



November 5, 2014

PUBLIC NOTICE (01-14)

All interested parties are notified that an application dated April 30, 2014 has been received from the Scheda Ecological Associates on behalf of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), by the Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District, for approval of the location and plans to construct a new parallel two-lane fixed bridge just east of the existing bridge and modify an existing fender system over a navigable waterway of the United States as part of a highway.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: Choctawhatchee Bay [Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), mile 250.3, EHL)] near City of Freeport, Walton County, Florida.

CHARACTER OF WORK: The applicant has proposed to construct a design/build northbound fixed span bridge immediately adjacent to the existing bridges. The existing bridges are locally known as the Clyde B. Wells Bridge crossing the GIWW and the Choctawhatchee Bay Relief Bridge, and the proposed construction will provide vehicular traffic improvements on U.S. 331, State Road 83 (SR 83). The project will increase capacity and improve mobility providing a crucial link for tourism, commerce, and hurricane evacuation for Walton County beaches and the heavily traveled I-10 corridor. Coast Guard permitting is limited to the approval of the location and plans for the proposed bridge project.

The proposed bridge will be constructed approximately 30 feet east of the existing Clyde B. Wells Bridge. The proposed bridge will be 12,055.61 feet in length and will have a clear roadway of 40.00 feet. The proposed bridge will parallel and match the bridge piers of the Clyde B. Wells Bridge over the open waters of the Choctawhatchee Bay. However, the proposed bridge will continue just east of the island on the north side of the main channel and abut the northern peninsula adjacent to the Choctawhatchee Bay Relief Bridge. The proposed northbound bridge will consist of two 12-foot travel lanes with a 10-foot outside shoulder, and a 6-foot inside shoulder.

The GIWW, mile 250.3, main navigational channel on the south end of the proposed bridge will provide a horizontal clearance of 150 feet between fenders. The bridge will provide a vertical clearance of 65 feet above Mean High Water (MHW), elevation 0.67 feet National American Vertical Datum (NAVD) 88. The existing fender system will be modified by adding 132.77 feet of new fender to the east of the Clyde B. Wells Bridge to create one fender system between the two bridges with an overall length of 265.54 feet. Directly north on the down slope curve of the GIWW channel, the proposed bridge will be constructed with a low-steel elevation of 2.80 feet less than the existing bridge. The low-steel elevation of the existing Clyde B. Wells Bridge in this same area is approximately 15.23 feet. The proposed bridge will have a low-steel elevation of 12.48 feet above MHW, elevation 0.67 NAVD 88.

The proposed bridge will be constructed entirely over water and will provide a second navigation channel just east of the existing Choctawhatchee Bay Relief Bridge. The secondary relief channel will provide 28 feet matching the horizontal clearance of the Relief Bridge. The proposed bridge will have a slightly higher low-steel elevation than existing Relief Bridge.

The two existing bridges are separated by an island and will remain in place and become the southbound lanes on U.S. 331, SR 83.

Construction is in a floodplain with a 100-year flood elevation of 6.3 feet NAVD 88. Total estimated project cost is \$188,047,994 million dollars.

The applicant has indicated that the clearances provided by the fixed span proposed bridge Interested parties who believe that these clearances will adversely affect them should provide this office with information regarding their vessel's overall length, beam, draft, and height of the highest fixed point above the waterline.

MINIMUM NAVIGATIONAL CLEARANCES:

EXISTING Clyde B. Wells Bridge
(Main Channel)

Horizontal: 150 feet between fender piers

Vertical: 65 feet above MHW,
elevation 0.67 feet NAVD 88

EXISTING Relief Bridge
(Relief Channel)

Horizontal: 28 feet between piers

Vertical: 11.99 feet above MHW

PROPOSED Northbound Bridge
(Main Channel)

Horizontal: 150 feet between fender piers

Vertical: 65 feet above MHW, elevation
0.67 feet NAVD 88

PROPOSED Northbound Bridge
(Relief Channel)

Horizontal: 28 feet Clear Channel

Vertical: 11.99 feet above MHW

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead federal agency for satisfying the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CF§ § 1506.1). The Coast Guard will be a cooperating Federal agency. On February 7, 2000, FDOT determined the proposed project met the criteria for a Type II Categorical Exclusion (CE). Subsequent to that determination, several reevaluations have occurred. The last reevaluation, dated August 29, 2012, indicated that there were no substantial changes to the project. FHWA concurred with this determination by email dated August 29, 2012. Unless it is demonstrated, through this public notice process, that the potential exists for significant environmental impacts, the Coast Guard will accept the FHWA determination and make a final CE determination that will become the environmental document for this proposed project.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) by letter dated August 26, 2013 notified FHWA and FDOT that the project will require a formal consultation and issuance of a Biological Opinion. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) sent a letter dated January 14, 2014 in response to the Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) letter requesting NMFS's concurrence with the project-effect determination under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In conclusion, they concurred with ACOE's determination that the proposed actions are unlikely to adversely affect the listed species or their critical habitat concluding ACOE's consultation responsibilities under ESA for species under NMFS's purview.

The ACOE issued a Nationwide Permit (NWP) Number 33 to install thirty-eight (38) test pilings, each 30" by 30" with the alignment, and permanent pile location of the proposed bridge on February 20, 2014. Any pilings that do not become part of the permanent bridge subject to Coast Guard permit shall be removed entirety. Additionally, noise data will be gathered during piling installation to assess movement and habitat utilization by the tagged population of Gulf sturgeon in the Choctawhatchee Bay.

The ACOE received an application for permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. § 403). Thereafter, the ACOE posted Public Notice #SAJ-2013-02362NW-MMW on May 19, 2014. The proposed project construction is estimated to impact 3.86 total acres of wetlands within the marsh and unvegetated bay wetlands. These impacts will be further addressed upon issuance of the ACOE permit, and the permit application will be required to mitigate for 0.41 acres of wetlands impacts by purchasing 0.07 mitigation credits.

The ACOE determined that the proposed project “may affect and is likely to adversely affect” the Gulf Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) and its designated critical habitat. The ACOE also determined that the proposed project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the Eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon Corais couperi*), Kemp’s ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), leatherback sea turtle (*Dermodochelys coriacea*), loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*), and the West Indian manatee. Further, the ACOE determined that the proposed action would have a minor adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the bay.

Thereafter, the ACOE gave FDOT notice that ACOE was requesting initiation of formal consultation and concurrence with ACOE’s determinations from the USFWS on land and freshwater species and the NMFS on marine species pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA was being requested. As required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996, this notice initiated consultation with the NMFS on Essential Fisheries Habitat. Through this process, the need for mitigation measures will be determined through coordination with the NMFS and is ultimately subject to NMFS review.

On August 26, 2014, Coast Guard received an email from NMFS stating that ESA consultation for the proposed project is in the final review stage and should be completed in the near future. The ACOE has requested additional information by letter dated September 12, 2014, and is holding the FDOT permit application in abeyance pending receipt of the outcome of USFWS/NMFS consultation and a complete Biological Opinion.

