



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SAVANNAH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
100 W. OGLETHORPE AVENUE
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3640

JULY 02 2013

Regulatory Division
SAS-2013-00404

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE
Savannah District/State of Georgia

The Savannah District has received an application for a Department of the Army Permit, pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344), as follows:

Application Number: SAS-2013-00404

Applicant: Mr. John L. Sawyer, P.E.
City of Savannah, Water Resources/Public Works
Post Office Box 1027
Savannah, Georgia 31402

Agent: Mr. Jeffrey Williams
Sligh Environmental Consultants
31 Park of Commerce Way
Suite 200B
Savannah, Georgia 31405

Location of Proposed Work: The project corridor extends from the southern bank of the Savannah River and it extends inland (south) approximately 2,700 feet, terminating at the Normandy Canal, west of the Truman Parkway and President Street intersection, in Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia (Latitude 32.0757, Longitude -81.0745).

Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: The applicant states that there are emergent freshwater wetlands within the proposed project boundaries. The wetland boundaries shown on the project drawings have not yet been verified by the Corps. If the Corps determines the boundaries of the wetland/waters are substantially inaccurate a new public notice may be published. The applicant proposes to impact 1.08 acres of freshwater wetlands for the excavation of the canal (conversion from wetlands to a tributary) and 0.01 acres of wetland fill associated with construction of an adjacent maintenance road and installation/replacement of a tide gate outfall structure. As mitigation for the impacts, the applicant proposes to purchase 7.5 wetland credits from AA Shaw Mitigation Bank, an approved Mitigation Bank within the primary service area. The application did not contain information about secondary effects including the possible drainage of adjacent wetlands.

BACKGROUND

This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval.

The applicant states that adjacent structures and estimated distances from the proposed Bilbo Canal on the Savannah River are as follows:

- a. Savannah River Landing bulkhead and boardwalk is west and immediately adjacent to the proposed outfall. The bulkhead was constructed along the existing bank and the boardwalk overhang is approximately 20 feet.
- b. East Coast Terminal has a dock structure that is approximately 370 feet east of the proposed outfall. The dock measures approximately 90 feet by 140 feet and extends approximately 150 feet into the Savannah River Channel.
- c. There are various docks, bulkheads, wharfs, and others located up and downstream of the proposed canal outfall.

For more information regarding the existing site conditions and need of the proposed project, please refer to the attached information supplied by the applicant titled "Project Description and Supporting Documentation, City of Savannah, Bilbo Canal Drainage Improvements" dated May 14, 2013.

STATE OF GEORGIA

Water Quality Certification: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, intends to certify this project at the end of 30 days in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which is required for a Federal Permit to conduct activity in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia. Copies of the application and supporting documents relative to a specific application will be available for review and copying at the office of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, Water Protection Branch, 4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354, during regular office hours. A copier machine is available for public use at a charge of 25 cents per page. Any person who desires to comment, object, or request a public hearing relative to State Water Quality Certification must do so within 30 days of the State's receipt of application in writing and state the reasons or basis of objections or request for a hearing. The application can be reviewed in the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Division, 100 W. Oglethorpe Avenue Savannah, Georgia 31401-3640.

State-owned Property and Resources: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or other appropriate instrument.

Marshland Protection: This notice also serves as notification of a request to alter coastal marshlands (under the provision of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act, Georgia Laws, 1970, p. 939 and as amended), if required. Comments concerning this action should be submitted to the Ecological Services Section, Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1 Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia 31523-8600 (Telephone 912-264-7218).

There are areas within the project corridor that are under the jurisdiction of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act. A Letter of Permission was issued from Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resource Division (Georgia-CRD) for a portion of the proposed project on February 12, 2013. The portion of the project permitted by Georgia-CRD was for replacing an existing tide gate structure and completely removing a 30 foot section of culvert and remnant timber pilings.

Georgia Coastal Management Program: Prior to the Savannah District Corps of Engineers making a final permit decision on this application, the project must be certified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division, to be consistent with applicable provisions of the State of Georgia Coastal Management Program (15 CFR 930). Anyone wishing to comment on Coastal Management Program certification of this project should submit comments in writing within 30 days of the date of this notice to the Federal Consistency Coordinator, Ecological Services Section, Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, One Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia 31523-8600 (Telephone 912-264-7218).

