

EAST LAKE TOHOPEKALIGA DRAWDOWN & HABITAT ENHANCEMENT: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC MEETING

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May 2, 2019



US Army Corps
of Engineers®





PURPOSE OF TONIGHT'S MEETING



Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is available for review

➤ 45 Day Public Comment Period ends May 27, 2019

- Explain where we are in the EIS process
- Describe elements of the Draft EIS
(Project purpose, alternatives, effects)

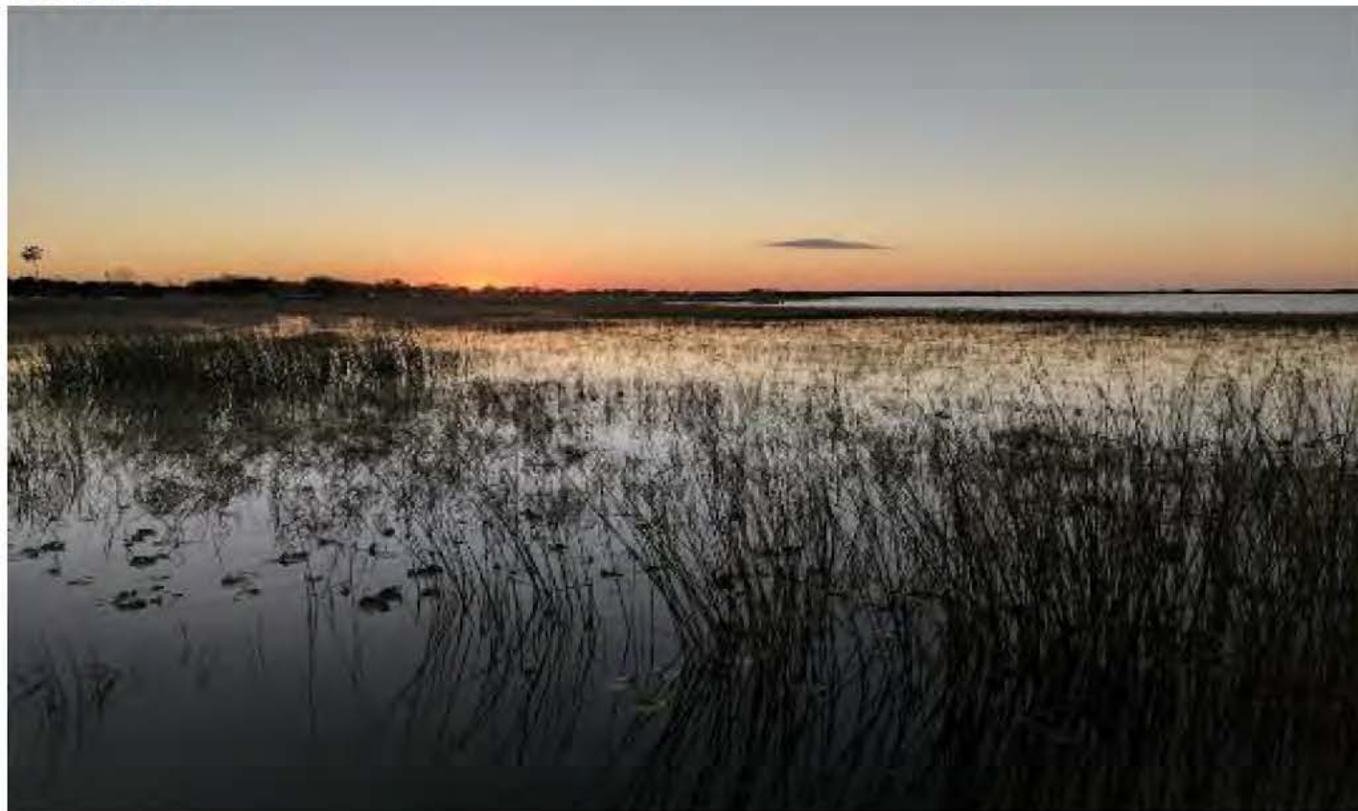




PURPOSE OF TONIGHT'S MEETING



- Describe Next Steps
- **Receive Public Comment**

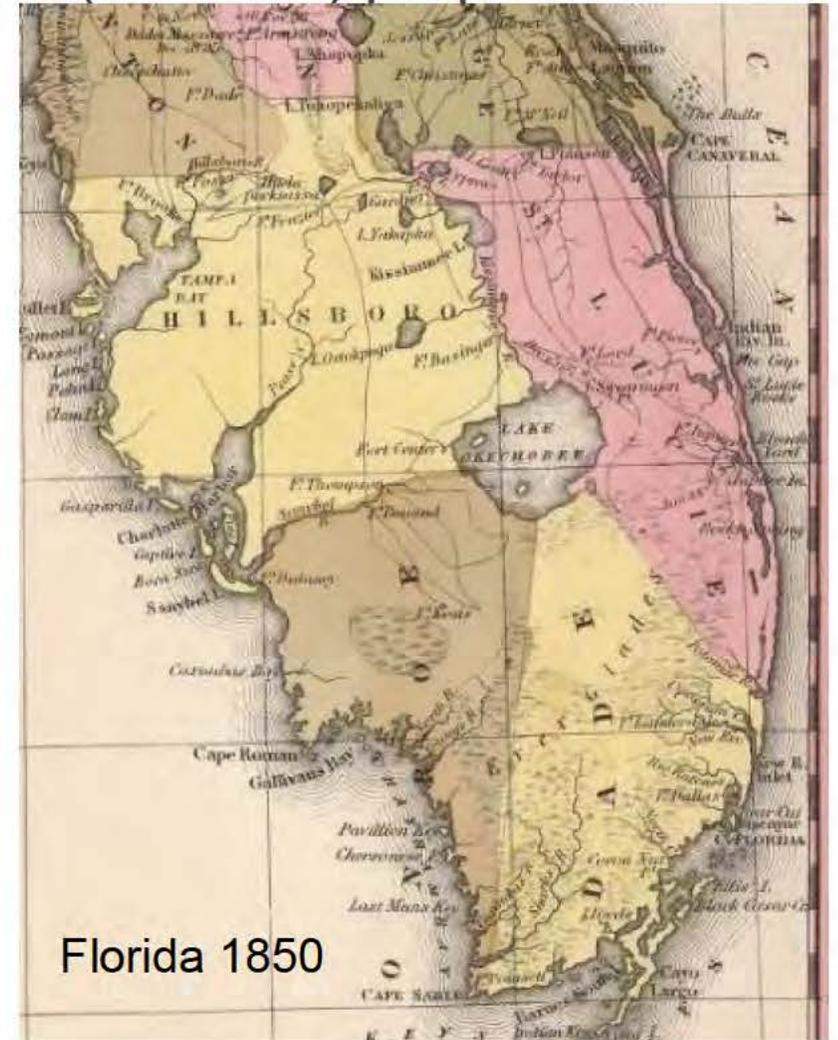




WHY AN EIS?

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FFWCC) proposed project:

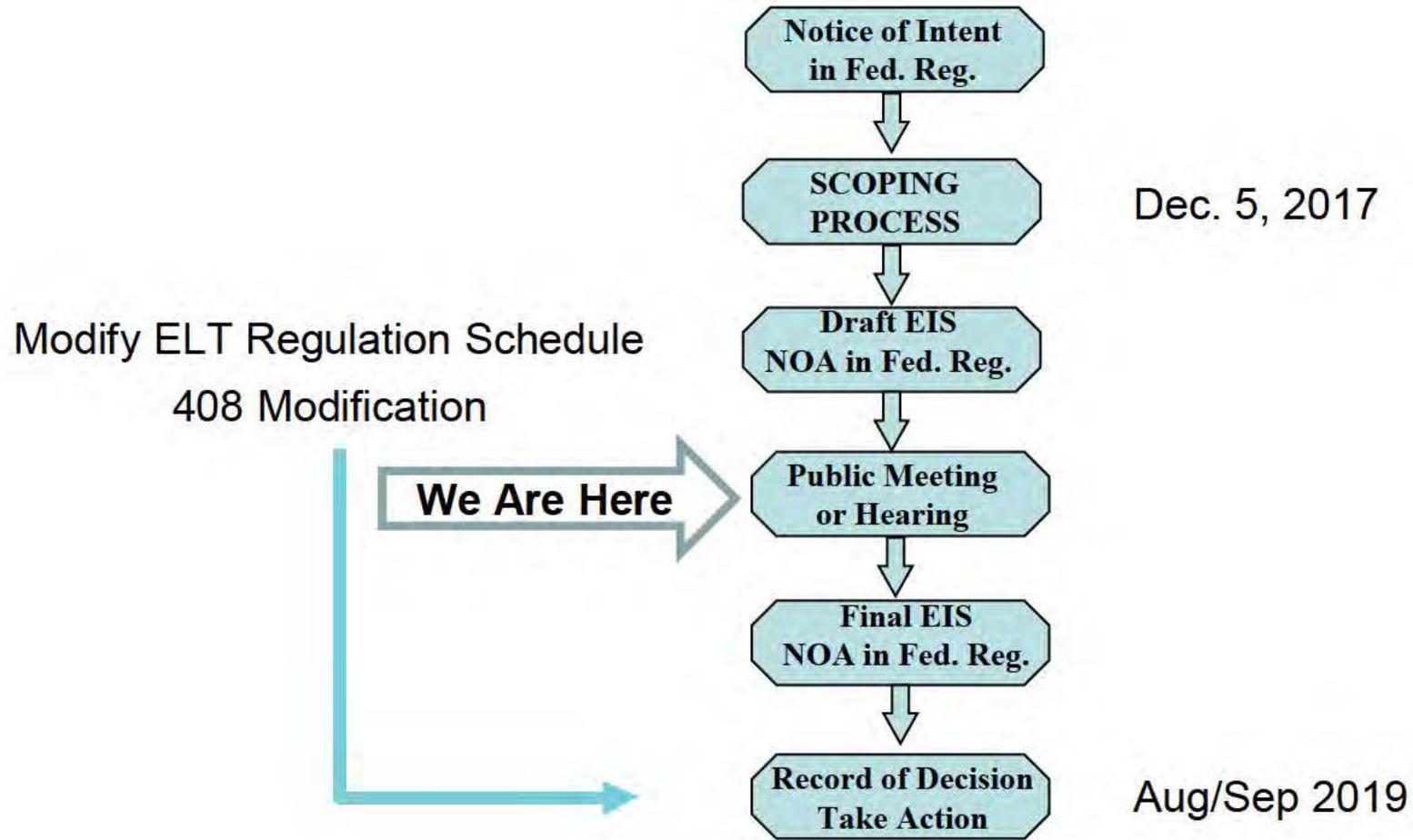
- Requires a federal permit
- Significant effects on the human environment
[National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)]
- Requires an EIS – disclosure