On December 6, 2013, the USFWS concurred with ACOE’s effect determination for the Eastern indigo snake. Regarding the West Indian Manatee, in a May 2014 Biological Assessment, FDOT committed to follow Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work protection measures. By email dated May 29, 2014, the USFWS concurred with the ACOE’s effect determination for the West Indian Manatee because of these protection measures.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) issued an Environmental Resources Permit State-owned Submerged Lands Authorization Granted May 30, 2014, pursuant to Part IV of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Chapter 62-330, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). By issuance of this authorization also constitutes a finding of consistency with Florida’s Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM), as required by Section 307 of the CZM Act. This permit also constitutes a Water Quality Certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C.1341. FDEP Air Quality Planning Division is expected to furnish a statement that the proposed project meets the requirements of the State Implementation Plan on air quality.

By letter dated July 8, 2014, State Historic Preservation Officer stated that the proposed project will have no effect on historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places. The applicant states no parklands, recreational areas, archaeological sites, waterfowl or wildlife refuges will be affected by the proposed bridge project. No prime and unique farmland will be impacted by the proposed project and no significant effects on public utilities, fire protection, or other emergency services are anticipated. No wild and scenic rivers or wildlife management areas exist at the proposed project site.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS:

Mariners are requested to comment on the proposed bridge project including comments relative to the modification to the existing bridge protective fendering system, the proposed Northbound Bridge crossing the GIWW, mile 250.3 and the Relief Channel crossing Choctawhatchee Bay, and other navigational safety issues, including the possible need for clearance gauges and extent of nighttime navigation past the bridge sites.

Interested parties are requested to express their views to the Coast Guard, in writing, on the proposed bridge projects including its possible impact on minority and/or low income population, if any, giving sufficient detail to establish a clear understanding of their reasons for support of or opposition to the proposed work. Comments will be received for the record at the Office of the Commander (dpb), Eighth Coast Guard District, 500 Poydras Street, Room 1313, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130-3310, through December 5, 2014. These comments will be made part of the case record.

Map of location and plans are attached.

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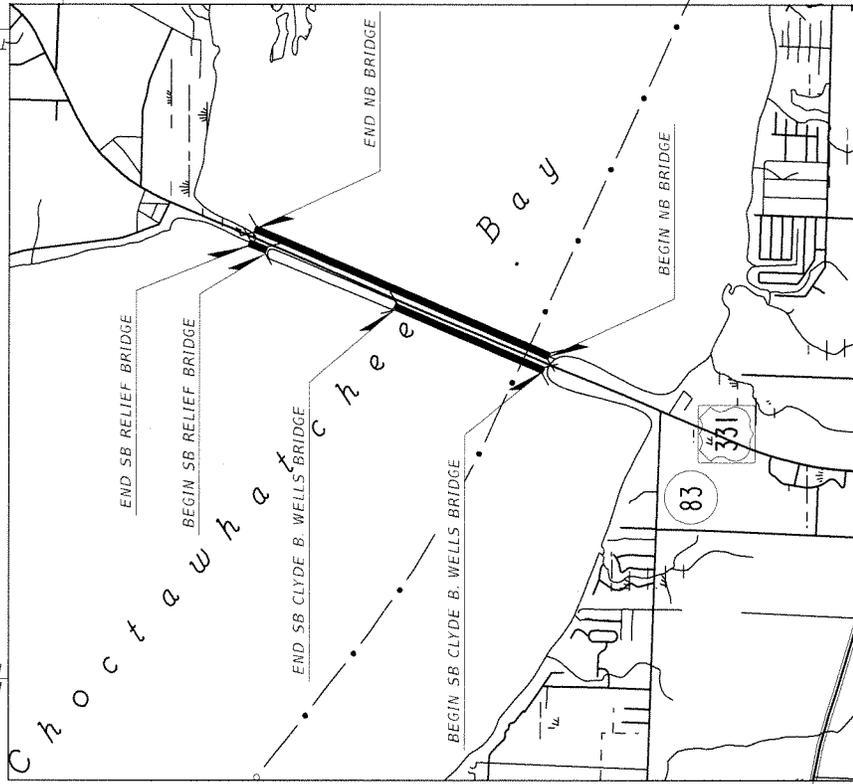
DAVID M. FRANK
Chief, Bridge Administration Branch
U.S. Coast Guard
By direction

This is a web-searchable copy and it is not the official, signed version; however, other than the signature being omitted, it is a duplicate of the official version.

BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

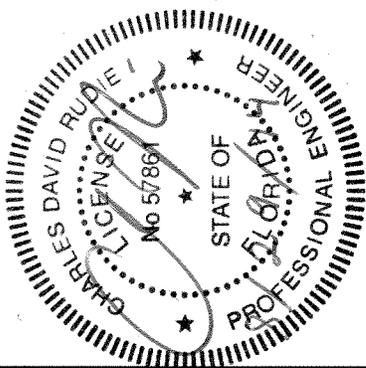
SR 83 OVER CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY
 FINANCIAL PROJECT ID 220664-2-52-01
 (FEDERAL FUNDS) 1190-012-P
 CONTRACT NO.: E3L23

R-19-W
 R-20-W



To Fort Walton

R-19-W
 R-20-W

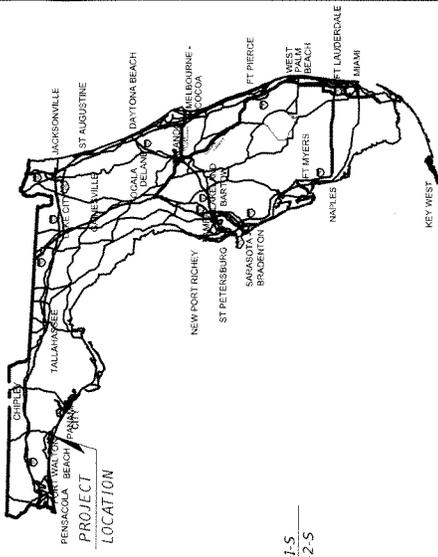


NOTES:

- ELEVATIONS SHOWN ON THESE PLANS ARE BASED ON NAVD 88.
- THE BRIDGE HAS BEEN DESIGNED FOR THE FOLLOWING EQUIVALENT STATIC LATERAL IMPACT FORCES APPLIED PER AASHTO LRFD PROVIDED BY THE RFP. DISTANCES ARE MEASURED FROM CHANNEL CENTERLINE TO CENTERLINE OF PIER MEASURED ALONG BRIDGE ALIGNMENT.

