

# East Lake Tohopekaliga Drawdown and Habitat Enhancement Public Scoping Meeting for Draft Environmental Impact Statement

**Jeffrey Collins**

Senior Project Manager  
USACE Regulatory - Cocoa Permits

&

**Tim Coughlin**

Project Manager, FWC

December 5, 2017



*Trusted Partners Delivering Value  
Today for a Better Tomorrow*



CHARLESTON

JACKSONVILLE

MOBILE

SAVANNAH

WILMINGTON



# Agenda



BUILDING STRONG

- Brief Project Overview
- Why is USACE involved?
- Meeting Purpose
- Environmental Impact Statement Process
- Detailed Project Description
- Receive Public Comments



# East Lake Toho Project Overview



BUILDING STRONG

The **purpose** of the proposed project is to improve aquatic habitat in East Lake Toho (ELT). The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission proposes to:

- Drawdown ELT to 53 feet (Oct/Nov 2019)
- Install sheet piling between ELT and Lake Runnymede
- Install dewatering pumps at discharge structure
- East Shore: mechanically scrape and consolidate muck into two in-lake spoil islands (1-2 acre); pile and burn woody vegetation
- North and West Shores: spray with herbicide and burn.



U.S. ARMY

# Applicable Federal Regulations



BUILDING STRONG

- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) [**Fill**]
- Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403) [**Structures**]
- 33 USC 408 (EC 1165-2-216) [**Mod Federal Project**]
- 33 C.F.R. § 222.5, Water Control Management (ER 1110-2-240). [**ELT Change in regulation schedule** requires deviation to USACE Water Control Plan]





# Applicable Federal Regulations



BUILDING STRONG

- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulation [CFR] 1500 et seq.)**
  - ▶ Applies to all Federal Actions
    - Encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.
    - Identify and assess reasonable alternatives.
    - **Scoping** – public participation in identifying issues related to a proposed action.
  - ▶ The proposed project requires an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**
    - Project with Potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment.
    - Public Disclosure



# Purpose of Tonight's Meeting



BUILDING STRONG

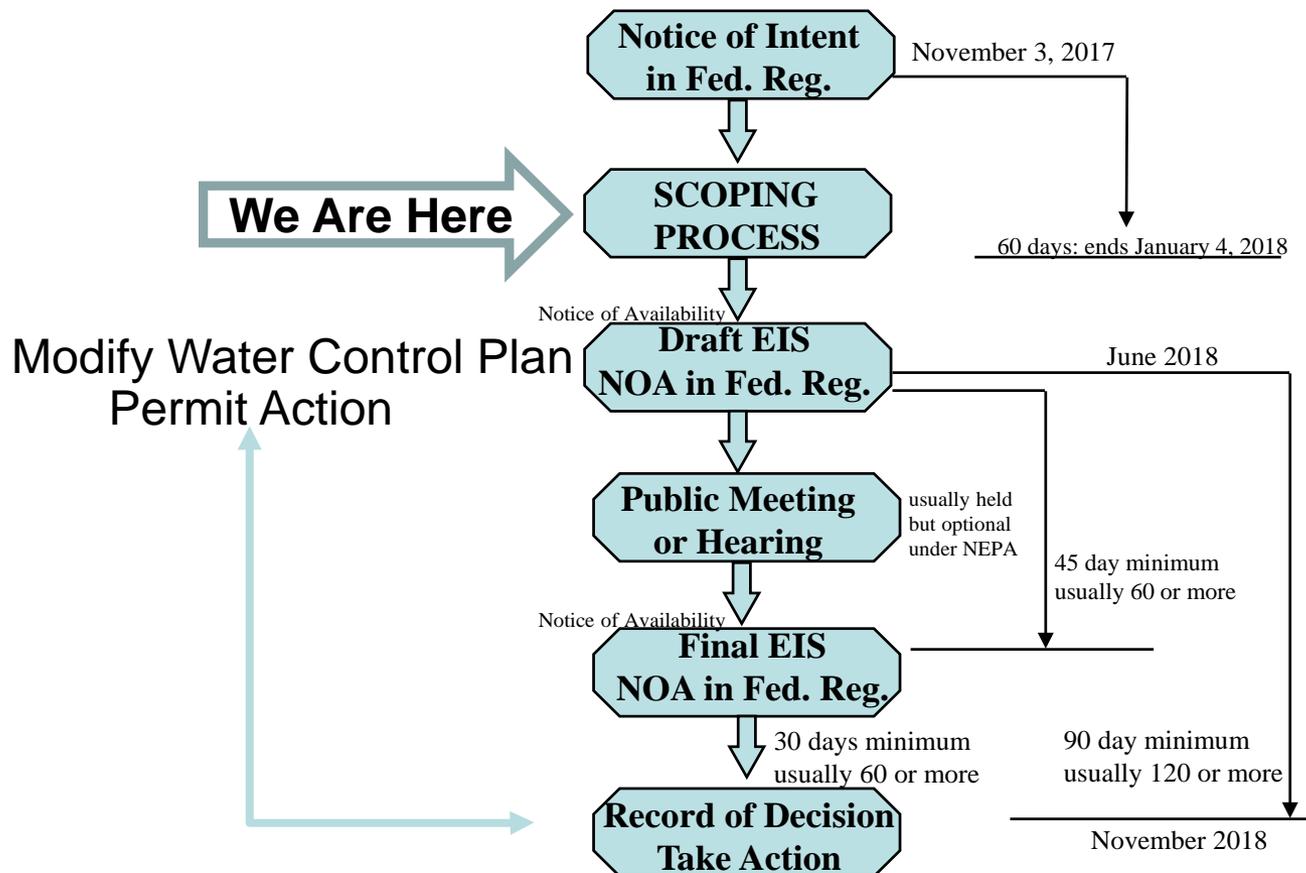
1. Conduct Project **Scoping (40 CFR § 1501.7)** - Solicit public input regarding alternatives and issues that should be addressed during preparation of the ELT EIS
  2. Explain the EIS process
  3. Inform you how your input will be incorporated into the EIS
- You will have the opportunity to ask questions:
    - ▶ At the end of formal presentation
    - ▶ During post-presentation open house session



