



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200  
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

**April 12, 2011**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:**

In accordance with the environmental review guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality found at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500, and with the use of the implementing environmental review procedures of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found at 40 CFR Part 6 entitled "Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act" as guidance, the EPA has performed an environmental review of the following proposed action:

Stormwater Construction Project  
Proposed by the  
St. Tammany Parish Government  
Located in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana

Estimated EPA Share: FY 10: \$485,000

Estimated Local Share: FY 10: \$402,644

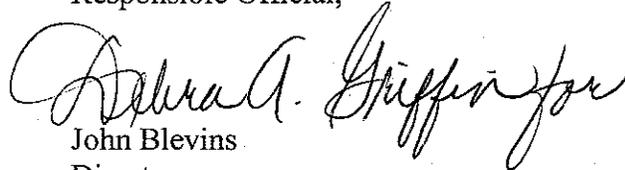
The Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations Act for the EPA included special Congressional funding for water and wastewater construction projects. The St. Tammany Parish Government (STPG) was selected to receive funding support through these special appropriations. The purpose of the proposed project is to construct a 17 acre stormwater detention pond to capture excess stormwater runoff and decrease flooding in the area.

The proposed project would convert a 17 acre parcel of undeveloped, forested land to a stormwater detention pond, five feet (ft) deep with a 90 acre-ft volume on Bayou Chinchuba. The proposed project would reduce floodwater heights in order to reduce risks to home, street, and highway flooding in the area. The project is located at the intersection of Bayou Chinchuba and State Highway 59.

The environmental review process, which is documented by the enclosed Environmental Assessment, indicates that no potential significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated from the proposed action. The project individually, cumulatively over time, or in conjunction with other actions is not expected to have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the environment. On that basis, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. My preliminary decision is based upon the

Comments regarding my preliminary decision may be submitted for consideration to the attention of the Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP), Environmental Protection Agency, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733. After evaluating any comments received, the EPA will make a final decision. No administrative action will be taken on this preliminary decision for at least 30 calendar days after release of this Finding of No Significant Impact. The preliminary decision and finding will then become final after the 30-day comment period expires if no new significant information is provided to alter this finding.

Responsible Official,



John Blevins

Director

Compliance Assurance and  
Enforcement Division

Enclosure

cc: Kevin Davis  
St. Tammany Parish President

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

### **STORMWATER CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

**Proposed by the**

**ST. TAMMANY PARISH GOVERNMENT**

**Located in ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LOUISIANA**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations Act for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) included special Congressional funding for water and wastewater construction projects. The St. Tammany Parish Government (STPG) was selected to receive funding support through these special appropriations. The purpose of the proposed project is to construct a 17 acre stormwater detention pond to capture excess stormwater runoff and decrease flooding in the area.

The proposed project would convert a 17 acre parcel of undeveloped, forested land to a stormwater detention pond, five feet (ft) deep with a 90 acre-ft volume on Bayou Chinchuba. The proposed project would reduce floodwater heights in order to reduce risks to home, street, and highway flooding in the area. The project is located at the intersection of Bayou Chinchuba and State Highway 59. The project vicinity and project planning areas are shown on Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

The proposed project is considered to be a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In accordance with the environmental review requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality found at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500, and with the use of the EPA's implementing regulations found at 40 CFR Part 6 entitled "Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act" as guidance, the EPA is preparing this Environmental Assessment to assist in determining the environmental impacts of the proposed action, and in evaluating whether an Environmental Impact Statement or a Finding of No Significant Impact will be prepared for the proposed project.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project includes construction of a 17 acre stormwater detention pond, five ft deep and with a 90 acre-ft volume on Bayou Chinchuba. The proposed project would capture excess stormwater runoff and decrease flooding in the area.

The proposed project would require the acquisition of 17 acres of land from a willing landowner; however, no relocations or displacements would occur.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Three alternatives are considered within this Environmental Assessment. Alternative One, the preferred alternative, is to construct a stormwater detention pond at the proposed location on Bayou Chinchuba. Alternative Two is to install large water storage tanks to control

the downstream release of stormwater. This alternative would require a larger footprint and substantially increase construction, operation, and maintenance costs. Under Alternative Three, the No-Action Alternative, construction of the stormwater detention pond would not occur. Property and street flooding would continue to occur, causing induced costs for cleanup and repair and potentially decreasing property values.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