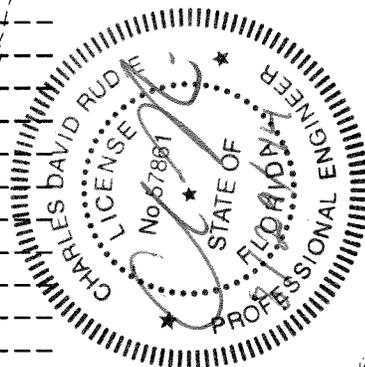
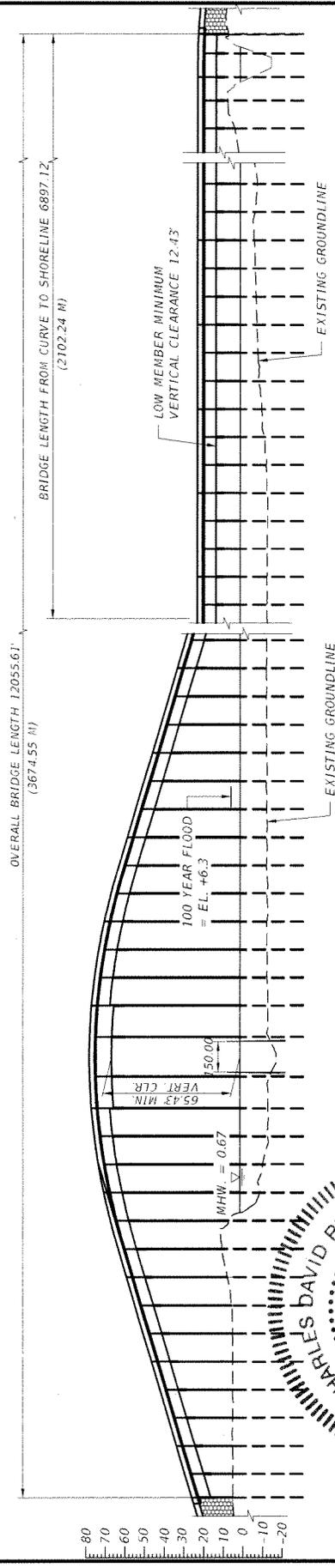
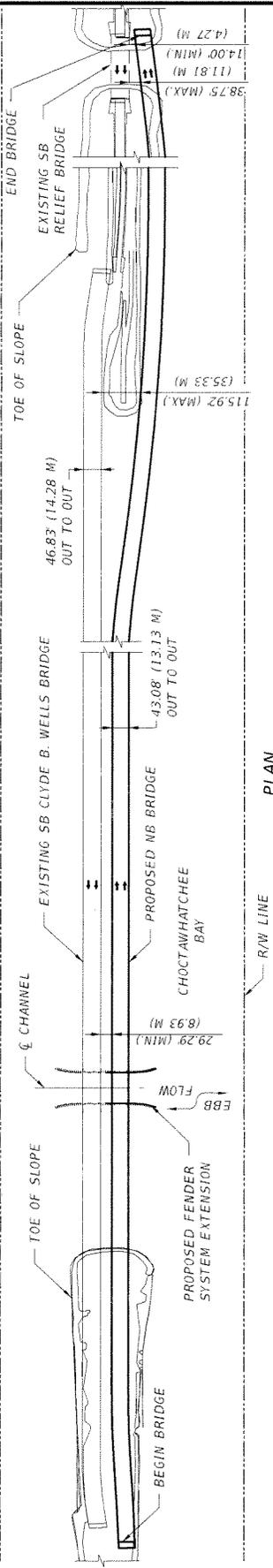
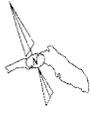
FT	TRANSVERSE (KIP)	LONGITUDINAL (KIP)
300	2600	1300
1000	2200	1100
1600	1100	550
>1600	200	100

LOCATION MAP



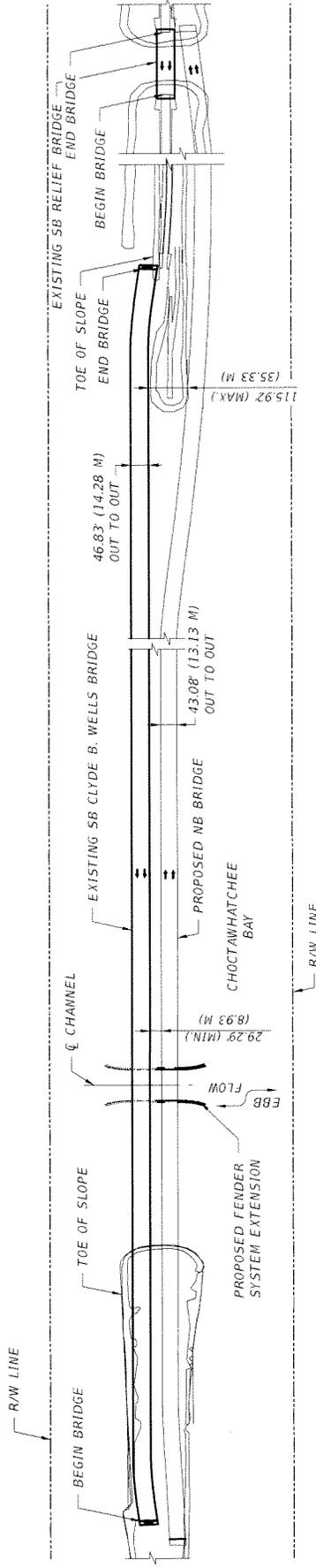
PROJECT LOCATION

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 APPLICATION BY: SCHEDA ECOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES
 CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY (GIWW, MILE 250.3 EHL),
 US 331, SR 83, EXISTING PERMITTED SOUTHBOUND
 AND PROPOSED NORTHBOUND BRIDGE
 NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
 VICINITY MAP
 AUGUST 2014 SHEET 1 OF 10

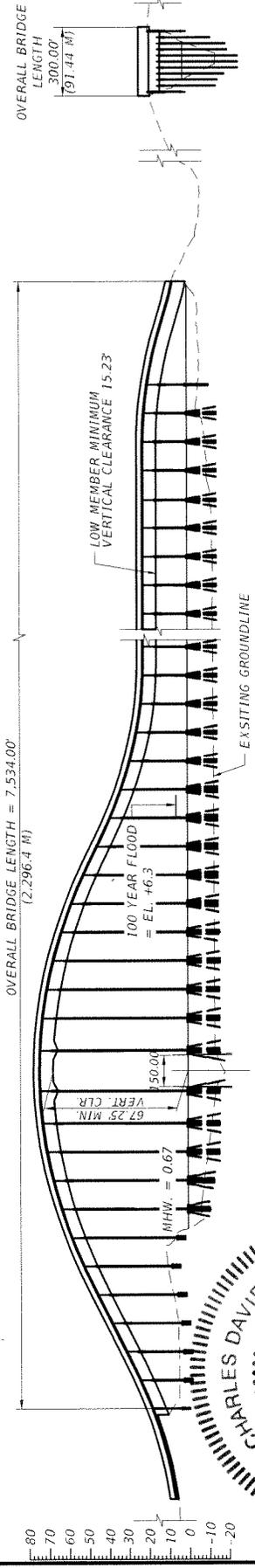


- NOTES:
1. TOTAL QUANTITY OF RIPRAP IS 8,300 CY CUBIC YARDS.
 2. TOTAL QUANTITY OF FILL ABOVE MEAN HIGH WATER IS 17,160 CY CUBIC YARDS.

