



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8175

February 24, 2025

Regulatory Division
South Coast Branch
Orange and Riverside Counties Permits Section

PUBLIC NOTICE

Permit Application No. SAJ-2024-00998 (SP-MY)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344) as described below:

APPLICANT: Polk County Roads and Drainage Division, Attn. Mr. Jay Jarvis
3000 Sheffield Road
Winter Haven, Florida 33880

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The project would affect wetlands and surface waters associated with the Withlacoochee and Peace River Basins for the CR 557 Widening Project. The project site is located at Polk County, Florida, and extends from the CSX Railroad crossing in Lake Alfred to south of the Interstate 4 (I-4) and CR 557 interchange in Sections 5, 8, 17, 20, 29, 31, and 32, Townships 26 and 27 South, and Range 26 East.

Directions to the site are as follows: From Orlando, take I-4 West to Exit 48 toward CR 557. Take the left exit at the roundabout onto CR 557 and travel south 0.3 miles to the project's northern limit.

APPROXIMATE CENTRAL COORDINATES: Latitude 28.125969°
Longitude -81.733881°

PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: Road Widening. The project proposes safety and capacity improvements to CR 557, including widening to increase roadway capacity, intersection improvements, and pedestrian safety improvements.

Overall: The project proposes safety and capacity improvements to CR 557, including widening to increase roadway capacity, intersection improvements, and pedestrian safety improvements.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The mixed hardwood and herbaceous wetlands systems are adjacent to the existing CR 557 roadway. The onsite vegetation consists primarily of red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and bay (*Persea* spp.) canopies with occasional cypress (*Taxodium* spp.), with understories composed primarily of Peruvian primrose willow

(*Ludwigia peruviana*), cattail (*Typha* sp.), wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) and caesarweed (*Urena lobata*). The existing condition of all onsite habitats has been influenced by the surrounding historic agricultural and residential uses. The wetland system consists of a freshwater system. The existing area surrounding the project area consists of agricultural land, a school, and low-density residential housing with additional housing developments currently in construction within portions of the surrounding areas.

PROPOSED WORK: The project proposes to directly impact a total of 43.66 acres of wetlands or surface waters. Specifically, there are 35.3 acres of direct impact to forested wetlands and 8.36 acres of direct impact to herbaceous/non-forested wetlands. The applicant seeks authorization to fill portions of adjacent forested and herbaceous wetlands, for the widening and safety improvements to CR 557 and construct the associated stormwater management system. All fill material would be clean fill, devoid of any debris, trash, or hazardous materials. All dredged materials would be stored and disposed of solely in uplands.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION INFORMATION – The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment:

The CR 557 Widening project underwent a complete PD&E Phase between 2019 and 2020. This included a review of the existing natural environment and potential impacts to wetlands, wildlife habitat, historic and archeological sites, and existing residential communities within all proposed alignment alternatives. Alternatives were evaluated based on potential impacts to natural and historic resources as well as the existing housing and utilities within the project area. Due to the adjacent wetlands on both sides of the existing CR 557 roadway, complete avoidance would not be possible. Avoidance and minimization of wetland impacts were considered throughout the planning and design process. The preferred alignment was chosen to avoid the majority of higher-quality wetland systems and avoid taking of public conservation lands. Median widths and fill slopes have been designed to minimum design standards that still allow for the necessary safety and capacity improvements in order to reduce the impacts to adjacent wetlands where practicable.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION – The applicant has offered the following compensatory mitigation plan to offset unavoidable functional loss to the aquatic environment:

To offset the proposed functional loss of 43.66 acres of wetlands and surface waters, the applicant proposes the purchase of 17.77 palustrine forested and 3.73 palustrine emergent mitigation bank credits from the Horse Creek, Crooked River, Green Swamp, and Tippen Bay Mitigation banks. Mitigation credits have been assessed via Unified Mitigation Assessment Methodology (UMAM). The proposed mitigation may change as a result of comments received in response to this public notice, the applicant's response to those comments, and/or the need for the project to comply with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

The Corps is aware of recorded historic resources within or adjacent to the permit area and is evaluating the undertaking for effects to historic properties as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This public notice serves to inform the public of the proposed undertaking and invites comments including those from local, State, and Federal government agencies with respect to historic resources. The Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources has returned the opinion that this project will have no effect on eligible historic properties. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer, those federally recognized tribes with concerns in Florida and the Permit Area, and other interested parties.