The project planning area is located in the eastern portion of the state approximately 56 miles east of the capital city of Baton Rouge. The terrain in the area contains small areas of mixed shortleaf pine/oak-hickory forests, wetlands, and scattered suburban residential neighborhoods. The proposed project area is located within Bailey's Outer Coastal Plain Mixed Forest Province ecoregion. This ecoregion is characterized by a flat to gently rolling landscape containing temperate pine forests, streams, marshes, swamps, and lakes. The area has warm summers with cool winters. Air quality in the area is in attainment of all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and is not in violation of any state or federal air quality control standards. The soils within the proposed project area are mapped as part of the Myatt-Stough association, nearly level to depressed acid, loamy soils. Myatt soils have a gray fine sandy loam surface and a gray sandy clay loam subsoil. The Stough soils, which occur on ridges, have a pale brown fine sandy loam surface and a yellowish-brown loamy subsoil with gray mottles. The geology of the area is determined by a series of terraces formed in the Pleistocene geological epoch.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB), St. Tammany Parish had a population of 191,268 people in 2000 and 231,495 in 2009, a 20 percent increase. The proposed project area is within USCB Census Tracts (CT) 412.05 and 412.06. The 2000 population of these CTs combined was 20,639. The economy of St. Tammany Parish is based on international offshore and commercial shipping industries, oil refining, property management, and technology based companies. The project will serve all populations equally, and will not exclude any particular person or population. The proposed project construction will not change the current land use patterns in the area, and will be compatible with applicable zoning ordinances. The benefits, costs, and minor impacts of the project, such as limited noise and dust created during construction activities, will be shared equally by all citizens and will cease upon completion of the project.

### **IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

The proposed project was analyzed to identify potential short-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts on the environment.

1. Biological Resources Including Threatened and Endangered Species: According to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species database, St. Tammany Parish contains the following federally listed species: Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), ringed map turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*), red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), dusky gopher frog (*Rana sevosa*), manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), Louisiana black bear (*Ursus americanus luteolus*), and Louisiana quillwort (*Isoetes*

*louisianensis*). Based upon the location and description of the proposed project area and upon coordination with the USFWS and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) Natural Heritage Program, construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to fish and wildlife resources, including any of the threatened or endangered species listed above. The vegetation in the proposed project area consists of overstory species such as shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, red oak, black oak, black hickory, sweetgum, and red maple. Understory species consist of saw palmetto, yaupon holly, huckleberry, and poison ivy. This vegetation community has been influenced by the urbanization of the area. Therefore, the proposed project should have no significant adverse impacts to rare or important vegetation types. The STPG is responsible for continued coordination with the USFWS and LDWF to insure protection of any listed animal and plant species that may be discovered during construction.

2. Cultural/Historic Resources: A Phase I cultural resources survey was completed for the proposed project area. The report found one recorded site within the area of potential affect and it was not considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The report concluded that no further cultural resources work is warranted. Based upon the report and coordination with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) construction of the proposed project should have no significant adverse impacts on archeological or historical resources. The STPG is responsible for continued coordination with the SHPO to insure that no archeological or historic resources are adversely affected during construction activities.

If cultural materials are encountered during construction, work will stop immediately in the general area of the discovery, and the STPG will immediately notify the SHPO to initiate accidental discovery procedures. Any such resources discovered will be evaluated in accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR Part 800, and appropriate mitigation measures developed and implemented, as needed, in consultation with the SHPO before construction in the area is allowed to continue.

3. Floodplain: The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) indicate that the proposed project area is located in the 100-year floodplain. Based upon the FIRM maps and upon coordination with the local Floodplain Administrator (FA), construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to the floodplain. The STPG is responsible for continued coordination with the FA and must complete any subsequent permitting prior to the initiation of construction activities.

4. Wetlands: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) issued a preliminary jurisdictional determination of the proposed project area on August 6, 2010. Based on a review of maps, aerial photography, and a site visit on July 26, 2010, the USACE determined that the property contains approximately 1.5 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. The STPG filed a permit application with the New Orleans USACE for impacts to wetlands that are waters of the U.S. pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The STPG must complete the USACE permitting process prior to the initiation of actual construction activities and is responsible for continued coordination with the USACE to insure permit requirements are followed, including any mitigation requirements. The STPG is also required to coordinate with the USACE to insure protection of any additional wetlands that may be discovered during construction.

5. Surface Water Resources: The project area is crossed by Bayou Chinchuba, a perennial stream that flows into Lake Pontchartrain. Bayou Chinchuba is not listed on the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ) 2006 List of Impaired Waterbodies Section 303(d) list. Although construction would take place in and adjacent to Bayou Chinchuba, the use of appropriate BMPs would mitigate impacts to the waterway. Based upon these findings and upon coordination with the LDEQ, construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to surface water resources including waters which have been designated as a wild and scenic river. Because this project would disturb more than five acres, the STPG would be required to comply with LDEQ's - Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit for Discharges of Stormwater from Construction Activities (LAR10000) and would be required to file a Notice of Intent (NOI) with LDEQ.