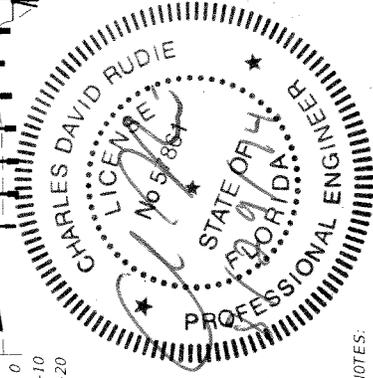
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 APPLICATION BY: SCHEDE ECOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES
 CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY (GIWW, MILE 250.3 EHL),
 US 331, SR 83, EXISTING PERMITTED SOUTHBOUND
 AND PROPOSED NORTHBOUND BRIDGE
 NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
 BRIDGE PLAN AND ELEVATION
 AUGUST 2014 SHEET 2 OF 10



PLAN

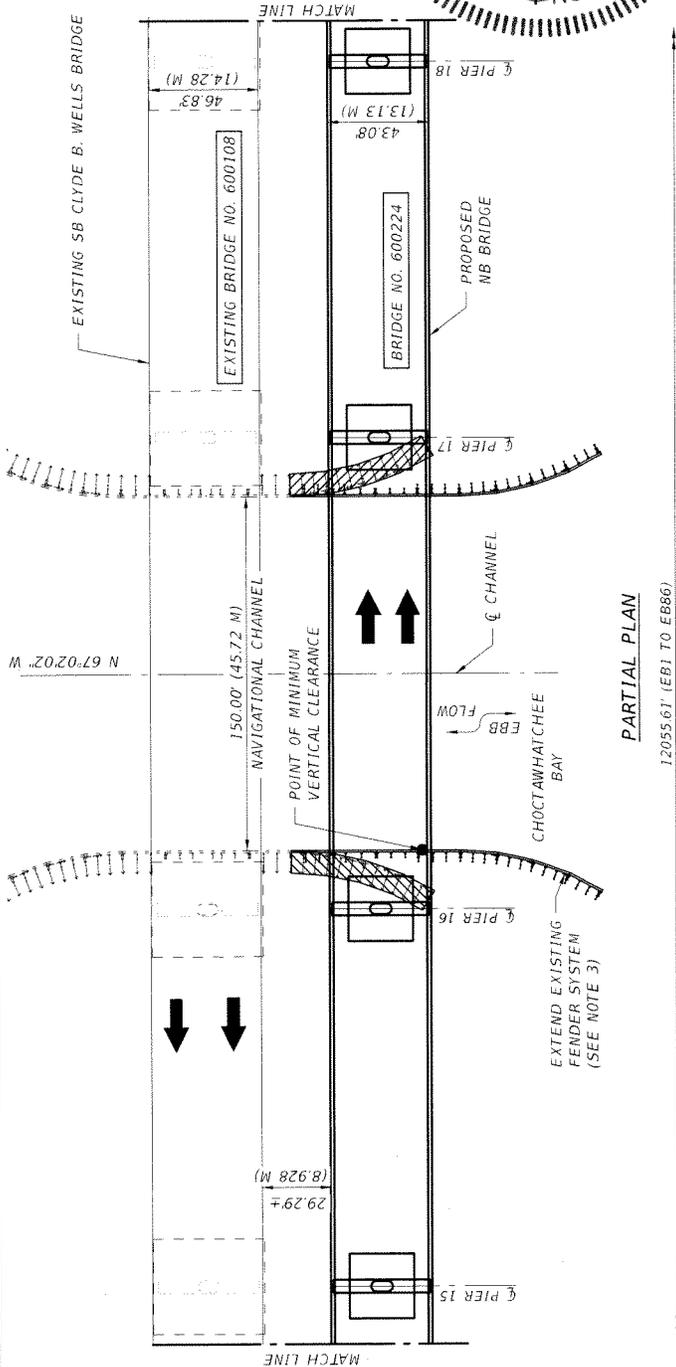
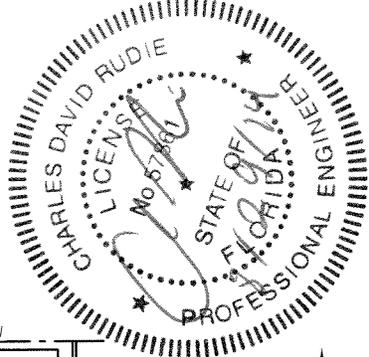


PROFILE EXISTING SB CLYDE B. WELLS & RELIEF BRIDGE

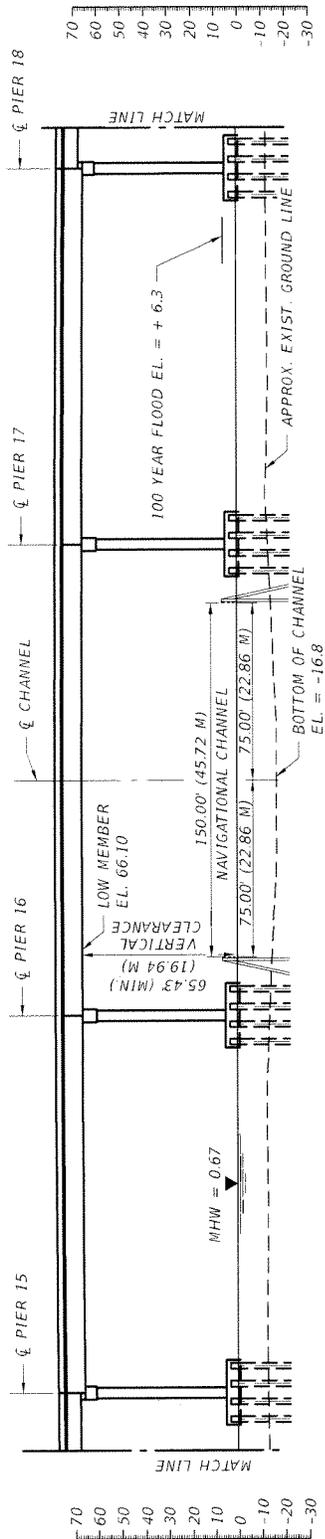


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CHOCTAWHAHATCHEE BAY (GIWW, MILE 250.3 EHL), US 331, SR 83, EXISTING PERMITTED SOUTHBOUND AND PROPOSED NORTHBOUND BRIDGE
NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
BRIDGE PLAN AND ELEVATION
AUGUST 2014 SHEET 3 OF 10