ENDANGERED SPECIES:

The Corps has determined the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect (MANLAA) the Eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), Audubon's crested caracara (*Caracara plancus cheriway*), sand skink (*Plestiodon reynoldsi*) and bluetail mole skink (*Plestiodon egregious lividus*) or any designated critical habitat for these species, and Core Foraging Areas (CFAs) for the wood stork (*Mycteria americana*). The Corps will request U.S. Fish and Wildlife/National Marine Fisheries Service concurrence with this determination pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

The Corps has determined the proposal would have no effect on the following listed, threatened, or endangered species or their designated critical habitat: Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*), Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), Florida grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus sавanarum floridanus*), and Lake Wales Ridge Plants.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH): The project is not located in or near waters considered to be EFH. Therefore, the project will not have an adverse effect on EFH or Federally managed fisheries. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NAVIGATION: The proposed activity is not located in the vicinity of a federal navigation channel.

SECTION 408: The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance

with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The jurisdictional line has not been verified by Corps personnel.

COMMENTS regarding the potential authorization of the work proposed should be submitted in writing to the attention of the District Engineer through the Regulatory Division, South Coast Branch, Orange and Riverside Counties Permits Section, 915 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1109, Los Angeles, California 90017 within 30 days from the date of this notice.

The decision whether to issue or deny this permit application will be based on the information received from this public notice and the evaluation of the probable impact to the associated wetlands. This is based on an analysis of the applicant's avoidance and minimization efforts for the project, as well as the compensatory mitigation proposed.

QUESTIONS concerning this application should be directed to the project manager, Miriam Yemane, in writing at the Orange and Riverside Counties Permits Section, 915 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1109, Los Angeles, California 90017; by electronic mail at Miriam.Yemane@usace.army.mil; or, by telephone at (213)610-8019.

IMPACT ON NATURAL RESOURCES: Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Services, and other Federal, State, and local agencies, environmental groups, and concerned citizens generally yields pertinent environmental information that is instrumental in determining the impact the proposed action will have on the natural resources of the area.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above.