The STPG has made application with LDEQ for a Water Quality Certification (WQC) in accordance with Section 401 of the CWA. Project compliance with Section 401 would require the incorporation of best management practices (BMPs) from each of the following categories to manage water quality on the construction site:

- Category I. Erosion control
- Category II. Post-construction total suspended solids control
- Category III. Sedimentation control

A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SW3P) would be prepared by the construction contractor in accordance with good engineering practices and would identify potential sources of pollution that may reasonably be expected to affect the quality of the stormwater discharges during construction of the project. BMPs would be implemented to prevent or minimize erosion and sedimentation, especially where there is a slope where soil disturbance would occur due to excavation. Appropriate methods such as hydroseeding or providing cover in order to prevent or minimize erosion and sedimentation should be implemented. To prevent stormwater flows from entering disturbed areas, structural BMPs, such as earthen dikes or silt fences are recommended. Measures to minimize off-site tracking of sediments by construction vehicles are also recommended. The STPG is responsible for continued coordination with the LDEQ, and must obtain and abide by any/all necessary permits to insure that surface water resources in the area will not be adversely impacted by construction activities.

6. Ground Water Resources: Based upon coordination with the EPA Region 6 Ground Water/UIC Section, the project lies on the Southern Hills aquifer system, which has been designated a sole source aquifer by the EPA. However, EPA stated that construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to protected ground water resources. The STPG is responsible for continued coordination with the EPA, and must obtain and abide by any/all necessary permits to insure that ground water resources will not be adversely impacted by construction activities.

7. Prime and Unique Farmlands: Coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) confirmed that some soils in the proposed project area meet the criteria for Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. In accordance with the Farmland Protection

Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981, the proposed project area was scored using U.S. Department of Agriculture NRCS, Form AD-1006. The resulting score was 89 points for the site assessment. Because the threshold for coordination with the NRCS is 260 points, no further coordination is required.

8. Air Quality: Construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to air quality because the project is located in an area which is in compliance with the NAAQS for all criteria air pollutants. To further insure compliance with NAAQS standards, all vehicles and motorized equipment used in construction must comply with regulations regarding the control of air pollution from mobile sources. The contractor should take all necessary actions to reduce the amount of particulate matter produced during construction. The STPG is responsible for continued coordination with the LDEQ, and must complete any subsequent permitting process prior to the initiation of actual construction activities.

9. Environmental Justice: Executive Order 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations directs federal agencies to identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. The population within one mile of the proposed project is 3,386, with a minority population of 6.7 percent and low-income population of approximately 12 percent. No minority or low-income populations would be adversely impacted by the proposed project. Community cohesion, neighborhood character, access and community circulation patterns would be unchanged by this project. Because all persons and populations will be served equally by the project, there will be no adverse impacts that are considered disproportionate to any particular portion of the population.

No schools, hospitals, churches, or other public facilities and services near or adjacent to the proposed project are expected to be affected by the project. Regional and community growth in the vicinity of the proposed project is expected to continue along present trends.

The proposed project would require the acquisition of 17 acres of land from a willing landowner; however, no relocations or displacements would occur.

10. Coastal and Barrier Resources: The proposed project was reviewed for consistency with the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program (LCRP) as required by Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. The LCRP found the project is consistent with LCRP goals and policies. LCRP issued the Coastal Zone Consistency Determination on August 26, 2010. Coordination with the LCRP was initiated on August 18, 2010 for a Coastal Use Permit, which makes certain that any activity affecting the coastal zone, such as a project that involves either dredging or filling, is performed in accordance with guidelines established by the LCRP. LDNR issued the Coastal Use Permit (CUP No. P20101037) on September 23, 2010, with no conditions.

11. Cumulative Impacts: Potential cumulative impacts would be those impacts to the local environment that would result from the proposed project in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD) have several on-going projects in the area. Improvements to LA 1088,

LA59, I-12, and US 190 are taking place. LaDOTD and other local, state, and federal entities would monitor environmental impacts related to highway construction and would mitigate for any adverse impacts. Other than highway maintenance and construction, there are no other known major construction activities being conducted presently or planned for the immediate future. The proposed project will not individually nor cumulatively over time have a negative impact on the quality of the human or natural environment.

Based on the information described above, there are no anticipated significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

### **DOCUMENTATION, COORDINATION, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public notices, which contained a project description, the decision-making process, where to find project information, and solicited public comment, were published in The Advocate of Baton Rouge on August 12, 2010 and October 27, 2010, and the New Orleans Times-Picayune on August 18, 2010 and October 28, 2010. Those notices also served as a floodplains and wetlands notice. Because the proposed project is supported by the community, no adverse public comments or concerns were received.

