June 2004 (rev.)
Cost figures as of: April 2024

West Bay Sediment Diversion (MR-03)

Project Status

Approved Date: 1992 **Project Area:** 12,910 acres
Approved Funds: $50.8 M **Total Est. Cost:** $50.8 M
Net Benefit After 20 Years: 9,831 acres
Status: Completed Nov. 2003
Project Type: Water Diversion
PPL #: 1

Location

The diversion site is located on the west bank of the Mississippi River, in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, 4.7 miles above Head of Passes. The project diverts Mississippi River water and sediments into West Bay.

Problems

Marshes along the lower Mississippi River are subsiding and converting to open water because of a lack of riverine sediment inputs and fresh water.

Restoration Strategy

The objective of the project is to restore vegetated wetlands in an area that is currently shallow open water. The project diverts sediments to create, nourish, and maintain approximately 9,831 acres of fresh to intermediate marsh in the West Bay area over the 20-year project life.

The project consists of a conveyance channel for the large-scale diversion of sediments from the river. The conveyance channel is being constructed in two phases: (1) construction of an initial channel with an average discharge of 20,000 cubic feet per second (cfs); (2) after a period of intensive monitoring, enlargement of the channel to a 50,000 cfs discharge. Material from the construction of the initial channel was used to create wetlands in the diversion outfall area.

The diversion may induce shoaling in the main navigation channel of the Mississippi River and the adjacent Pilottown anchorage area. Dredging of the main channel is accomplished under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' ongoing Operations and Maintenance Program for the river, but additional dredging of the anchorage area would be an added feature and cost of the project. The material dredged from the anchorage area will be used to create wetlands in the West Bay diversion outfall area.

The conveyance channel allows fresh water and sediment to flow from the Mississippi River (bottom of picture) to restore vegetated wetlands in an area that is currently shallow open water.

Progress to Date

An Environmental Impact Statement was completed in March 2002. Final project plans and specifications were approved in September 2002. Project construction began in September 2003 and was completed in November 2003. Monitoring of the channel and receiving area is currently underway.

The Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force approved proceeding with the project at the current price of $22 million at their January 2001 meeting. Most of the increase in the project cost is for dredging of the anchorage area and the relocation of a 10-inch oil pipeline.

This project is on Priority Project List 1.

For more project information, please contact:

US Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District

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New Orleans, LA
(504) 862-1597

CPRA

Local Sponsor:
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
Baton Rouge, LA
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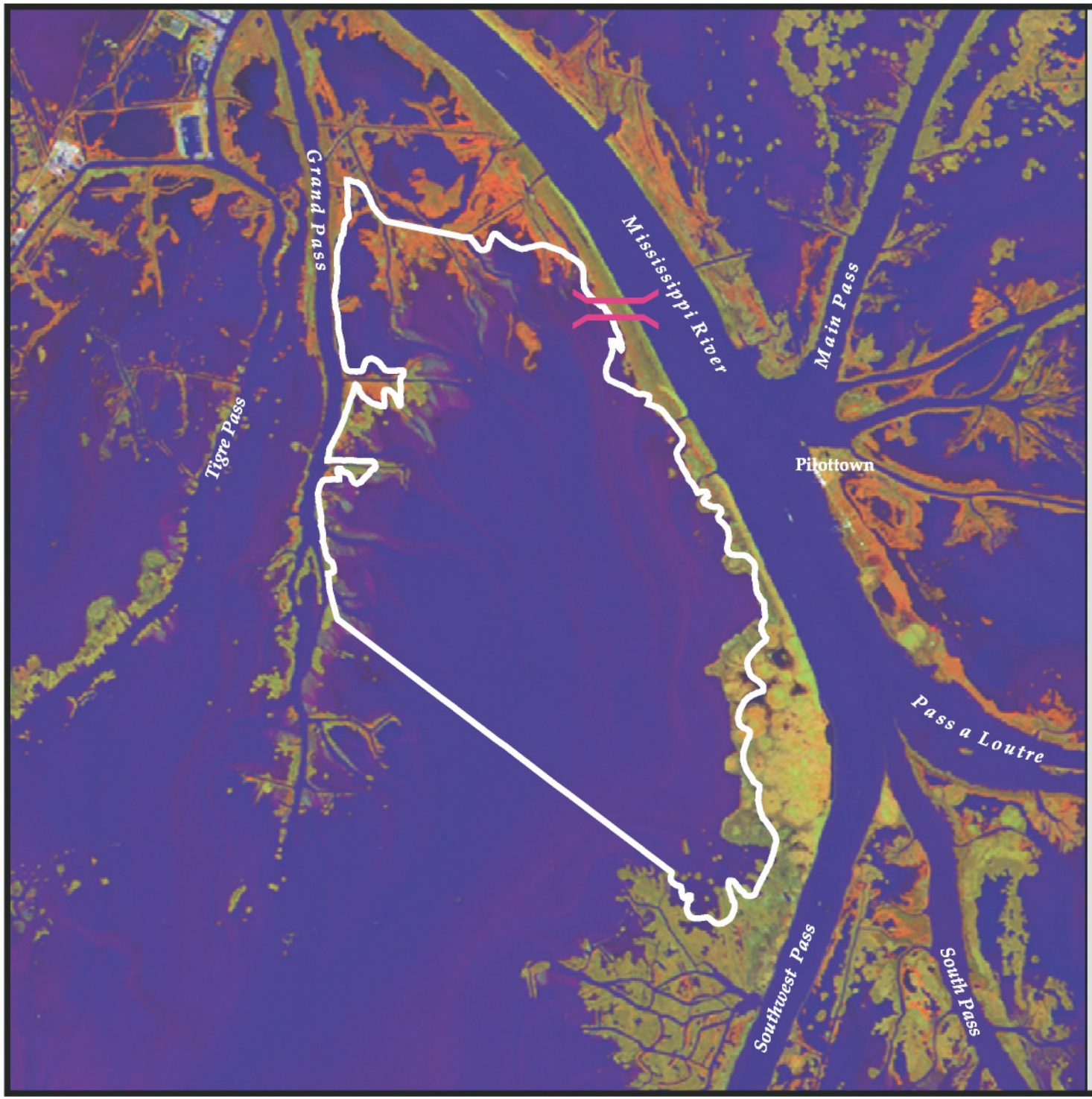

West Bay Sediment Diversion (MR-03)

Sediment Diversion

Project Boundary

USGS
science for a changing world

Louisiana

N

Project Location

1 0 1 Miles

1 0 1 Kilometers

Map Produced By:
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
National Wetlands Research Center
Coastal Restoration Field Station

Background Imagery:
2002 Thematic Mapper Imagery

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