# EIS PROCESS



BUILDING STRONG





# Use of Third-Party EIS



BUILDING STRONG

- A neutral third party is being used to prepare the ELT EIS, as required by the USACE Regulatory Division nationwide
  - ▶ South Florida Engineering & Consulting selected to prepare the EIS
  
- Role of Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission:
  - ▶ Notify USACE of intent to construct a project with the potential for filling waters of the US
  - ▶ Prepare/submit permit application
  - ▶ Provide funding for the third-party preparation of the ELT EIS
  - ▶ Project implementation
  
- Role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:
  - ▶ Serve as lead federal agency for preparation of the EIS
  - ▶ Responsible for managing the contractor independent from FFWCC
  - ▶ Maintain integrity of the NEPA/EIS process



# Project Background



BUILDING STRONG

- Water control structures & regulation schedules were created in the 1960's for flood control.
- Historically lakes on the Kissimmee Chain would fluctuate up to 10 feet, but now only fluctuate 3-3.5 ft.
- Stabilized water levels have negative impacts on fish & wildlife habitat.
- To help mitigate these negative impacts FWC has performed managed drawdowns on
  - ▶ Lake Tohopekaliga (1971, 1979, 1987, 2004),
  - ▶ Lake Kissimmee (1977, 1996),
  - ▶ Lake Jackson (1994, 1995, 1997),
  - ▶ Alligator Chain of Lakes (2000) and
  - ▶ East Lake Toho (1990).

