

**APPENDIX D:  
Programmatic Net Benefit Section 4(f) Evaluation –  
Peach Point Wildlife Management Area**

# **SH 36 / Spur 10 Roadway Improvements**

## **Programmatic Net Benefit Section 4(f) Evaluation**

### **Peach Point Wildlife Management Area**

### **Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties, Texas**

Texas Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation

CSJ 0188-06-046

June 2007

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## INTRODUCTION

The following Section 4(f) evaluation discusses the proposed improvements to State Highway 36 (SH 36) and Spur 10 (Hartledge/Gerken Road) and the potential impacts to the Peach Point Wildlife Management Area (WMA) which is located in Brazoria County, Texas. An environmental assessment, dated June 2007, addresses the anticipated impacts of the SH 36 / Spur 10 proposed improvements.

Proposed improvements to SH 36 would extend from FM 2218 in Pleak, Fort Bend County, Texas south to FM 1495 in Freeport, Brazoria County, Texas. The proposed improvements to Spur 10 would extend from US 59 in Rosenberg to SH 36 in Pleak. The length of the total project is approximately 55 miles.

The proposed roadway improvements would upgrade SH 36 and Spur 10, a designated hurricane evacuation route, to increase safety, access, and mobility for the transportation of people and commercial goods in coastal areas during emergency situations. This project would also serve the local transportation needs of communities and towns within the project area, which include Rosenberg, Pleak, Needville, Guy, Damon, West Columbia, Brazoria, Jones Creek, and Freeport.

Floodplain mitigation basins and detention ponds are proposed as part of the highway improvement. They would compensate for the fill to be added within the 100-year floodplain that is necessary to raise the roadway above the 100-year flood level and also to compensate for additional rainfall runoff caused by the additional roadway pavement. One of these mitigation basins is proposed to be located within the Peach Point WMA. This floodplain mitigation basin would be located adjacent to Jones Creek. It would be 25 acres (ac) in area and provide 151 ac-feet (ft) of storage volume. The basin would be 6 to 6.5 ft in depth with 3:1 side slopes. Since this basin would be a permanent modification in the WMA, it would be a Section 4(f) impact. Significant coordination has taken place between TxDOT and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), manager of the Peach Point WMA, resulting in a joint use concept for the basin which includes mitigation of floodplain impacts and a waterfowl roosting site.

The Section 4(f) legislation, as established under the U. S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC 303, 23 USC 138) provides protection for publicly owned parks, recreation areas, or wildlife and/or waterfowl refuges of national, state, or local significance or land of an historic site of national, state, or local significance from conversion to transportation usage. Section 4(f) also applies to all archaeological sites on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and which warrant preservation in place. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) may not approve the use of publicly owned land of a publicly owned park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of

national, state, or local significance or land of an historic site of national, state, or local significance unless a determination is made that:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land from the property; and
- The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use (23 CFR 771.135).

Section 4(f) impacts may also occur in certain cases when there is no direct conversion of the 4(f) resource, but there are indirect impacts to a site. This is called a constructive use of Section 4(f) property. Constructive use occurs when the transportation project does not require land from a 4(f) resource, but the proximity impacts are so severe that they cause substantial impairment to the protected activities, features, or attributes that qualify a resource for 4(f) protection. Substantial impairment occurs only when the protected activities, features, or attributes of the resource are substantially diminished. Indirect impacts due to noise, aesthetics, access, land use changes, and impacts to ecological features could potentially affect the utility of a 4(f) property. (See 23 CFR 771.135 (p)(iii).

#### **Section 4(f) Programmatic Evaluation - Net Benefit**

In April 2005, the FHWA issued a final nationwide programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation (programmatic evaluation) for use in certain Federal (Federal-aid or Federal Lands Highway) transportation improvement projects where the use of publicly owned property from a Section 4(f) park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge or property from a historic site results in a net benefit to the Section 4(f) property. The application of this programmatic evaluation is intended to promote environmental stewardship by encouraging the development of measures that enhance Section 4(f) properties and to streamline the Section 4(f) process by reducing the time it takes to prepare, review, and circulate a draft and final individual Section 4(f) evaluation (individual evaluation) that documents compliance with Section 4(f) requirements. This programmatic evaluation provides a procedural option for demonstrating compliance with the statutory requirements of Section 4(f) and is an addition to the existing nationwide programmatic evaluations, all of which remain in effect. This programmatic evaluation has been prepared for a federally assisted transportation improvement project on existing alignment that would use property of a Section 4(f) wildlife management facility, which in the view of the Administration and official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property, the use of the Section 4(f) property would result in a net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.