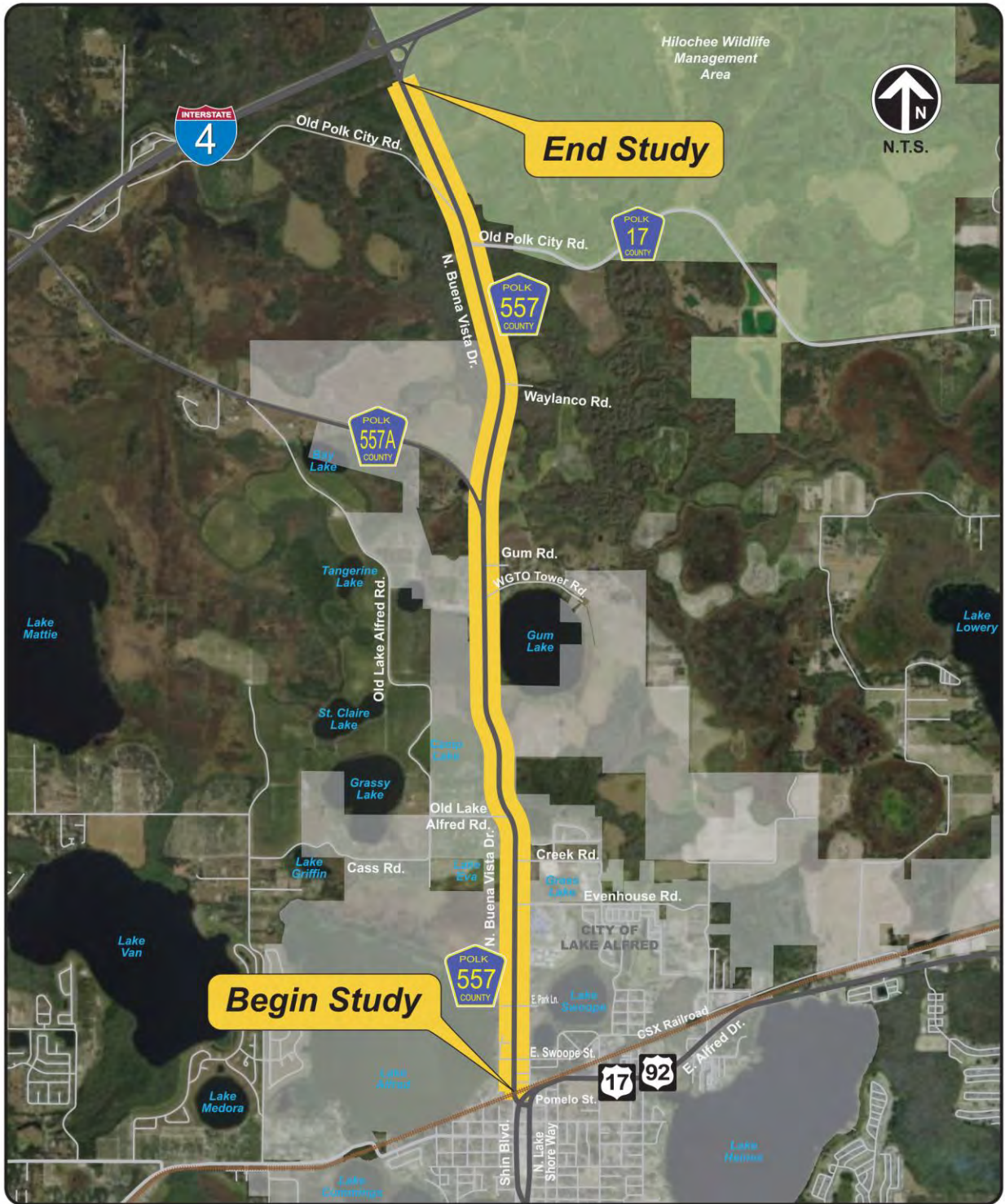
Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.



WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Water Quality Certification is required from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The project is being reviewed under SWFWMD application no. 877400.

