

Habitat Evaluation for Spotted Turtle
West Cox Ferry Road Mine Site
Conway, Horry County, South Carolina

PREPARED FOR:

Moss Park Partners, LLC
Post Office Box 201
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

PREPARED BY:

The Brigman Company
Post office Box 1532
Conway, SC 29526

August 22, 2023



THE BRIGMAN COMPANY

August 22, 2023

Moss Park Partners, LLC
Ost Office Box 201
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

Attention: Mr. Tripp Nealy

Reference: **Habitat Evaluation for Spotted Turtle
West Cox Ferry Road Mine Site**
Conway, Horry County, South Carolina

Dear Mr. Nealy:

The Brigman Company (TBC) is pleased to submit this report detailing our Habitat Evaluation for the West Cox Ferry Road Mine Site (i.e., the Property) located south of and adjacent to West Cox Ferry Road, in Conway, Horry County, South Carolina. This report and the on-site pedestrian survey have been conducted to assess the potential for the presence of habitat to support Spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*) prior to land disturbing activities on the Property.

The Property is comprised of a tract of land (portion of Horry County TMS# 150-00-06-007) totaling approximately 4.94 acres. The Property is identified on a portion of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Conway, S.C. topographic quadrangle map dated 1980. The USGS Topographic Map Exhibit of this report depicts the approximate location of the Property overlaid on the referenced topographic quadrangle.

Site Description

The Property is centrally located in Horry County within the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province of South Carolina. The proposed mine site is comprised of an upland ridge that has been cutover and is naturally re-vegetating with saplings species including water oak (*Quercus nigra*), southern red oak (*Q. falcata*), and sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). Herbaceous and shrubs within the proposed mining area include species such as dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*), winged sumac (*Rhus copallinum*), and bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*). There are no wetland areas within the Property.

Species and Habitat Requirements

The spotted turtle is the only species of the genus *Clemmys*. This semi-aquatic species is found from southern Maine south along the eastern United States to Florida. The spotted turtle is a relatively small turtle with a carapace length of approximately 3-4 inches upon adulthood. Their carapace is typically gray to black in color with yellow spots on the shell, head, neck, and limbs.

The spotted turtle occupies a variety of habitats including swamps, bogs, fens, marshes, woodland streams, and wet pastures. Also, brackish streams that are influenced by tides can also serve as a home to this turtle in addition to ditches, vernal pools, and sedge meadows. For a habitat to be sufficient for spotted turtle survival it



must have areas of soft substrate and at least some aquatic vegetation. An optimum habitat would include shallow and slow-moving waters with soft muddy soil, sedge tussocks, water lilies, sphagnum moss, and cattails

Spotted turtles are cryptic, not often easy to find, and are most frequently encountered in the very early Spring (i.e., the first warm spells and late February-March, but including April). In South Carolina, they frequent shallow water rivulets within the wetland systems and are often found in early Spring because the wetland foliage has not yet erupted and helped to conceal their presence. Those rivulets often dry later in the season, and the spotted turtles are believed to return to more watered areas or dig into soft mud and under vegetation where they become inactive for the hot summer months.

Methodology

TBC personnel reviewed available supporting information including the aerial photographs, USGS topographic quadrangles, and applicable soil survey data. The purpose of reviewing this supporting information was to identify drainage features and soil types in the site area that may be suitable habitat for protected species. During field reconnaissance on August 21, 2023, TBC personnel integrated the information obtained from this supporting documentation with field evaluation for the presence of habitat to support spotted turtles.

Summary and Conclusions

Based on the literature review, habitat assessment, and pedestrian field review of the Property, it is our opinion that the proposed sand mine located does not contain suitable habitat for spotted turtles. Future land clearing activities associated with proposed sand mine will have no effect on spotted turtles. As this species is highly mobile in the spring of the year, it is unlikely that they would enter the area of the proposed mine site as it is significantly higher than the nearby swamps and wetlands and is not in between two wetland areas where spotted turtles could travel from one wetland to another.

Closure

TBC appreciates the opportunity to be of service to you by performing this Biological Evaluation for the Property. Please contact us at (843) 248-9388 with questions regarding this report, or if you require additional information.