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## PROPOSED ACTION

### Project Description

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the FHWA are proposing to upgrade SH 36 from FM 2218 in Pleak, Fort Bend County, Texas south to FM 1495 in Freeport, Brazoria County, Texas. Proposed improvements to Spur 10 would extend from US 59 in Rosenberg to SH 36 in Pleak. SH 36 is a designated hurricane evacuation route. The proposed roadway improvements would increase safety, access, and mobility for the transportation of people and commercial goods in coastal areas during emergency situations. The project would also serve the local transportation needs of communities and towns within the project area, including Pleak, Needville, Guy, Damon, West Columbia, Brazoria, Jones Creek, and Freeport.

At the present time, SH 36 is generally an undivided two-lane roadway with open ditches. The existing right-of-way (ROW) width varies from 80 ft to 325 ft along the project route. The proposed roadway would be a four-lane divided highway with a grassy center median in rural sections and a four-lane undivided highway with a continuous center left-turn lane in urban areas. In the vicinity of the Peach Point WMA, SH 36 is a two-lane roadway with open ditches on either side within a 220-ft ROW. The proposed improvements in this area would be a four-lane undivided roadway with a continuous center left-turn lane constructed within the existing ROW.

Floodplain mitigation basins and detention ponds are proposed as part of the highway improvement. They would compensate for the fill to be added within the 100-year floodplain that is necessary to raise the roadway above the 100-year flood level and also to compensate for additional rainfall runoff caused by the additional roadway pavement. One of these mitigation basins is proposed to be located within the Peach Point WMA. This floodplain mitigation basin would be located adjacent to Jones Creek. It would be 25 ac in area and provide 151 ac-ft of storage volume. The basin would be 6 to 6.5 ft in depth with 3:1 side slopes. This floodplain mitigation basin would be a permanent modification to the Peach Point WMA, and thus would be a 4(f) impact.

### Need and Purpose for the Action

**Need:** The following items are the focal points regarding the need for this project:

- Improved operational efficiency and safety
- Added capacity for projected population growth in the region; specifically north of the project corridor in Fort Bend County, and south of the project corridor at the Port of Freeport
- Improved mobility for hurricane evacuation needs
- Improved intermodal relationships with the Port of Freeport

**Purpose:** The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and mobility and to improve the roadway design of the existing Spur 10 and SH 36 facilities. Additional travel lanes will accommodate for the projected increase in traffic volumes during hurricane evacuations and projected future corridor traffic demands. Improving the existing roadway design by adding dedicated turning lanes and improving intersections will better accommodate turning movements along the corridor, thus improving safety, efficiency, and mobility in the project area for local traffic and heavy truck traffic from the Port of Freeport.

The proposed project would eliminate the existing unsafe, undivided roadway by creating a divided roadway with a grassy center median or center left-turn lane that separates oncoming traffic. Numerous unsafe and less desirable intersections would be improved by adding grade separations and improved roadway design at various locations within the project limits. SH 36 is a designated hurricane evacuation route and serves as a major route northward from Brazoria and Fort Bend counties. The proposed improvements are intended to improve the capacity and efficiency of the roadway primarily for use as a hurricane evacuation route. The present roadway does not meet the capacity and design standards of a hurricane evacuation route. The proposed improvements are needed to adequately meet the evacuation needs of an area that is expected to experience continued growth of population and employment.

If the improved highway is to adequately serve its intended function as a hurricane evacuation route, the pavement must be above the 100-year flood elevation. Fill will be required in the floodplains to raise the pavement to the required elevation. The proposed floodplain mitigation basin to be located adjacent to Jones Creek in the Peach Point WMA would mitigate the loss of flood storage volume occupied by the required highway fill at a much lower cost than a bridge spanning the entire width of the 100-year floodplain.

## **SECTION 4(f) PROPERTY**

### **Site Description**

The Peach Point WMA, located 5 miles west of Freeport in Brazoria County, is owned and operated by the TPWD. Of the 10,911-ac of coastal prairie and coastal marsh that comprise the property, 8,684 ac were purchased using waterfowl stamp funds from 1985 to 1987. An additional 1,627 ac were acquired in 1988 as mitigation from the Brazos River Harbor District. The 600-ac Bryan Beach Unit was added in 1993.

Major land use patterns to facilitate land drainage and development have influenced the Peach Point WMA and adjacent marshes. The Gulf Intracoastal

Waterway was completed in the area during the early 1940s. Jones Creek, which crosses through the Peach Point WMA was once a tributary of the San Bernard River. As a result of the Waterway and its associated spoil compartments, Jones Creek now empties directly into the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The mouth of the Brazos River was moved approximately 4 miles west of its natural location adjacent to the Peach Point WMA to provide improved boat traffic and flood relief. Tobey Ditch borders the easternmost portion of the Peach Point WMA. It provides flood relief for homes west of the flood levee on the Brazos River. The diversion of the Brazos River and the construction of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and Tobey Ditch have severely altered the natural drainage patterns and have greatly contributed to saltwater intrusion into the area marshes.