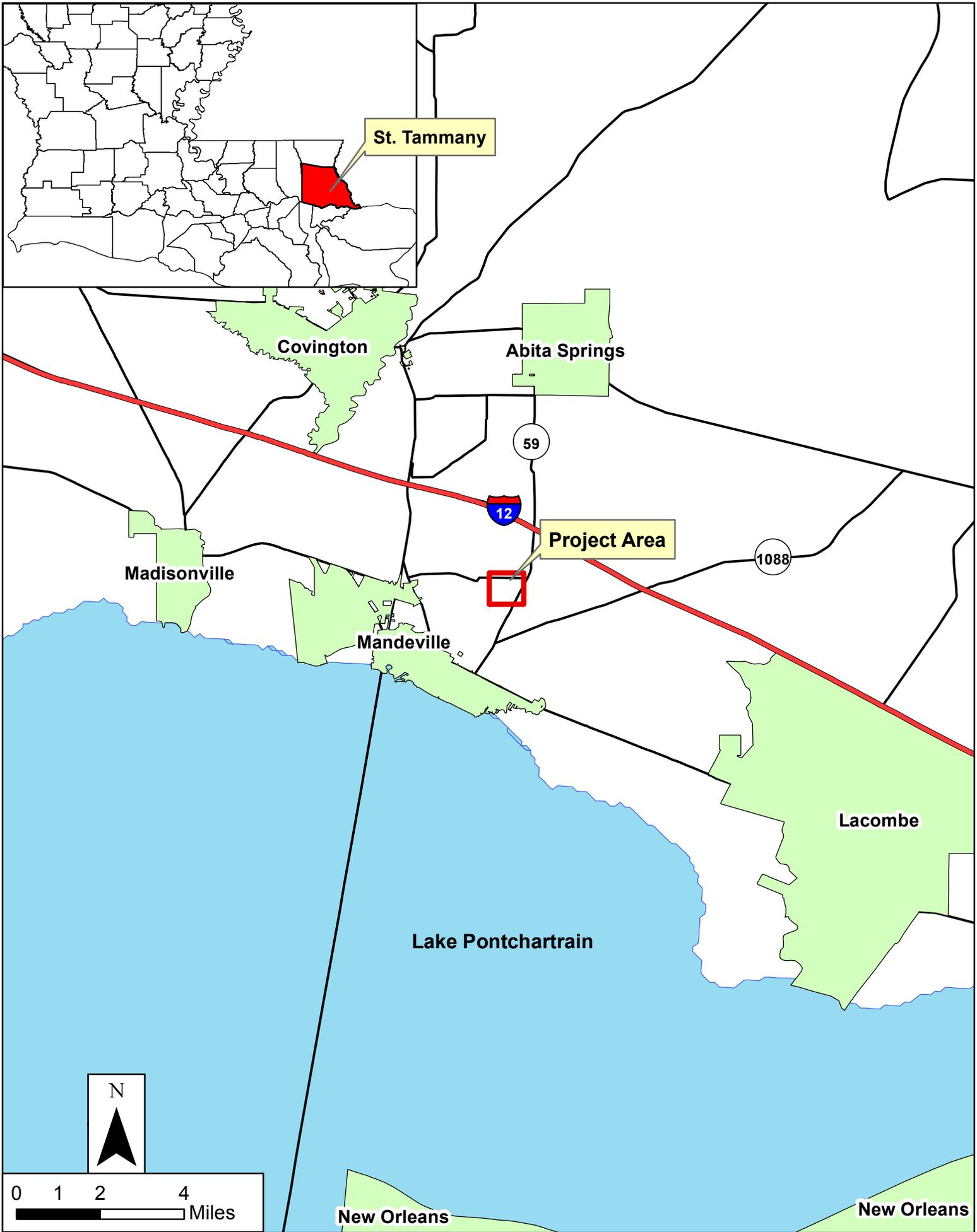
During the process of conducting the environmental review and preparing this Environmental Assessment for the project, coordination has been conducted with all required resource protection agencies and offices to solicit and incorporate their initial review and comments. Copies of this Environmental Assessment will be provided to those agencies and offices for their final review and comments. Other interested parties may request a copy of the Environmental Assessment in writing from the EPA, Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP), 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733.

