

A large flock of ducks is gathered in a shallow body of water, likely a marsh. The ducks are in various stages of flight and swimming. In the background, there is a dense field of tall, golden-brown grasses. The sky is bright and clear.

Ducks Unlimited Big Branch Marsh Terracing Project

St. Tammany Levee, Drainage
and Conservation District
January 21, 2026

Scott Graham
Regional Biologist
Ducks Unlimited

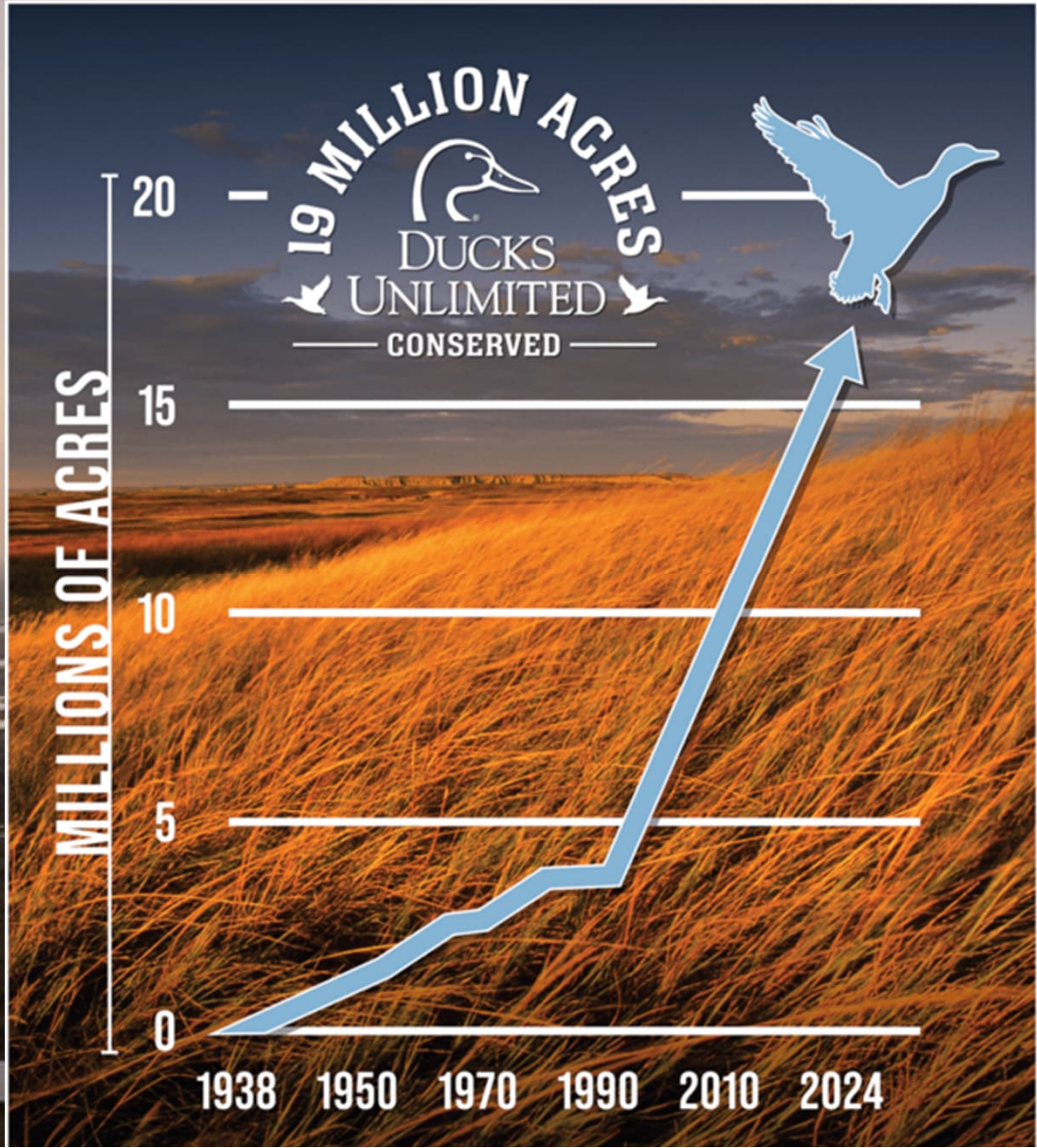
What is DU?