The Peach Point WMA is representative of the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion. This ecoregion occupies approximately 15,000 square miles of Texas. The land is nearly level and poorly drained. The elevation of the Peach Point WMA is generally 5 ft or less above mean sea level with a few areas 10 ft or more above sea level. Soils are primarily clays, ranging from saline to non-saline.

Most of the management area consists of either coastal prairie or coastal marsh. The marsh usually has standing water from early fall to late spring and is often dry during the summer. Most of the marsh is brackish to saline, but some intermediate and freshwater marshes do occur. Marshhay cordgrass, saltgrass, and leafy three-square bulrush dominate the brackish and saline marshes. Gulf cordgrass dominates the more saline upland marshes. Wetter prairies support a mix of seacoast bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, eastern gamma grass, and Indian grass. Plant species occurring in the intermediate marshes include American bulrush and marshhay cordgrass. Some brackish and saline marsh areas are subject to daily tidal action. There are numerous freshwater sloughs and seasonal ponds on the area. Four freshwater impoundments provide nearly 1,200 ac of habitat. The freshwater areas support a number of plants, including sedges, smartweeds, millet, and alligatorweed.

The primary game species found on the Peach Point WMA include snow geese, white-fronted geese, Canada geese, blue-winged teal, shoveler, green-winged teal, wigeon, gadwall, pintail ducks, and mottled ducks. Public hunts for feral hogs, an introduced species, are conducted to control numbers and decrease competition with native wildlife. White-tailed deer, sandhill cranes, bobwhite quail, and mourning doves are also found on the area. Nongame species include bobcat, coyote, armadillo, river otter, nutria, raccoon, and numerous other rodent species. Over 270 species of birds, 22 species of mammals, and 29 species of reptiles have been observed on the Peach Point WMA.

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## History

The Peach Point WMA is located within a league of land deeded to Stephen F. Austin by the Mexican government in 1830. James F. Perry and his wife, Emily Austin Perry, established Peach Point Plantation in 1832. Emily was Stephen F. Austin's sister. They purchased the property from Austin for \$300, and operated a plantation until 1863, with cotton and sugar cane as the primary crops.

After James Perry died in 1853, Emily Perry gave her son by a previous marriage, William Joel Bryan, 200 ac of the original plantation. William and his wife developed a thriving cotton and cattle business known as Durazno Plantation. A portion of the Durazno Plantation is contained within the present Peach Point WMA boundaries. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the property was used to graze cattle.

The portion of Peach Point Plantation that is now included in the Peach Point WMA was donated to Austin College by Mrs. Lucy Harvey. The property was later sold to a consortium of six major petrochemical corporations. Development plans included construction of an offshore pumping station for oil tankers. Plans were canceled, however, due to a decline in the oil-based economy. The Nature Conservancy eventually acquired the 8,580-ac tract. The TPWD purchased the area from that organization.

## Activities and Use

The Peach Point WMA is part of the Central Coast Wetlands Ecosystem project (CCWEP). The project's mission is to provide for sound biological conservation of all wildlife resources within the central coast of Texas for the public's common benefit.

The Peach Point WMA and adjacent marshes are important resources for a wide variety of wintering and resident waterbirds and other wildlife. The Peach Point WMA often supports more than 35,000 snow geese during parts of the winter. The wooded ridges and mature live oak woodlands are an important "fall-out" site for neotropical migrants. The Christmas Bird Count location at the Peach Point WMA annually ranks as the nation's highest single-day reporting location, often reporting more than 300 bird species. Because of the abundance of bird life, the Peach Point WMA is a stop on the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail.

Various college and university groups conducting studies on wildlife, habitat types, and ecosystem functions utilize the Peach Point WMA as a study area. A 2.5 mile interpretative trail was constructed in a portion of the Peach Point WMA vegetated with large 100-year-old live oaks. The trail includes a wildlife observation platform, picnic area, and interpretative trail.

Visitors to the Peach Point WMA may enjoy nature viewing, birdwatching, photography, and hiking. A new nature trail is under development. It will provide visitors with the opportunity to explore an oak/hackberry motte and grassland typical of the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion. Persons possessing an Annual Public Hunting Permit may hunt waterfowl, rail, gallinule, and snipe on designated days during the appropriate season. Feral hog hunters are randomly selected during Special Permit drawings.

Habitat management focuses on the establishment of native plant communities and habitat conditions that result in maximum wildlife benefits. Habitat management employs a variety of proven, innovative, and experimental techniques that may be used to complement each other. Management activities used at the Peach Point WMA include rotational grazing, controlled burning, hunting, disking, and water level management. A grit site and winter forage crop provide habitat for wintering sandhill cranes and geese.

