

Marine Corps Support Facility-Blount Island: Integrated Natural Resources Program Successes



E2S2 Conference

May 12, 2011

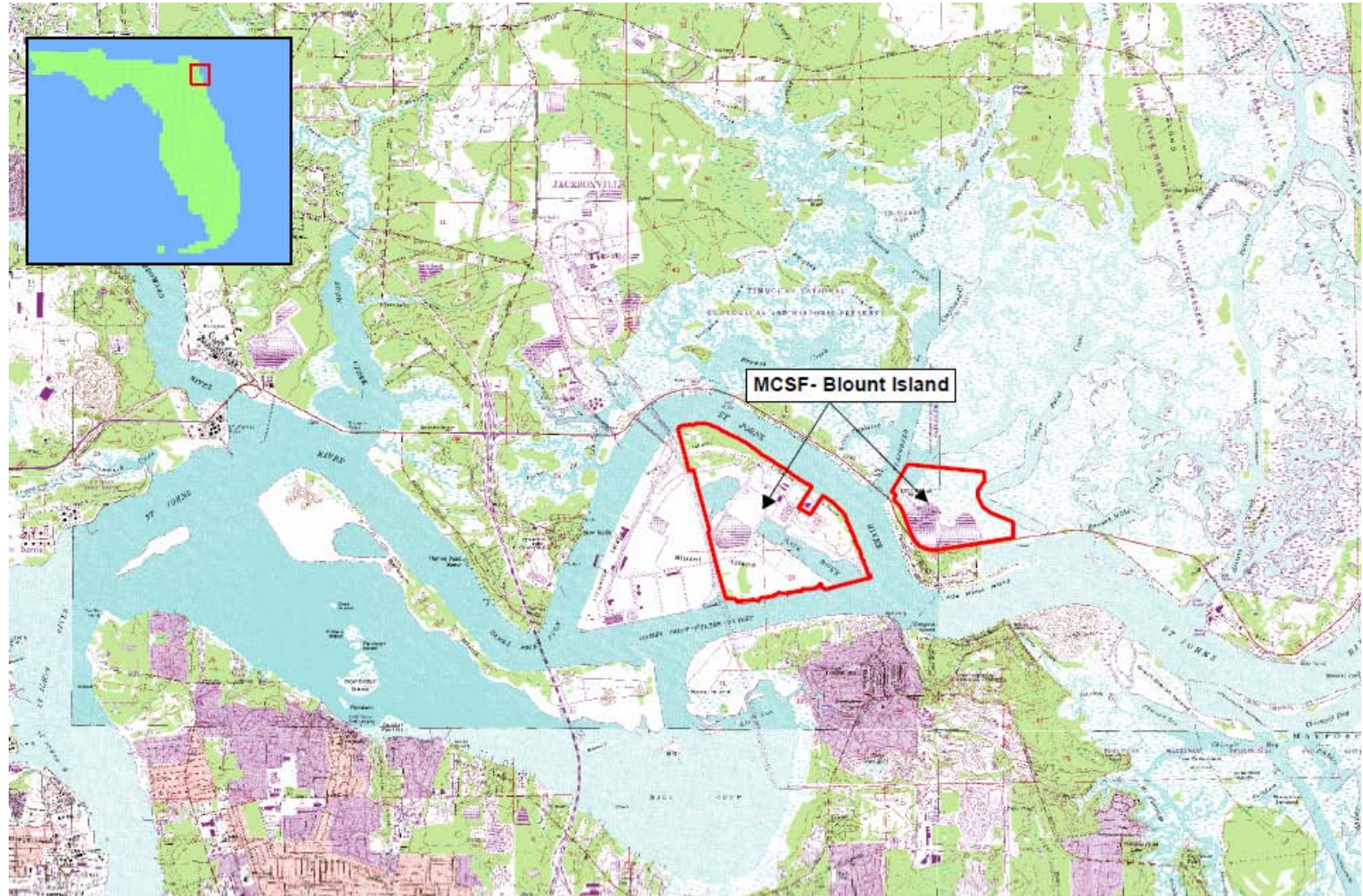
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Location





Mission

The mission of Marine Corps Support Facility
– Blount Island (MCSF-BI) is to plan,
coordinate, and execute logistics efforts in
support of the Maritime Prepositioning
Ships Program and the Marine Corps
Prepositioning Program, Norway



Blount Island History

- Created as a spoil island for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging in St. John's River in the 1960's
- Property turned over to the Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT) to develop
- Eastern half of Blount Island sold to Gate Maritime, then acquired by the Marine Corps in 2005