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The Savannah District must consider the purpose and the impacts of the applicant's proposed work, prior to a decision on issuance of a Department of the Army Permit.

Cultural Resources Assessment: Review of the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places indicates that no registered properties or properties listed as eligible for inclusion are located at the site or in the area affected by the proposed work. Presently unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistorical or historical data may be located at the site and could be affected by the proposed work.

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH): This notice initiates the EFH consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Per the applicant, the proposal consists of removing the Bilbo Box Culvert and wooden timbers that extend 30 feet into the Savannah River and replacing the dilapidated tide gates at the existing shoreline. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would have no effect on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean. However, a jurisdictional determination to confirm the habitats onsite is needed. Our final determination relative to project impacts to EFH and the need for mitigation measures are subject to review by and coordination with the NMFS and the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council.

Endangered Species: Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), we request information from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Marine Fisheries Service; or, any other interested party, on whether any species listed or proposed for listing may be present in the area.

The current threatened and endangered species listed for Chatham County are humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), Kemp's Ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempi*), leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*), shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*), Bachman's warbler (*Verminvora bachmanii*), wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), and pondberry (*Lindera melissifolia*) The applicant conducted a pedestrian survey in order to identify protected species and/or habitat within the corridor.

Based on the information provided by the applicant, the Corps is making a may effect, not likely to adversely affect determination on the wood stork due to the impact of potential forging habitat. For all the other species listed above, the Corps is making a no effect determination due to lack of suitable habitat and species observation within the project corridor.

Public Interest Review: 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, flood plain 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 people.

Consideration of Public Comments: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American 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 U.S. Army 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.

Application of Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: The proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States. The Savannah District's evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

Public Hearing: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application for a Department of the Army Permit. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for requesting a public hearing. The decision whether to hold a public hearing is at the discretion of the District Engineer, or his designated appointee, based on the need for additional substantial information necessary in evaluating the proposed project.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment on this application for a Department of the Army Permit should submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Ms. Sherelle Reinhardt, 100 W. Oglethorpe Avenue Savannah, Georgia 31401-3640, no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. Please refer to the applicant's name and the application number in your comments.

If you have any further questions concerning this matter, please contact Ms. Sherelle Reinhardt, Regulatory Specialist, Permits Section, Coastal Branch at 912-652-5964.

5. Encls

1. Project Description and Supporting Documentation, City of Savannah, Bilbo Canal Drainage Improvements, May 14, 2013 (2 pages)
2. Drainage Basin Exhibit (Exhibit 1, 1 page)
3. Bilbo Drainage Improvements (Sheet 1-5, 7, 6 pages)
4. Alternatives Exhibit (Exhibit 6, 1 page)
5. Site Photographs (1-6, 3 pages)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
CITY OF SAVANNAH
BILBO CANAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS**

May 14, 2013

I. Introduction:

The City of Savannah (applicant) is proposing drainage improvements for the Bilbo Basin by constructing a canal within existing and expanded Bilbo Box Culvert right of way. The terminus of the project site is the southern bank of the Savannah River, and it extends inland (south) approximately 2,700 feet, terminating at the Normandy Canal, west of the Truman Parkway and President Street Intersection. The approximate center coordinates of the site are latitude 32.074990° N / longitude -81.0174780° W. The project site is entirely located within the Lower Savannah Watershed (HUC 03060109).

The proposed site plan requires unavoidable impacts to 1.09 acres of jurisdictional wetland associated with the construction of the proposed Bilbo Canal within a 9.68 acre project area. This project includes 1.08 acre of excavation to emergent freshwater wetland, 0.01 acre of fill associated with construction of an adjacent maintenance road, and installation/replacement of a flapgate outfall structure. As described in further detail below, impacts to wetland system which surrounds the project site have been avoided to the maximum extent practicable.

II. Existing Site Conditions:

The project area is composed of 8.34 acres of upland, which is primarily developed industrial and maintained rail road right of way. The remaining portion of the project area is composed of 1.34 acres of semi-permanently flooded emergent freshwater wetland and the tidal open waters of the Savannah River. The habitat types found within the project area are typical for urban industrial areas found within the Coastal Plain of Georgia. The habitat types found adjacent to the project area are the Savannah River, industrial development, bottomland hardwood forest, road and rail maintained right of way, and vacant commercial development. The past and current land use for this area has primarily been industrial or commercial development, transportation, and stormwater conveyance/storage. The habitat types found within the project area are described below.