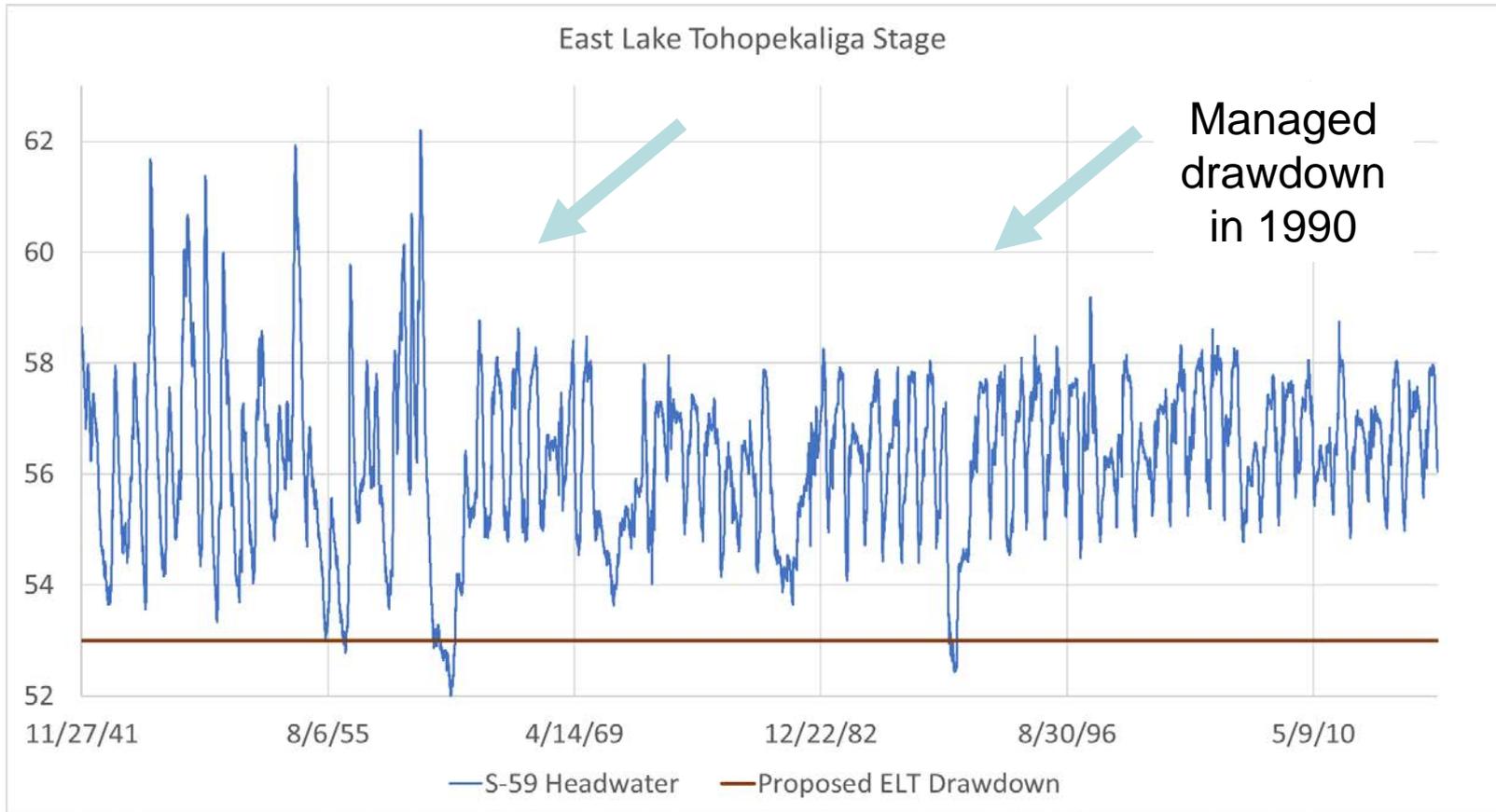




# Historic Stages



BUILDING STRONG



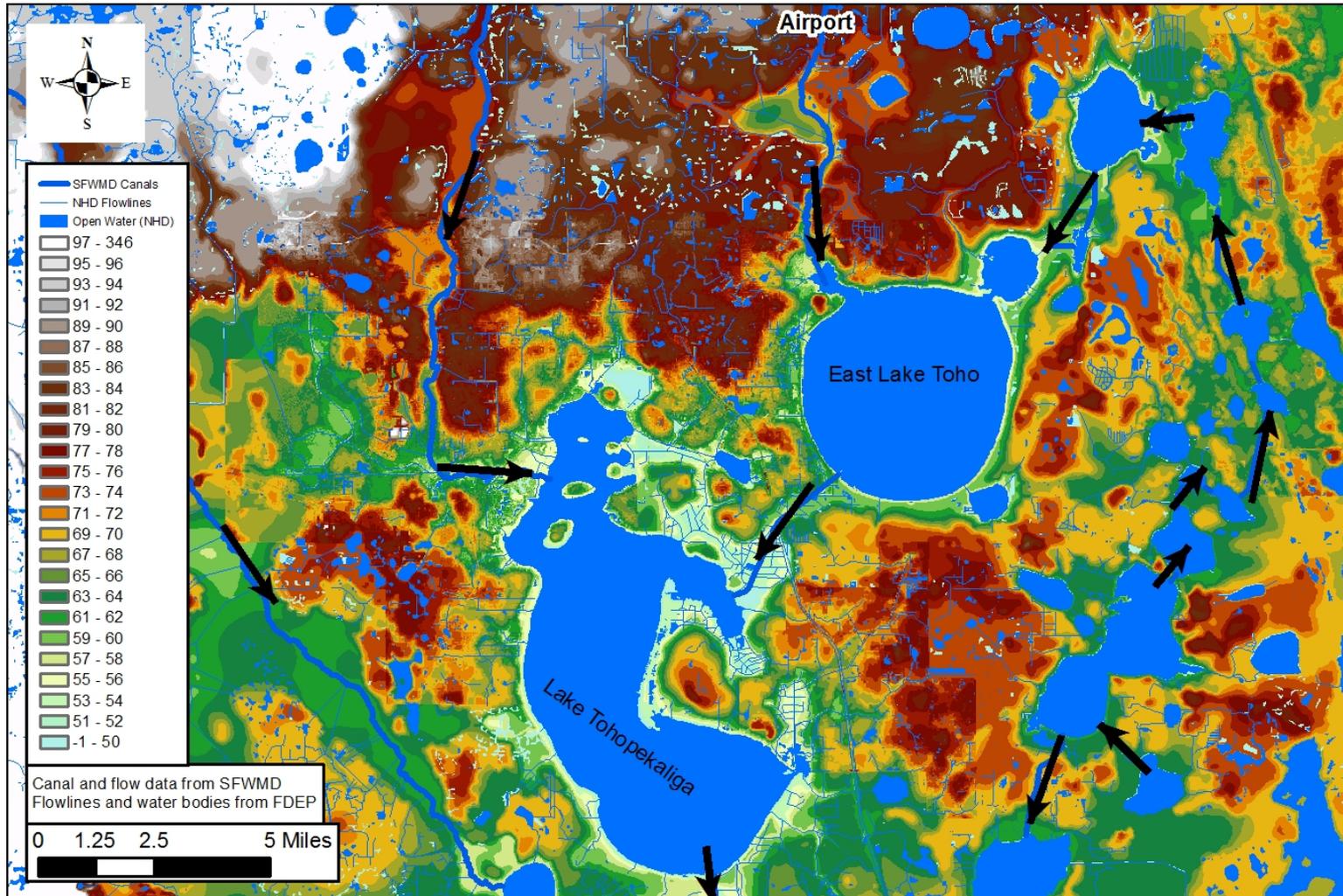


U.S. ARMY

# Regional Topography/Hydrology



BUILDING STRONG

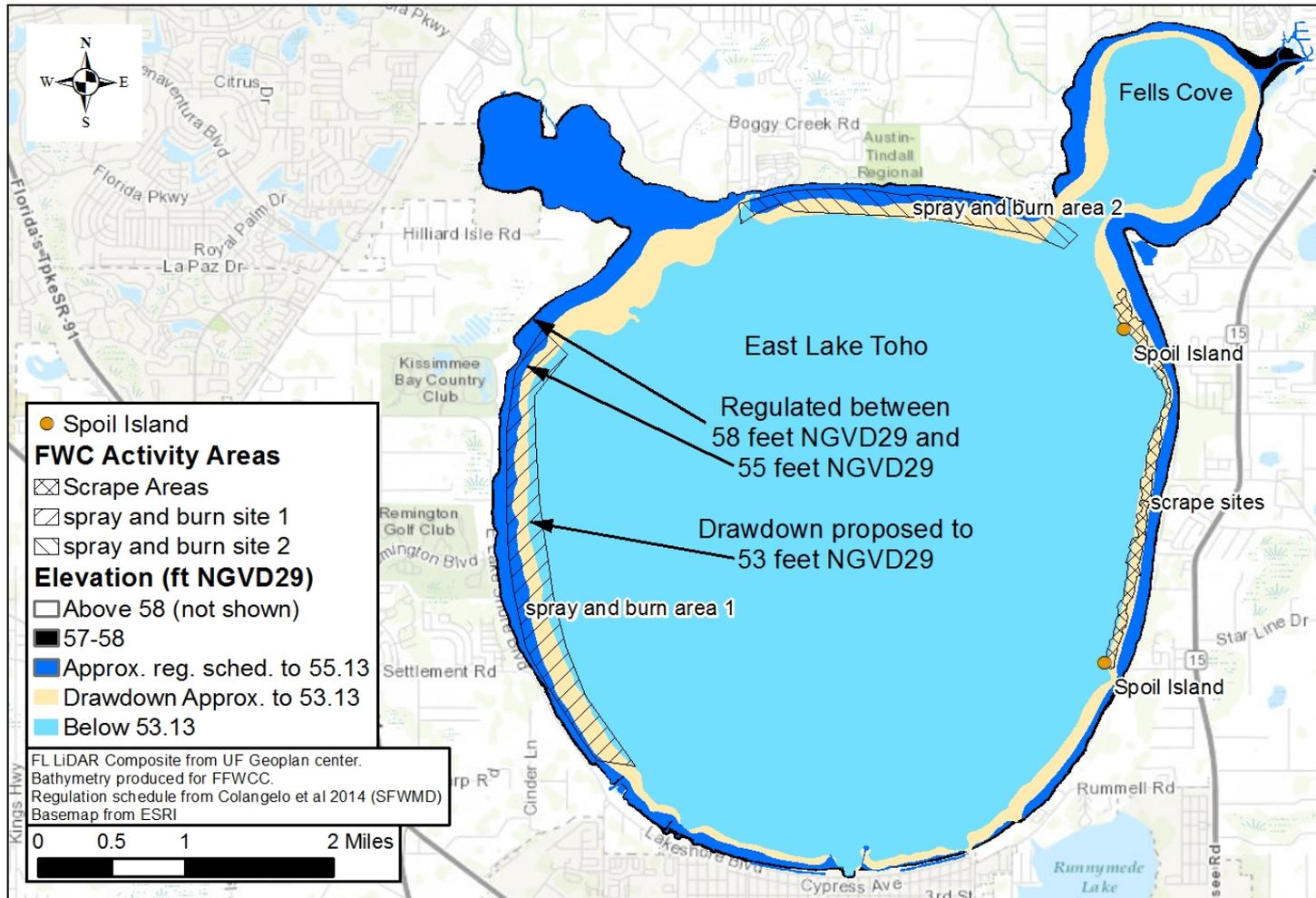




