

2020-2022 Public Lands Transportation Fellows Program

Presented by: Tommy Eglund and Russ Webb,
Savannah Coastal Refuge Complex

Webinar Logistics

- Duration is 12:00 – 1:00 PM Eastern
- Webinar – recorded and archived. For quality of recording, please stay muted during presentation
- At the end there will be time for Q&A
- Please feel free to use the chat to ask questions or provide comments

Goal of this Webinar

- To document and archive the work completed by the PLTF at the Savannah Coastal Refuge Complex from 2020-2022, including his lessons learned and tips and tricks for applying these to other USFWS units.

Agenda

- **Program Introduction**
- **Introduction by Refuge Manager**
- **PLTF Projects**
- **Lessons Learned & General Suggestions**
- **Q & A**



PLTF Program Introduction

- Began in 2012
- Modeled after the NPS Transportation Scholars Program
- Currently serves USFWS and NPS
- Full time, paid fellowship with benefits
- 12 to 24-month position with the possibility of extension/promotion
- Locations across the U.S. at select National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges



Our Fellows...

- Provide transportation and planning support to National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges
- Develop transportation solutions that preserve valuable resources and enhance visitor experience
- Experience work at park/refuge, regional office, and national headquarters levels
- Work, learn and grow through orientation, conferences, guest lectures, and mentorship



Today's Presenters



Russell Webb
Refuge Manager
Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex

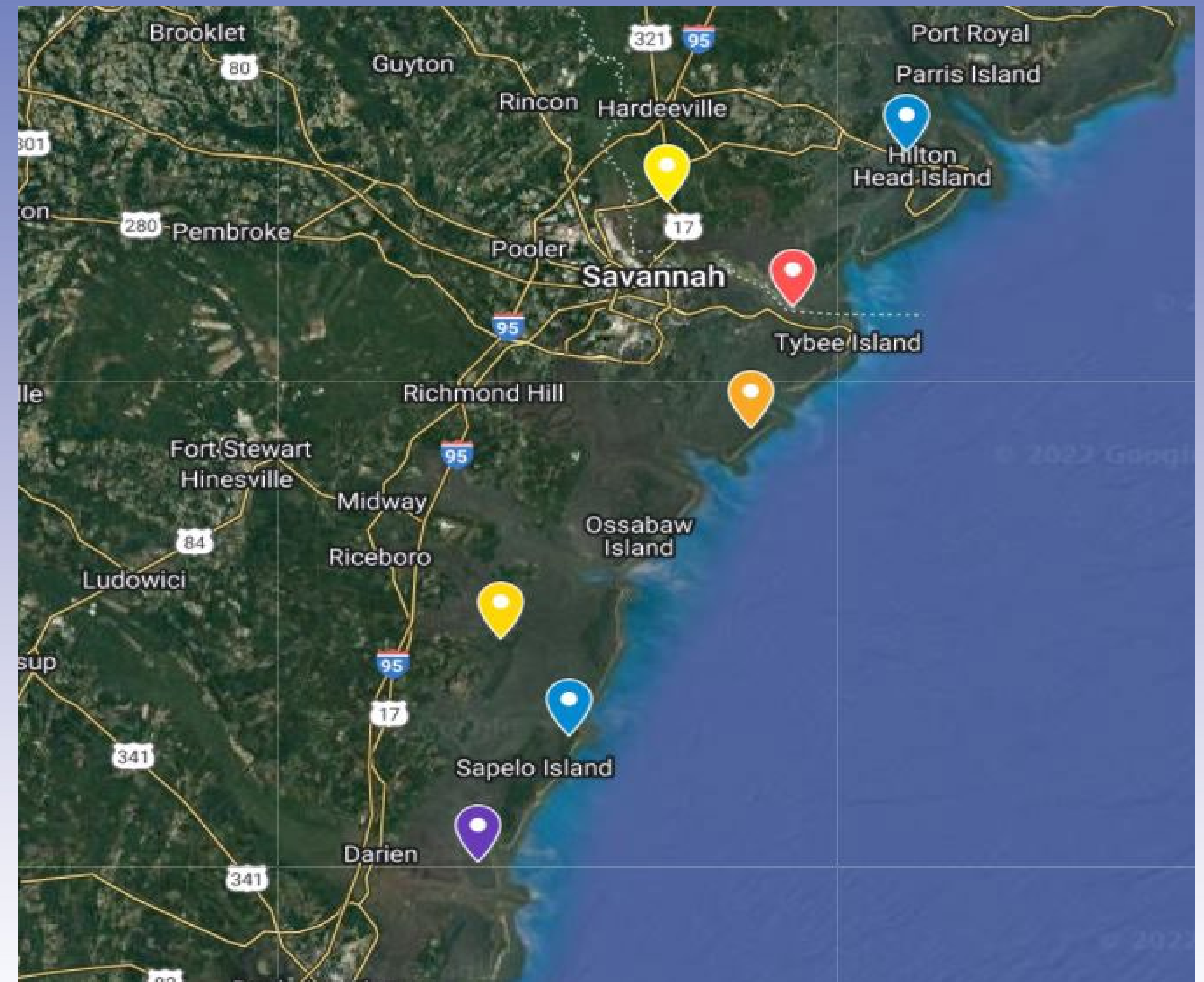


Tommy Egland
Public Lands Transportation Fellow (PLTF)
Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex

The Complex

Seven National Wildlife Refuges

- Pinckney Island NWR
- Savannah NWR
- Tybee NWR
- Wassaw NWR
- Harris Neck NWR
- Blackbeard Island NWR
- Wolf Island NWR



The Complex



- The Conservation Landscape
 - Collision of environmental factors
 - Nearly 750,000 annual visitors
- Barriers to Access and Opportunities
 - Growing local population
 - Increasingly variable environmental factors



Introduction

- Tommy Eglund
- Refuges: Savannah, Pinckney Island, and Wassaw National Wildlife Refuges
- Start Date: September 28, 2020
- Place of Birth: Moscow, Idaho
- Educational Background: B.S. Exercise Science (Pre-Physical Therapy), University of Montana, M.S Conservation Leadership, Colorado State University
- Academic Focus: Partnership Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Strategic Planning
- Fun Fact: Had never been to the South or spent significant time on the East Coast before moving to Savannah



Urban Refuges

Urban National Wildlife Refuges

- Savannah NWR
- Wassaw NWR
- Pinckney Island NWR



UWCP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

- Know and Relate to the Community
- Connect Urban People with Nature via Stepping Stones of Engagement
- Build Partnerships
- Be a Community Asset
- Ensure Adequate Long-term Resources
- Provide Equitable Access
- Ensure Visitors Feel Safe and Welcome
- Model Sustainability

UWCP Critical Elements

- Community-focused: Prioritize community needs with long-term commitments.
- Intentional: Adopt community engagement methods that are well-informed, purposeful, and measurable.
- Inclusive: Implement equitable solutions to involve systematically excluded communities in solving conservation challenges.
- Collaborative: Form long-term transformational relationships with community partners and across Service programs with the goal of increasing the collective impacts of conservation efforts.

Fellow's Projects

- **Refuge**

- Liaison for US 278 Corridor Improvement
- Liaison for GA 25 Corridor Improvement
- Refuge Access Plan
- Wassaw NWR Bulkhead maintenance and Wingwall Construction
- Assistance with Refuge Programmatic Areas

- **Headquarters**

- Cycling Decision Making Tool
- IMD Transportation SharePoint edits

- **Region**

- Review St. Marks Design
- Review FLAP application
- Ongoing

The background features a gradient of blue and green wavy shapes, creating a sense of depth and movement. The top half is a deep blue, while the bottom half transitions into a lighter green. The waves are smooth and flowing, giving the impression of a vast, open landscape or a calm sea.