Marine Corps Support Facility – BI





MCSF-BI Area

- MCSF-BI consists of
 - 902 acres located on the eastern half of Blount Island
 - 334-acre dredge disposal area (DDA) is part of located on the east bank of the St. Johns River



Blount Island





MCSF-BI Land Use

- Developed property consists of 686 acres of military facilities and associated infrastructure (e.g. stormwater ponds)
- Undeveloped areas include:
 - 216 acres on Blount Island
 - 334 acres at the DDA



Land Use





Natural Resources Significance

- Located along Atlantic flyway for migratory birds
- Contains freshwater and estuarine wetlands
- Habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species including manatee, birds, American alligator and gopher tortoise



INRMP History

- Initial INRMP for MCSF-BI signed in 2007
- Participants
 - Federal Agencies
 - USACE, USEPA, USFWS, NMFS, NPS
 - State and Local Agencies
 - FDEP, FFWC, OCHP, St. John's Water Management District
 - City of Jacksonville, JAXPORT
 - Public



- INRMP Focus:
 - Inventory natural resources
 - Protect and enhance wetlands and riparian areas
 - Survey migratory birds and wildlife
 - Control invasive plant and pests
 - Protect and enhance sensitive species
 - Develop GIS and integrate environmental planning
 - Integrate INRMP with grounds maintenance
 - Evaluate recreation and education opportunities



Natural Resources Inventories

- Initial accomplishments focused on documenting resources present:
 - Protected species/habitats survey in 2005
 - Wetland delineation in 2008
 - Gopher tortoise surveys in 2008, 09, 10 and 11
 - Eastern indigo snake survey in 2009
 - Alligator surveys in 2009, 2010
 - Bird surveys in 2008, 2009, 2010
 - Invasive plant surveys in 2008, 2009, 2010