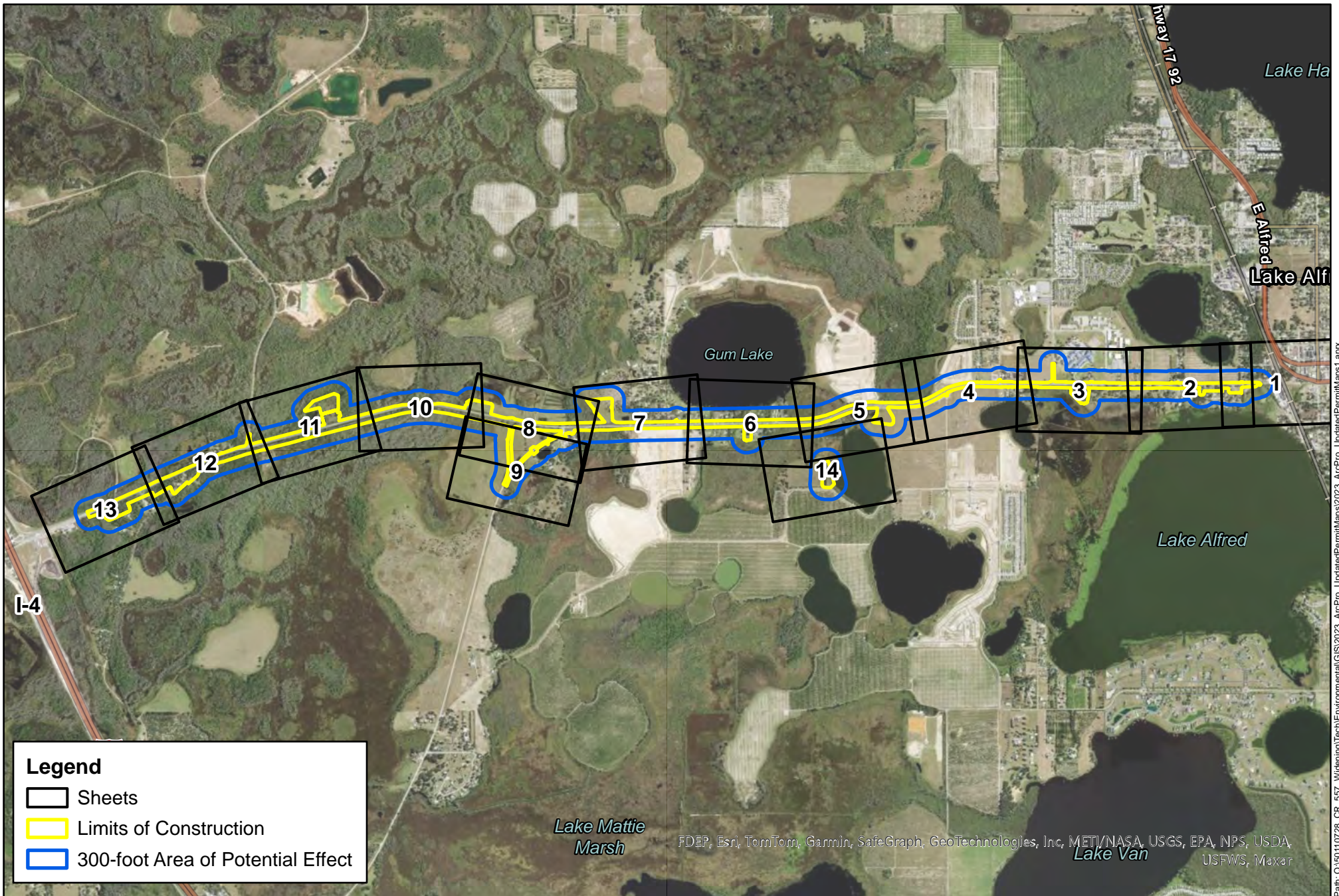
COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY: In Florida, the State approval constitutes compliance with the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the designated comment period of the notice and must state the specific reasons for requesting the public hearing.

Figure 1-1: Project Aerial Map



 <p>POLK COUNTY</p>	<p>CR 557 (Buena Vista Drive) Alignment Study from North of the CSX Railroad to South of the I-4 Interchange Polk County, Florida Contract: 18-73</p>	 <p>CR 557 WIDENING</p>
---	---	---