Florida 1850



EIS PROCESS

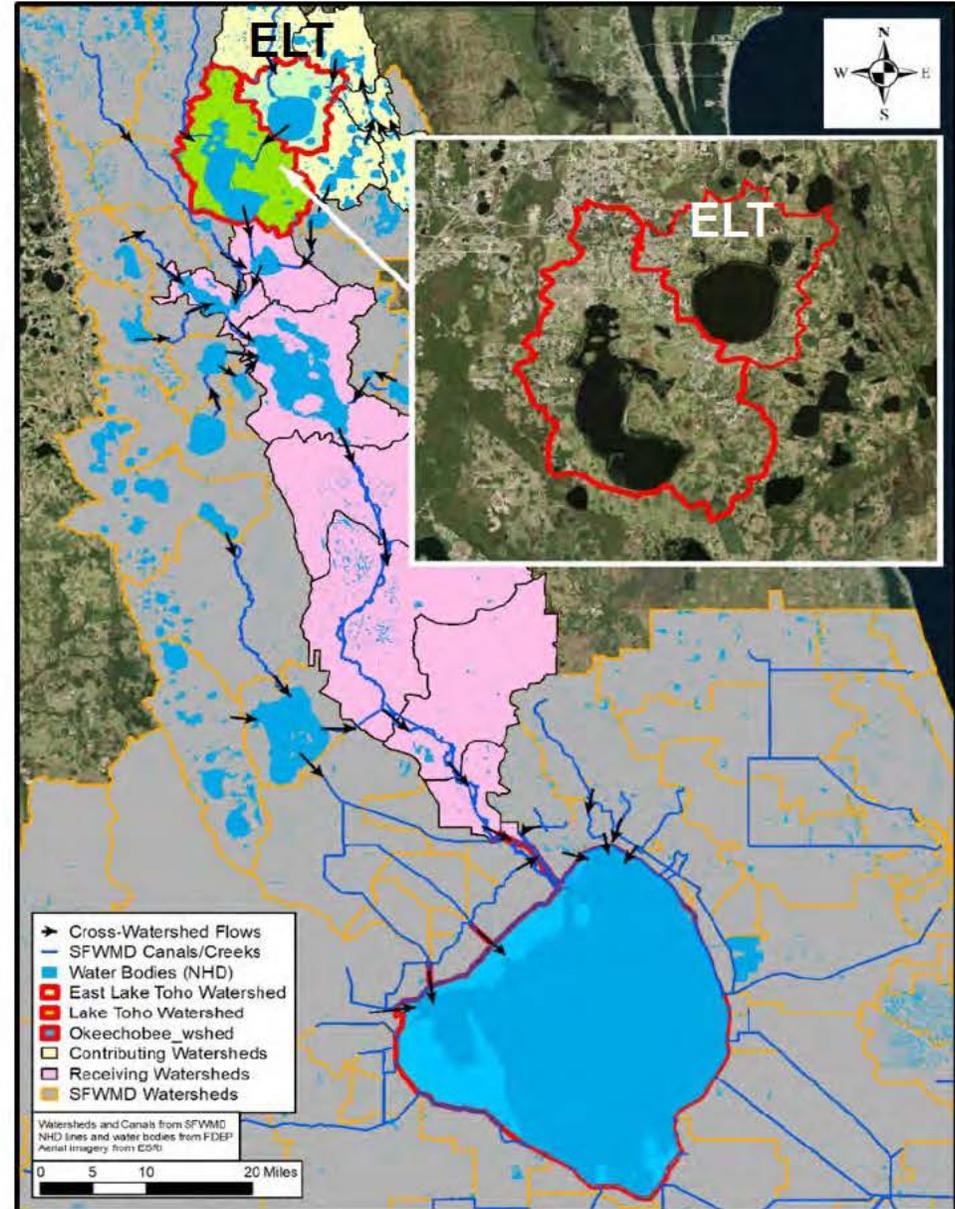




EAST LAKE TOHO PROJECT PURPOSE



The **purpose** of the proposed project is to improve aquatic habitat in East Lake Toho (ELT).





PROJECT ALTERNATIVES



Draft EIS analyzed reasonable alternatives to meet the project purpose and need, including:

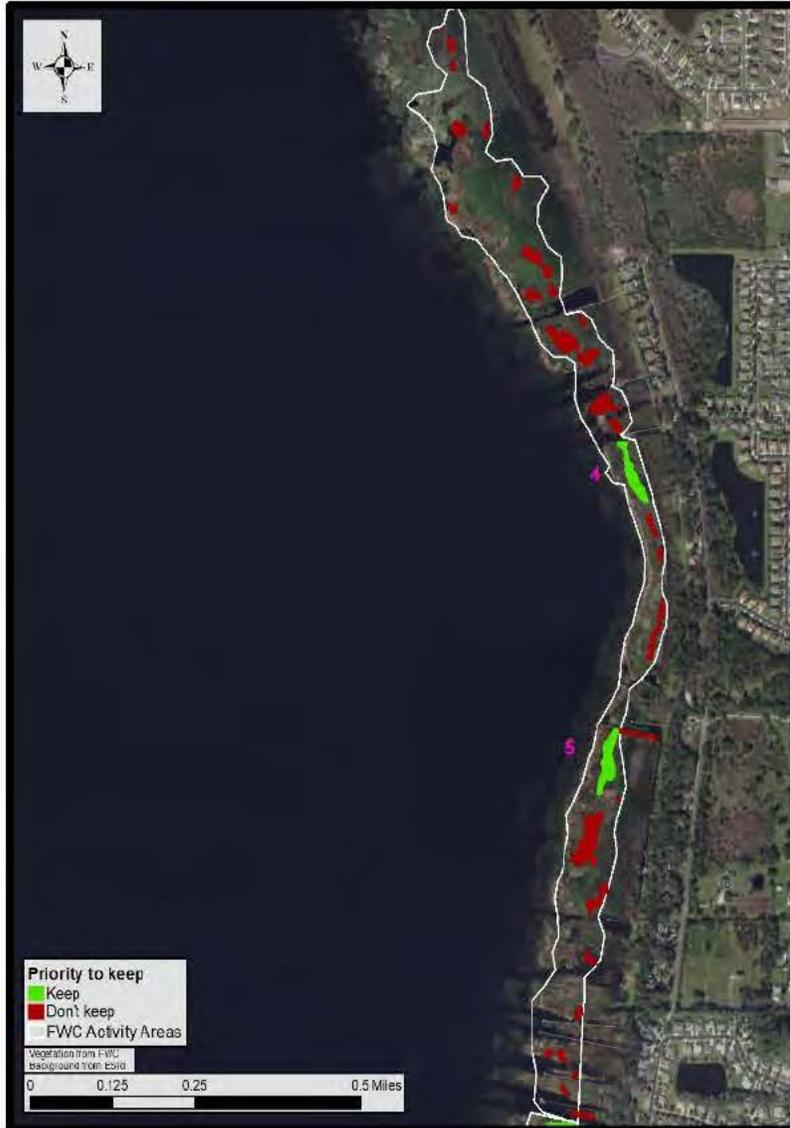
- “No action” alternative.
- Alternative A - Approximately 112 acres of littoral zone scraping (100,000 cubic yards); herbicide and burn activities.
- Alternative B (preferred alternative) – Alternative A but keep 6-11 acres of tree/shrub habitat.