### **Access**

Access to the Peach Point WMA is directly off SH 36, near Jones Creek. This is the only public access entrance to the facility.

### **Ownership**

The State of Texas, through the TPWD, owns the Peach Point WMA.

## **IMPACTS TO 4(f) PROPERTY**

During the alternatives analysis phase of the SH 36 improvement project, it was not deemed feasible to acquire additional ROW in the vicinity of the Peach Point WMA due to the constraints located immediately adjacent to the existing ROW. Along the south side of SH 36 is the Peach Point WMA, while to the north of the highway is a mobile home park and the Stringfellow historical marker and picnic area. The recreational facility within the WMA that is closest to SH 36 is a nature trail located more than 850 ft from the highway. The proposed highway improvements in the vicinity of the Peach Point WMA would be constructed within the existing ROW. The highway improvements would not adversely impact Peach Point. However, a floodplain mitigation basin is necessary to compensate for fill added in the Jones Creek floodplain to raise the highway pavement above the 100-year flood level. The proposed basin would be located in a meadow adjacent to Jones Creek, and would impact fewer than a dozen trees of less than 12-inch diameter. A construction easement would be required for TxDOT to construct the basin on TPWD property. Following construction, the basin would continue to be owned and operated by TPWD as part of the Peach Point WMA operations.

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## ALTERNATIVES

Four alternatives have been identified and evaluated. The no-build alternative involves not constructing the proposed highway improvements, and therefore a floodplain detention pond would not be built. Three alternative floodplain mitigation sites have been identified and evaluated. Only one of these sites avoids use of the 4(f) property. It is required that the floodplain mitigation sites be located within the Jones Creek 100-year floodplain, which limits site alternatives. (Refer to Exhibit 2)

The no-build alternative would not improve the future safety and mobility needs of Brazoria and Fort Bend counties from Freeport north to the Rosenberg area. Once improved, SH 36 would serve as a hurricane evacuation route, enabling citizens living and working along the low-lying coastal areas of Freeport to more safely escape to higher ground in Fort Bend County and points north in the event of a major storm such as a hurricane or tropical storm. A no-build alternative would not provide the safety standards for a roadway needed to evacuate the current or anticipated future populations from the coastal areas in the event of a hurricane. Further, the no-build alternative would not accommodate the mobility needs of the public resulting from increased growth of the Port of Freeport and areas north of the project corridor.

If the highway improvements were constructed without the floodplain mitigation basin in the Jones Creek floodplain, the flood storage capacity would be reduced thereby raising the elevation of floodwaters for a rainfall event of a given magnitude.

Alternative 1 is located at the junction of CR 217 (Old SH 36) and SH 36. This site presents a number of constraints. Because of the low surface elevation of this site, 144 ac would be required to accommodate the required flood storage volume. Locating the floodplain mitigation at this site could prevent the additional widening of SH 36 at some future date. Further, approximately 24 ac of wetland would be impacted. Constructing a floodplain detention pond at this location would require mitigation for wetland loss.

Alternative 2 is the preferred floodplain detention pond site. It would be located immediately south of SH 36 and east of Jones Creek on WMA property, and would occupy 25 ac. The proposed detention pond would be approximately 550 ft wide and 2,100 ft long. The pond would be 6 to 6.5 ft in depth with a capacity of 151 ac-ft of water. The pond can be configured to avoid impacting wetlands.

Alternative 3 would be located on the Peach Point WMA immediately south of SH 36 and east of Hanley Road (CR 329). Due to topography, the detention pond at this site can be deeper, and therefore would occupy 56 ac. Approximately 22 ac of wetland would be adversely impacted by a detention pond at this location.

## **EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE HARM**

Alternative 2, the proposed 25 ac floodplain mitigation basin, is one of two alternatives studied that would be located within the Peach Point WMA. It offers the opportunity to work cooperatively with the TPWD to enhance the habitat within the WMA while mitigating highway improvement impacts on the floodplain. The basin can be designed to hold water and therefore serve as a roosting area for migratory waterfowl. This would enhance one of the main functions of the WMA, which is to provide a winter home for migratory waterfowl, without adversely impacting existing wetlands. Alternative 3 would occupy 56 ac and adversely impact approximately 22 ac of existing wetland.

TxDOT will work closely with TPWD staff to develop a mutually beneficial design for the mitigation basin. Further, construction of the basin will be performed in a manner and at that time of the year when such activity results in the smallest adverse impact to the wildlife in the Peach Point WMA.