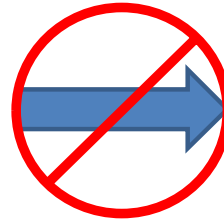
DU Mission

“Ducks Unlimited Conserves, Restores, and Manages Wetlands and Associated habitats for North America’s Waterfowl. These Habitats also Benefit other Wildlife and People.”

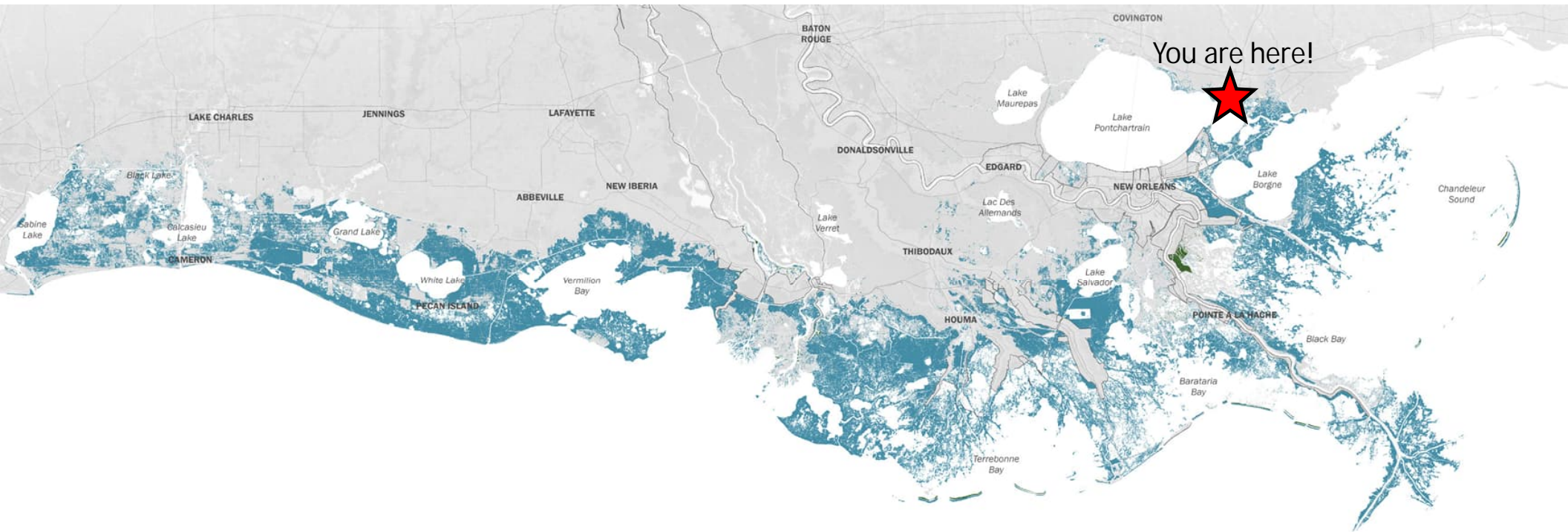




1.2 Million acres converted to open water in LA 1932 – 2016 (Couvillion et al. 2016)