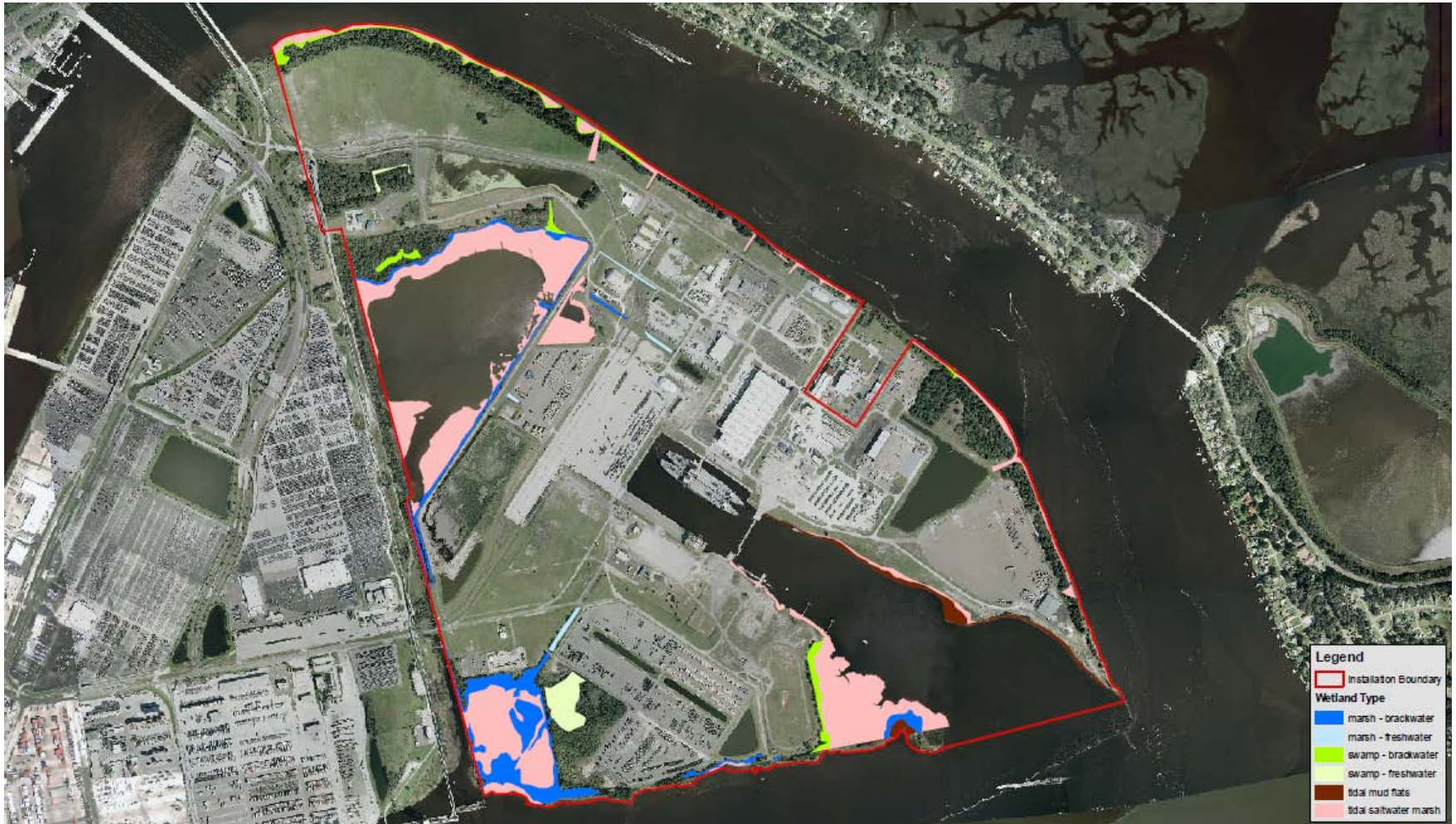


Wetlands and Riparian Areas

- Wetland and riparian resources include:
 - 91.7 acres of wetlands on Blount Island and 191 acres at DDA
 - Stormwater ponds and ditches on Blount Island
 - St. John's River shoreline
- Actions implemented focused on improving quality:
 - invasive species removal
 - protection from potential impacts



Wetlands and Riparian Areas





Birds

- 105 species of birds, including 29 breeding species, have been identified at MCSF-BI





- Actions implemented:
 - Improve existing habitat
 - Avoid of activities that would disrupt reproduction
 - Coordinate maintenance and construction to avoid disturbance in or adjacent to active nesting areas
 - Accommodate the habitat needs of migratory birds in the designs of future facilities.
 - Increase roosting and nesting habitat in stormwater ponds and the dredged material disposal site.



Wildlife Management

- Alligators
 - 67 found in 2009 survey
 - 32 found in 2010
 - Warning signs posted in alligator habitat
 - Annual training on alligator procedures
- Snakes
 - Relocated from high traffic areas
 - May be killed if they would cause an unsafe work environment