## **AGENCY COORDINATION**

TxDOT met with the manager of the Peach Point WMA at the WMA to discuss the results of the wetland assessments of three potential floodplain mitigation areas between Jones Creek and the Brazos River Diversion Channel and to reach agreement on a preferred floodplain mitigation site. Following a review of the three potential alternatives, it was agreed that Alternative 2 was the preferred alternative as it resulted in the least impact to wetlands. WMA management has suggested that the detention pond be constructed so it will hold water over prolonged periods of time. The detention pond would serve to enhance the waterfowl roosting areas in the WMA as well as providing flood storage capacity. The design details will be developed during final design of the highway and detention pond. A conceptual layout is shown in Exhibit 4. The TPWD concurred in a letter dated March 22, 2005 that the proposed floodplain mitigation basin design is both acceptable and considered to be an enhancement to the Peach Point WMA. A second TPWD coordination letter was received July 22, 2007, which stated that the floodplain mitigation basin is considered a "net benefit" to the Peach Point WMA. Both TPWD coordination letters are included in the appendix of this document.

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed improvements to SH 36 in the vicinity of the Peach Point WMA would be constructed within the existing ROW. Thus, no highway ROW would be acquired from the Peach Point WMA. The recreational facility within the WMA closest to the highway is a nature trail more than 850 ft from the roadway.

A floodplain mitigation basin is proposed for a location within the WMA adjacent to Jones Creek. The 25-ac facility would be constructed within a construction

easement. Once constructed, the basin would remain the property of the TPWD, who would be responsible for its maintenance. This basin, or detention pond, would serve two purposes. The proposed highway improvements would be constructed on fill within the Jones Creek floodplain to raise the highway pavement above the 100-year flood level. The detention pond is necessary to compensate for the loss of flood capacity occupied by the highway fill. The floodplain mitigation basin would be operated by the TPWD as a waterfowl roosting site.

The proposed project results in an overall enhancement to the WMA when compared to the future do nothing or avoidance alternatives and the present condition of the Section 4(f) property, considering the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the property for Section 4(f) protection. Therefore, the project has been determined to provide a net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.

The proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm and subsequent mitigation necessary to preserve and enhance those features and values of the property that originally qualified the property for Section 4(f) protection.

