

# An Overview of the USACE Engineering With Nature Initiative

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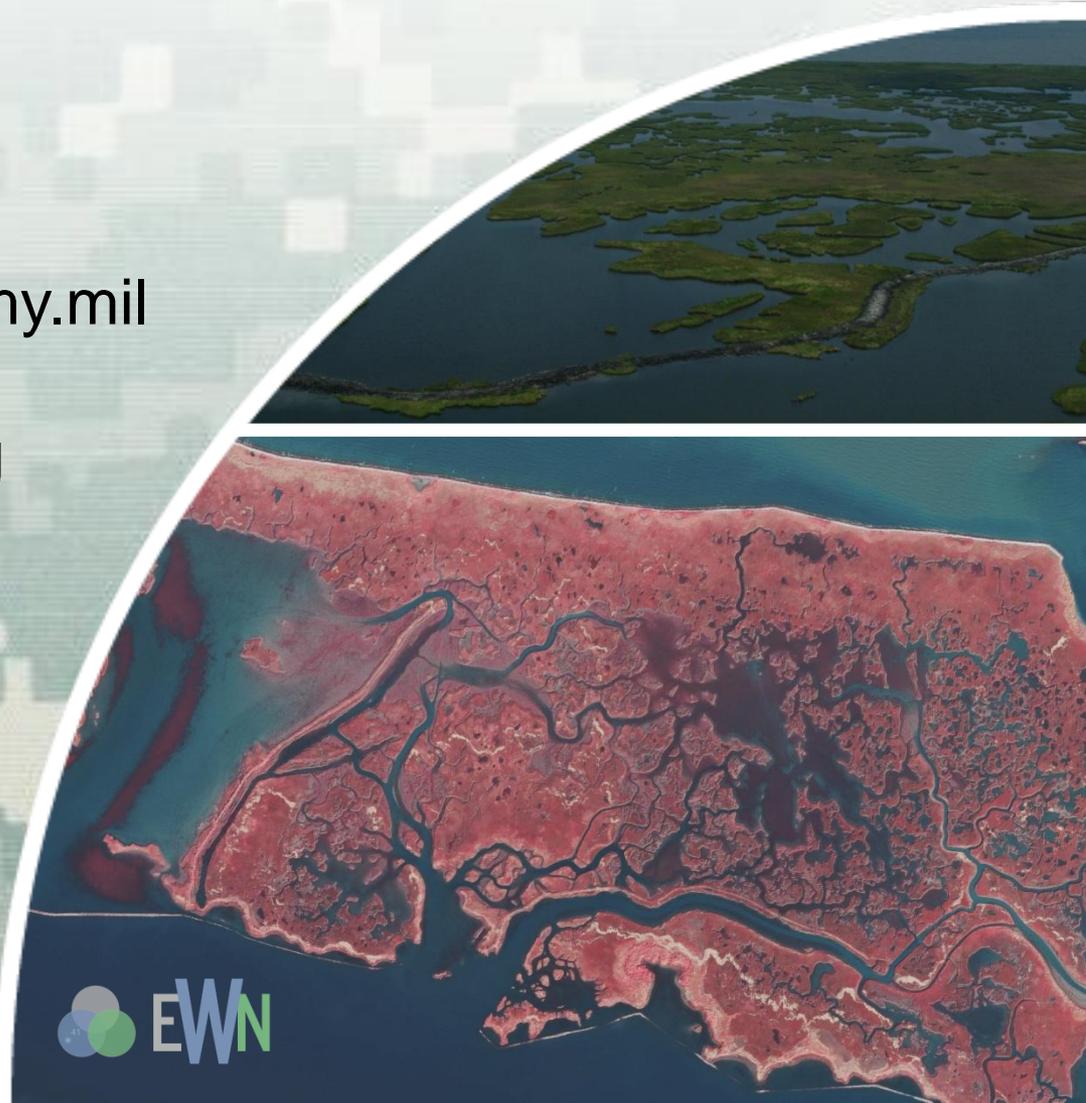
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**National Dredging Meeting**

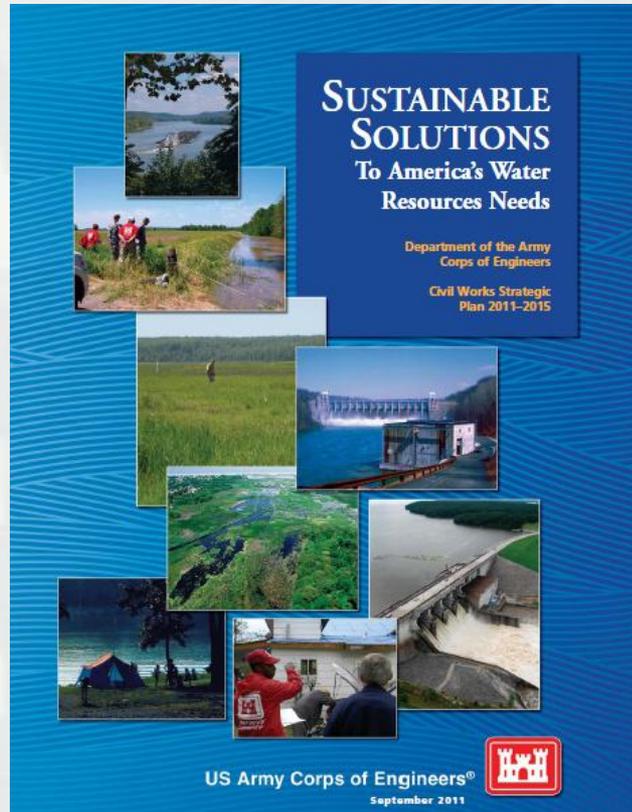
25 June 2014



US Army Corps of Engineers  
**BUILDING STRONG**



# Moving Beyond the *Status Quo*



## Needs:

- Efficient, cost effective engineering and operational practices
- More collaboration and cooperation, less unproductive conflict.
  - ▶ Ports, commercial interests, regulators, NGOs, and others
- Sustainable projects. Triple-win outcomes integrating social, environmental and economic objectives.