1.9 Million acres will be converted to open water in the next 50 years – without action (2023 LA Coastal Master Plan)

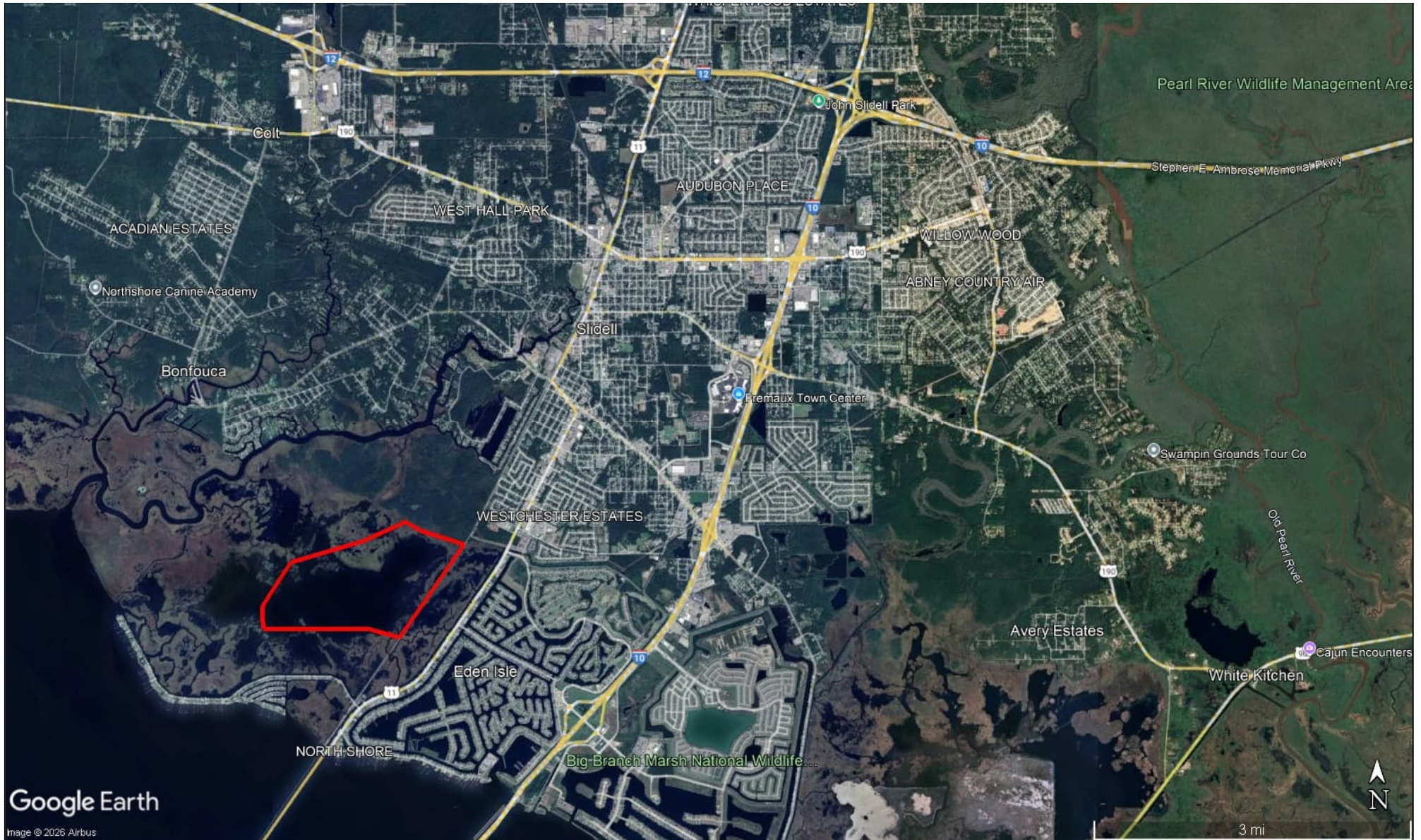


DU South Louisiana Restoration Strategies

- Freshwater Introduction
- Earthen Terracing
- Shoreline Protection
- Living Shoreline
- Hydrologic Restoration
- Land Acquisition
- Water Quality / Nutrient Reduction
- Marsh Management
 - Water Control Structures
 - Levees
 - Pumps