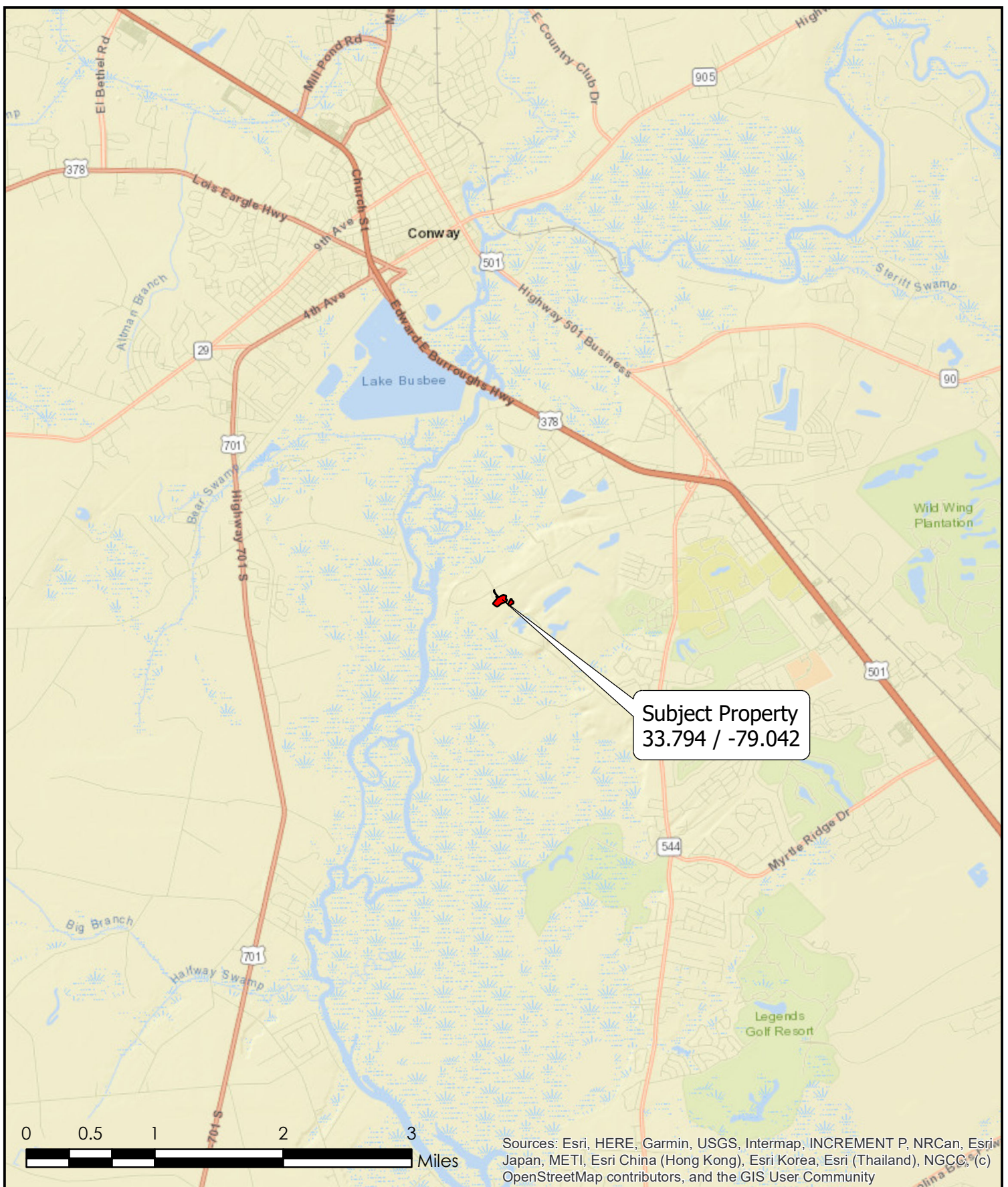
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles C. Oates, J.".