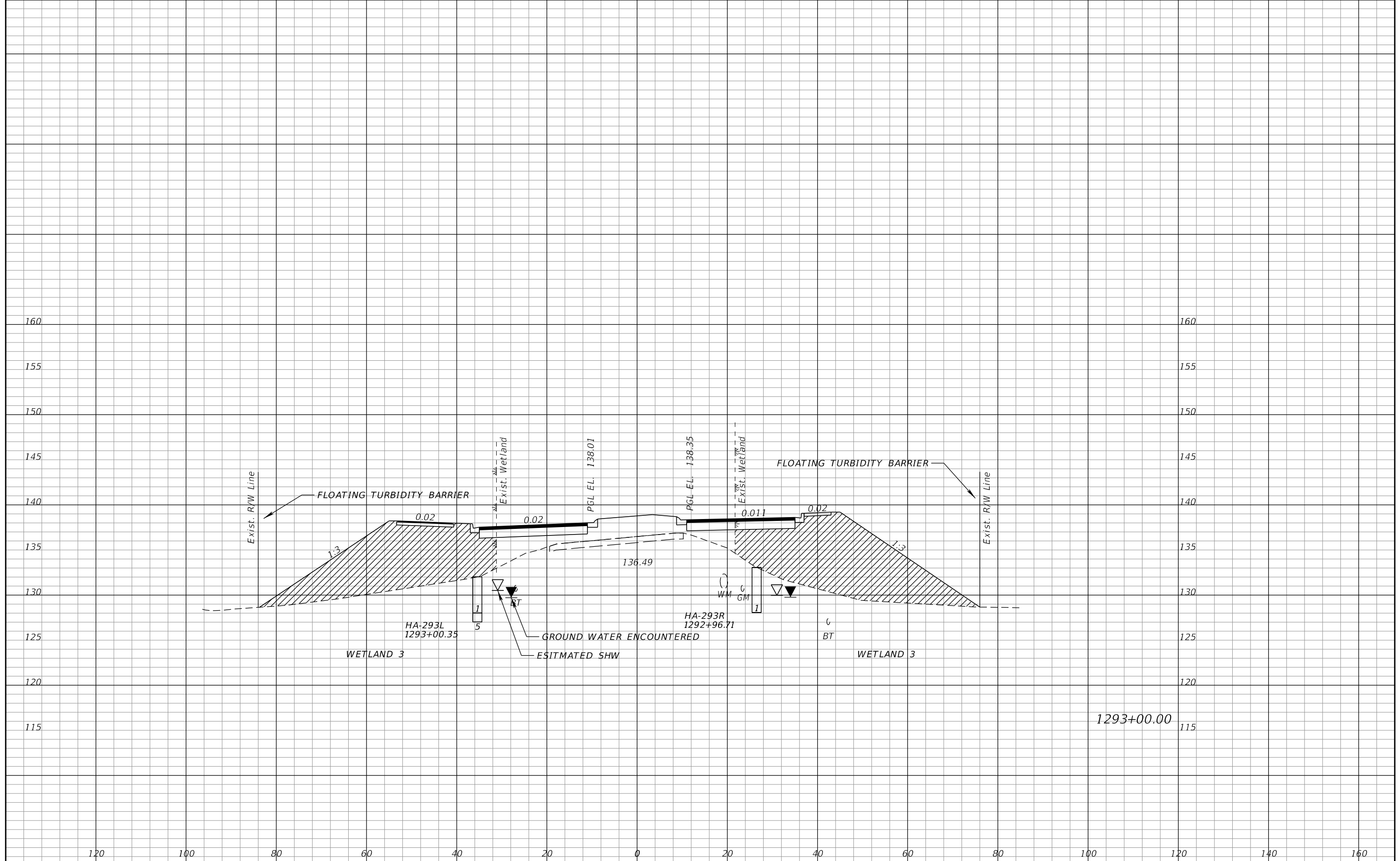
Overall Sheet Key Map

County Road (CR) 557 Widening from North of the CSX Railroad
to South of the I-4 Interchange

Contract 18-73
Polk County, FL

Data Source: Dewberry
Image Source: ESRI (2021 Aerial)

Path: C:\50110728_CR_557_Widening\Tech\Environmental\GIS\2023_AcrPro_UpdatedPermi\Maps\2023_AcrPro_UpdatedPermi\Maps1.aprx



REVISIONS				KEVIN E. KNUDSEN, P.E. P.E. LICENSE NUMBER 41062 DEWBERRY ENGINEERS INC. 800 NORTH MAGNOLIA AVE., SUITE 1000 ORLANDO, FL 32803 CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION NO. 8794	POLK COUNTY ROADS AND DRAINAGE DIVISION			SHEET NO. 25
DATE	DESCRIPTION	DATE	DESCRIPTION		ROAD NO.	COUNTY	PROJECT NO.	
				CR 557	POLK	5400135	CROSS SECTIONS	

THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THIS SHEET IS THE ELECTRONIC FILE DIGITALLY SIGNED AND SEALED UNDER RULE 61G15-23.004, F.A.C.