**The 2022 Project Proposal**

Both the original and 2022 EGL project applications include a series of cuts along the south bank

of Bayou Sorrel, the west bank of the Intracoastal Water Way (GIWW), and the north and south spoil piles along the Florida Gas Pipeline Canal to introduce river water into these areas in the Upper East Grand Lake area of the Basin. The present (2022) project proposal includes one less cut (for a total of 12 cuts, not the original 13 proposed in 2018) – the southernmost cut in the west bank of the GIWW, and now proposes new deposit sites for the 18,251 cubic yards of dredged material removed to make the cuts. These new locations include placing dredged spoil in adjacent man-made canals and the Florida Gas Pipeline canal to “create wetlands and/or marsh.” Deposit sites also include already elevated areas beside the cuts in the south bank of Bayou Sorrel and the first cut on the GIWW, covering the areas with anywhere from 8 inches to 8 feet of dredged spoil to “nourish the forest.”

**ABP’s Claimed Purpose and Need for the Project**

The Atchafalaya Basin Program under CPRA claims that the project is intended “to restore hydrologic connectivity and reduce stagnation … by increasing north to south flow through the swamp” which will be achieved by “improving existing bayous to convey water through the swamp, gapping spoil banks along a pipeline canal, and creating and enhancing wetlands.” They claim that when complete, water will be able to flow out of Bayou Sorrel and the GIWW through the adjacent swamps to reduce stagnation, increase dissolved oxygen concentrations in the swamp, improve aquatic habitat for fish and crawfish, and promote the natural regeneration of cypress trees.

Allegedly, these actions will make the swamp more resilient and able to better withstand future

conditions predicted for this area from climate change, such as rising sea levels and stronger

tropical storms. Allegedly, this project will improve conditions for the local fishing industry by improving habitat for fish and crawfish. The project aims to increase connection between the Atchafalaya River and its floodplain swamps “to improve forest health and habitat quality.”

CPRA claims that using the dredged spoil to “create wetlands” and “nourish and enhance

the wetlands” “leaves the project with a net benefit to the wetlands of this area, and further

enhances the existing habitats by alleviating stagnation while improving water quality and

wildlife habitat.”

The focus of the project application is impacts to water quality and the wetland nourishment/enhancement of increased water and deposited dredged spoil on top of existing

elevations. Outside the project application, the ABP has represented that the project area suffers from stagnation impacting the health of the fisheries, that the trees in the area are stunted and dying, that subsidence and sea level rise may offset concerns raised about sedimentation, and that this project is different from similar projects that failed (Beau Bayou, Buffalo Cove) because the cuts will not be so deep as to introduce water year-round, but will instead bring water from the upper part of the water column into the swamp when river stages are roughly 12.5 ft at Butte la Rose. They allege that accretion will “ensure that those swamps will remain viable in the face of land subsidence and sea level rise.”