October 2002
Cost figures as of: February 2023

Point Au Fer Canal Plugs (TE-22)

Project Status

Approved Date: 1992 **Project Area:** 5,230 acres
Approved Funds: $3.33 M **Total Est. Cost:** $3.33 M
Net Benefit After 20 Years: 375 acres
Status: Completed May 2000
Project Type: Shoreline Stabilization and Hydrologic Restoration
PPL #: 2

Location

The project is located on Point Au Fer Island, approximately 30 miles south of Morgan City, Louisiana, in Terrebonne Parish. The project is divided into two areas. Area 1 consists of saline and brackish marshes on the southeastern portion of the island between Mosquito Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Area 2 consists of brackish marsh on the southwestern portion of Point Au Fer.

Problems

Pipeline canals and access channels on Point Au Fer Island are conduits for saltwater intrusion into the island's interior marshes. During periods of low river flow in which the input of fresh water declines, the elevated salinity levels cause the breakup of the island's marshes. In addition, storm-induced breaches along sections of the gulf shoreline immediately adjacent to oilfield canals also allow salt water to penetrate the island's interior.

Restoration Strategy

Under Phase 1, a series of wooden plugs reinforced with oyster shells was constructed in two major natural gas/oil pipeline canals on the eastern half of the island. Under Phase 2, a rock shoreline stabilization structure was built along a thin stretch of beach separating the Gulf of Mexico from a minerals access canal. The project has reestablished the natural hydrology of the island, preventing saltwater intrusion into the island's interior brackish marshes and protecting over 4,000 acres of wetlands habitat.

Progress to Date

The shoreline erosion rate along the plugged canals (Phase/Area 1) has not been reduced. Visual observations indicate that the shoreline stabilization project (Phase/Area 2) has halted erosion, but monitoring data is still under analysis. This project is on Priority Project List 2.

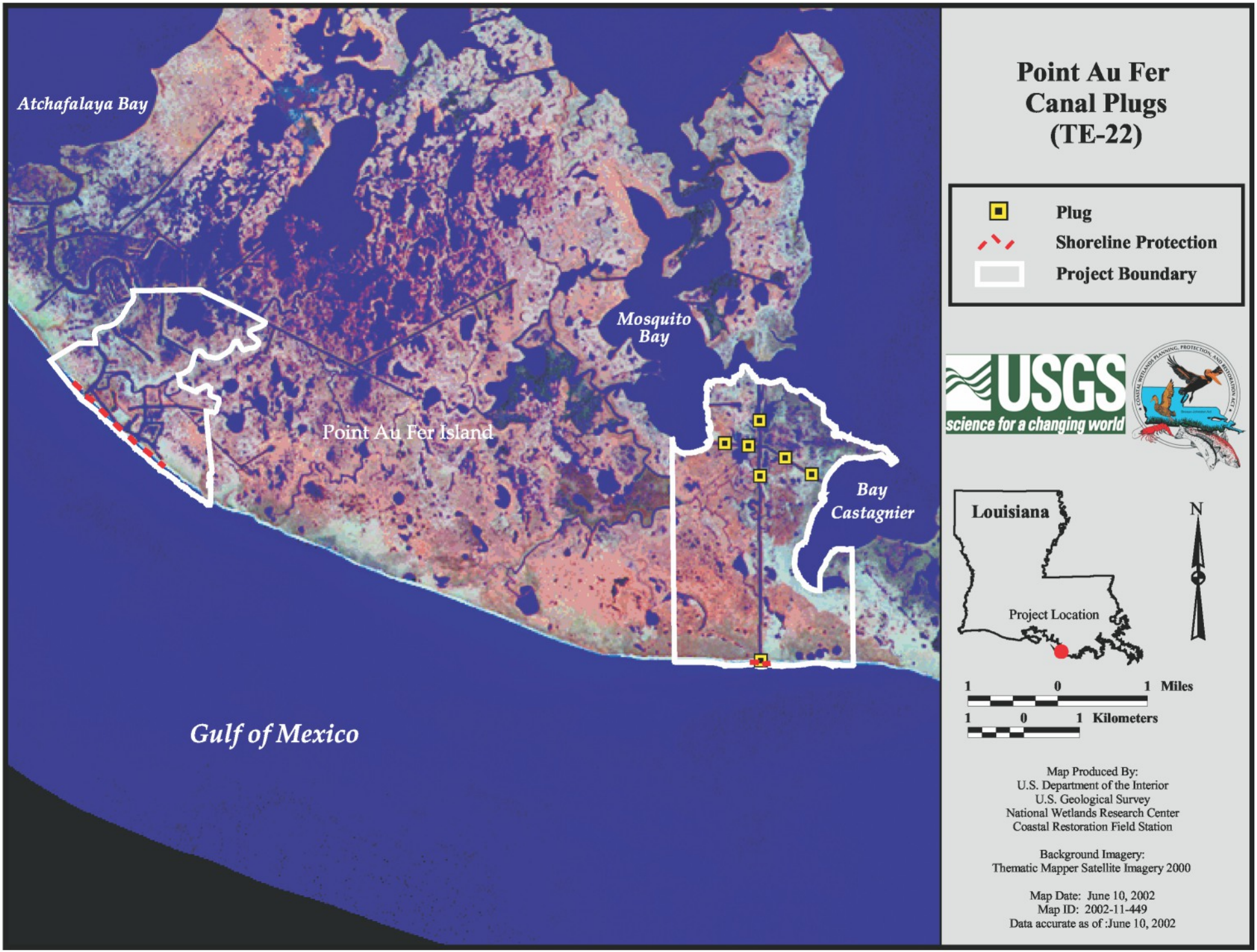
The beach where a pipeline canal meets the Gulf of Mexico has been stabilized with concrete mats thus preventing saltwater intrusion into the interior wetlands of Point au Fer Island.

This section of Mobil Canal was backfilled and armored with rock to reestablish the separation between the canal and the gulf so that salt water would be prevented from damaging the intermediate marshes in the interior of the island.

For more project information, please contact:

Federal Sponsor:
National Marine Fisheries Service
Baton Rouge, LA
(225) 389-0508

Local Sponsor:
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
Baton Rouge, LA
(225) 342-4736



Point Au Fer Canal Plugs (TE-22)

Plug

Shoreline Protection

Project Boundary

USGS science for a changing world

Louisiana

Project Location

N

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:
Thematic Mapper Satellite Imagery 2000

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