Emergent Freshwater Wetland:

As noted above, the project area is made up of 1.34 acres of semi-permanently flooded emergent freshwater wetland. The tree, sapling, and shrub strata within this habitat is very sparse and consist primarily of species such as black willow (*Salix nigra*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), red maple saplings (*Acer rubrum*), tallow tree (*Sapium sebiferum*), and false willow (*Baccharis halimifolia*). The herbaceous vegetation within the project area is primarily made up of aquatic vegetation such as cattail (*Typha latifolia*), water spider orchid (*Habenaria repens*), false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*), smartweed (*Polygonum densiflorum*), and pennywort (*Hydrocotyle umbellata*).

Savannah River:

A small portion of the project area is within the Savannah River, which is tidal open water and is not vegetated, but consists of rubble and debris lining the shore bank. The vegetation found on the upland portion of the river bank consists of tallow tree, cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), false willow, and coastal Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*).

Maintained Right of Way & Industrial & Commercial Development:

Portions of the project area consist of maintained road right of way and developed areas. This portion of the project limits is upland and is composed of vegetation common to mowed right-of-way such as tallow tree, sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), red maple, wax myrtle, false willow, coastal Bermuda grass, broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), rattle bush (*Sesbania drummondii*), southern dew berry (*Rubus trivialis*), joint vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*), bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*), common plantain (*Plantago major*), and golden rod (*Solidago canadensis*).

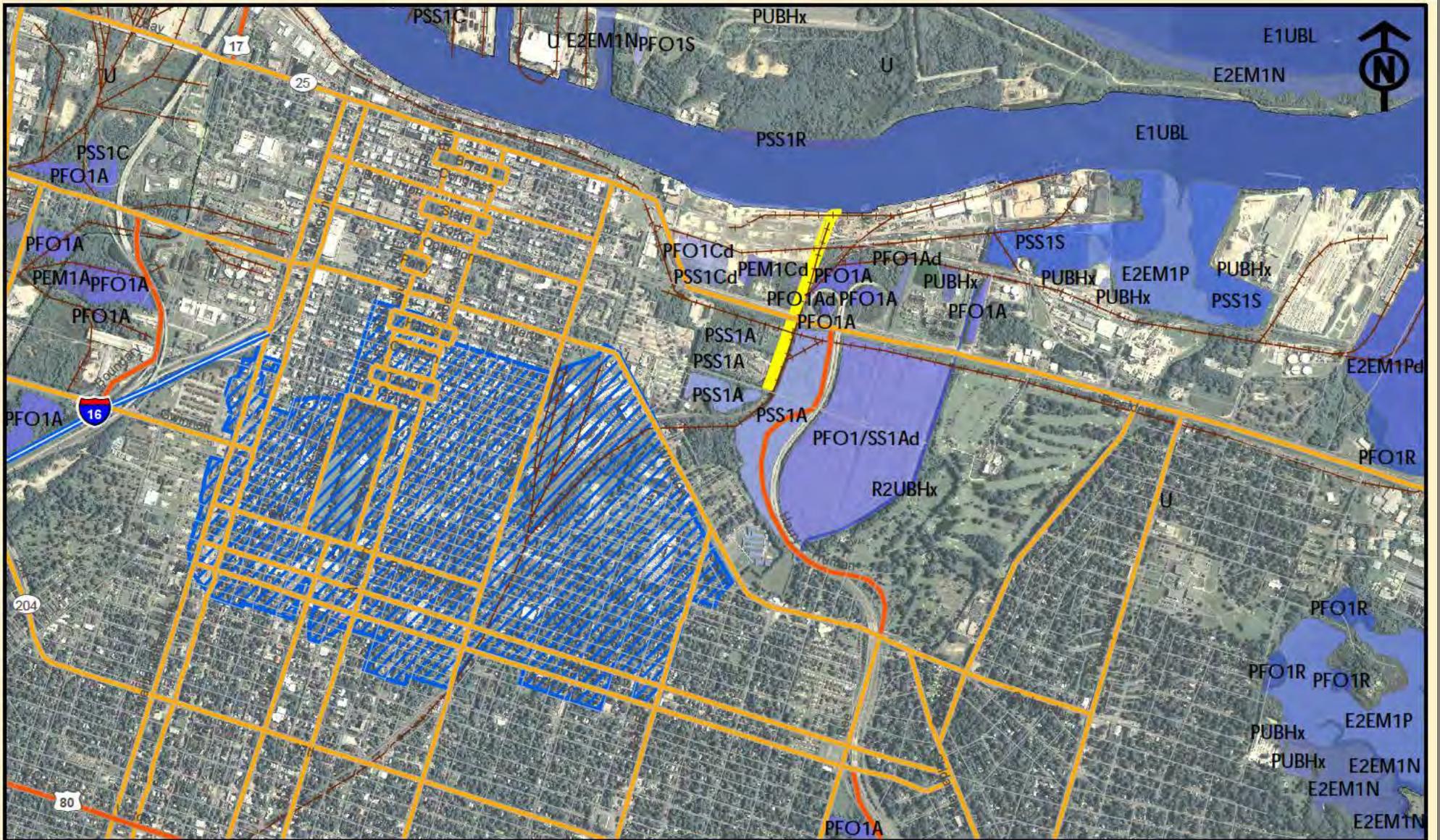
III. Project Purpose:

The purpose of the proposed project is to alleviate flooding issues pertaining to the Bilbo Drainage Basin, President Street, and the surrounding areas of the City of Savannah. According to the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines of the Clean Water Act, the U.S Army Corps of Engineers must define the basic and overall purpose of the project. The basic purpose must be known to determine if a project is water dependent. The basic purpose for the proposed project is to alleviate flooding, which is not a water dependent activity. The overall project purpose is used to evaluate practicable alternatives under the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. The overall project purpose is to alleviate flooding within the Bilbo Drainage Basin, President Street, and the surrounding areas.

IV. Project Need:

The proposed project is needed to resolve flooding issues within the Bilbo Drainage Basin, President Street, and the surrounding areas which face the City of Savannah. As depicted in the below exhibit titled: *BILBO CANAL IMPROVEMENTS Drainage Basin Exhibit Chatham County, Georgia*, the 675.95 acre Bilbo Drainage Basin is located southwest of the project area and is a heavily developed area within the City of Savannah. This area currently and historically is prone to severe flooding during storm events due to the existing failing Bilbo Box and undersized stormwater storage capacity within the proposed project area. Additionally, this area of President Street is prone to flooding during high tide and storm events. Below, Exhibits 2-5 depict the extent of flooding in the Bilbo Drainage Basin following a 2 year, 10 Year, 25 year, and 100 year storm event. The goals of the City of Savannah proposed Bilbo Canal Improvements project are: 1) alleviate flooding issues within the Bilbo Drainage Basin, President Street, and the surrounding areas; 2) maintain and construct an adequate, cost-effective stormwater collection and outfall structure; 3) ensure that drainage basin flooding is appropriately stored and discharged; and 4) ensure that the proposed stormwater design is consistent with the City's Stormwater Management Plan.

Based on the current stormwater modeling, the existing Bilbo Box and tide gate, which handles all of the stormwater for the drainage basin, is severely undersized and is failing primarily due to its age, which violates the goals of the City's Stormwater Management Plan. The need to upgrade the tide gate and excavate the proposed canal is great. Without constructing this project as proposed, flooding will continue to be an economic burden on the City of Savannah and the residents and businesses within the drainage basin.



 Project Limits (9.68 acres)

 Bilbo Drainage Basin (675.95 acres)

sligh environmental consultants, inc.
 31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B
 Savannah, Georgia 31405
 phone (912) 232-0451
 fax (912) 232-0453

BILBO CANAL IMPROVEMENTS
 Drainage Basin Exhibit
 Chatham County, Georgia

Exhibit 1

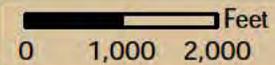


Exhibit Date: April 29, 2013

Drawn By: JPW

Reviewed By: BWW

Job Number : 01-12-074



PROPOSED ACTIVITY:
WETLAND PERMITTING
PROJECT LOCATION:
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
APPLICANT:
CITY OF SAVANNAH