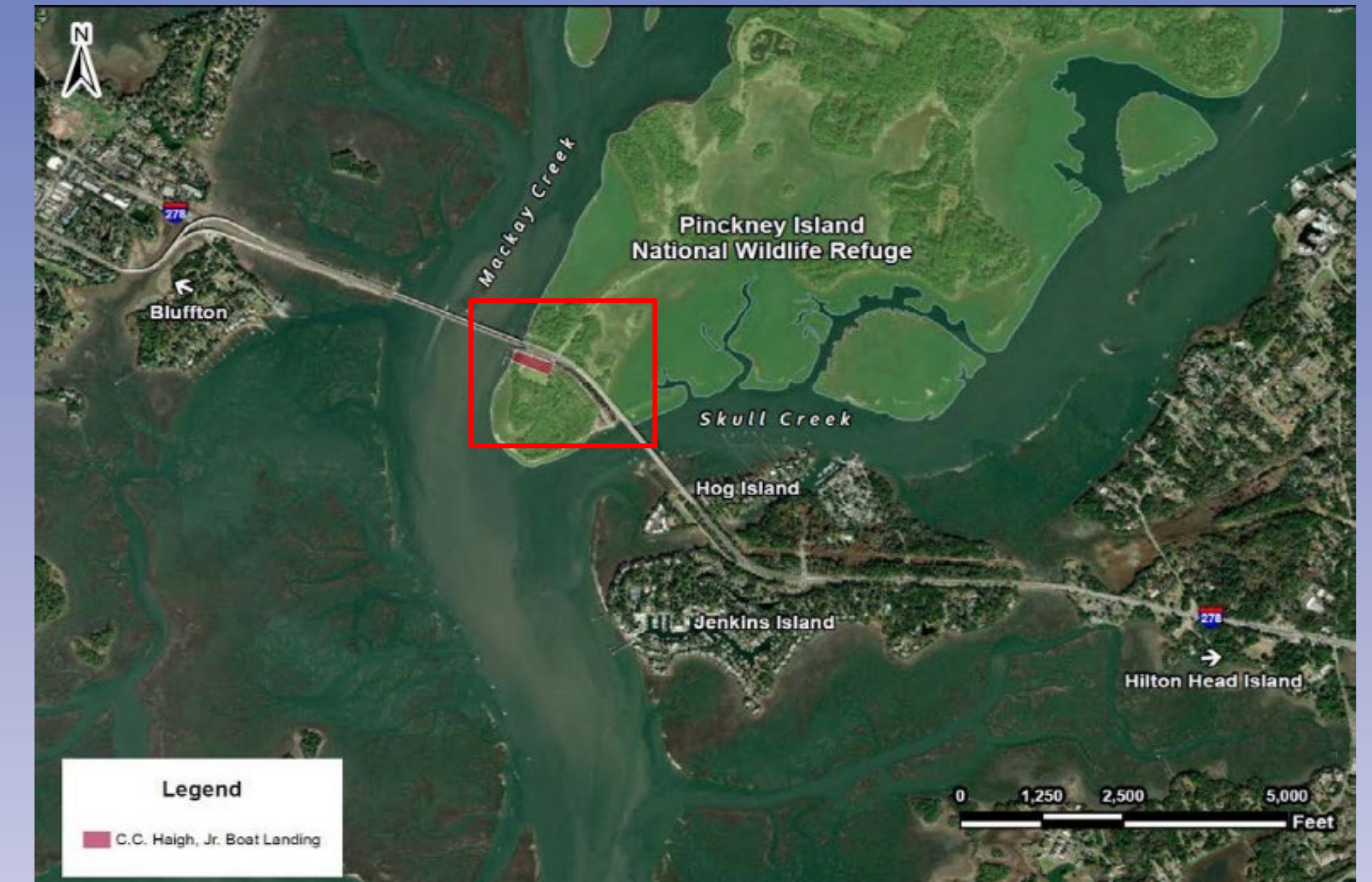
REFUGE

Common Terms

- Section 4(f)
- Alternatives Analysis
- Finding of Appropriateness (FOA)
- Section 106
- Section 7
- Compatibility Determination
- Right-of-Way

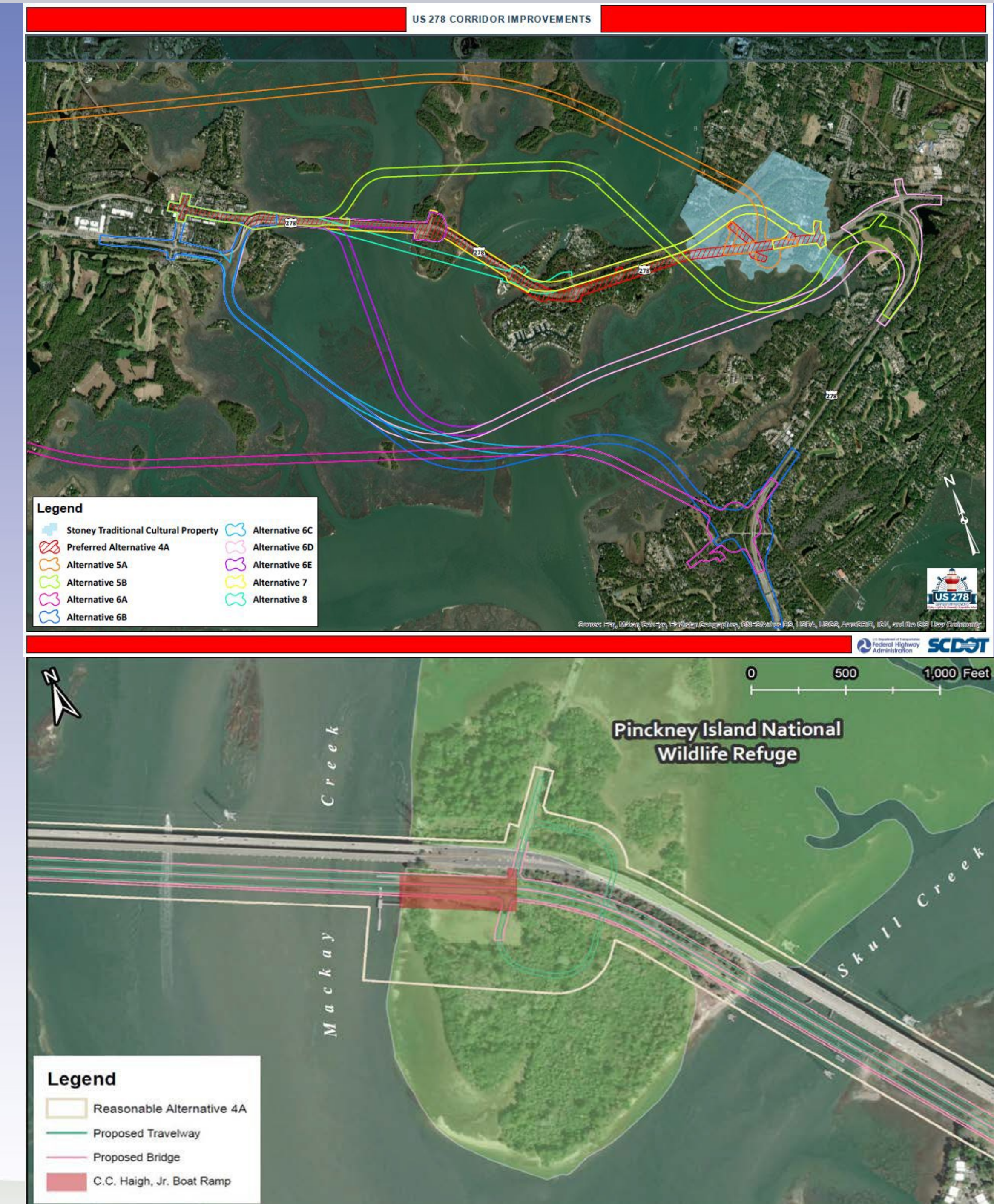
US 278 Corridor Improvement

- Project Background:
 - Road access to Pinckney Island NWR began in 1956
 - 2010 Savannah & Pinckney NWR Transportation Study Report
 - 2016 Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) application
 - 2018, Eastbound Mackay Creek bridge slated for reconstruction
- Current Progress
 - SCDOT National Environmental Protection Act documents in review
 - Held two public meetings:
 - July 21, 2021
 - March 3, 2022