# Proposed Project Area



BUILDING STRONG



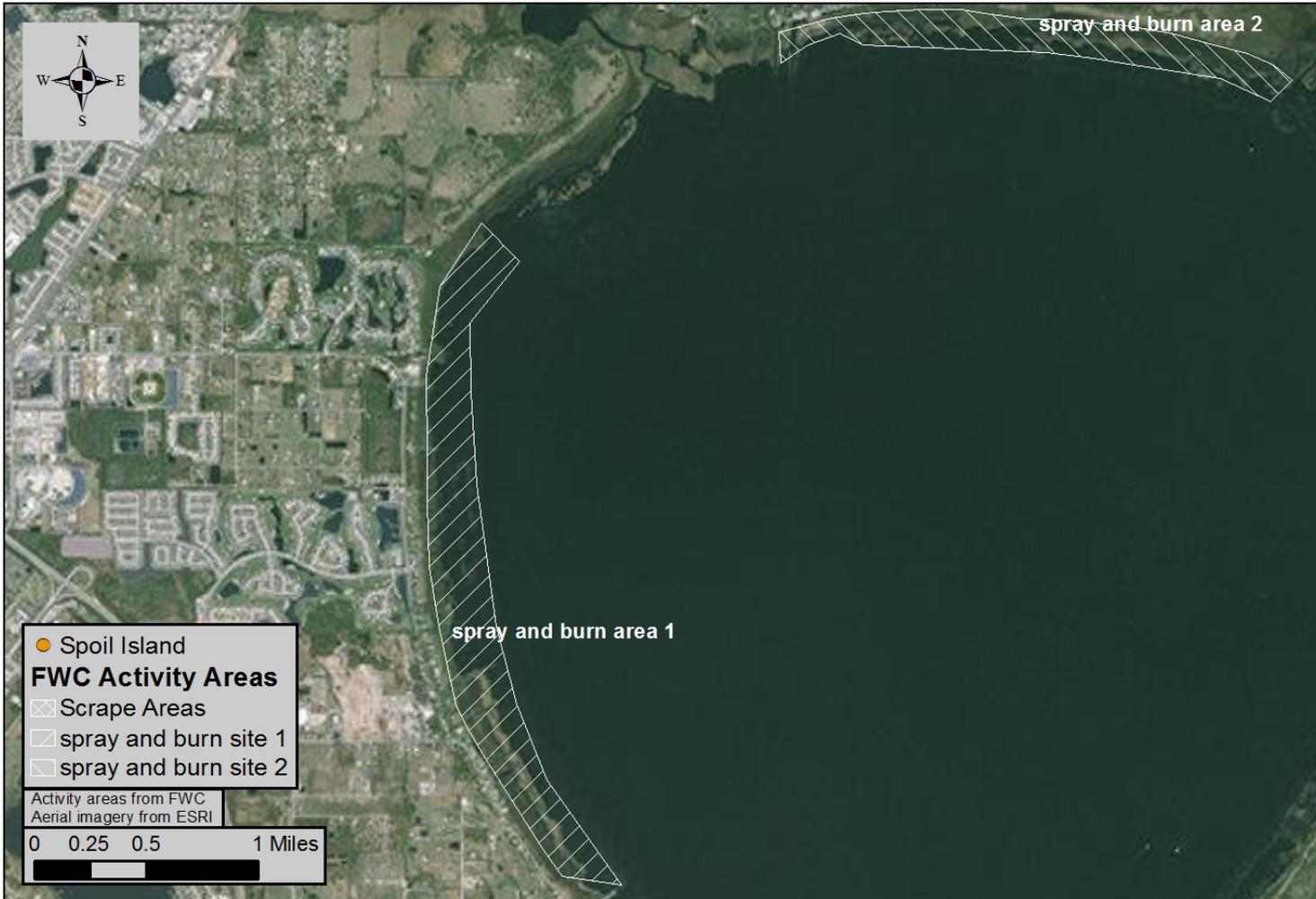


U.S. ARMY

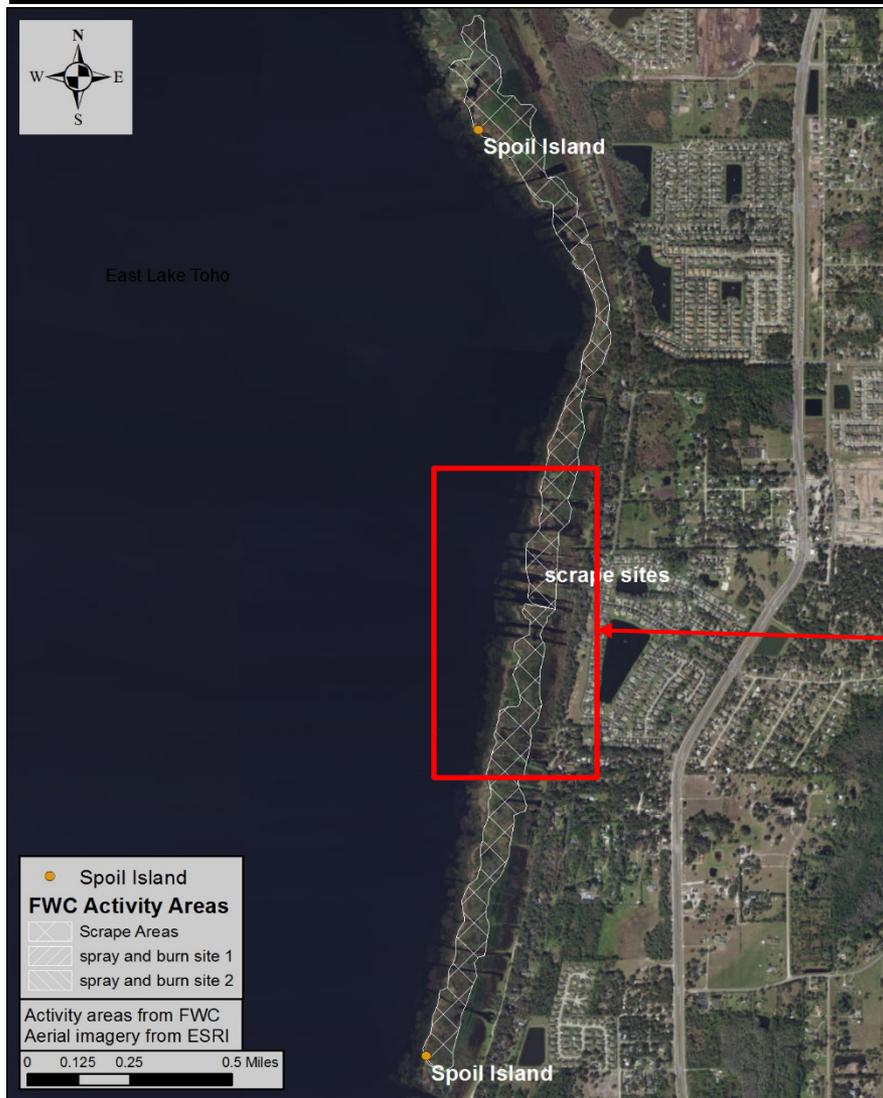
# Proposed spray & burn areas



BUILDING STRONG



# Proposed scrape sites and spoil islands locations



BUILDING STRONG





U.S. ARMY

# Typical Vegetation in Scrape Area



BUILDING STRONG





# Typical Vegetation outside of Scrape Area



BUILDING STRONG



# Spoil Island shoreline & aerial view



BUILDING STRONG



(Regal Bay, Lake Tohopekaliga)





