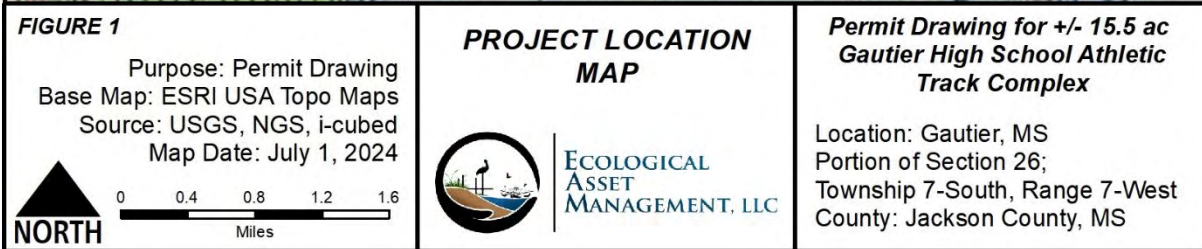
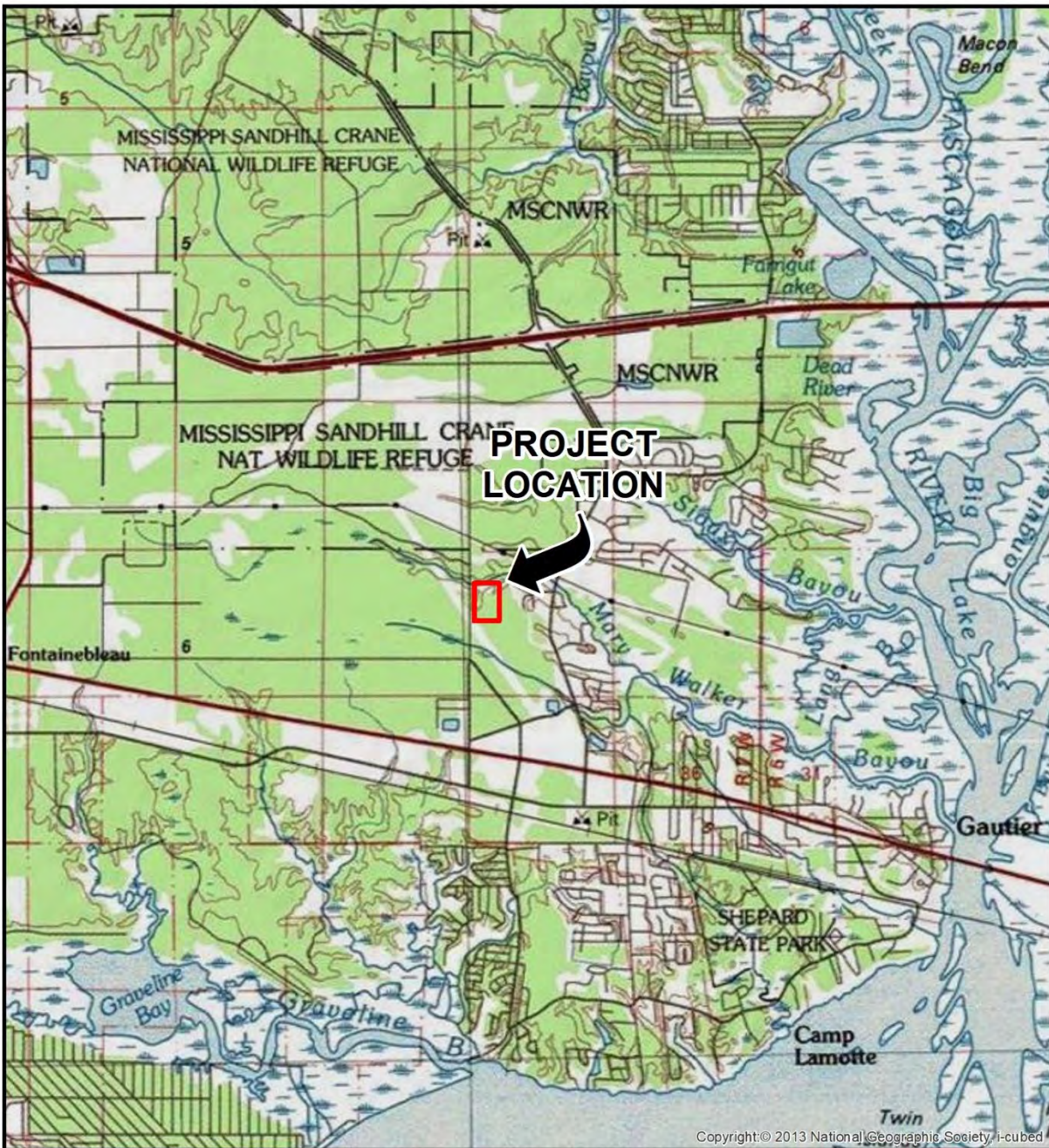