Google Earth

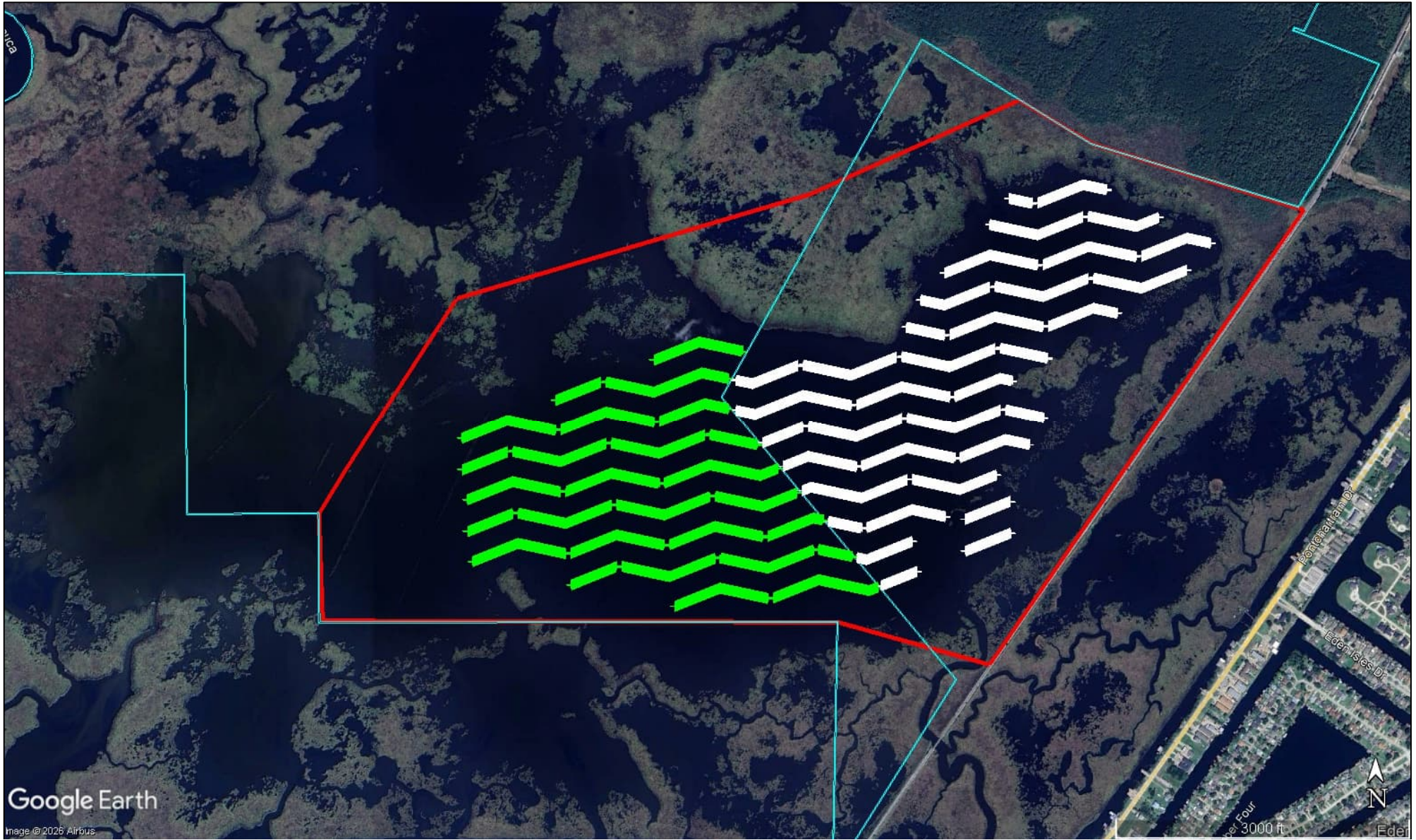
Image © 2026 Airbus

3 mi

Big Branch Marsh Terracing Project

- Construct of 57,000 LF of earthen marsh terraces
- Project located near Slidell, St. Tammany Parish
- Property owned by USFWS and private owner
- Acres Benefited: 800+
- Estimated Cost: \$2.5M
- Status: Final Design > Heading to Bid
- Start Date: Fall 2027





Google Earth

Image © 2026 Airbus

3000 ft



Edel



Why build earthen terraces?

Create emergent marsh habitat beneficial for fish and wildlife, while also protecting existing surrounding marsh, and critical infrastructure.

Reduce wave fetch and enhance water quality.

Terraces increase submerged aquatic vegetation growth and abundance.

Terraces increase edge habitat.

Terrace fields offer increased foraging opportunities for many bird guilds and fish.

Terraces more economical than marsh creation.

Terraces easier to permit than marsh creation.

Benefits of Terraces...