# Wildlife



**BUILDING STRONG**

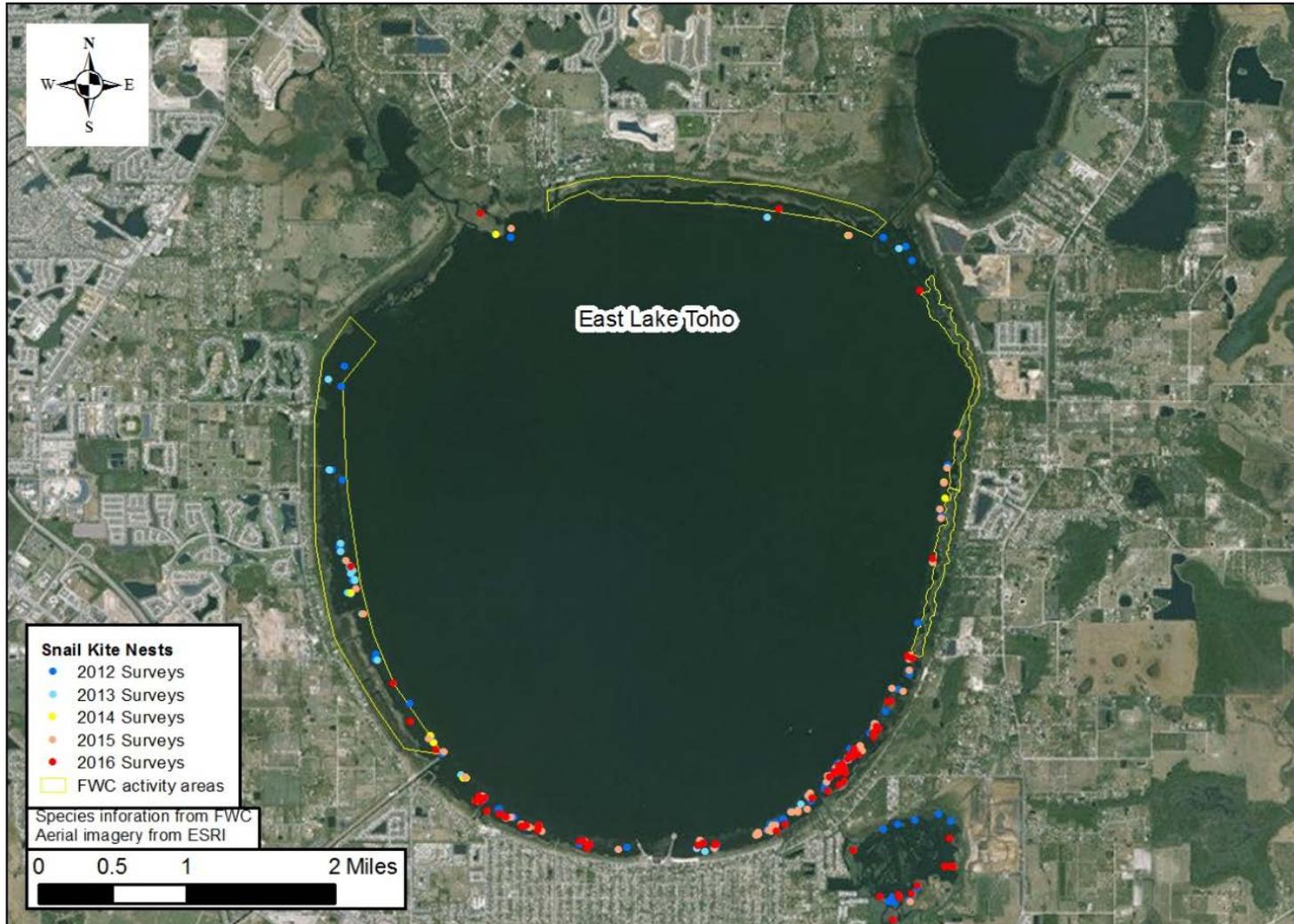




# Snail Kite Nesting Locations



BUILDING STRONG





# Proposed Project Timeframe



BUILDING STRONG

- Oct. 2019: Begin dewatering East Lake
- Nov. 2019: Begin recession on Toho
- Dec. 2019: Deploy 400cfs pump capacity to S59
- Feb. 2020: Begin work with heavy equipment
- Feb. 2020: Reach 53.0 ft (ELT) and maintain
- May 2020: Possible revegetation?
- June 2020: Refill begins ( $\leq 1.0$  ft/mo ascension)
- Nov. 2020: Water level reaches 58.0 (normal)