PARTIAL PLAN



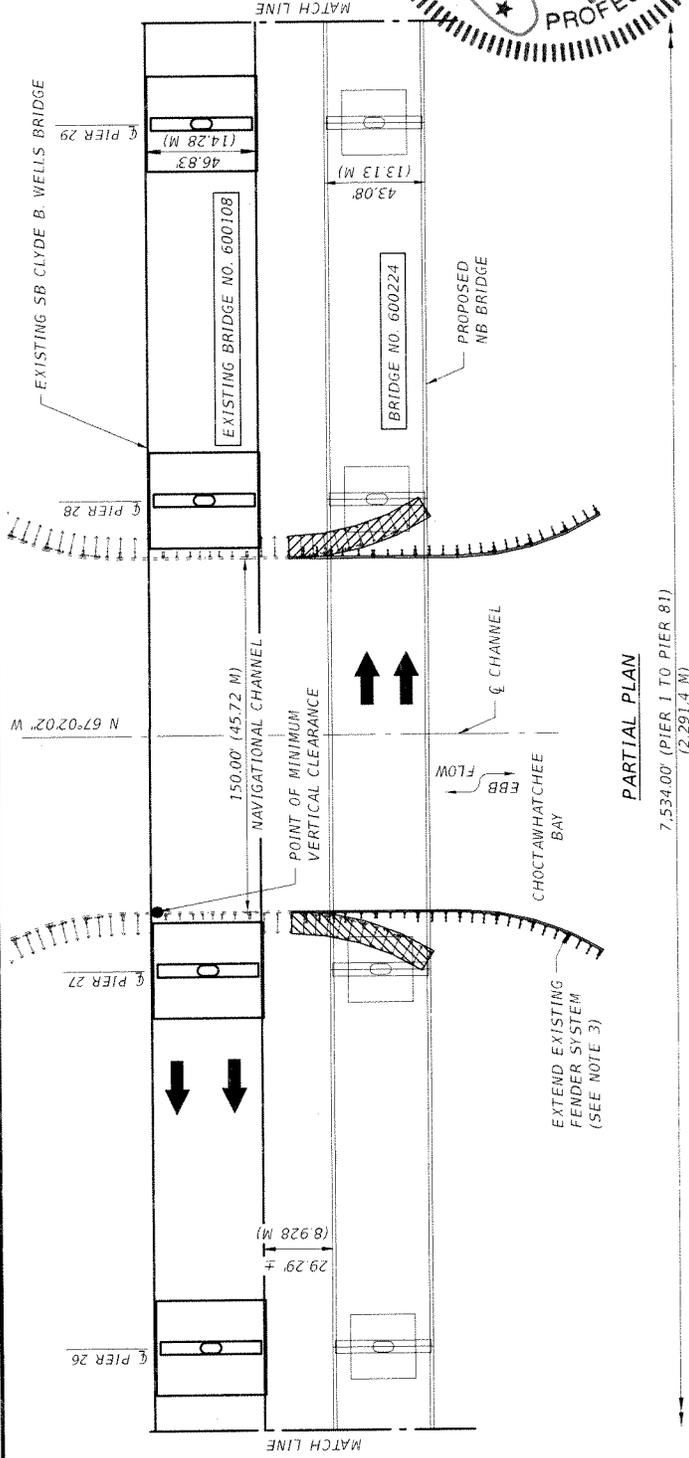
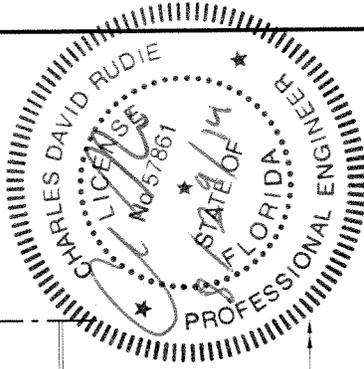
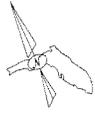
ELEVATION OF PROPOSED NB BRIDGE NAVIGATION CHANNEL DETAIL

LEGEND: EXISTING FENDER TO BE REMOVED

NOTES:

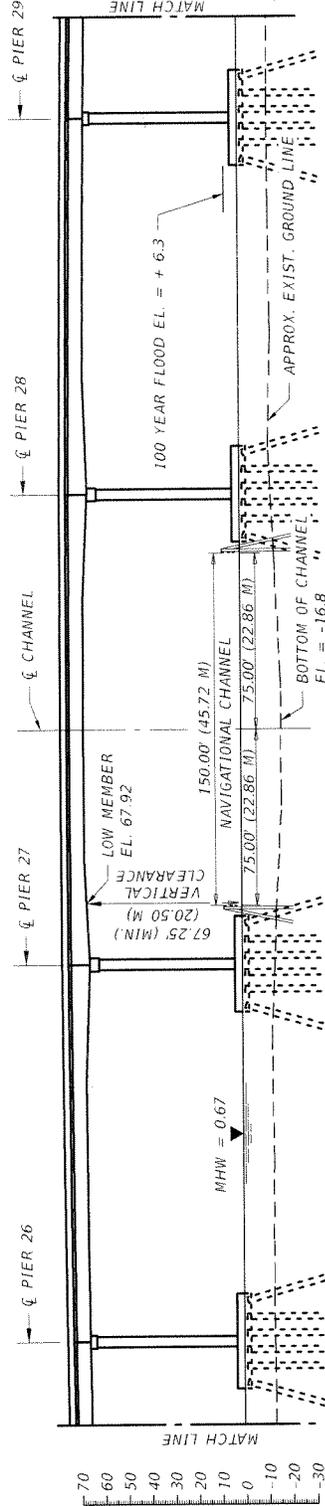
1. TOTAL QUANTITY OF RIPRAP IS 8,300 CY CUBIC YARDS.
2. TOTAL QUANTITY OF FILL ABOVE MEAN HIGH WATER IS 17,160 CY CUBIC YARDS
3. SEE SHEET 10 FOR FENDER SYSTEM LAYOUT.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 APPLICATION BY: SCHEDE ECOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES
 CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY (GIWW, MILE 250.3 EHL),
 US 331, SR 83, EXISTING PERMITTED SOUTHBOUND
 AND PROPOSED NORTHBOUND BRIDGE
 NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
 BRIDGE PLAN AND ELEVATION
 AUGUST 2014 SHEET 4 OF 10



PARTIAL PLAN

7.534.00' (PIER 1 TO PIER 81)
(2,291.4 M)