National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - National Coastal Resilience Fund

- 2018 – NFWF ECRF/NCRF Program Established
- DU NFWF Projects in LA:
 - 2018 – \$1,705,000 – Terrebonne Basin Ecosystem and Community Resiliency (LA)
 - 2021 – \$1,150,000 – Port Fourchon Terracing and Living Shoreline Project
 - 2022 – \$4,952,800 – Dularge Marsh Enhancement and Community Resilience (ECRF)
 - 2022 – \$4,805,456 – East Barataria Basin Marsh Terracing and Community Resilience (LA)
 - 2022 – \$650,000 – West Barataria Basin Evaluation and Design (LA)
 - 2023 – \$6,251,920 – Highway 1 Marsh Terracing and Living Shoreline (LA)
 - 2024 – \$4,182,376 – Port Fourchon Terracing and Living Shoreline Project – Phase II (LA)
 - 2025 - \$4,483,379 – Enhancing Resilience through Marsh Restoration and Living Shorelines in the Terrebonne Basin (LA)



NFWF

TOTAL = \$28,180,931 Grant Dollars



North American Wetlands Conservation Act

“An Act to conserve North American wetland ecosystems and waterfowl and other migratory birds and fish and wildlife that depend upon such systems”.

North American Wetlands Conservation Council



LOUISIANA NAWCA PROJECTS

\$84,766,741

NAWCA GRANT AMOUNT

\$210,791,175

TOTAL PARTNER CONTRIBUTION

97

NUMBER OF PROJECTS

893,943

TOTAL ACRES

NAWCA Proposal Summary

COUNTY(IES), STATE(S), CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT(S): Plaquemines Parish, St. John the Baptist Parish, St. Tammany Parish, Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, LA-1, LA-2

JOINT VENTURE(S): Gulf Coast Joint Venture

BIRD CONSERVATION REGION(S): 26 – Mississippi Alluvial Valley & 37 – Gulf Coast Prairie

GRANT AMOUNT		\$3,000,000
Allocation: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	\$3,000,000	

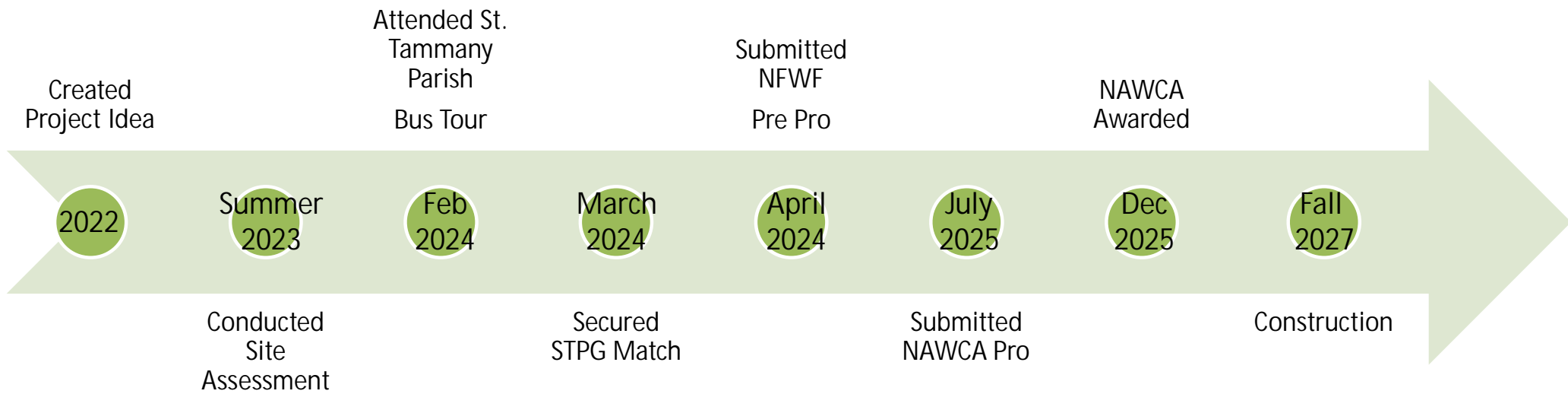
MATCHING PARTNERS		\$6,600,000
Ducks Unlimited, Inc	\$300,000	
St. Tammany Parish Government	\$300,000	
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority	\$6,000,000	

GRANT AND MATCH - ACTIVITIES, COSTS, AND ACRES		\$9,600,000/2,000 acres
Restored	\$6,000,000/35 acres	
Enhanced	\$3,500,820/1,965 acres	
Indirect Costs	\$99,180	

NON-MATCHING PARTNERS		\$5,000
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	\$5,000	



Project Development Timeline



Thank You!

St. Tammany Parish Levee, Drainage, and Conservation District

&

St. Tammany Parish Government



Questions?

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