Sustainable Solutions Vision: “Contribute to the strength of the Nation through innovative and environmentally sustainable solutions to the Nation’s water resources challenges.”

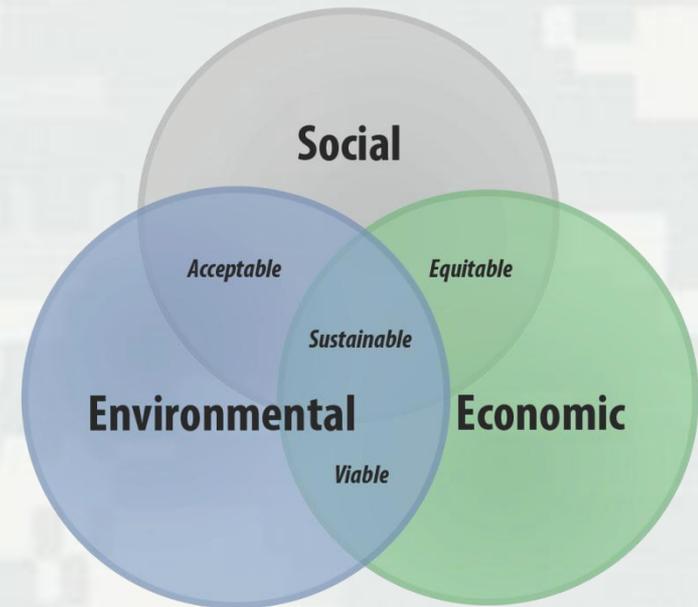


# Engineering With Nature (EWN)...

***...the intentional alignment of natural and engineering processes to efficiently and sustainably deliver economic, environmental and social benefits through collaborative processes.***

## Key Ingredients:

- Science and engineering that produces operational efficiencies
- Using natural process to maximum benefit
- Broaden and extend the benefits provided by projects
- Science-based collaborative processes to organize and focus interests, stakeholders, and partners





***Working  
with Nature***

***Engineering  
With Nature***

***Building  
with Nature***



# EWN Status

- *Engineering With Nature* initiative was started within the USACE Civil Works program in 2010. Over that period we have:
  - ▶ Engaged > 300 ind. across USACE Districts (23), Divisions, HQ; other agencies, NGOs, academia, private sector, international collaborators
    - Workshops (11), dialogue sessions, collaborative project teams, etc.
  - ▶ Developed a strategic plan
  - ▶ Focused research projects on EWN
  - ▶ Initiated field demonstration projects
  - ▶ Begun implementing our communication plan



# EWN Project Mapper (ProMap)

- Online GIS database of projects illustrating EWN principles and practices
  - ▶ Illustrating the key attributes of EWN
- Currently contains >200 projects
  - ▶ Name
  - ▶ Manager/Owner
  - ▶ Description
  - ▶ Infrastructure association e.g., jetty, breakwater, channel
  - ▶ Benefits e.g., fish habitat, bird habitat, recreation
  - ▶ Links, reports, photos
- Designed to facilitate communication about opportunities, lessons learned, and good practices
- Projects examples will be added through a process of self-nomination and independent evaluation

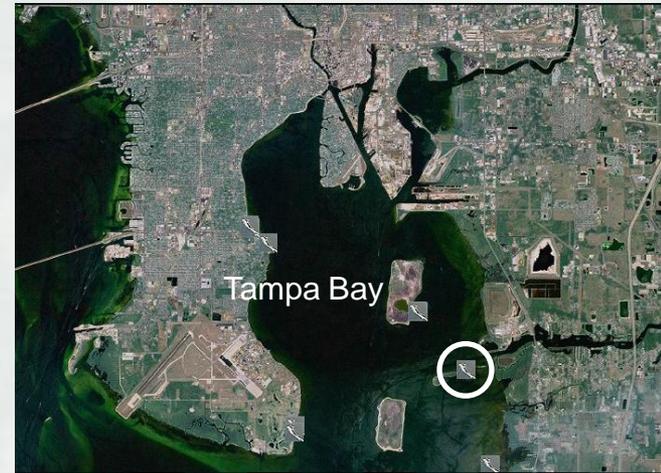


<http://155.82.160.6/applications/opj/V013/public/viewer.swf>



# Alafia Banks Bird Sanctuary, FL

- 8000 lb reef module breakwaters (930 ft)
- Shore protection for Audubon bird sanctuary islands
- Help restore oyster populations
- Provide habitat

