



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SAVANNAH DISTRICT  
100 WEST OGLETHORPE AVENUE  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 30401

February 9, 2024

Regulatory Division  
SAS-2005-00769

**30-DAY PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Savannah District**

The District Engineer has received a proposal to modify the vegetative monitoring plan and vegetative success criteria of the Salt Creek Mitigation Bank (SCMB), a single-client, non-commercial tidal wetland mitigation bank, approved on March 5, 2012. The RIBITs Cyber Repository can be found at the following link:

[https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:278:::RP,278:P278\\_BANK\\_ID:1528](https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:278:::RP,278:P278_BANK_ID:1528).

The SCMB was established to provide compensatory mitigation for adverse impacts to aquatic resources resulting from projects sponsored by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and authorized by Federal and/or State permits. To date, 253.6 salt marsh credits (legacy credits) have been released for use from the approved total potential credit generation of 422.9 salt marsh credits at the SCMB.

The comment period for the proposed modification will close 30 days from the date of this public notice. Written comments, including suggestions for modifications or objections to the proposal, stating reasons thereof, are being solicited from anyone having an interest in this proposal, and must be submitted so as to be received on or before the last day of the comment period. Written comments concerning the modification request must reference the bank Sponsor's name and the Regulatory File Number, and be forwarded to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) at the above address, or via the email listed at the end of this notice.

Authority: A public notice regarding a Banking Instrument (BI) modification request for the SCMB is being evaluated under Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations Part 332.8, entitled "Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources, Final Rule", as published in the Federal Register on April 10, 2008.

Regulatory File Number: SAS-2005-00769

Bank Sponsor: Mr. Bill Nicholson  
Chatham County, Department of Engineering  
Post Office 8161  
Savannah, Georgia 31412

This public notice does not imply, on the parts of the Corps or other agencies, either favorable or unfavorable opinion of the proposed BI modification but is issued to solicit comments regarding the factors on which final decisions will be based.

Location of Project: The 98.9-acre project is located northwest of Salt Creek and southeast of US Highway 17, near the city of Savannah, in Chatham County, Georgia (Latitude 32.0105, Longitude -81.2249). Please see Figure 1 (Site Location Map) for more information on the location of the SCMB.

Description of Proposed Modification: The current vegetation monitoring requirements include stem count and vegetative species documentation within a three (3) meter square plot at each hydrologic stage recorder. The sponsor is proposing to amend the monitoring requirements to include documentation of aerial vegetative coverage using an unmanned aerial vehicle to collect imagery at low tide during the growing season of each monitoring period. Percent aerial vegetative coverage within the site will be calculated using ArcGIS Software.

The current vegetative success criteria for the SCMB are outlined below:

- **Year 2:** Demonstrated Improvement in Vegetation (10% Coverage in 70% of Plots)
- **Year 3:** Demonstrated Improvement in Vegetation (20% Coverage in 70% of Plots)
- **Year 5:** Demonstrated Improvement in Vegetation (40% Coverage in 70% of Plots)
- **Year 7:** Demonstrated Improvement in Vegetation (60% Coverage in 70% of Plots)

The proposed vegetative success criteria outlined in the modification would revise the final performance of the project to a total aerial vegetative coverage of 60% for salt marsh species, regardless of the age of the bank (i.e., the final credit release would be related to the achievement of final performance, and not be based upon the achievement of annual monitoring milestones over time).

The BI modification also proposes a revision to the total credits generated and the credit release schedule. As proposed, the total credits generated from the bank would decrease from 422.9 salt marsh credits to 413.8 salt marsh credits, therefore, 160.2 salt marsh credits would be available for release. The site is performing at 60% coverage in 70% of plots. Additionally, the sponsor has proposed BI modification to include the following revision to the credit release schedule:

- **Release 4:** Demonstrated Improvement in Vegetation (60% Coverage in 70% of Plots) – 141 credits (88% of remaining credits/34% of modified total credits)

- **Release 5 (Final):** Closing on Conservation Easement – 19.2 credits (12% of remaining credits/5% of modified total credits)

Other Governmental Authorizations: The Interagency Review Team responsible for the review and approval of the proposed mitigation bank modification include representatives from the Corps, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – National Marine Fisheries Service, the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR), and the Coastal Resources Division of GADNR. This BI modification would not require authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Environmental Resource Review: Preliminary review indicates that: 1) An environmental impact statement would not be required; 2) No species of fish, wildlife, or plant (or their critical habitat) listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (PL 93-205) would be affected; and, 3) No cultural or historical resources considered eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places would be affected according to a website review of known listed properties. Additional information may change any of these preliminary findings.