## **APPENDIX**

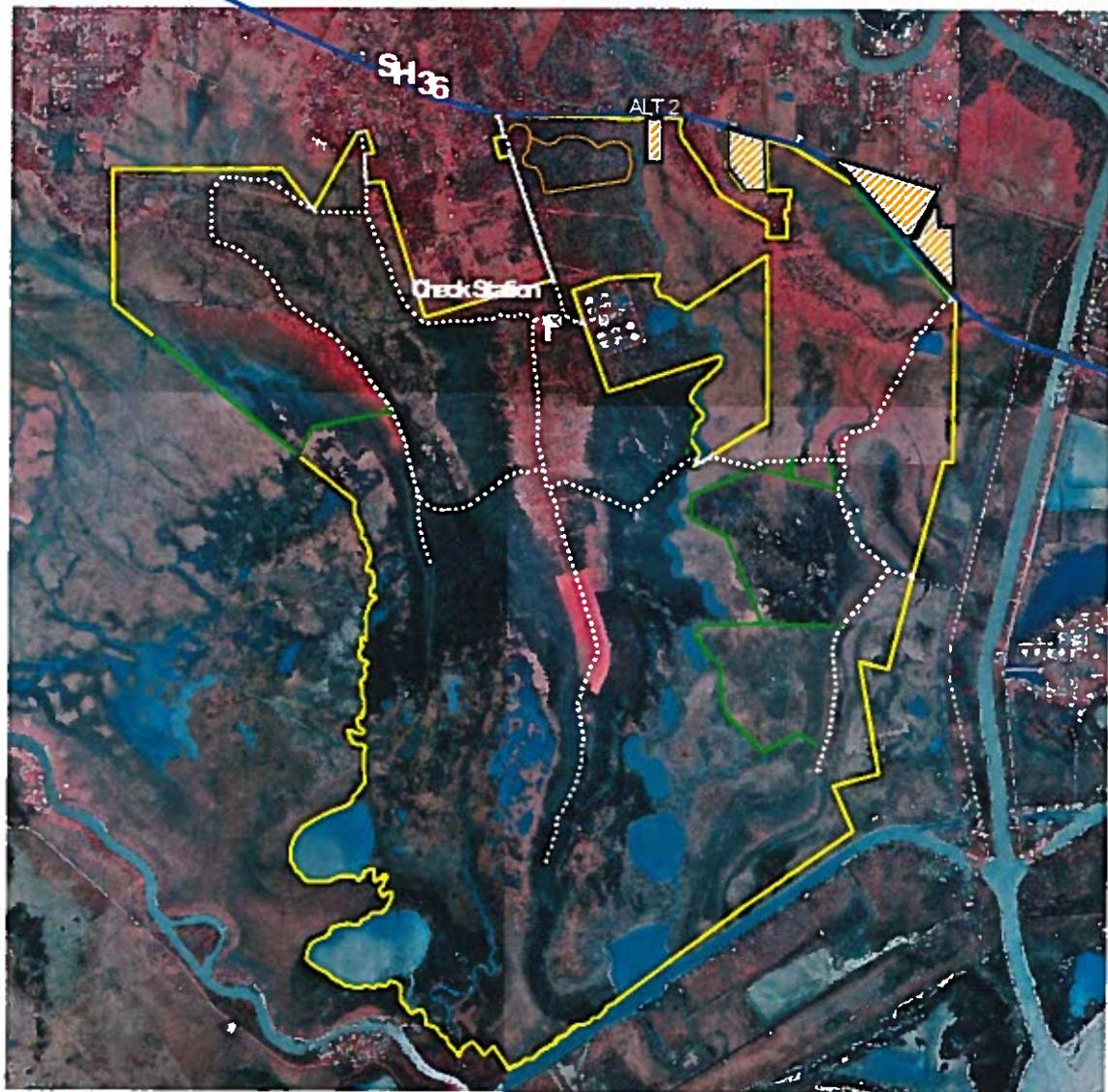
**Exhibit 1: Vicinity Map**

**Exhibit 2: Alternative Floodplain Mitigation Sites Studied**

**Exhibit 3: Floodplain Mitigation Basin at Peach Point Wildlife  
Management Area**

**Exhibit 4: Floodplain Mitigation Pond Conceptual Layout  
TPWD Letter of Approval**





**Legend**

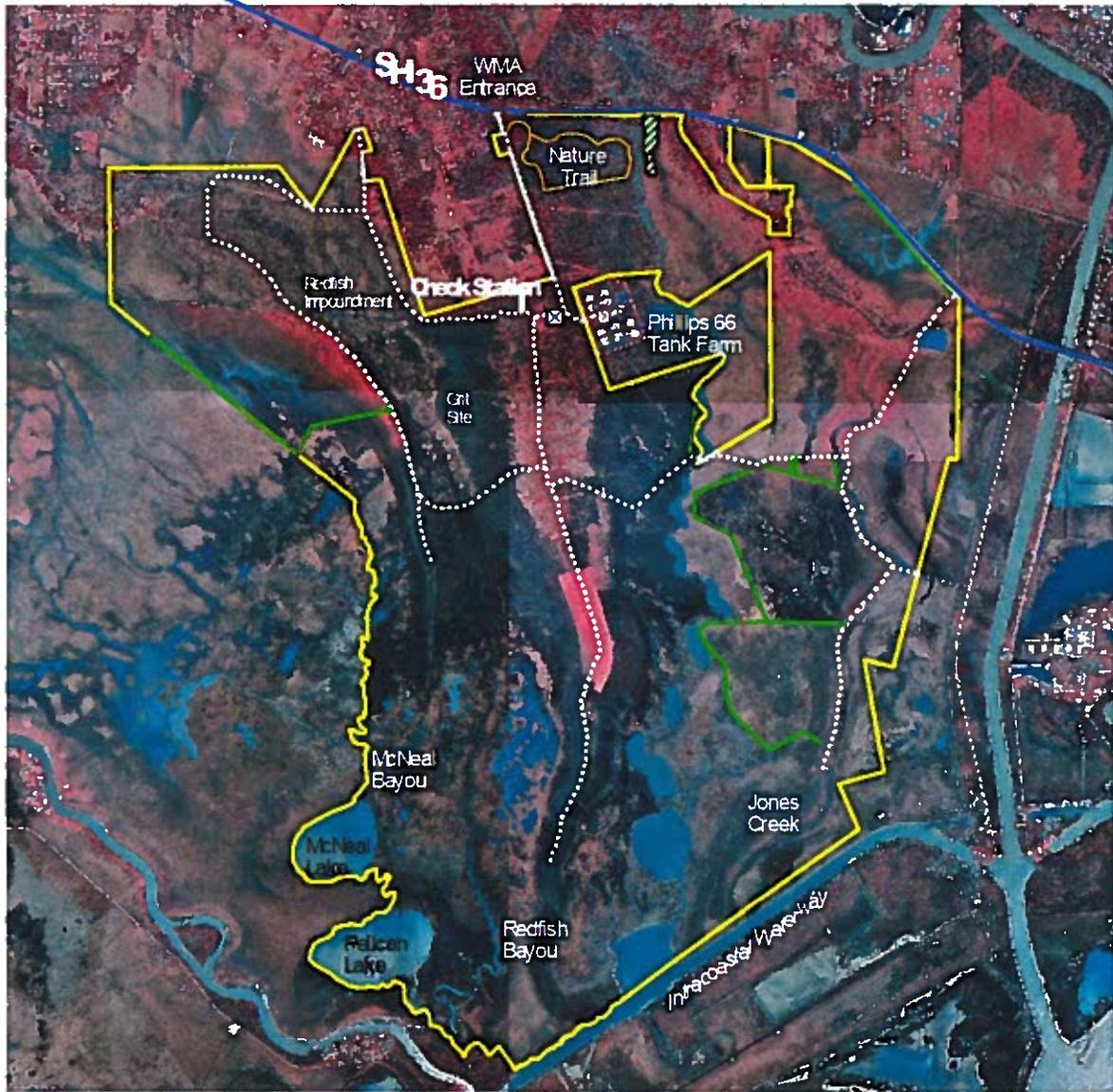
-  Detention Basin
-  SH 36
-  Check Station
-  Levees
-  Roads
-  Nature Trail
-  Boundries