ALTERNATIVE B



(RECOMMENDED/PREFERRED)





PROJECT ALTERNATIVES



Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Consideration :

- Alternative A with Gravity Flow to Accomplish Drawdown (no pumps)
- Alternative A with Upland Disposal
- Alternative A with Weir between East Lake Toho and Fells Cove



UPLAND DISPOSAL ALTERNATIVE

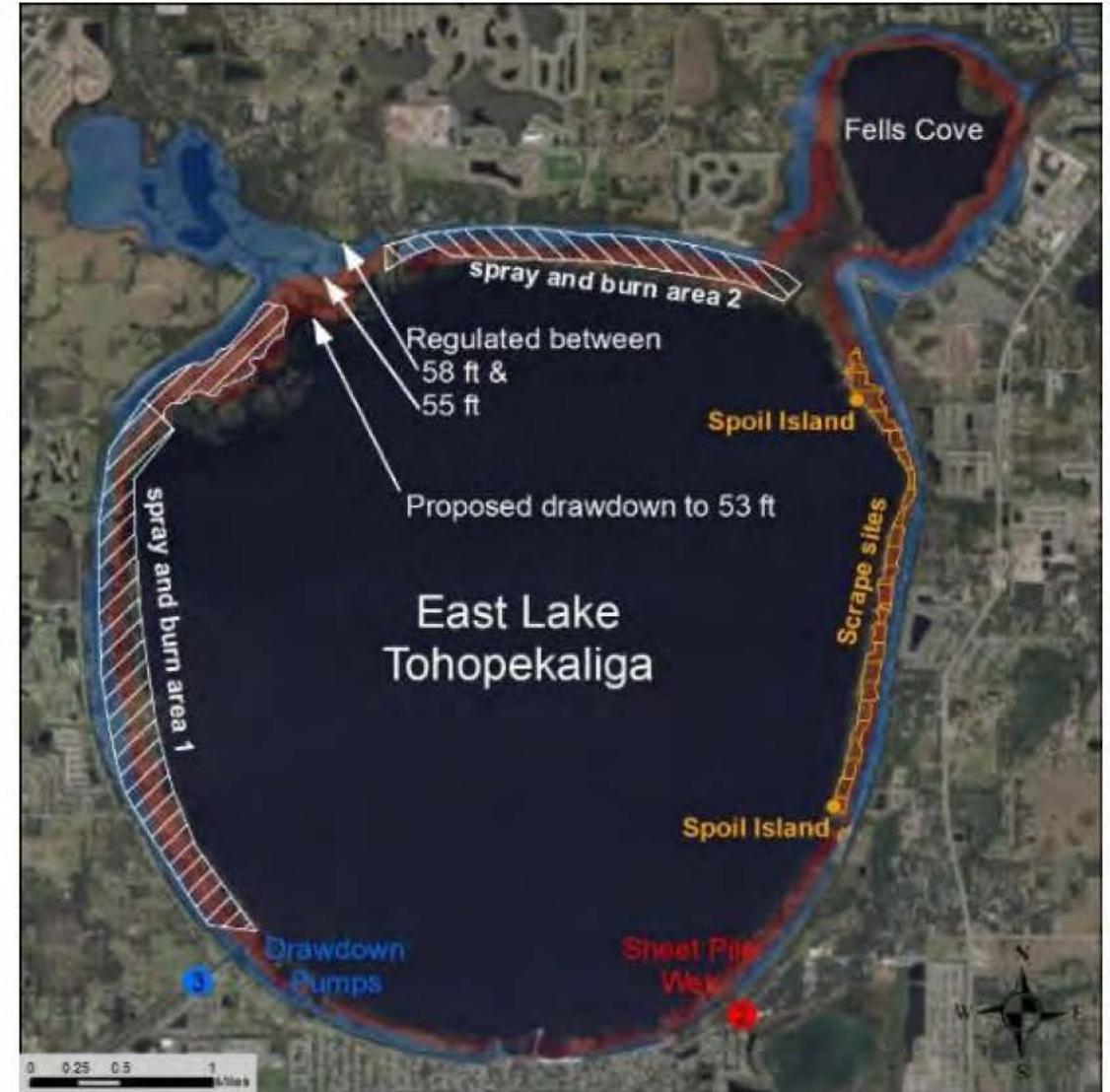


- FWC evaluated 10 parcels within 3 miles of the access location on East Lake Toho
- Transportation cost to these sites was up to four times as much as constructing in-lake spoil islands
- No land owners were willing to accept spoil material
- Upland disposal is not a practicable alternative

ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)

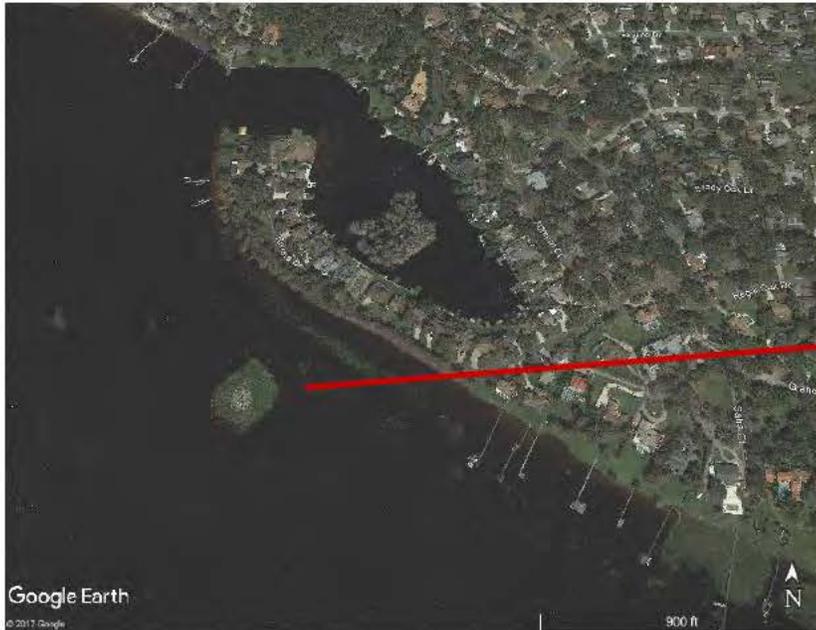


- Install sheet piling between ELT and Lake Runnymede
- Initiate Drawdown (Oct/Nov 2019)
- Install dewatering pumps at S-59 discharge structure (4-100 cfs pumps)



ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)

- East Shore: mechanically scrape ~100 acres and consolidate muck into two in-lake spoil islands (2-3 acres each); pile & burn woody vegetation