US 278 Corridor Improvement Con't

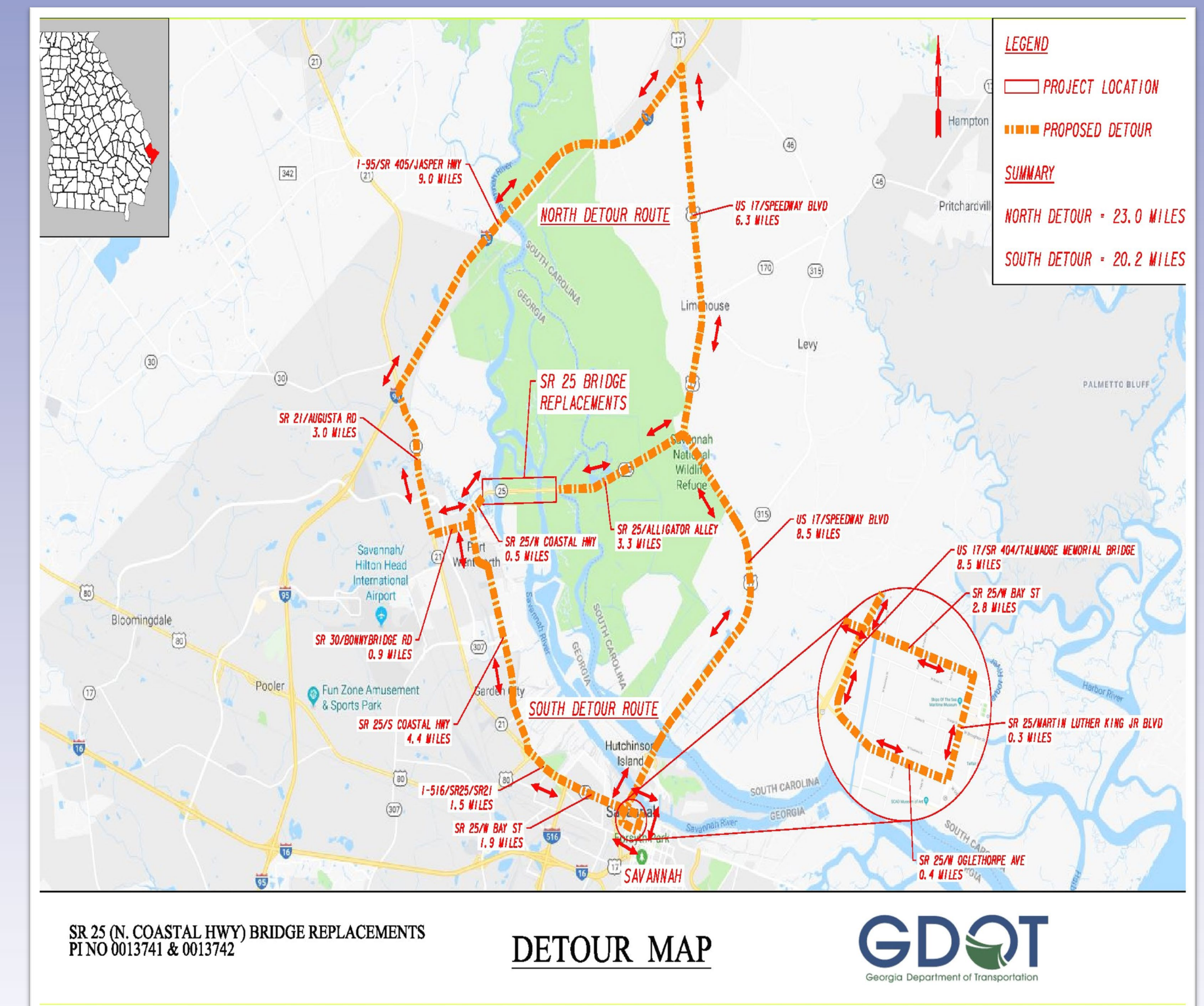
- Projected Roadway Changes
 - Nine alternatives provided, Selected Alternative 4A
 - Least amount of impact to the project area
- Impacts to the Pinckney Island NWR
 - Substantially improve access
 - Right-of-Way adjustments
- My Role
 - Cross-governmental coordination
 - Compatibility Determination prep
- Schedule
 - ROW acquisition is expected throughout 2023
 - Target construction date 2024