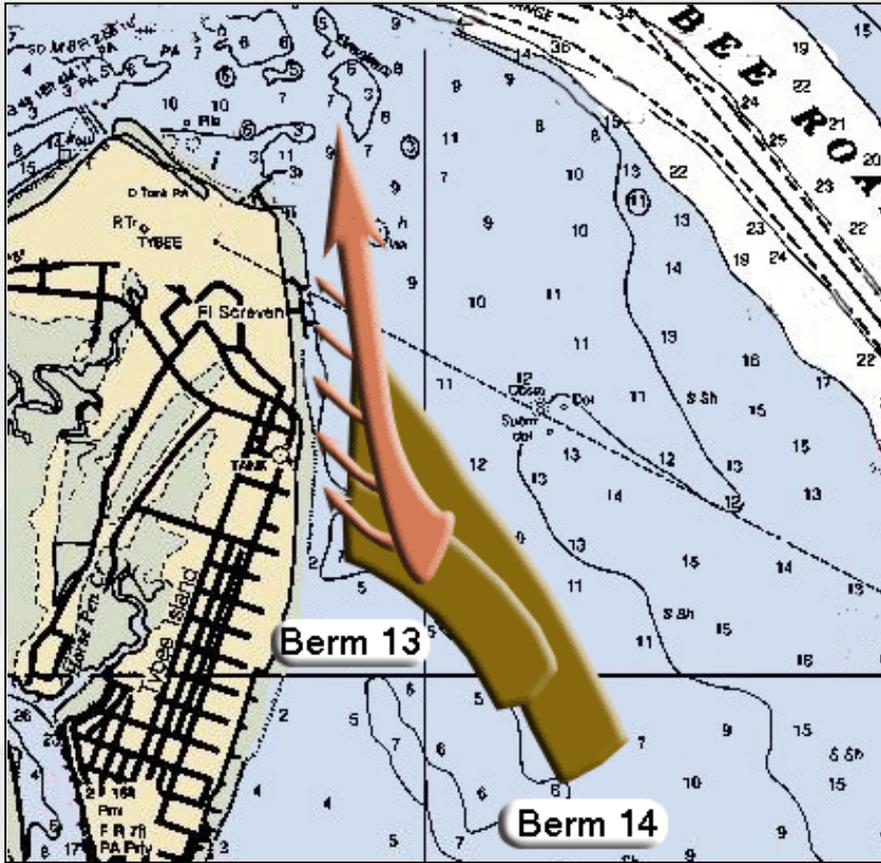


Example: [www.reefball.org](http://www.reefball.org)