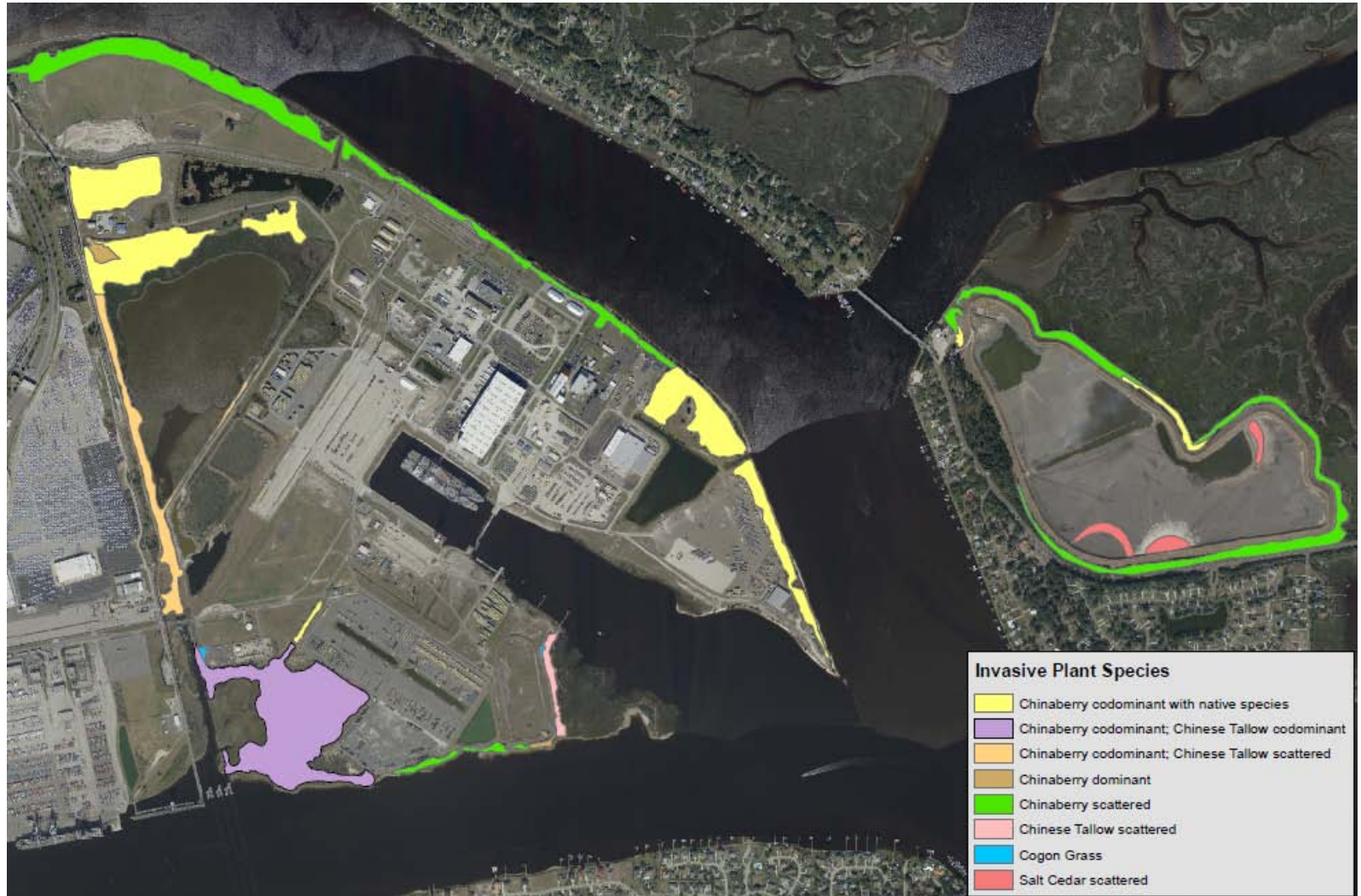


Invasive Plants

- Invasive plant surveys conducted on MCSF-BI and the DDA in 2008, 2009, and 2010.
 - Species include chinaberry, Chinese tallow, salt cedar, and cogon grass
- 70 acres of salt cedar killed at DDA to limit the potential to spread to adjacent areas
- Chinaberry trees removed from areas adjacent to the gopher tortoise burrows