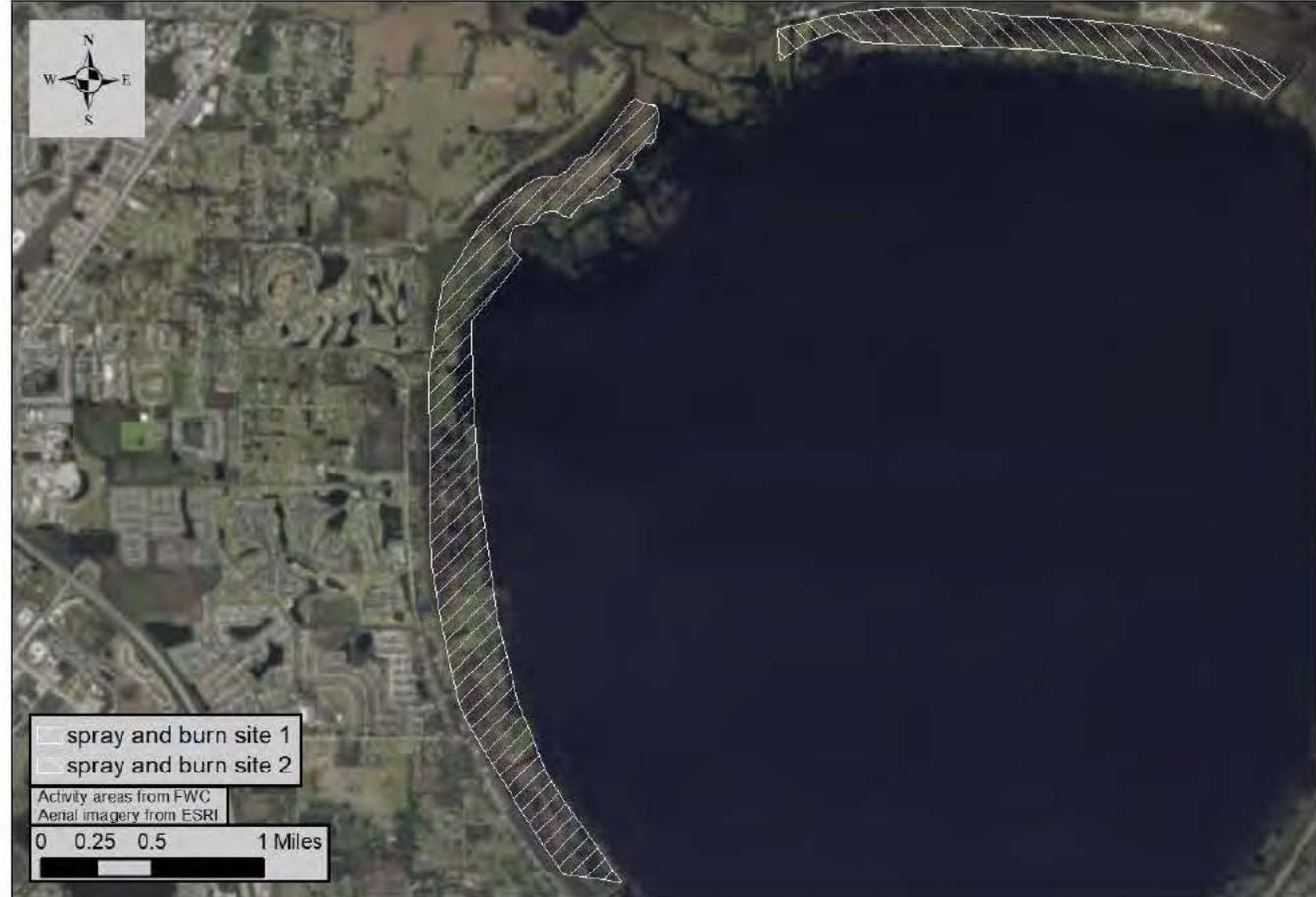




ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)



- North and West Shores: spray ~200 acres of Cattail with herbicide and burn
- Initiate refill in June
- Back on regulation schedule in September-November





PROJECT EFFECTS



Draft EIS considered effects on 20 environmental resource categories and identified short-term impacts to:

- water management
- navigation
- fish and wildlife*
- water quality
- noise impacts
- wetlands
- Possible short term impacts to air quality