**BILBO CANAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
LOCATION MAP**

SCALE: 1" = 2 mi.
DATUM: NAVD 88

DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2012
JOB NO.: J-21310

SHEET 1

THOMAS & HUTTON
50 PARK OF COMMERCE WAY • PO BOX 2727
SAVANNAH, GA 31402-2727 • 912.234.5300
www.thomasandhutton.com
Savannah, GA • Copyright © 2012, Thomas & Hutton, LLC
COPYRIGHT © 2012 THOMAS & HUTTON



PROPOSED ACTIVITY:
WETLAND PERMITTING

PROJECT LOCATION:
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

APPLICANT:
CITY OF SAVANNAH

**BILBO CANAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
QUADRANGLE MAP**

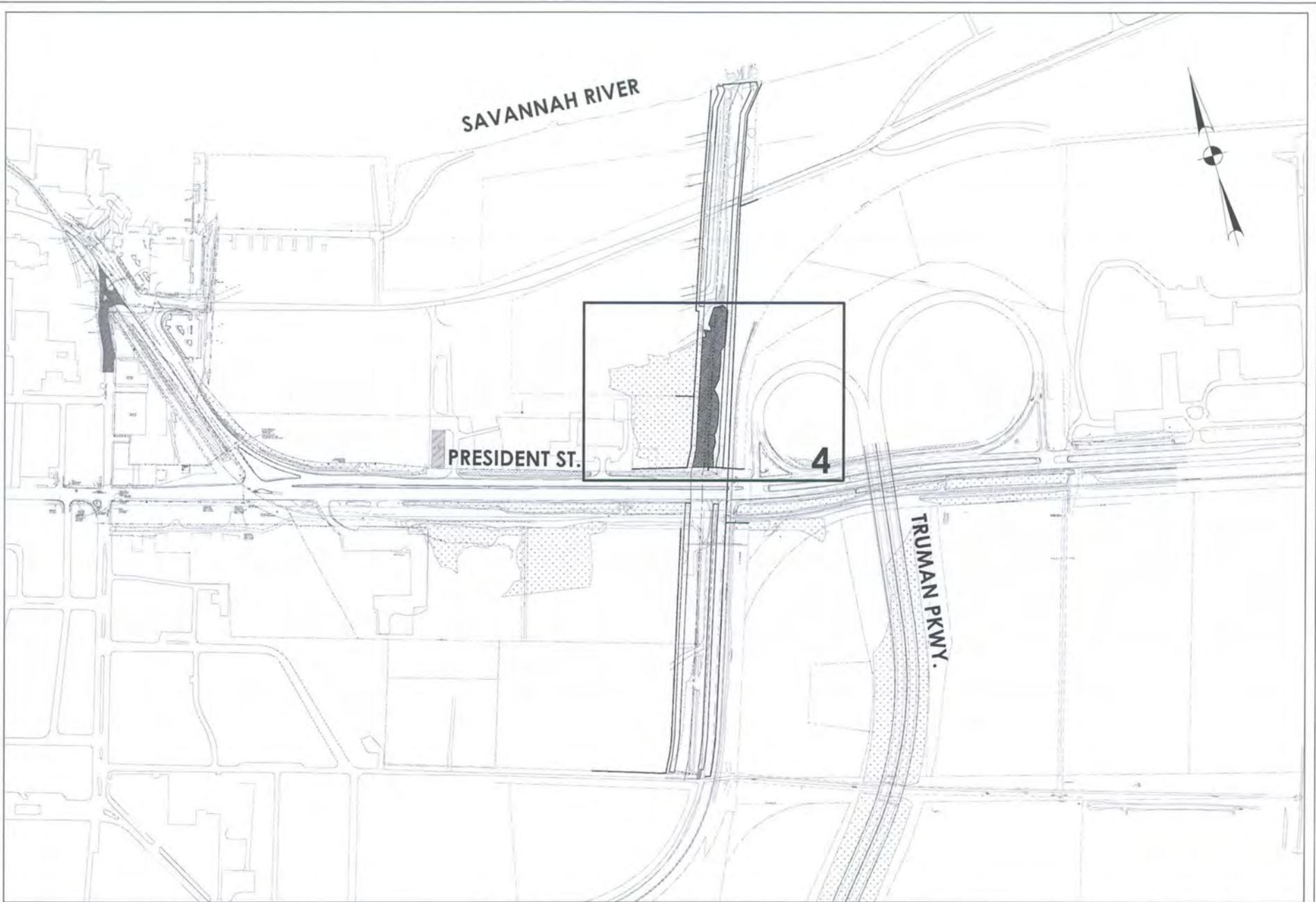
DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2012
JOB NO.: J-21310