**EXHIBIT 2**  
**JONES CREEK FLOODPLAIN MITIGATION**  
**BASIN ALTERNATIVES**

Programmatic Net Benefit Section 4(f) Evaluation  
 Peach Point Wildlife Management Area

SH 36 / SPUR 10 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS  
 FORT BEND AND BRAZORIA COUNTIES, TEXAS

CSJ: 0188-06-046  
 JUNE 2007



Source: TPWD GIS Lab



**Legend**

-  Detention Basin
-  SH 36
-  Check Station
-  Levees
-  Roads
-  Nature Trail
-  Boundaries

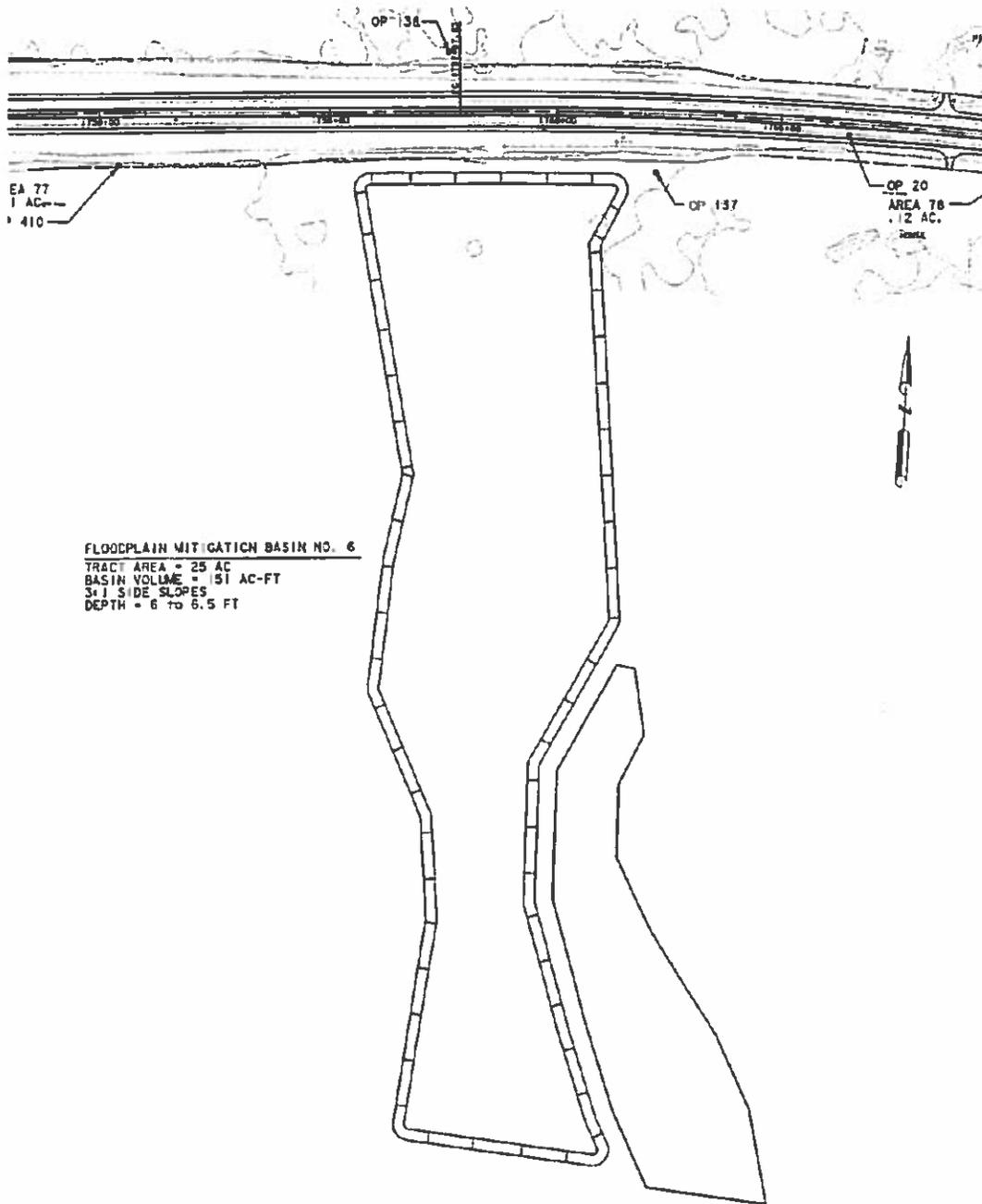
**EXHIBIT 3  
PEACH POINT WILDLIFE  
MANAGEMENT AREA**

Programmatic Net Benefit Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Peach Point Wildlife Management Area

SH 36 / SPUR 10 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS  
FORT BEND AND BRAZORIA COUNTIES, TEXAS

CSJ: 0188-06-046

JUNE 2007



FLOODPLAIN MITIGATION BASIN NO. 6  
 TRACT AREA = 25 AC  
 BASIN VOLUME = 151 AC-FT  
 3:1 SIDE SLOPES  
 DEPTH = 6 TO 6.5 FT

PROJECT NO. 01-0000-2002 0810

DATE: 08/15/02

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**EXHIBIT 4**  
 Preferred Jones Creek  
 Floodplain Mitigation Basin  
 State Highway 36  
 Brazoria County, Texas

**TPWD Coordination**



RECEIVED

MAR 28 2005

HNTB  
HOUSTON, TX

March 22, 2005

Mr. Roger Gonzalez  
Project Manager  
Texas Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 1386  
Houston, TX 77251-1386

Re: SH 36: Jones Creek to 0.2 mile north of the Brazos River Diversion  
Channel; CSJ: 0188-06-046

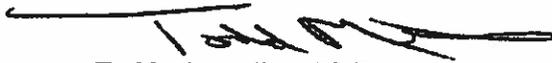
Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposes to upgrade SH 36 and Spur 10 (Hartledge/Gerken Road) from US 59 in Fort Bend County to FM 1495 in Brazoria County. The proposed improvements are intended to increase safety, access, and mobility for the transportation of people and commercial goods in coastal areas during emergency situations.

Although the proposed highway improvements would not encroach onto the Peach Point Wildlife Management Area (WMA) property, TxDOT proposes to construct a floodplain detention pond within a construction easement located adjacent to Jones Creek on Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) property at the WMA. TxDOT has worked with TPWD to develop a design for the detention pond that would improve wildlife opportunities while also meeting the floodplain mitigation needs. The detention pond would be operated by TPWD and would serve to enhance the waterfowl roosting areas in the WMA as well as providing flood storage capacity.