ELEVATION OF EXISTING SB CLYDE B. WELLS BRIDGE

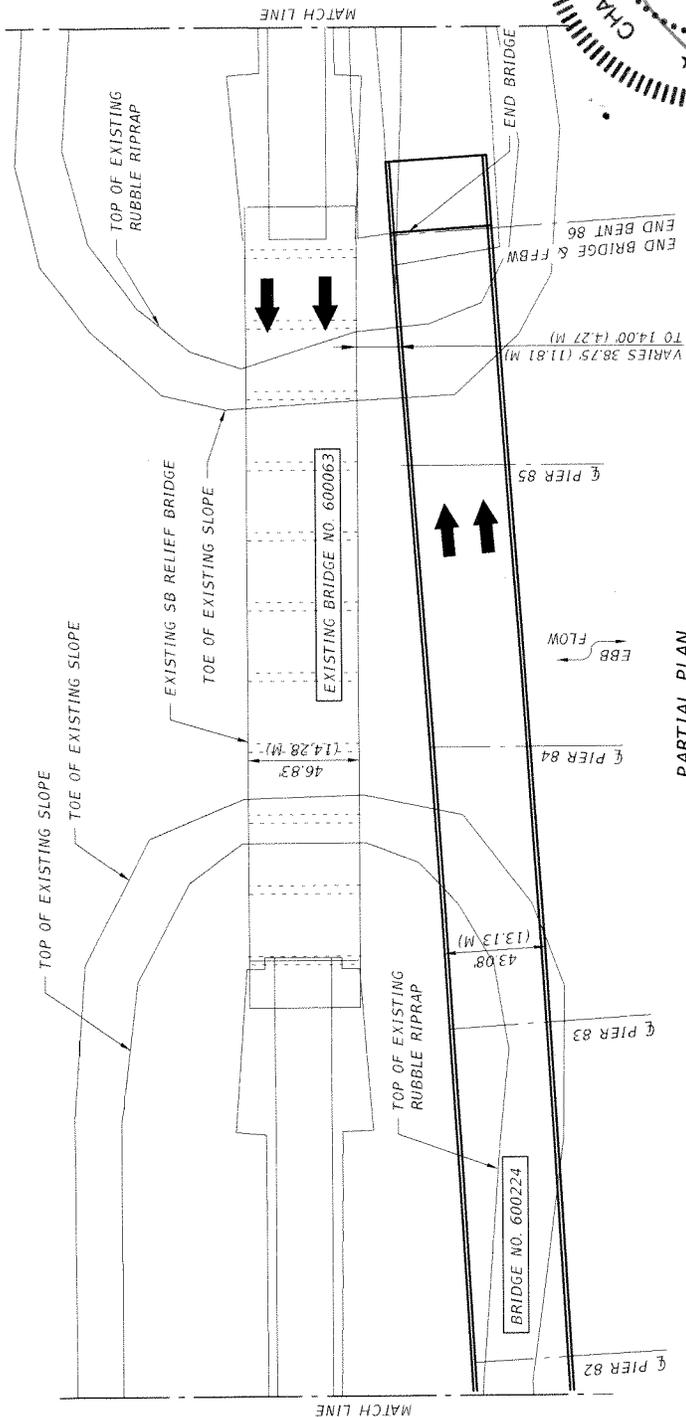
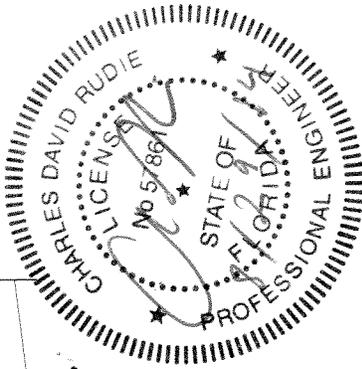
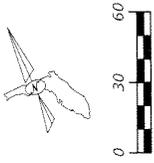
NAVIGATION CHANNEL DETAIL

LEGEND:
 EXISTING FENDER TO BE REMOVED

NOTES:

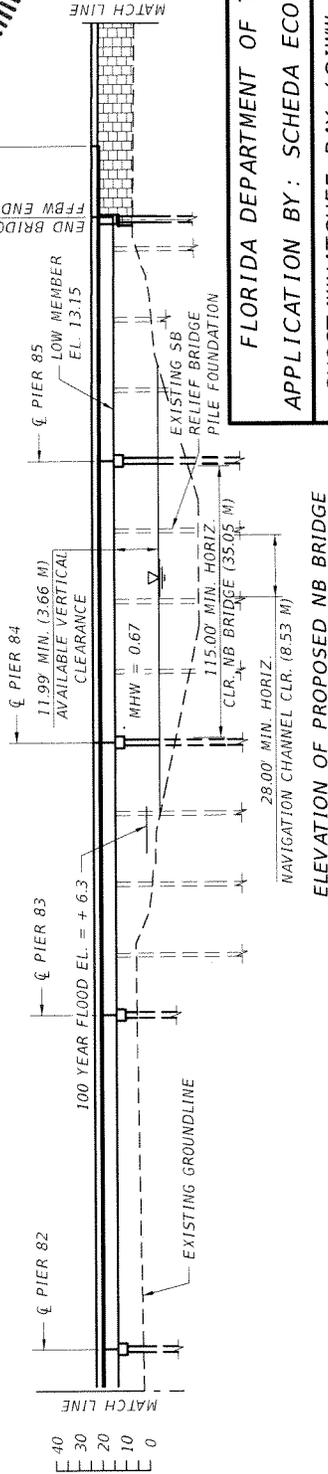
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 BRIDGE PLAN AND ELEVATION
 AUGUST 2014 SHEET 5 OF 10



PARTIAL PLAN

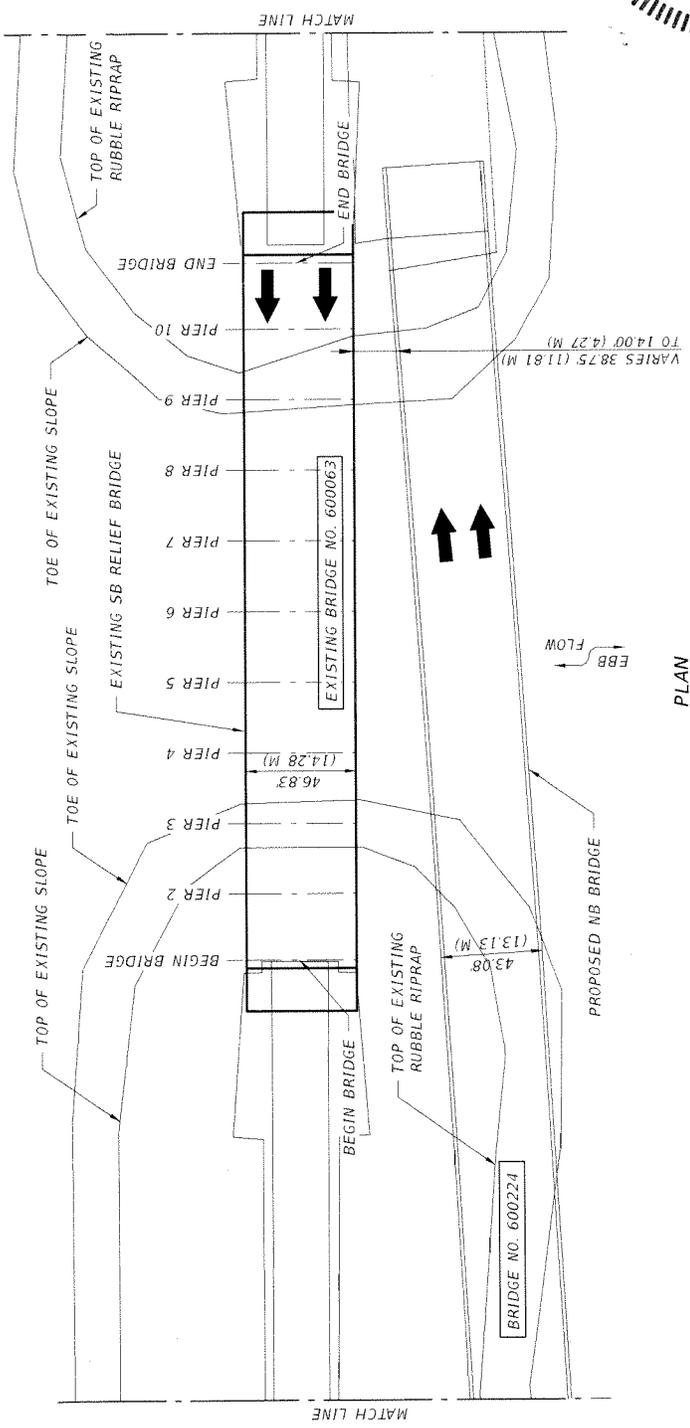
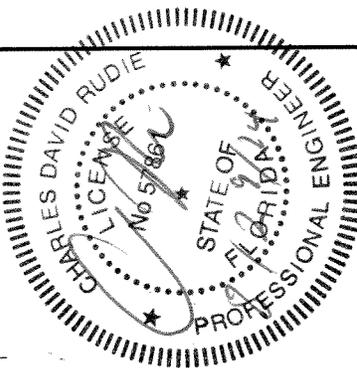
12055.61' (3,674.55 M)
OVERALL BRIDGE LENGTH