SR 25 Corridor Improvement



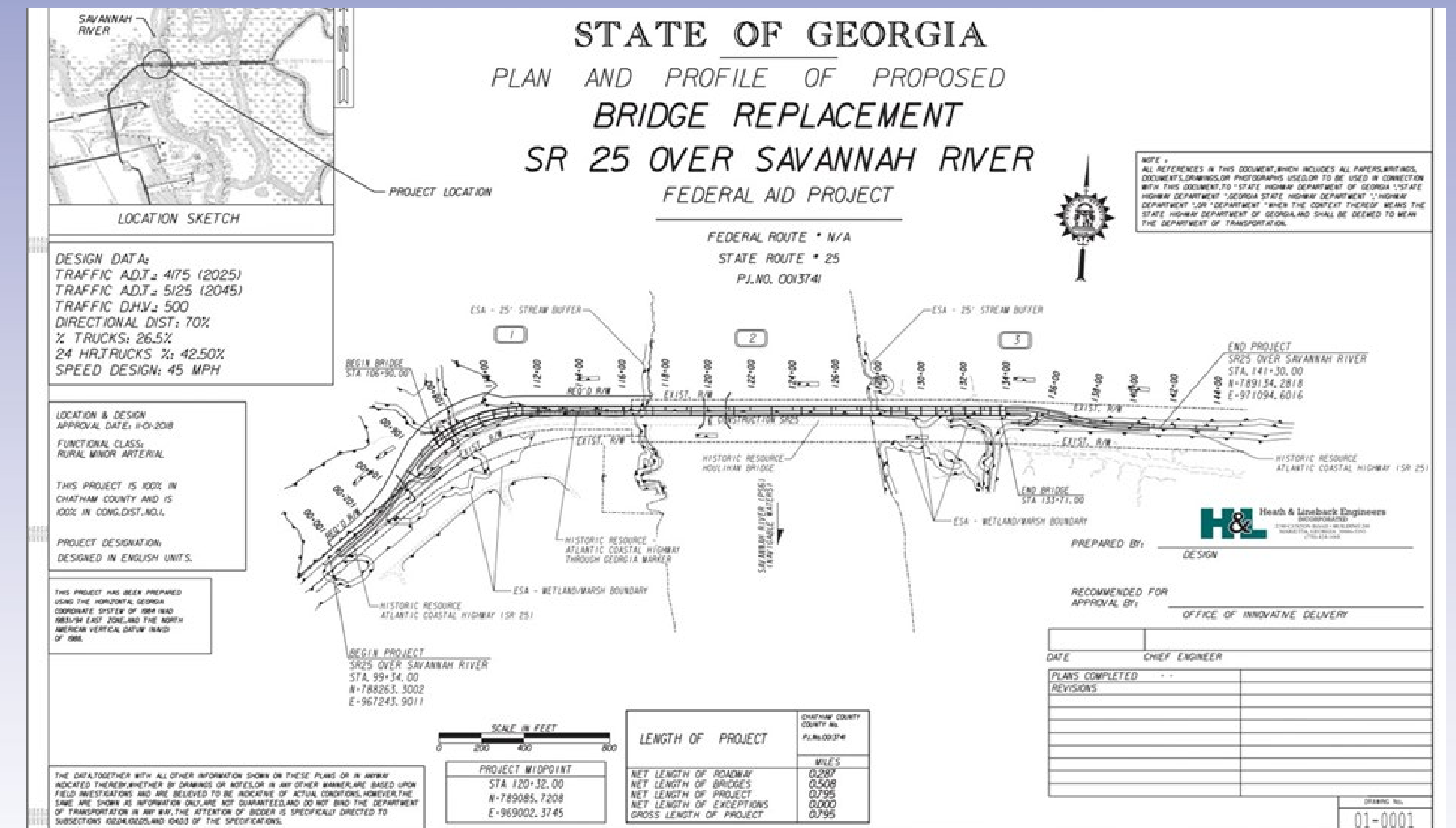
- Project Background
 - Houlihan bridge built in 1922, reconstructed in 1954
 - Middle River bridge built in 1922, widened in 1953
 - Rural Minor Artery
- Current Condition
 - Houlihan Bridge irregular maintenance closures
 - Significantly hinders regional transportation
 - Does not meet current design or USCG standards



SR 25 Corridor Improvement Con't.

- Projected Roadway Changes
 - Two new bridges
- Impacts to Savannah NWR
 - Expansion of Right-of-Way
 - Improved access and travel
 - Section 4(f)
- My Role
 - Finding of Appropriateness (FOA)
 - Compatibility Determination (CD)
 - Easement compliance certificate