Other Evaluation Factors: The Corps 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 to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors. Comments are used in the evaluation of the proposed mitigation Banking Instrument modification per 33 CFR Part 332.8.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment on this proposal should submit comments via email to [skye.h.stockel@usace.army.mil](mailto:skye.h.stockel@usace.army.mil), or in writing to: Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Skye H. Stockel, Regulatory Division, 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31401, no later than **30-days from the date of this notice**. Please refer to the mitigation bank name (Salt Creek Mitigation Bank) and the Regulatory Division file number (SAS-2005-00769) in your comments.

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act.

If you have any further questions concerning this proposed modification, please contact Skye H. Stockel, Team Lead, Coastal Branch at (912) 652-5690, or [skye.h.stockel@usace.army.mil](mailto:skye.h.stockel@usace.army.mil).

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1. Figure 1 Site Location Map, Salt Creek Mitigation Bank, Chatham County, Georgia

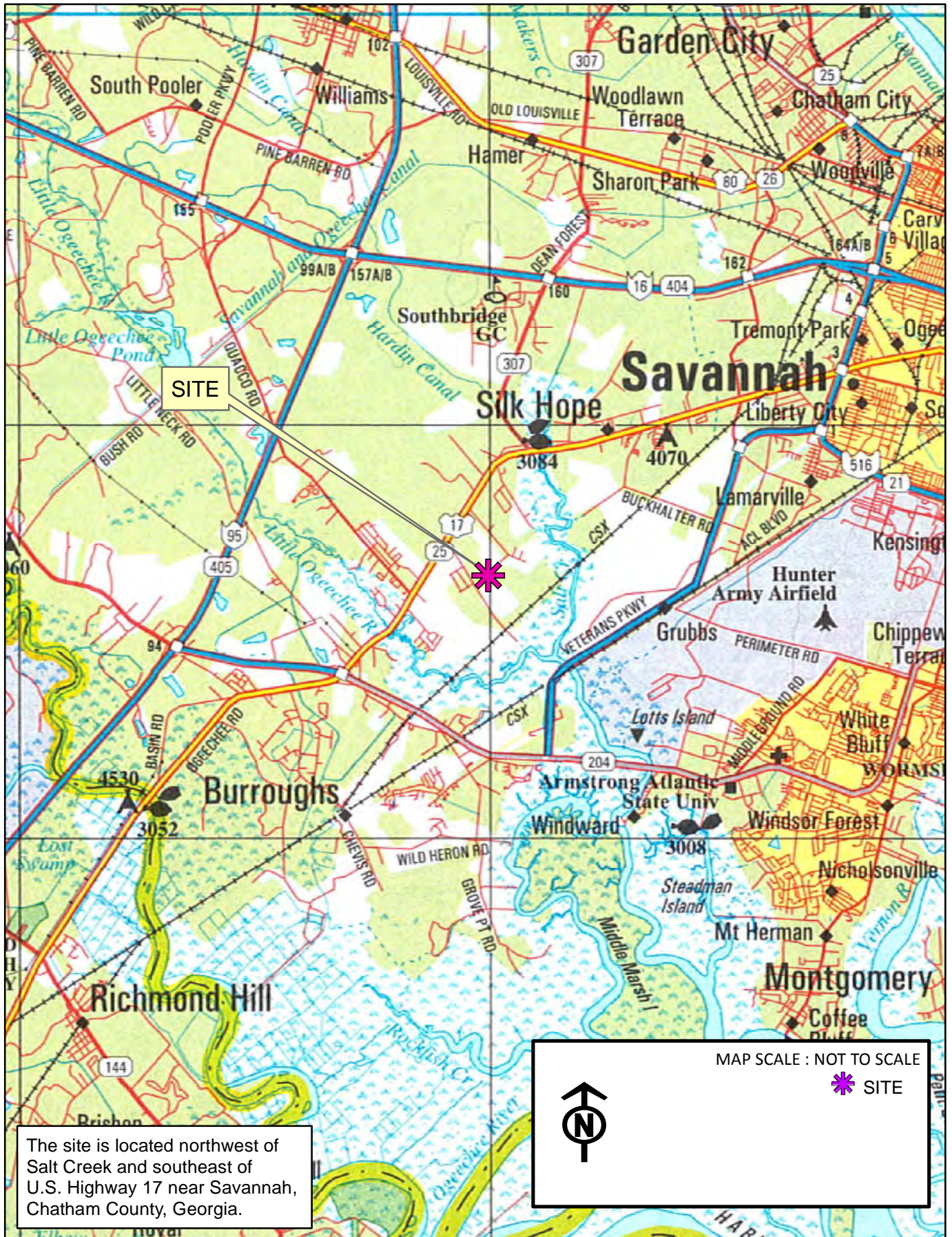


FIGURE 1, VICINITY MAP, DELORME GEORGIA ATLAS & GAZETTEER