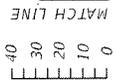
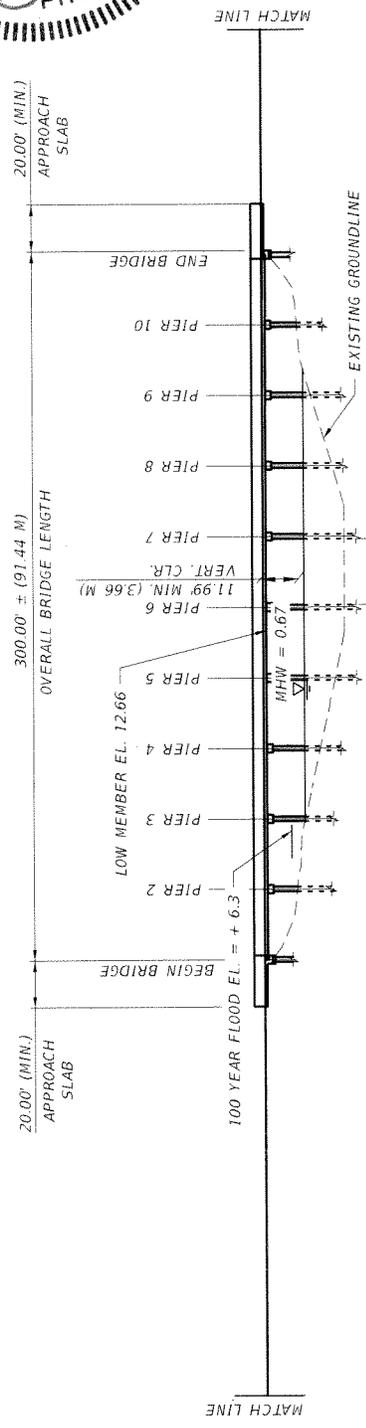
ELEVATION OF PROPOSED NB BRIDGE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 APPLICATION BY: SCHEDA ECOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES
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 US 331, SR 83, EXISTING PERMITTED SOUTHBOUND
 AND PROPOSED NORTHBOUND BRIDGE
 NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
 BRIDGE PLAN AND ELEVATION
 AUGUST 2014 SHEET 6 OF 10

- NOTES:
1. TOTAL QUANTITY OF RIPRAP IS 8,300 CY CUBIC YARDS.
 2. TOTAL QUANTITY OF FILL ABOVE MEAN HIGH WATER IS 17,160 CY CUBIC YARDS.
 3. ACTUAL VERTICAL CLEARANCE FOR NB BRIDGE IS 12.48'. HOWEVER, AVAILABLE VERTICAL CLEARANCE IS 11.99' AS SET BY EXISTING SB RELIEF BRIDGE.



PLAN

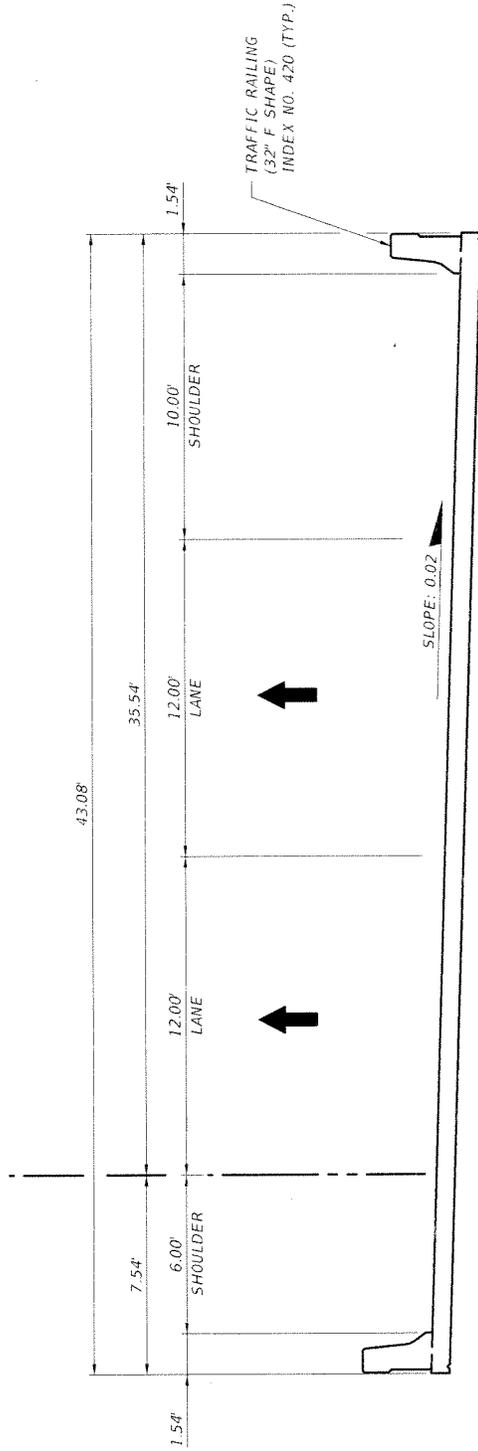


ELEVATION OF EXISTING SB RELIEF BRIDGE

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 BRIDGE PLAN AND ELEVATION
 AUGUST 2014 SHEET 7 OF 10