In coordination with the environmental assessment process, TPWD agrees with the detention pond design concept presented in TxDOT's Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. We appreciate the opportunity to work with TxDOT on this highway improvement project.

Sincerely,

  
Todd Merendino, Ph.D.  
Project Leader, Central Coast Wetlands Ecosystem Project

Cc: Karen Coopersmith, HNTB Corporation  
Lance Olenius, TxDOT

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Mr. Pat Henry, P.E.  
Project Manager  
Texas Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 1386  
Houston, TX 77251-1386

Re: SH 36: Jones Creek to 0.2 mile north of the Brazos River Diversion Channel

Net Benefit Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation  
CSJ: 0188-06-046

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Dear Mr. Henry:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposes to upgrade SH 36 and Spur 10 (Hartledge/Gerken Road) from US 59 in Fort Bend County to FM 1495 in Brazoria County. The proposed improvements are intended to increase safety, access, and mobility for the transportation of people and commercial goods in coastal areas during emergency situations.

Although the proposed highway improvements would not encroach onto the Peach Point Wildlife Management Area (WMA) property, TxDOT proposes to construct a floodplain detention pond within a construction easement located adjacent to Jones Creek on Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) property at the WMA. TxDOT has worked with TPWD to develop a design for the detention pond that would improve wildlife opportunities while also meeting the floodplain mitigation needs. The detention pond would be operated by TPWD and would serve to enhance the waterfowl roosting areas in the WMA as well as providing flood storage capacity.

In coordination with the environmental assessment process, TPWD agrees with the floodplain mitigation basin design concept presented in TxDOT's Draft Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation. Further, TPWD concurs that the proposed basin would result in a net benefit to the Peach Point WMA. We appreciate the opportunity to work with TxDOT on this highway improvement project.

Sincerely,

  
Todd Merendino, Ph.D.  
Project Leader, Central Coast Wetlands Ecosystem Project

Cc: Karen Coopersmith, HNTB Corporation  
Lance Olenius, TxDOT



Take a kid  
hunting or fishing  
• • •  
Visit a state park  
or historic site