Invasive Plants



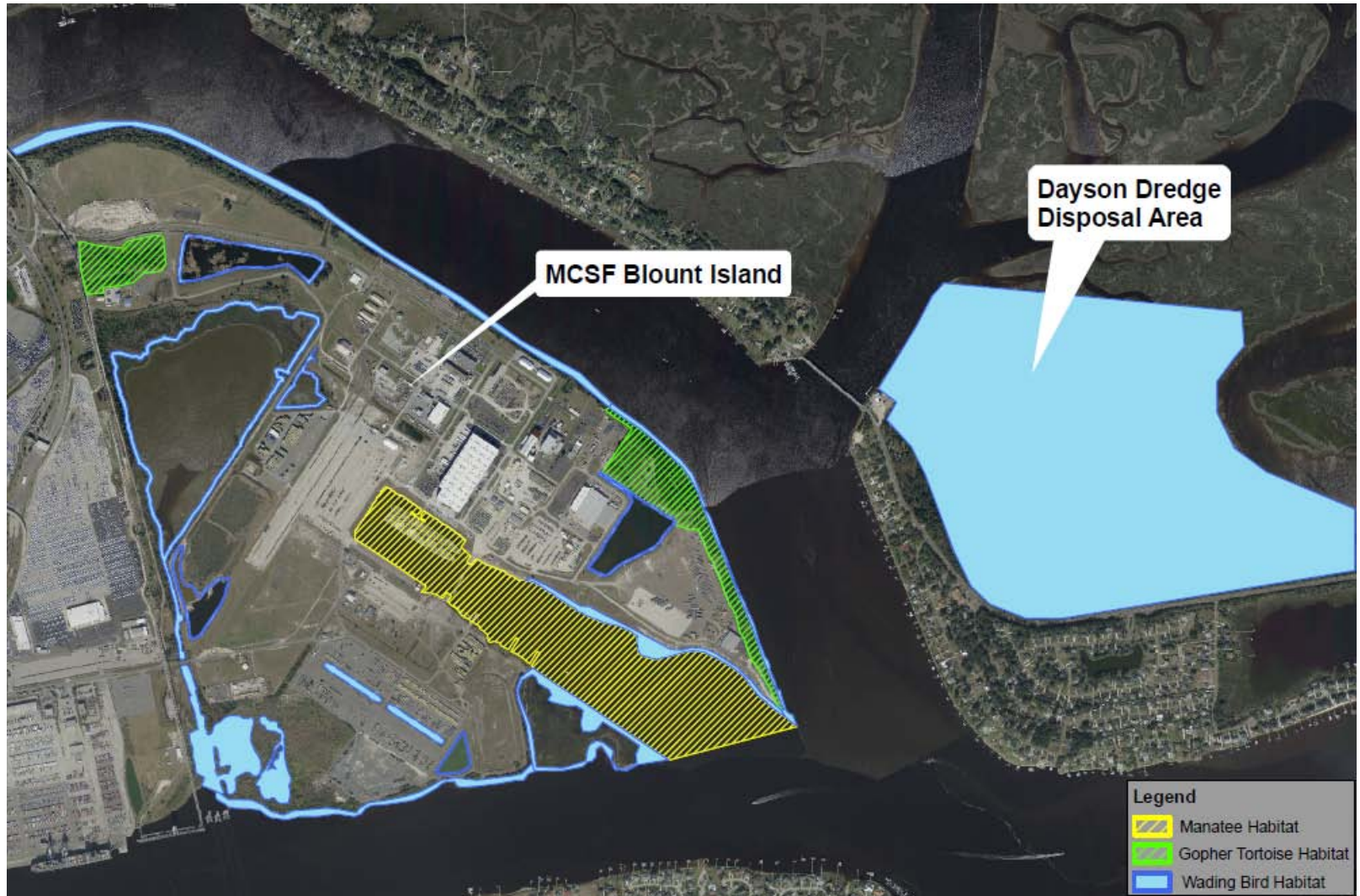


Sensitive Species

- Surveys identified 15 federal or state-listed protected species
 - West Indian Manatee (FE)
 - Wood Stork (FE)
 - Other birds (primarily wading and shore)
 - American alligator (SAT)
 - Gopher tortoise (ST)



Sensitive Habitats





Sensitive Species Management

- Actions implemented:
 - Avoidance and minimization of potential impacts
 - Habitat maintenance and enhancement
 - Monitoring and surveying to identify status, quality, trends and distribution
 - GIS-based tracking system of observances



Manatee

- Manatees have been documented in the slipway at MCSF-BI





- Actions implemented include:
 - Install signage
 - Work instructions and training
 - Watch posted whenever activity will occur in slipway
 - Coordinate with FWC during ship movements





Gopher Tortoise

- Active gopher tortoise burrows have been identified in undeveloped areas (e.g. 5 acre area of small original island)





Gopher Tortoise

- Actions implemented include:
 - Signage posted to prevent vehicle traffic
 - Enhancement of desired vegetation
 - Removal of invasive vegetation





2011 Gopher Tortoise Survey





Gopher Relocation Project

- Prepared EA
- Kickoff meeting
- 5 day survey the facility
 - 120 burrows found
 - 92 potentially occupied
- Submit dig permit
- 10 day relocation of all gopher tortoise to Appalachian national forest Tallahassee, FL





Rare Birds

- Rare birds observed primarily in stormwater ponds, ditches, and wetlands
- Wood storks have been observed in stormwater ponds and in DDA
- Protection and enhancement actions, including monitoring and surveys, are conducted as part of overall bird program



Environmental Planning

- Installation environmental staff works with base planners to accommodate the habitat needs of birds and sensitive species in the designs of future facilities.
- Developed new GIS data layers to aid in integration of natural resources program



Grounds Maintenance

- Accomplishments include development of natural resources information for grounds maintenance and landscaping staff
 - GIS layers identify off-limits areas
 - Signs mark boundaries and provide contact numbers
 - A map identifying jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional waters and the typical maintenance activities allowed within them



Grounds Maintenance

Annual debris removal program along the St. Johns River shoreline initiated in 2008

- 60 tires, 7 pounds of aluminum cans, approximately 20 tons of treated lumber, and 20 cubic yards of miscellaneous trash in 2008 and 2009
- Boy Scouts helped in 2010





Recreation

- Limited recreation potential at MCSF-BI
- Recreational fishing
 - Designated areas approved for fishing by facility staff and dependents in 2007.
 - Authorized fishing areas are identified by signs
- Potential future use for bird watching





Questions ?

US Marine Corps Support Facility

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