SCALE: 1" = 2,000'
DATUM: NAVD 88

SHEET 2

THOMAS & HUTTON
50 PARK OF COMMERCE WAY • PO BOX 2727
SAVANNAH, GA 31402-2727 • 912.234.5300
www.thomasandhutton.com

Bunkie, GA | Charleston, SC | Myrtle Beach, SC | Wilmington, NC
COPYRIGHT © 2010 THOMAS & HUTTON



THOMAS & HUTTON
 50 PARK OF COMMERCE WAY • PO BOX 2727
 SAVANNAH, GA 31402-2727 • 912.234.5300
 www.thomasandhutton.com

Brunswick, GA | Charleston, SC | Myrtle Beach, SC | Wilmington, NC
 COPYRIGHT © 2010 THOMAS & HUTTON

**BILBO CANAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
 SHEET INDEX MAP**

DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2012
 JOB NO.: J-21310

SHEET 3

SCALE: 1" = 500'
 DATUM: NAVD 88

PROPOSED ACTIVITY:
 WETLAND PERMITTING
 PROJECT LOCATION:
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
 APPLICANT:
 CITY OF SAVANNAH



FRESHWATER WETLAND
IMPACT 0.01 AC.

PROJECT LIMITS
(TYPICAL)

FRESHWATER WETLAND

FRESHWATER WETLAND
IMPACT 1.08 AC.

THOMAS & HUTTON
 50 PARK OF COMMERCE WAY • PO BOX 2727
 SAVANNAH, GA 31402-2727 • 912.234.5300
 www.thomasandhutton.com
 Brunswick, GA | Charleston, SC | Myrtle Beach, SC | Wilmington, NC
 COPYRIGHT © 2010 THOMAS & HUTTON

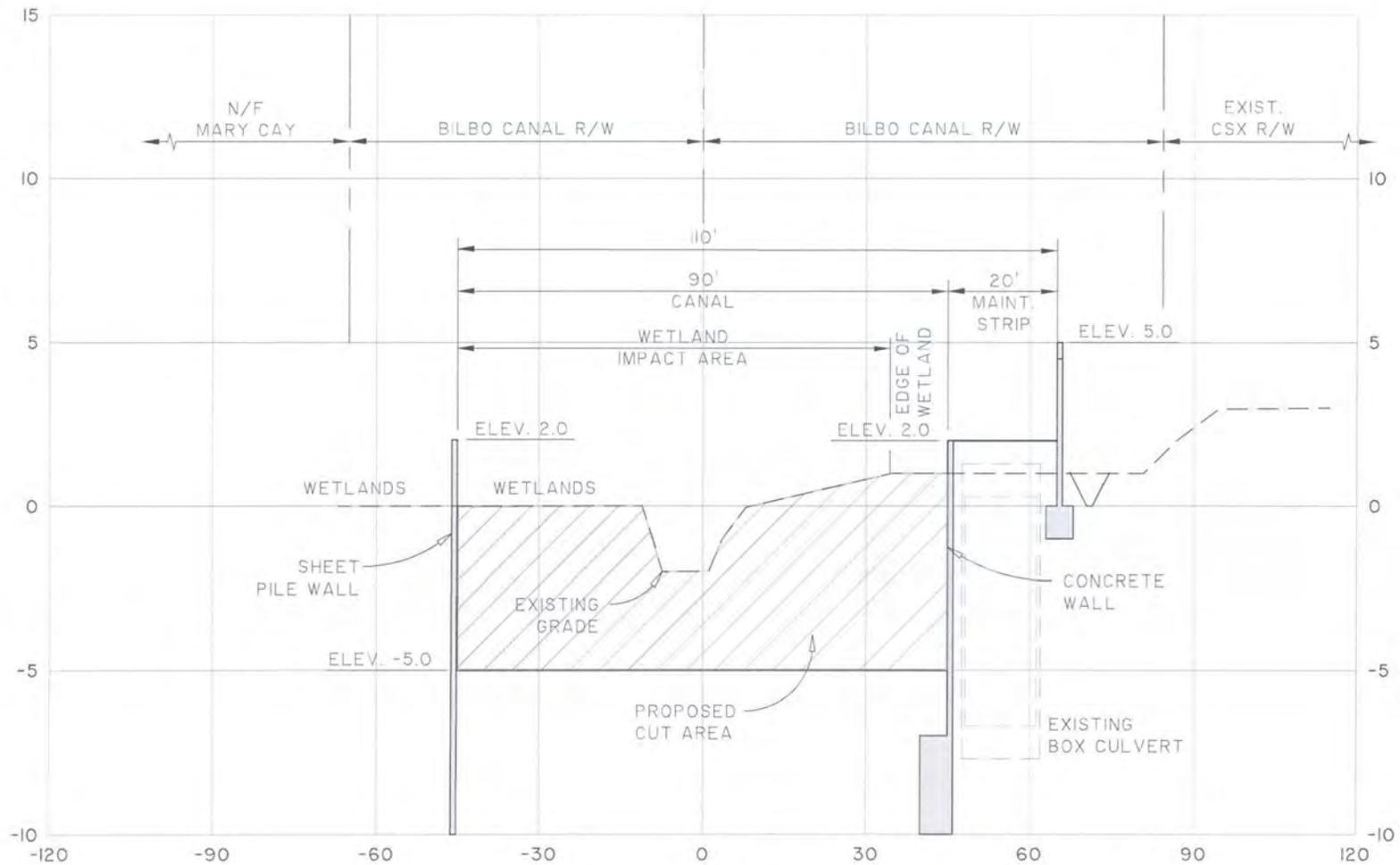
**BILBO CANAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
 PLAN VIEW**

DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2012
 JOB NO.: J-21310

SHEET 4

SCALE: 1" = 100'
 DATUM: NAVD 88

PROPOSED ACTIVITY:
 WETLAND PERMITTING
 PROJECT LOCATION:
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
 APPLICANT:
 CITY OF SAVANNAH



14+00

SECTION

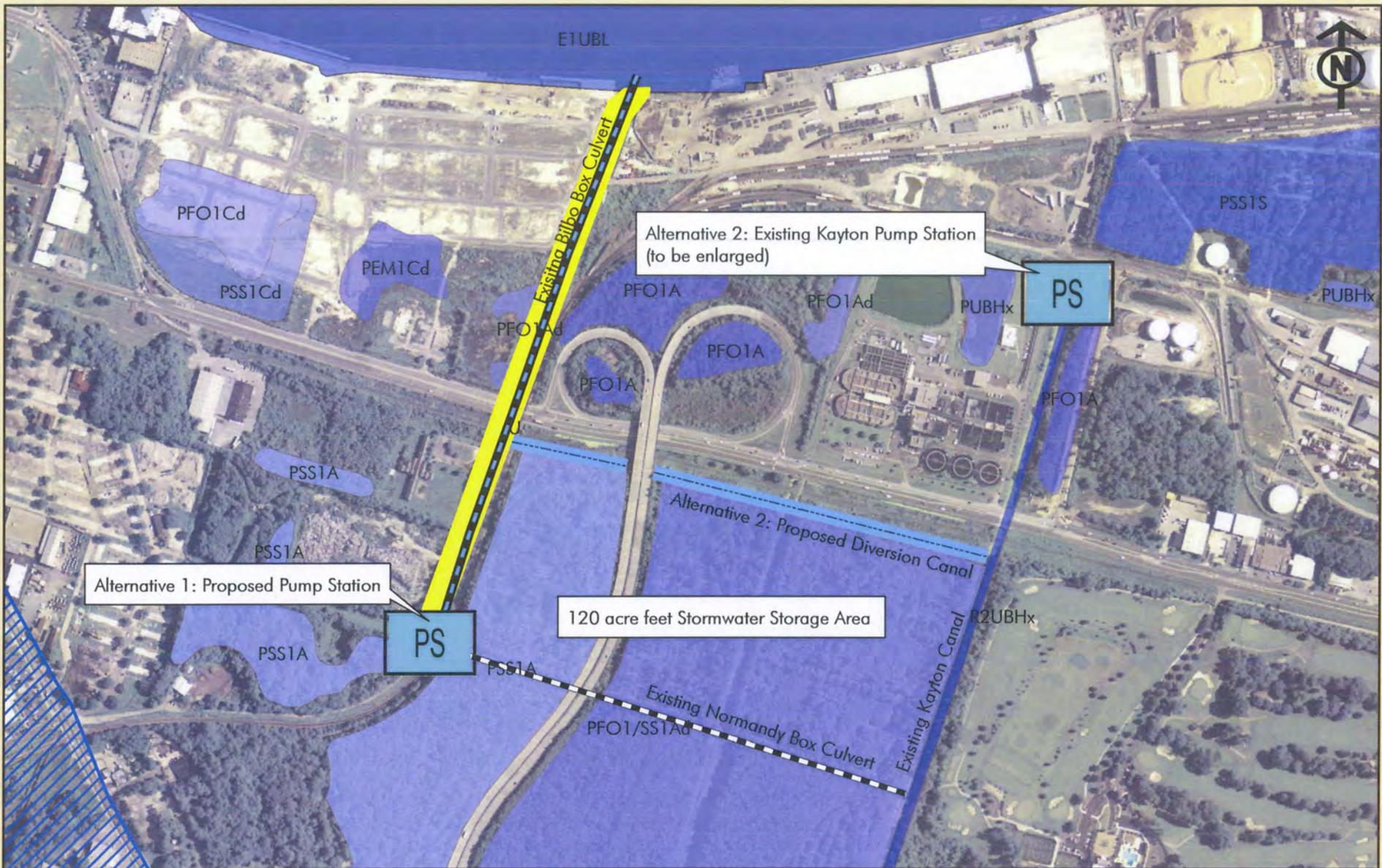
HORIZ: 1" = 30'
VERT: 1" = 5'