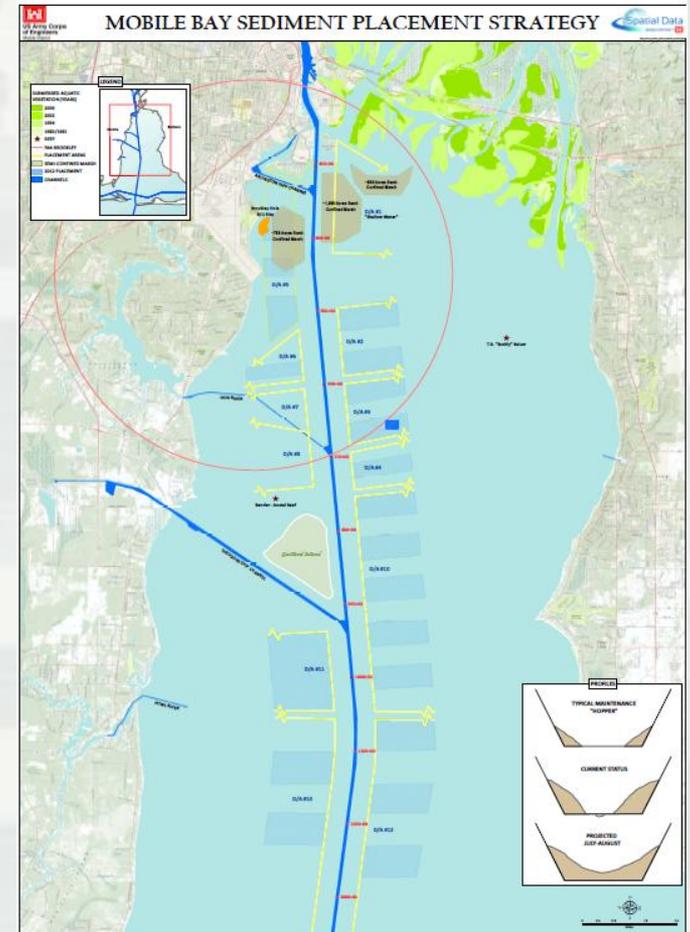


# Example EWN Solutions

## Strategic Sediment Placement



North Tybee Island  
Savannah, Georgia

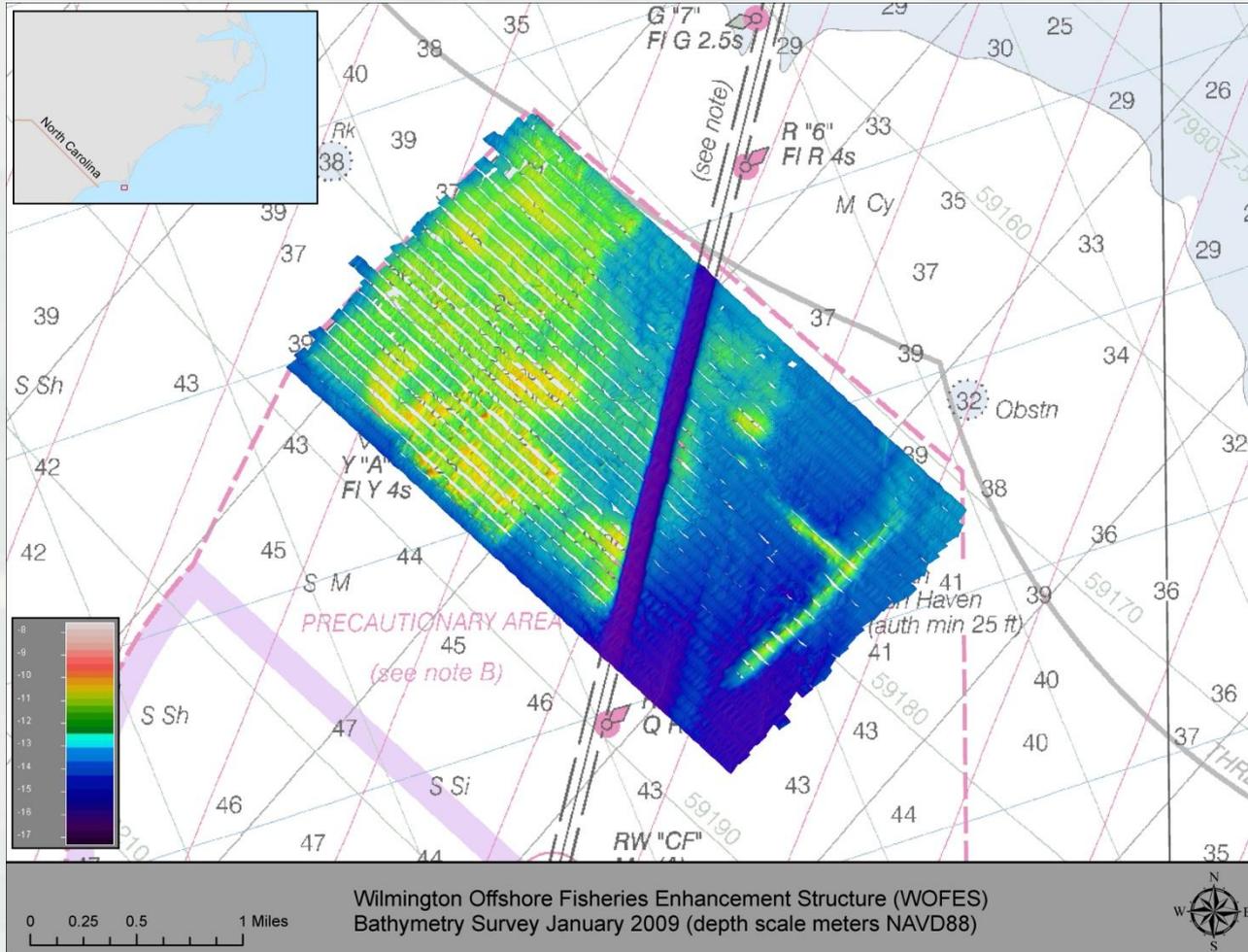


Mobile Bay Thin-Layer  
Placement



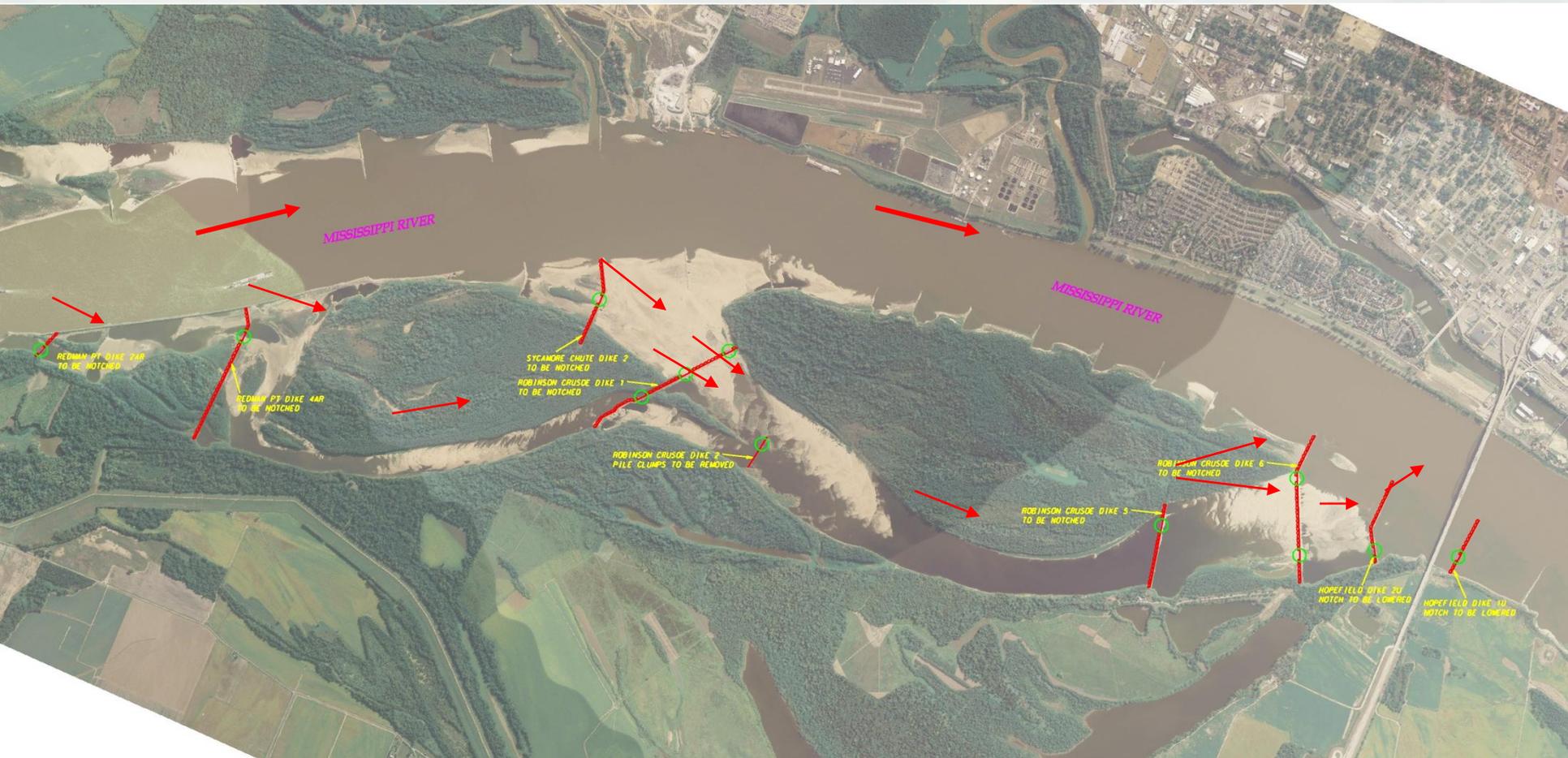
# Example EWN Solutions

## Wilmington Offshore Fisheries Enhancement Structure



# Example EWN Solutions

## Loosahatchie Bar Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation



# EWN Action Demonstration Projects

- Sediment Retention Engineering to Facilitate Wetland Development (San Francisco Bay, CA)
- Realizing a Triple Win in the Desert: Systems-level Engineering With Nature on the Rio Grande (Albuquerque, NM)
- Atchafalaya River Island and Wetlands Creation Through Strategic Sediment Placement (Morgan City, LA)