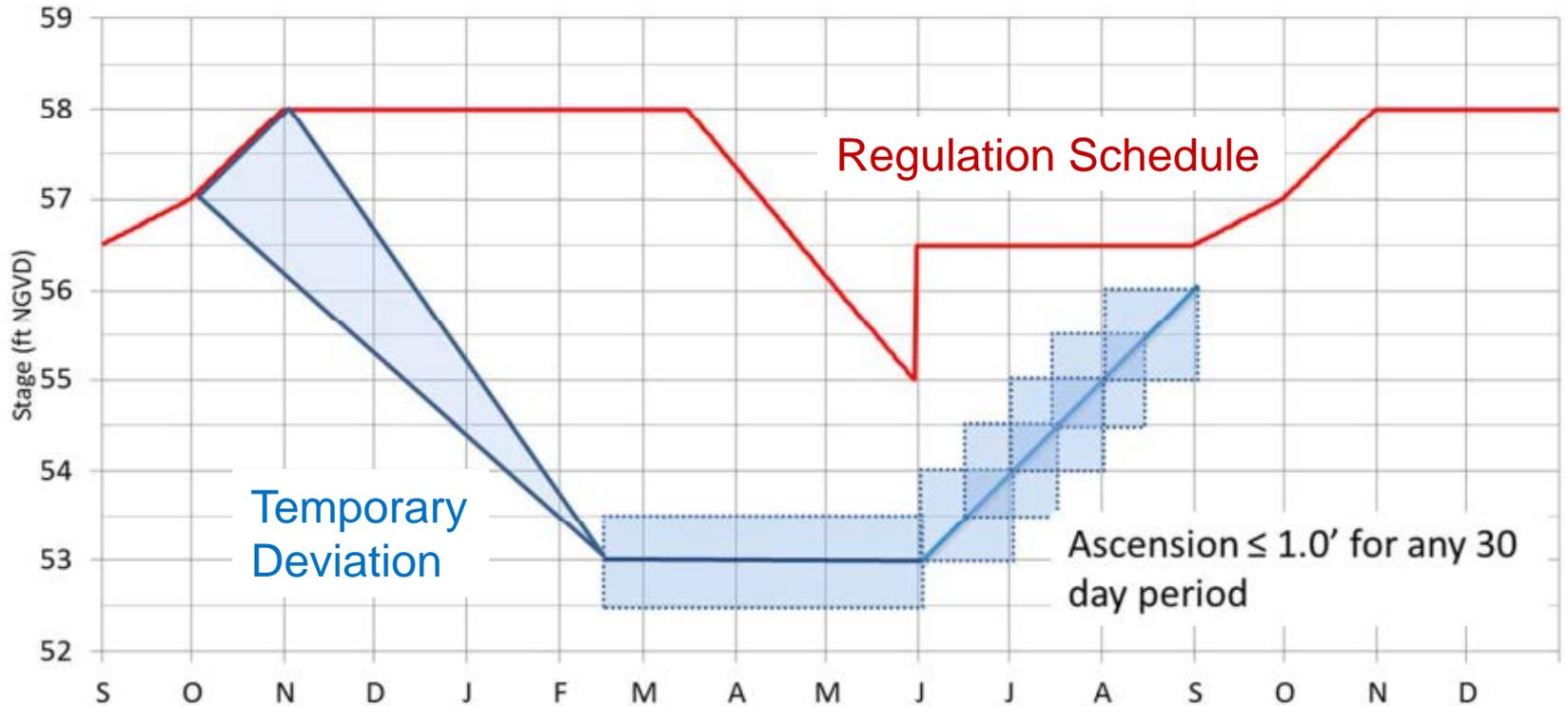




# East Lake Tohopekaliga proposed temporary schedule deviation



BUILDING STRONG

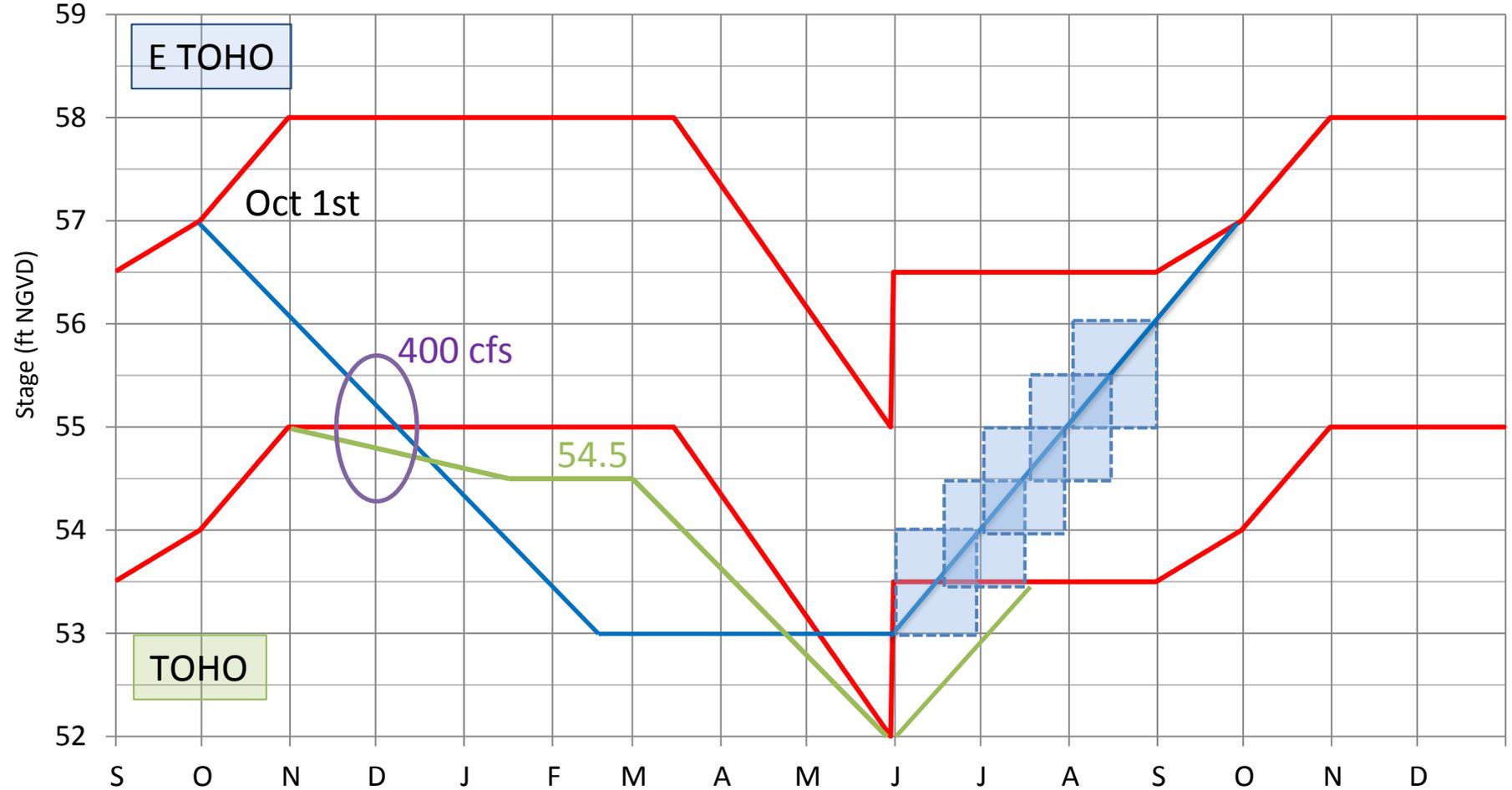




# Combined ELT and Toho Drawdown Schedules



ING

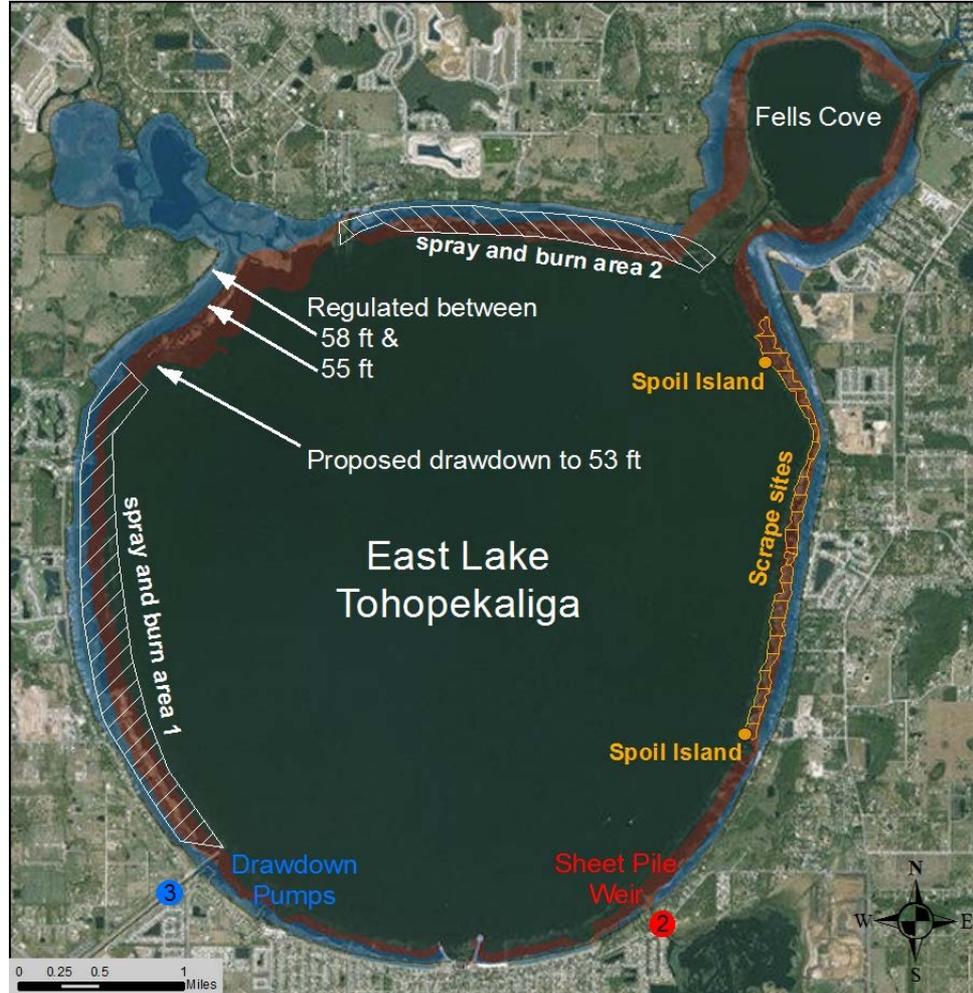




# Existing & proposed temporary drawdown schedules



BUILDING STRONG



# Anticipated Benefits from Proposed Action



BUILDING STRONG

- Decrease density of exotic and invasive vegetation
- Improve navigation access
- Improvement in littoral zone habitat for fish and wildlife
- Lessen impact from muck and associated nutrient load
- Consolidation of flocculent organic material
- Increase dissolved oxygen concentrations in hydrologically isolated areas





# How Public Input will be Used



BUILDING STRONG

- Public input will help define study area
- Better define and develop alternatives that should be evaluated in the EIS
- Determine which environmental resources should be analyzed in the EIS process
- Define the issues/areas of concern to be addressed during preparation of the EIS



# ELT Project Alternatives



BUILDING STRONG

- Draft EIS will analyze reasonable alternatives to meet the project purpose and need, including the no federal action alternative.
- Other preliminary alternatives to be considered include:
  - ▶ Effectuating ELT drawdown with pumps
  - ▶ ELT drawdown without pumps
  - ▶ Disposing of spoil material by truck-hauling off-site; and
  - ▶ Disposing of spoil material using in-lake disposal islands
- Alternatives will be further developed subsequent to the scoping process

# Methods for Submitting Public Comments



BUILDING STRONG

- Complete comment form and hand in tonight
- Send written comment to USACE at the address below:
  - ▶ Jeffrey S. Collins, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cocoa Permits Section, 400 High Point Drive, Suite 600, Cocoa, FL 32926.
- Comments may also be submitted by email to:  
[jeffrey.s.collins@usace.army.mil](mailto:jeffrey.s.collins@usace.army.mil); (comments should include *East Lake Tohopekaliga Drawdown Comments* in the subject line)
- Provide verbal comments for recording tonight



# Table Breakout Questions and Answers



BUILDING STRONG