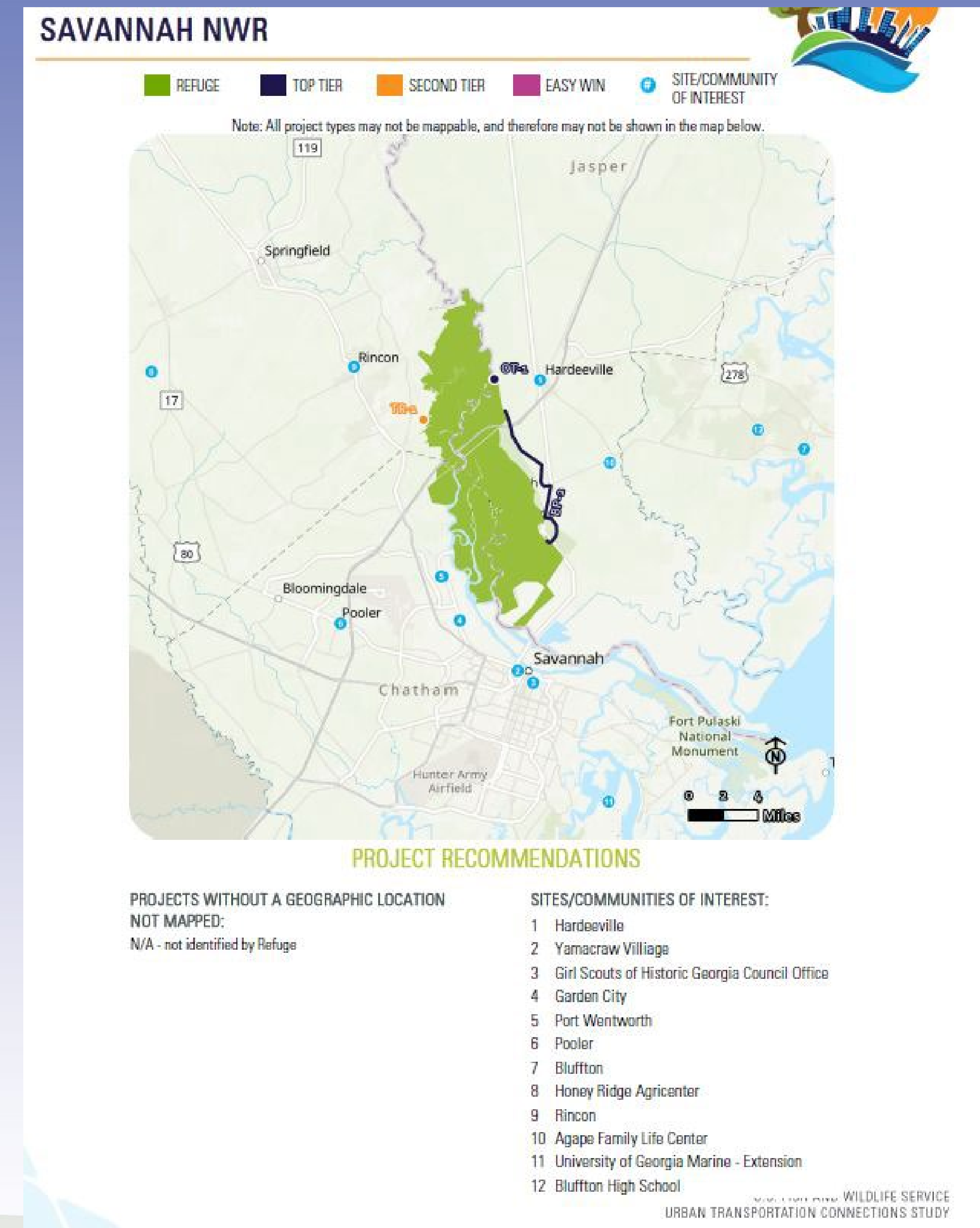
	Savannah Crossing Bridge	Middle River Bridge	Per Site Easement Expansion Totals (Acres)
Permanent ROW (Acres)	0.144	0.340	0.484
Temporary ROW (Acres)	0.413	0.686	1.099
Combined ROW total	0.557	1.026	1.583



(E. Duff, personal communication, August 12, 2020a, personal communication, August 12, 2020b)

Refuge Access Plan

- Urban National Wildlife Refuge
 - Improve connection, knowledge of NWRS
 - Providing Equitable Access
- Urban Transportation Connections Study
 - Preliminary RAP
 - Outcomes



TOP TIER

- BP-2 Sergeant Jasper Bike/Ped Trail
- OT-1 Millstone Landing fishing pier and community space

SECOND TIER

- TR-1 Abercorn Boat Launch

EASY WINS

No projects were scored under Easy Wins.

Wassaw NWR Bulkhead Maintenance and Wingwall Construction

- Project Background
 - Impacted by hurricanes Matthew and Irma
 - Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO)
- Importance
 - Provides the only public access to Wassaw NWR
 - Asset Protection
- My Role
 - Coordination
 - Field Inspector



Wassaw NWR Bulkhead Maintenance and Wingwall Construction

- Construction Outcomes
 - Bulkhead maintenance
 - Expanded wingwalls
 - Increased rip rap
 - More appropriate anchors
- Timeline
 - Expected completion April 29th