- Portfolio Framework to Quantify Beneficial Use of Dredged Material (New Orleans and New England)
- Engineering Tern Habitat into the Ashtabula Breakwater (Ashtabula, OH)
- Living Shoreline Creation Through Beneficial Use of Dredged Material (Duluth, MN)
- A Sustainable Design Manual for Engineering With Nature Using Native Plant Communities
- Landscape Evolution of the Oil Spill Mitigation Sand Berm in the Chandeleur Islands, Louisiana



# Process Research: Physical Processes within Wetlands

## ■ Problem

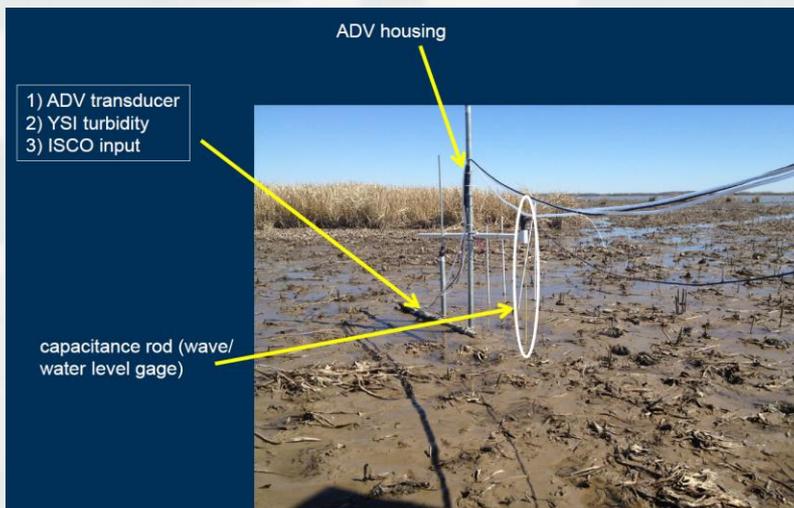
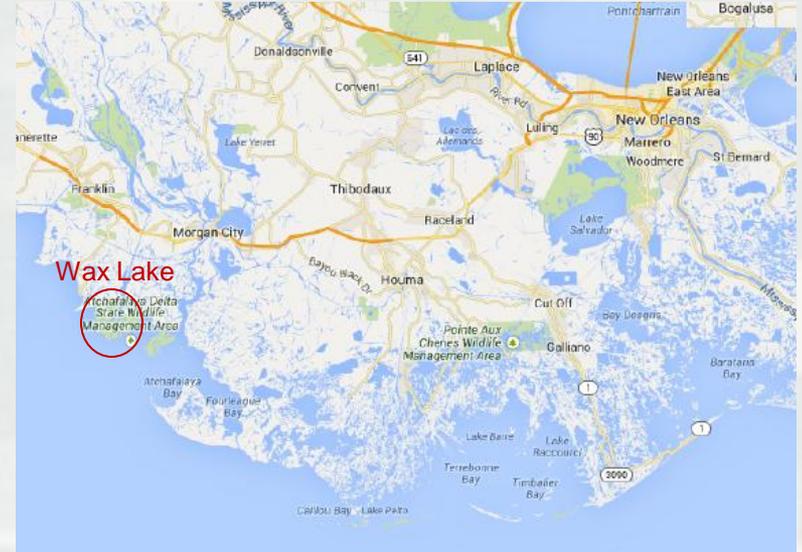
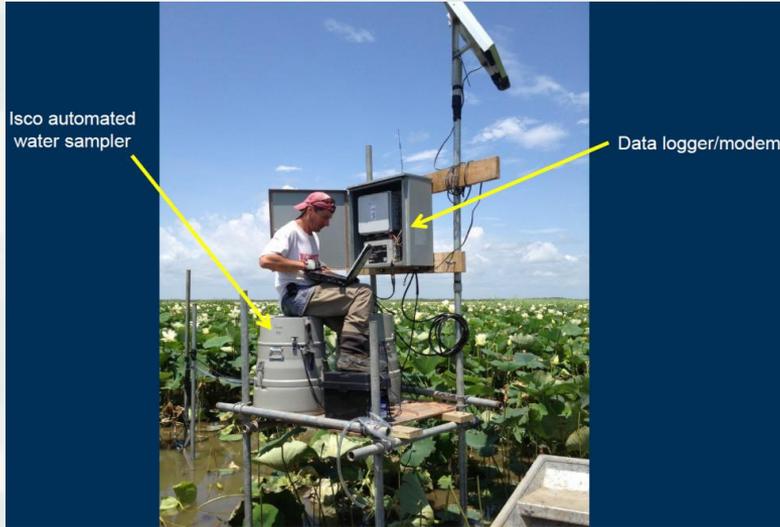
- Poor understanding of mixed sediment transport in vegetated regions with waves and currents
- Unacceptable uncertainty when evaluating nearshore and wetland placement alternatives