LEGEND

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	ACRES
	PROJECT LIMITS	9.68 ACRES
	FRESHWATER WETLANDS	1.34 ACRES

PROJECT IMPACTS

	FRESHWATER WETLAND IMPACTS CANAL CONSTRUCTION	1.09 ACRES
<hr/>		
TOTAL WETLAND IMPACTS		1.09 ACRES



sligh environmental consultants, inc.
 31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B
 Savannah, Georgia 31405
 phone (912) 232-0451
 fax (912) 232-0453

BILBO CANAL IMPROVEMENTS
 Alternatives Exhibit
 Chatham County, Georgia

Exhibit 6

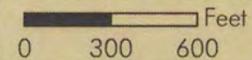


Exhibit Date: April 29, 2013

Drawn By: JPW

Reviewed By: BWW

Job Number : 01-12-074



Photo 1: Existing Bilbo Box to be Removed, Facing South.



Photo 2: Bilbo Box, Facing West

slighenvironmental consultants, inc.
31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B
Savannah, Georgia 31405
phone (912) 232-0451
fax (912) 232-0453

BILBO CANAL IMPROVEMENTS
Site Photographs 1 & 2
Chatham County, Georgia

Site Photographs

Exhibit Date: April 16, 2013

Drawn By: JPW

Reviewed By: BWW

Job Number : 01-12-074



Photo 3: Wetland, Facing West



Photo 4: Upland & Wetland Interface, Facing West

slighenvironmental consultants, inc.
31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B
Savannah, Georgia 31405
phone (912) 232-0451
fax (912) 232-0453

BILBO CANAL IMPROVEMENTS
Site Photographs 3 & 4
Chatham County, Georgia

Site Photographs

Exhibit Date: April 16, 2013

Drawn By: JPW

Reviewed By: BWW

Job Number : 01-12-074



Photo 5: Typical Upland, Savannah River Landing, Facing West



Photo 6: Typical Upland, South of President Street, Facing West

slighenvironmental consultants, inc.
 31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B
 Savannah, Georgia 31405
 phone (912) 232-0451
 fax (912) 232-0453

BILBO CANAL IMPROVEMENTS
 Site Photographs 5 & 6
 Chatham County, Georgia

Site Photographs

Exhibit Date: April 16, 2013

Drawn By: JPW

Reviewed By: BWW

Job Number : 01-12-074