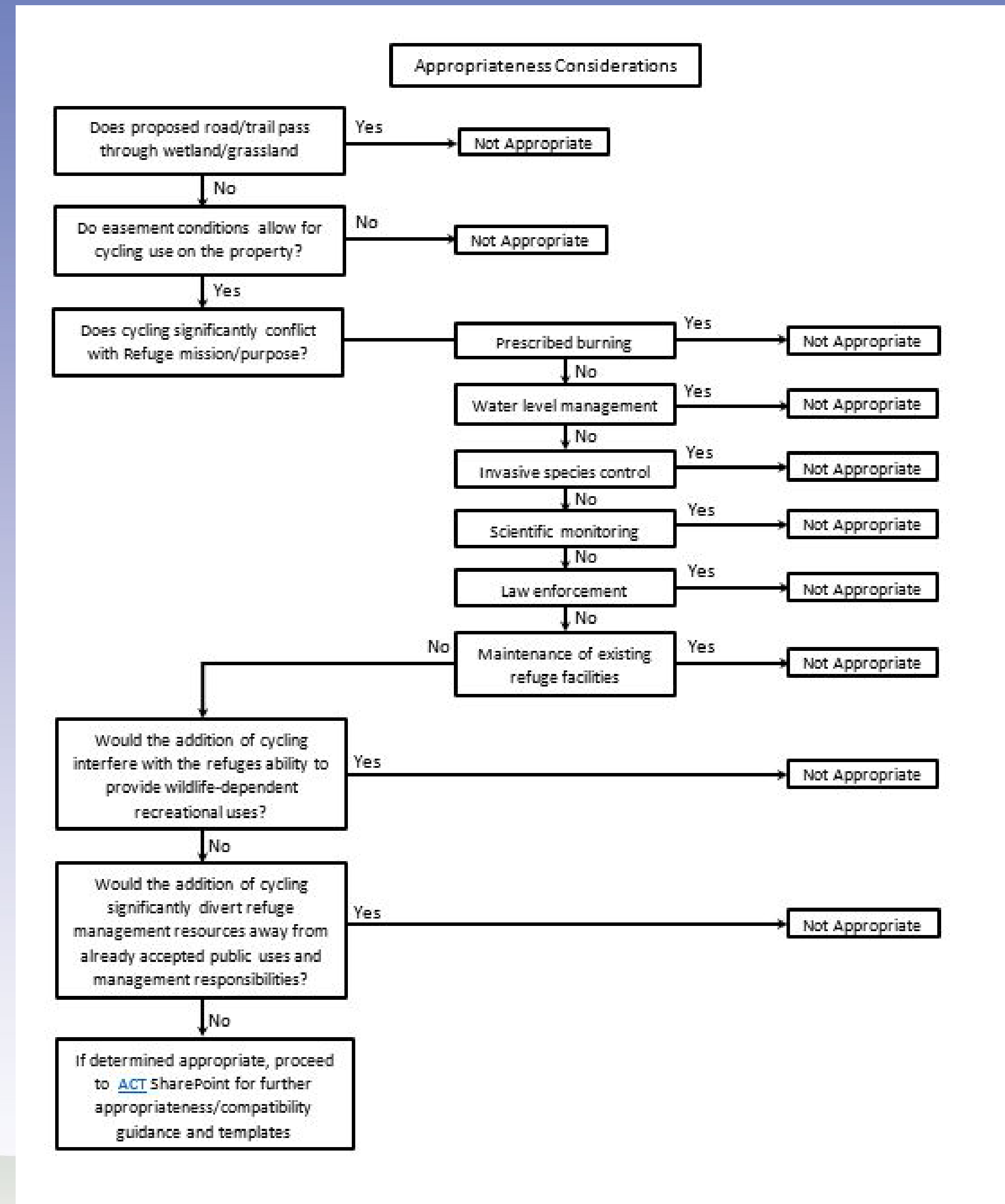
Assistance with Refuge Programmatic Areas