## ■ Approach

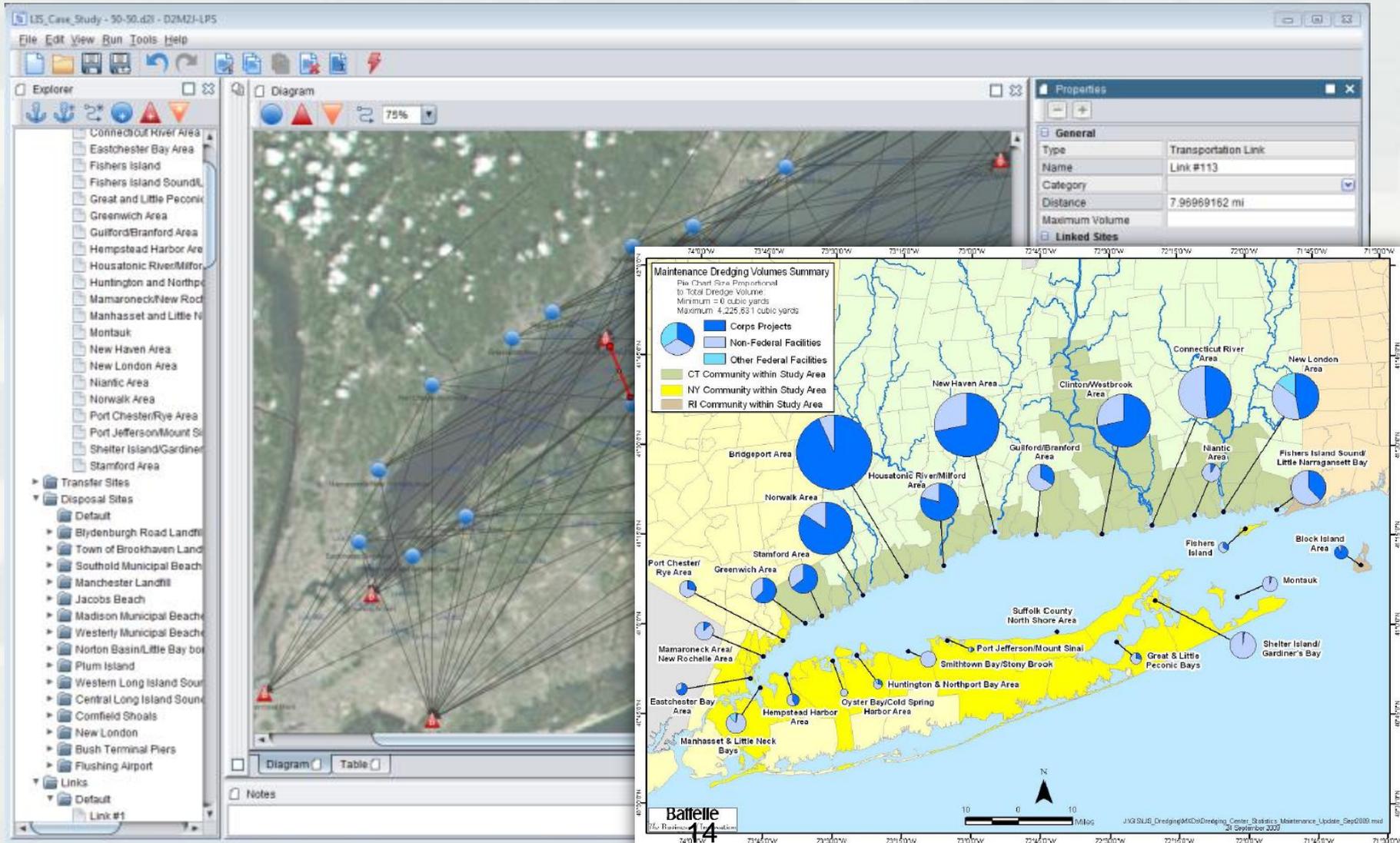
- Laboratory experiments to quantify hydrodynamic and transport processes in vegetation
- Laboratory experiments → 10' flume; Investigated wave energy transformation and limited sediment studies
- Field experiments (planned) → Tampa SAV, Fort Saint Phillip, Currituck Sound