### References

1. *Description of Ecoregions of the United States*. U.S. Forest Service, August 22, 2008. Web. <<http://www.fs.fed.us/land/ecosysmgmt/>>.
2. *Endangered Species Database*. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, March 23, 2011. Web. <<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>>.
3. Environ. Environmental Assessment for the Bayou Chinchuba Detention Pond Project, Mandeville, Louisiana – St. Tammany Parish. 2010.
4. Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, “2006 List of Impaired Waterbodies Section 303(d) List.”, 2006.
5. *Soil Data Mart*. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dec. 2008. Web. <<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>>.

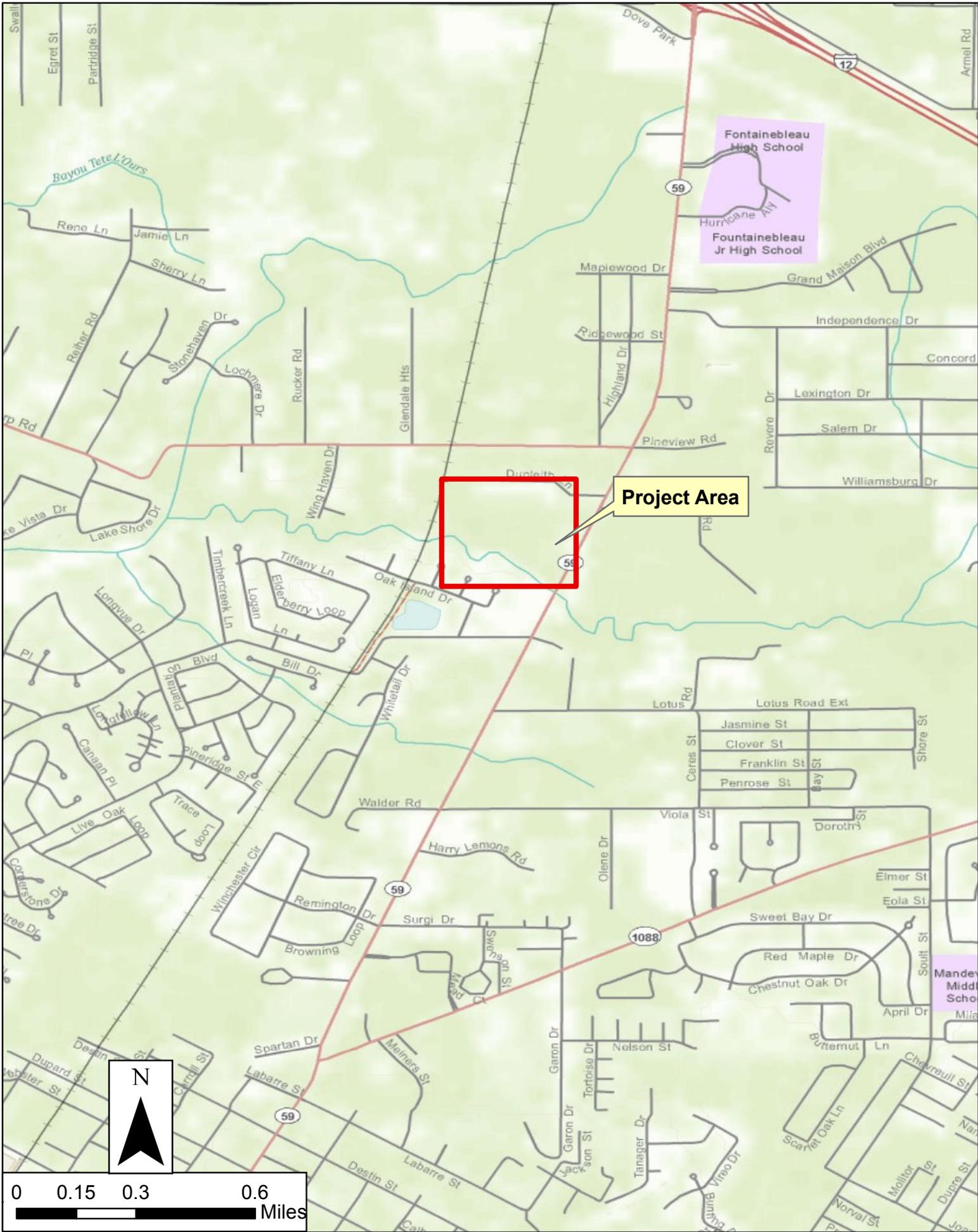
### **RECOMMENDATION**

The engineering, social, economic and environmental investigations conducted thus far indicate that the proposed project qualifies under the criteria as an Environmental Assessment. Significant environmental impacts are not expected to occur. Therefore, it is recommended that a Finding of No Significant Impact be issued for this project.



**Figure 1. Project Vicinity**

EA for St. Tammany Parish Government



**Figure 2. Project Area**