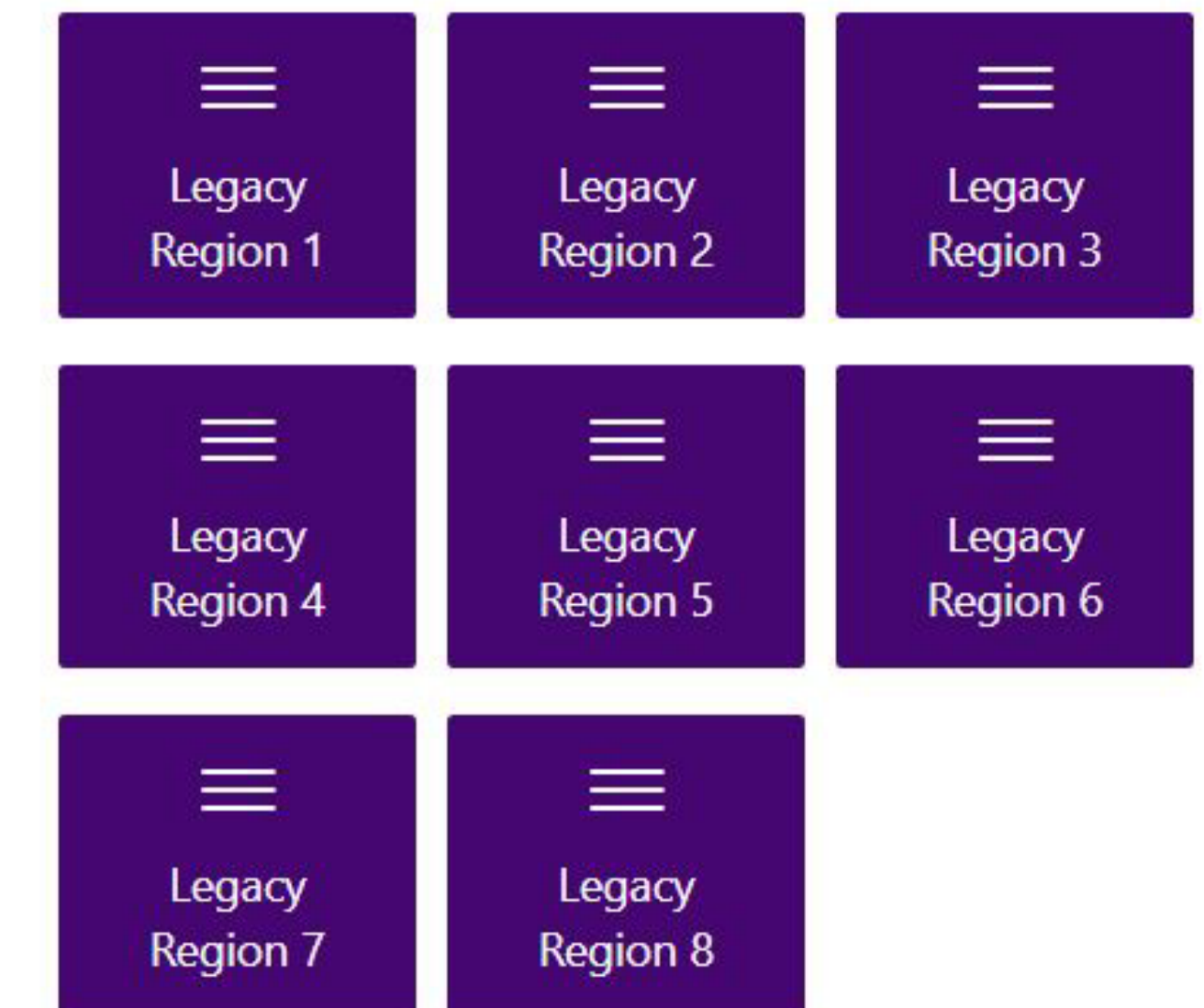
HEADQUARTERS

Headquarters Projects

- Cycling Decision-making Tool
 - Stemmed from a Volpe cycling report
 - To help assist refuges in determining cycling appropriateness
- SharePoint
 - Evaluated other IMD sites
 - Compiled documents to provide easier access.



Cycle 4 RIP reports



Transportation	Observations	Suggestions
Assets	Streamlined, just maybe doesn't have all the information needed.	Reduce gap between Introduction and What We Do sections.
		Change photo grid to a gallery if possible.
		Either remove Bridges section due to lack of information or, along with the National Scenic Byways section, place under Roads heading.
		Consider keeping the Our Assets drop down, but have different sub sections for Roads, Trails, Bicycle Routes, Innovative Tech & ITS .
		Add separate RIP and TriP sections and link them to the individual Roads and Trails sections.
		Add images of different Trails and Roads projects that have been completed.

REGION

Regional Rotation

- St. Marks Lighthouse Rd. Design review
- Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) application review
- Prepared to step into Acting Regional Transportation Coordinator role

Lessons Learned & Suggestions

- Approach projects and people with clear intent
- Think systematically
- Embrace opportunities outside the Scope of Work
- Exercise cautious optimism
- Use the Fellowship as an opportunity to explore a variety of careers in and out of the Federal Government
- Willingly dive into research/policies you never know what you may discover
- Learn from the experiences of others
- Use reflection early and often
- Don't let moving hold you back from an opportunity
- Be persistent and spend time building and maintaining relationships

Thank You

- Including, but not limited to:
 - The Savannah Coastal Refuge Complex and R4 staff:
 - Russ Webb, Will Meeks, Shaw Davis, Monica Harris, Amy Ochoa, Abby Florez, Jack Bentley, Dennis Williams, Vic Scott
 - Jo Ann Clark
 - Headquarters Staff:
 - Laura Whorton, Eric Bergey, Nathan Beauchamp, Peter Tomczik
 - WTI & Transportation Fellows:
 - Natalie Villwock-Witte, Jaime Sullivan, David Kack
 - Nathan Begay, Naomi Fireman, Taylor Long, Ella Weber, Pat McMahon, Charlie Gould, Ma'ayan Dembo

Resources

- Policy 603 FW 2, Compatibility - <https://www.fws.gov/policy/603fw2.html>
- Section 4(f) Evaluations - https://www.fws.gov/ecological-services/es-library/pdfs/4f_handbook.pdf
- National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Survey 2012 - [https://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/754/SoutheastRegion\(R4\)/Savannah%20NWR%20-%20NWR%20visitor%20survey%202012.pdf](https://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/754/SoutheastRegion(R4)/Savannah%20NWR%20-%20NWR%20visitor%20survey%202012.pdf)
- Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads - <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs/erfo>
- Urban Wildlife Refuge Conservation Program Ten-Year Strategic Plan - <https://www.fws.gov/urban/UWCP-Strategic-Plan-FINAL508tested.pdf>
- The file cabinet at the Savannah Coastal Refuge Complex Headquarters

Questions?

Contact Information

If you have any questions related to this presentation, please contact:

Russ Webb at Russell_webb@fws.gov

or

Tommy Eglund at Thomas_egland@fws.gov / tommy.egland@gmail.com

Or contact the PLTF Program Manager at:

(774) 571-3505 or jaime.sullivan2@montana.edu

<https://westerntransportationinstitute.org/professional-development/public-lands-transportation-fellows/>