Charles Oates

Partner / Project Manager

coates@TheBrigmanCompany.com



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Site Vicinity Map
West Cox Ferry Road Sand Mine
Portion of TMS# 150-00-06-007
Conway, Horry County, SC
August 2023



1" = 1 miles



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USGS Topographic Map
West Cox Ferry Road Sand Mine
Portion of TMS# 150-00-06-007
Conway, Horry County, SC
August 2023



1" = 500'

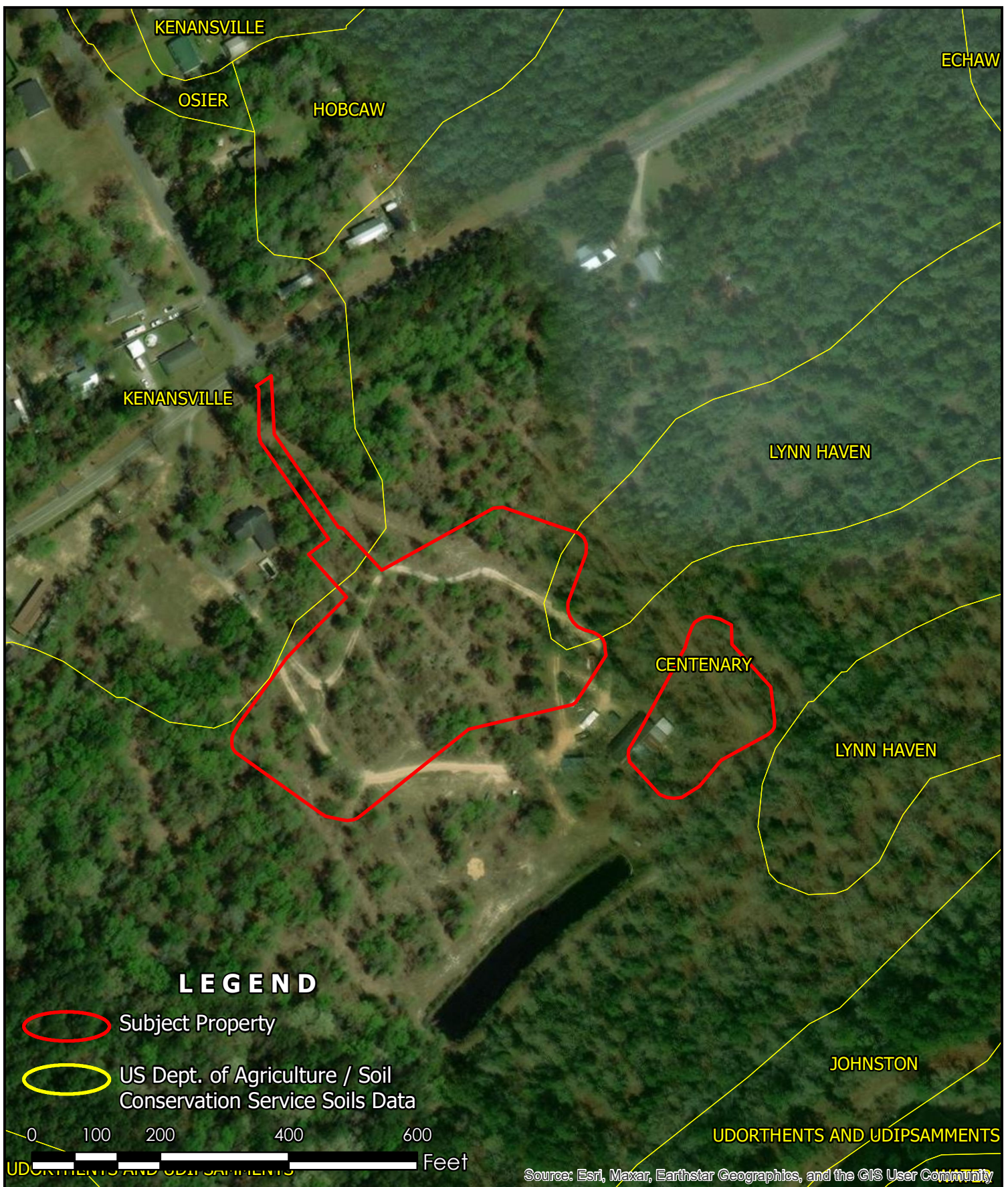


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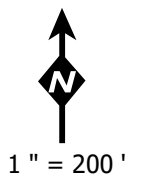
Aerial Photograph Exhibit
West Cox Ferry Road Sand Mine
Portion of TMS# 150-00-06-007
Conway, Horry County, SC
August 2023