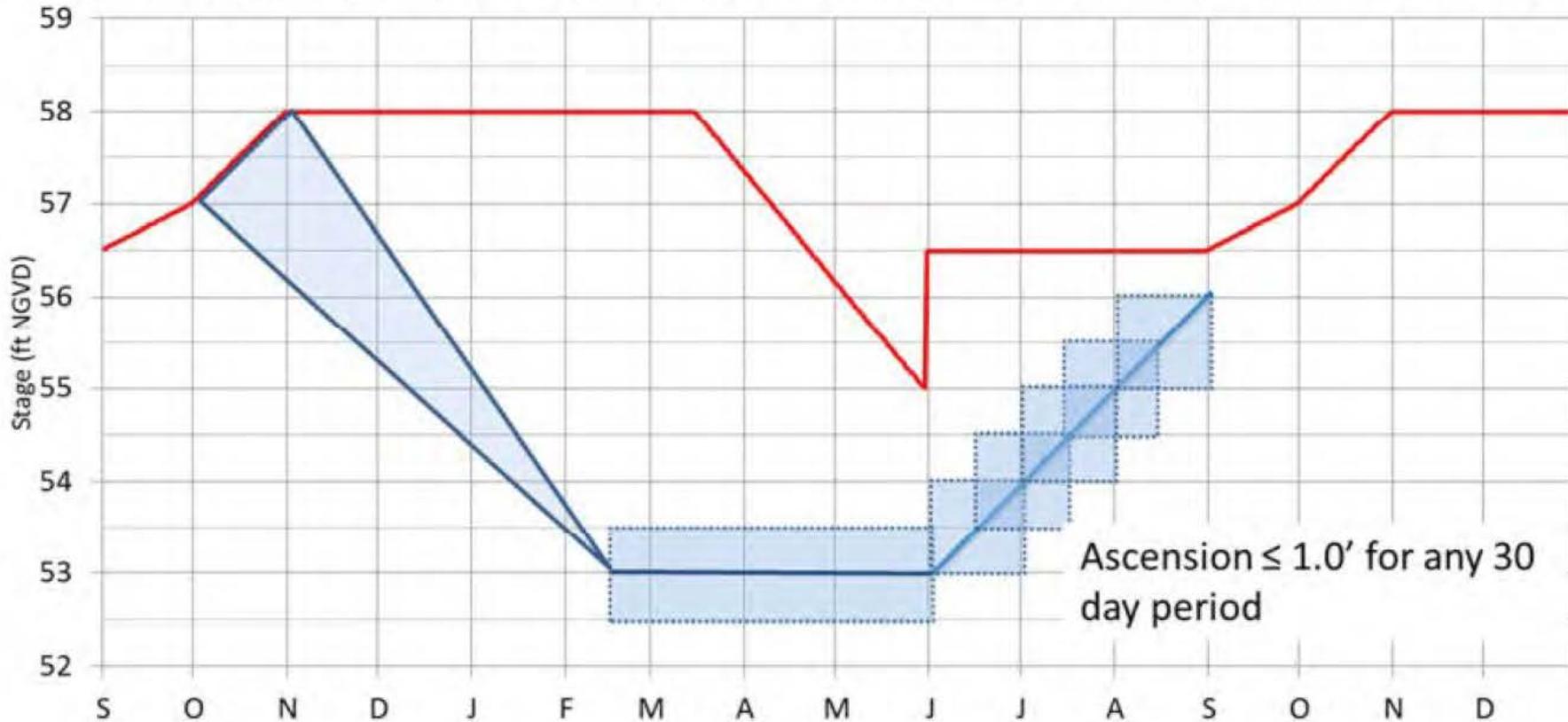


PROJECT EFFECTS



Water Management – drawdown to 53' NGVD will temporarily alter timing of discharges and deviate from the regulation schedule.

(USACE. 1994. Master Water Control Manual for Kissimmee River-Lake Istokpoga Basin)





PROJECT EFFECTS



Navigation

- No lake access at Chisholm Park from February through June.
- No navigation between ELT and Lake Runnymede during the drawdown.
- May have fish camp access.
- Won't have navigation access to ELT littoral zone



PROJECT EFFECTS



Fish and Wildlife*

- Negative effects due to removal of aquatic and wetland habitat and function
- Direct and indirect negative effects to fish, herpeto fauna, birds, and other wildlife
- Snail kite nesting and foraging

*Possible impacts to T&E species are being evaluated by USFWS. See Biological Assessment for more details (Appendix B)



PROJECT EFFECTS



Water Quality - Intra-lake impacts (turbidity and nutrients) due to scraping and island construction

- potential nutrient flux of oxidized material upon rewetting

Noise Impacts – due to construction and pump operation

Wetlands - Loss of ~4-6 acres of wetlands by constructing spoil islands.

Air Quality – burning activities



ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FROM PROPOSED ACTION



- Less exotic/invasive vegetation
- Improve navigation access
- Improved littoral zone habitat for sport fish and wildlife





ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FROM PROPOSED ACTION



- Consolidation of flocculent organic material
- Less muck and associated nutrient load
- Reduced nutrient flux
- Increase dissolved oxygen concentrations in isolated littoral zone areas





FACTORS THAT COULD AFFECT PROPOSED SCHEDULE



- Adverse Comments on the Draft EIS
- Biological Opinion - Snail Kite
- Sustained winds greater than 10 mph will limit prescribed burning
- Extreme drought conditions
- Extreme wet conditions
- Cultural Resources



NEXT STEPS AND SCHEDULE



- Public Comment Synthesis
- Publish Final Environmental Impact Statement (July/Aug)
- Modify ELT regulation schedule
- Prepare Record of Decision (Aug/Sept.)
- If authorized, FFWCC Oct. 2019 start date





METHODS FOR SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENTS



- Complete comment form and hand in tonight
- Provide verbal comments for recording tonight
- Send written comment to USACE (see handout)
- Comments may also be submitted by email to:
jeffrey.s.collins@usace.army.mil;
(subject line should include *ELT Drawdown Comments*)

*** Submit comments by **May 27th 2019**