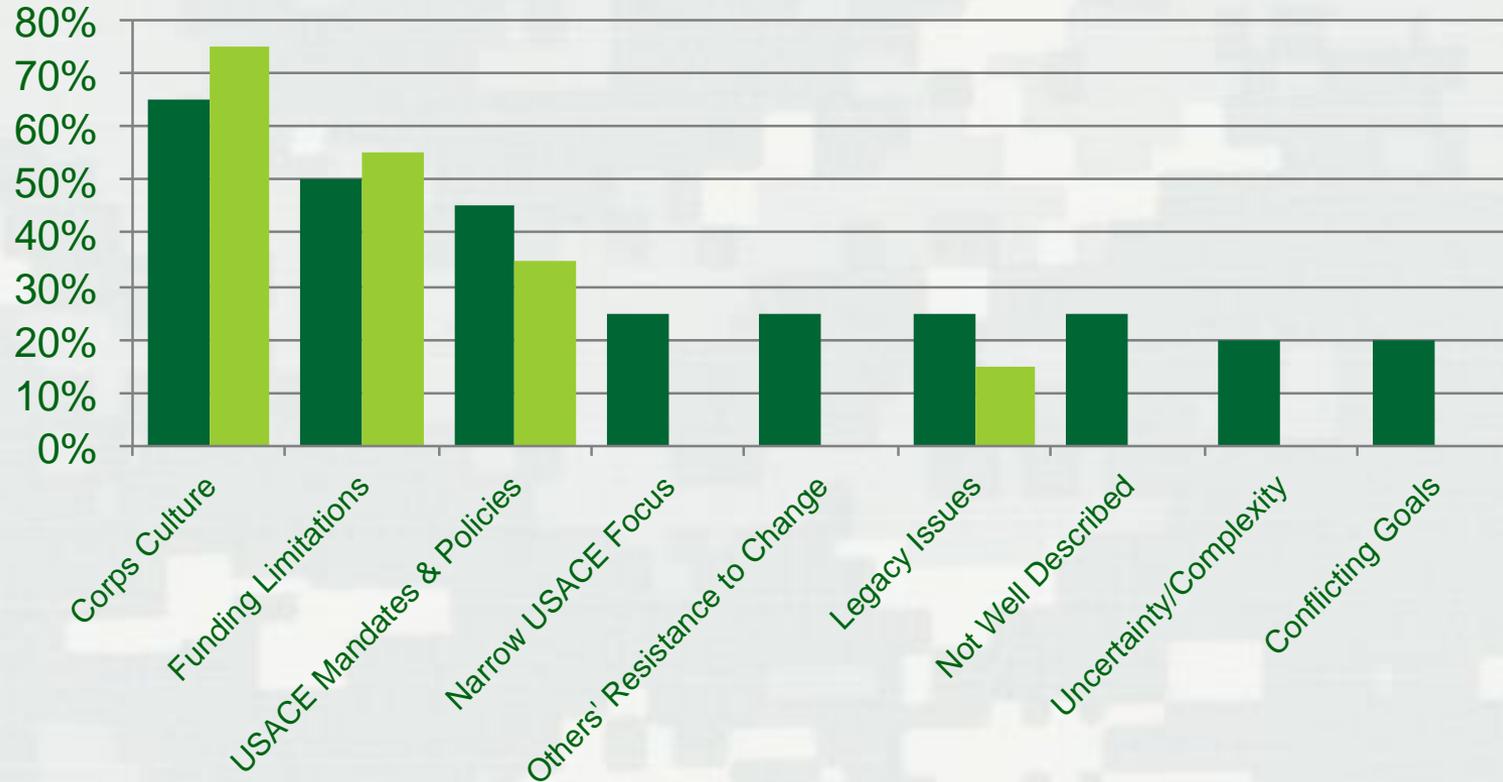
# Process Research: Sediment Processes in a Accreting Delta (Wax Lake, LA)