Figure 1. Project Location



Proposed GHS Athletic Track Complex (SAM-2024-00708-APS)

Gautier High School

Image © 2024 Airbus

Google Earth

1527 ft

1985

Imagery Date: 6/26/2023

lat 30.407108° lon -88.658115° elev 17 ft eye alt 6699 ft

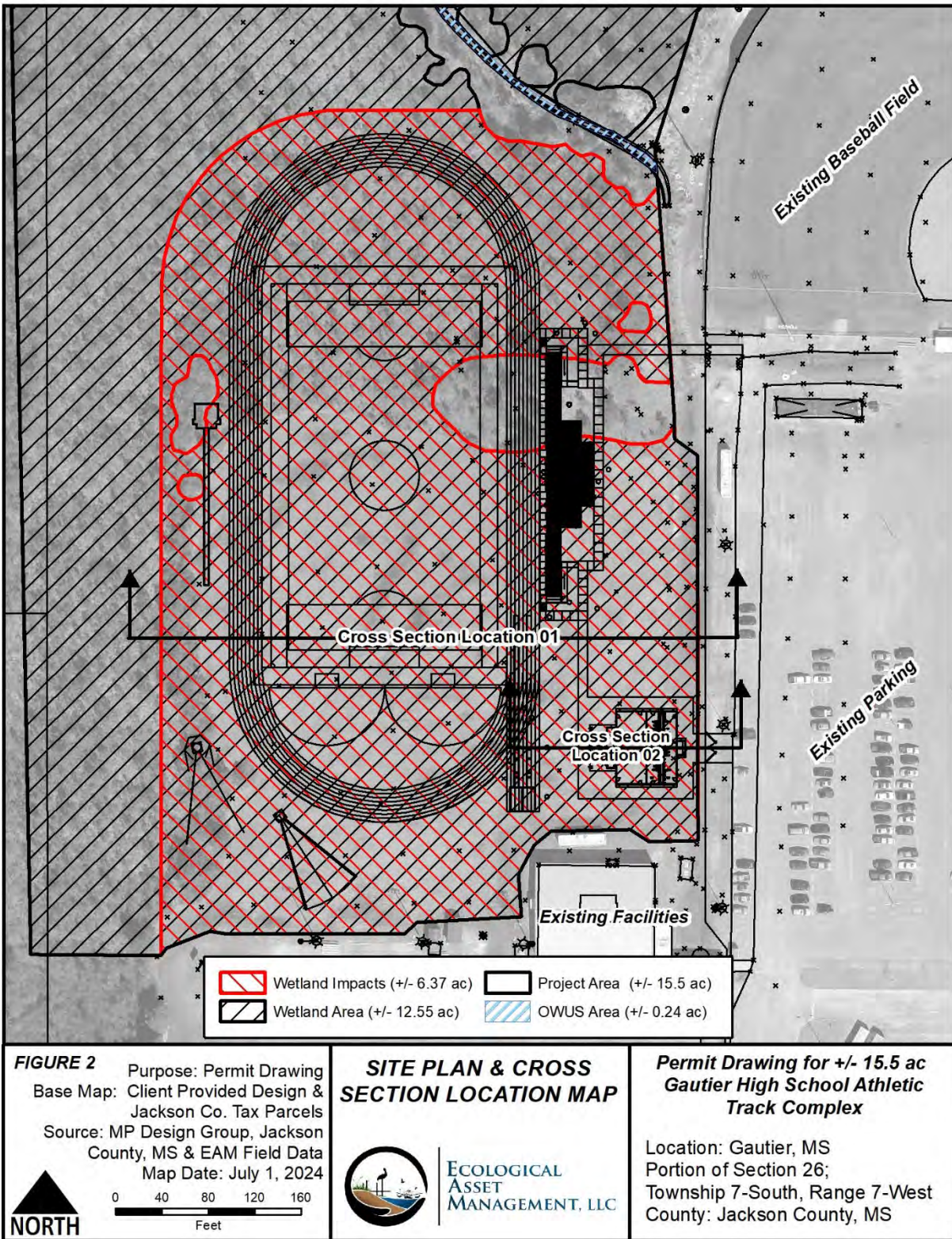


Figure 2. Existing Site Plan & Cross Section Location

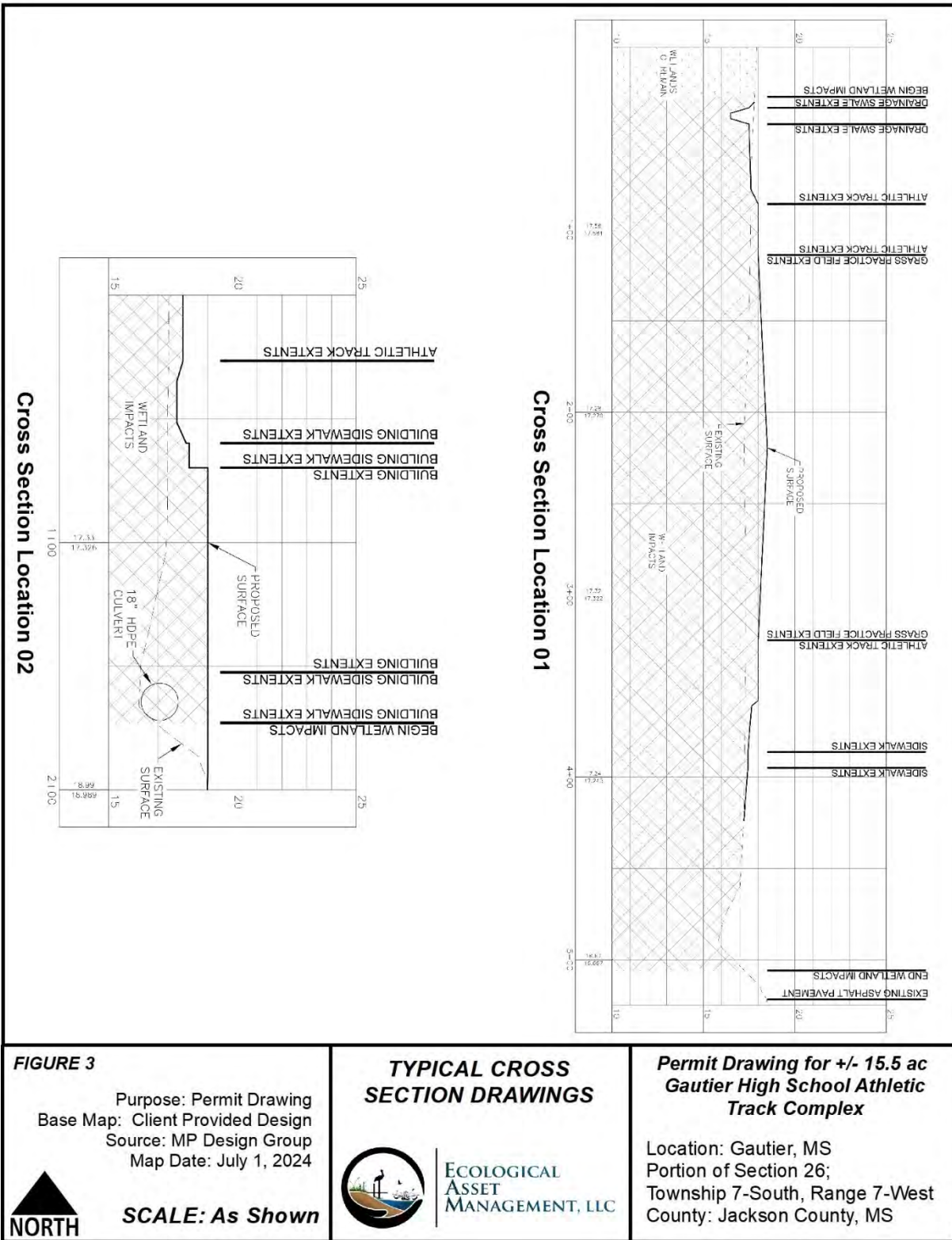


Figure 3. Typical Cross Section Drawing