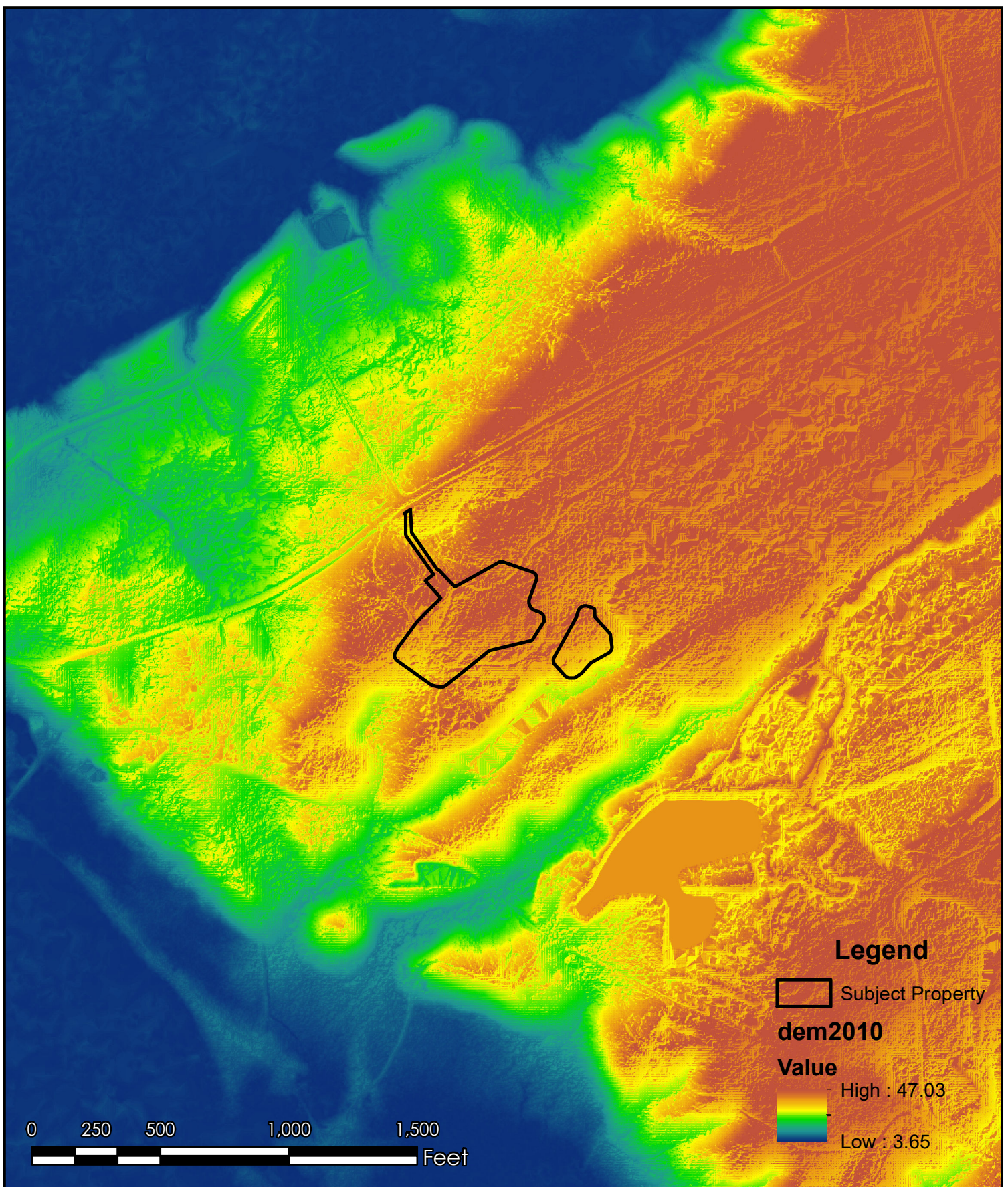


1" = 200'



USDA / SCS Soils Map
 West Cox Ferry Road Sand Mine
 Portion of TMS# 150-00-06-007
 Conway, Horry County, SC
 August 2023





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LiDAR Imagery

West Cox Ferry Road Sand Mine
 Portion of TMS# 150-00-06-007
 Conway, Horry County, SC
 August 2023



1" = 500'



1 Typical view of the proposed mine site facing east.



2 Typical view of the proposed mine site facing south.



3 Typical view of the proposed sediment basin facing east.



4 Typical view of the proposed sediment basin facing south.



Site Photographs
West Cox Ferry Road Mine Site
Conway, Horry County, SC

Project No.:

Taken by: CO

Date Taken: 8/21/23