# D2M2: Dredged Material Management Decisions



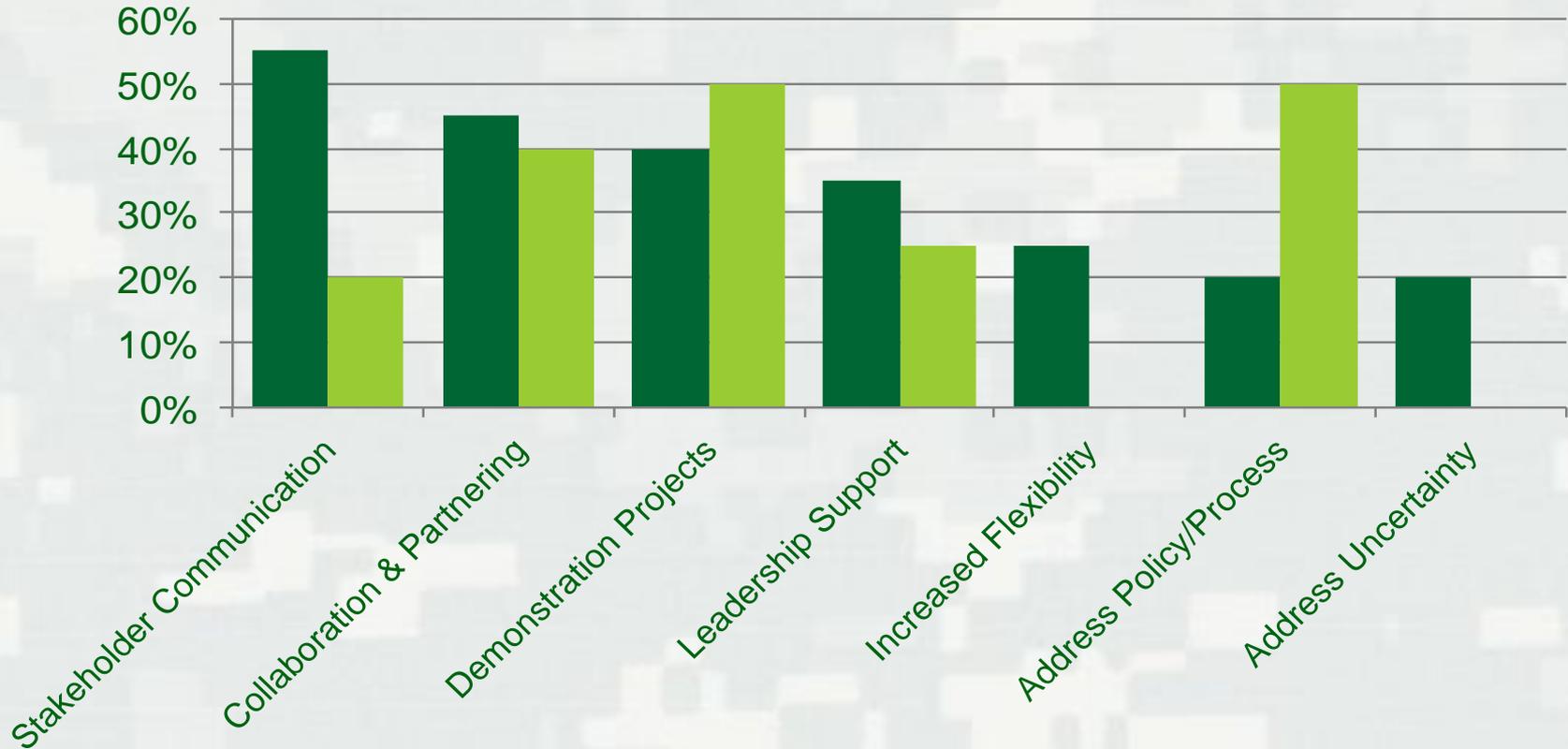
# Barriers to EWN Adoption



■ External MM (n=34)  
■ Internal MM (n=22) (*Only common factors shown*)



# Overcoming Barriers to EWN

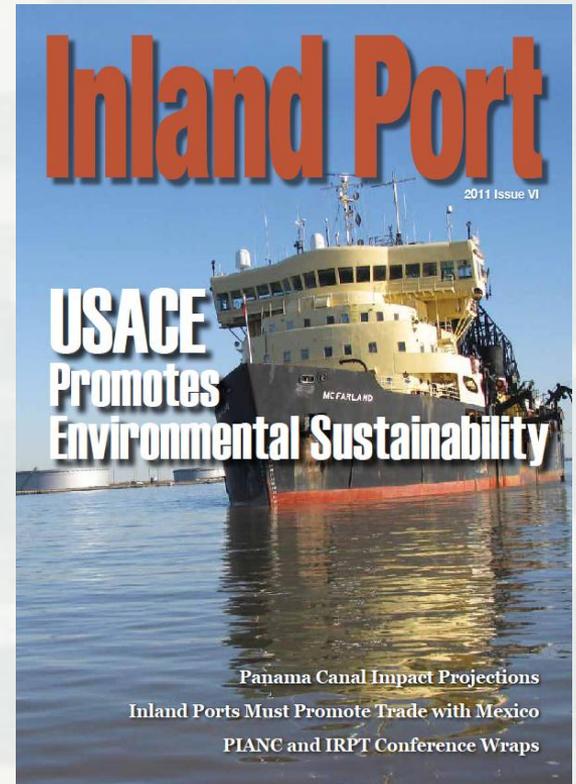


External MM (n=34)  
Internal MM (n=22) (*Only common factors shown*)



# Engineering With Nature

- Expand the range of benefits provided through water-based infrastructure
  - ▶ Create value!
- Balancing consideration of environmental risks with project **benefits**
- A path to more sustainable projects
  - ▶ 2013 Chief of Engineers Environmental Award in Natural Resources Conservation
  - ▶ 2014 USACE Sustainability Award-Green Innovation





### WHAT IS ENGINEERING WITH NATURE?

Engineering With Nature (EWN) is an initiative of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to enable more sustainable delivery of economic, social, and environmental benefits associated with water resources infrastructure. EWN directly supports USACE's "Sustainable Solutions to America's Water Resources Needs: Civil Works Strategic Plan 2011 - 2015" and contributes to the achievement of its Civil Works Mission and Goals. EWN is the intentional alignment of natural and engineering processes to efficiently and sustainably deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits through collaborative processes.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

- 21-23 MAY** USACE Coastal Resilience Conference: New Orleans, LA
- 1-5 JUNE** 33rd PIANC World Congress: San Francisco, CA
- 15-18 JUNE** Western Dredging Assoc. and Texas A&M University Conference: Toronto, Canada

#### WHAT'S NEW

Dr. Todd Bridges, Senior Research Scientist, describes how Engineering With Nature fits within the USACE Navigation mission.



#### FEEDBACK FROM OTHERS

"In the old days, the Corps would identify a problem and come up with a solution and approach fish and wildlife and its partners very late in the process after resources had been pretty much committed, especially in the design phase. But because it was so late in the process, there was never any discussion about alternatives and it was pretty much take it or leave it. Engineering With Nature allows us to get involved early and have the dialogue that is needed to try some non-traditional approaches that work." -Partner Agency



# Point of Contact

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