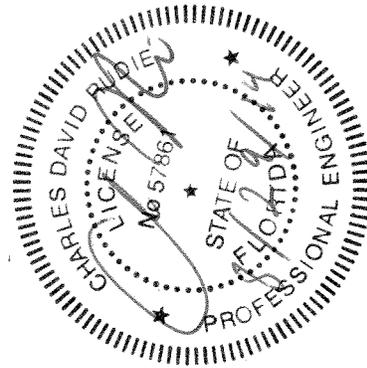
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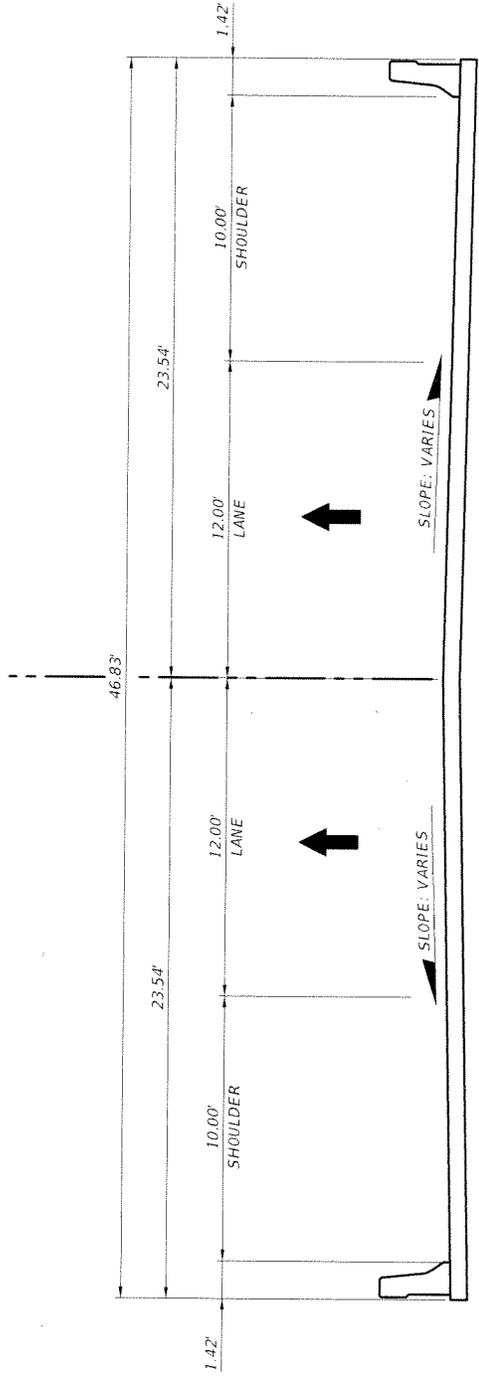


TYPICAL SECTION PROPOSED NB BRIDGE

SR 83 (US 331) CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY

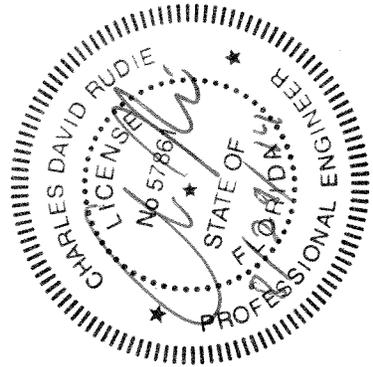


FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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US 331, SR 83, EXISTING PERMITTED SOUTHBOUND
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NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
TYPICAL SECTION
AUGUST 2014 SHEET 8 OF 10

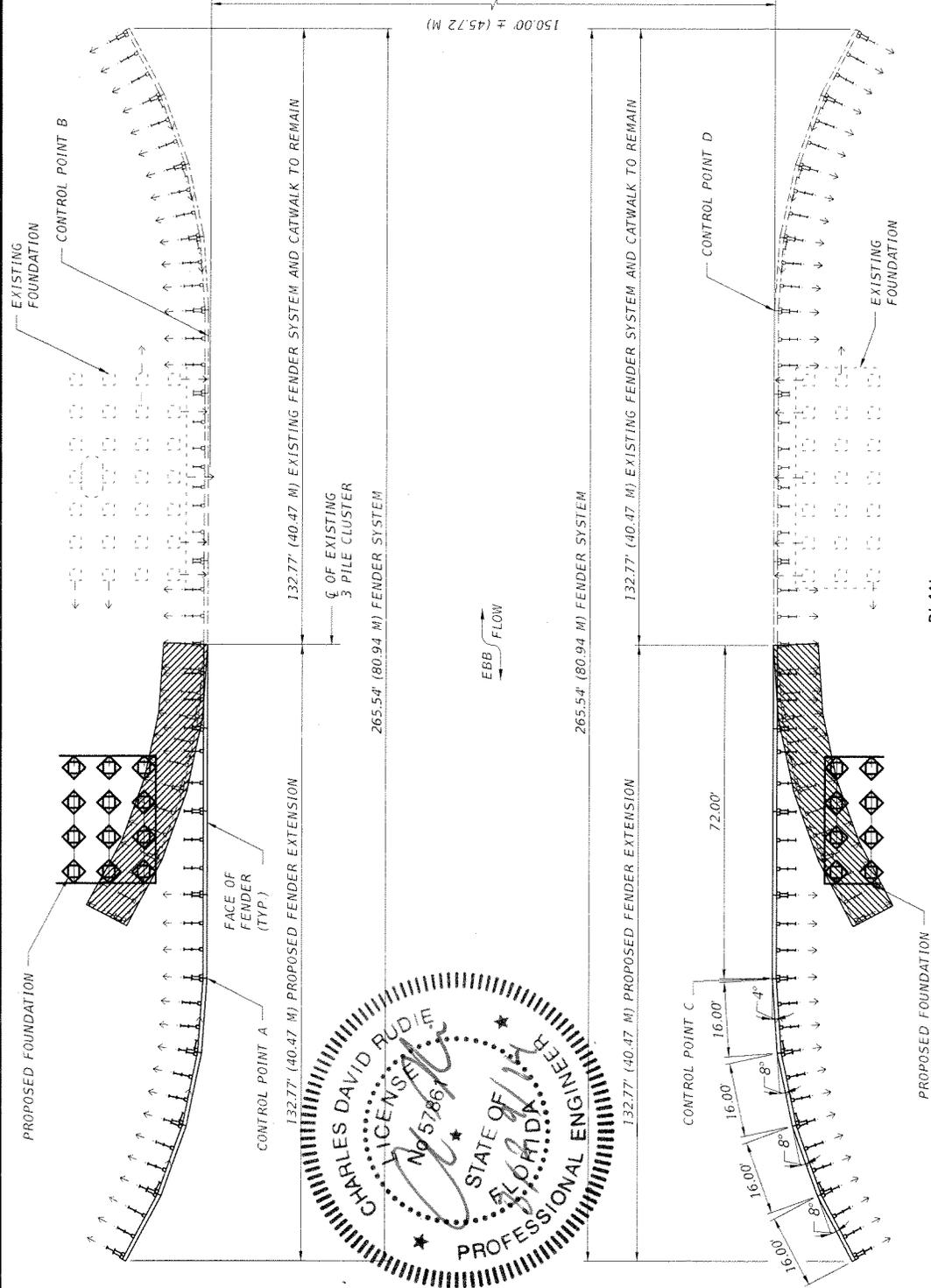
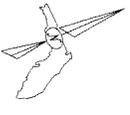


TYPICAL SECTION EXISTING SB CLYDE B. WELLS AND RELIEF BRIDGE

SR 83 (US 331) CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
APPLICATION BY: SCHEDA ECOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES
CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY (GIWW, MILE 250.3 EHL),
US 331, SR 83, EXISTING PERMITTED SOUTHBOUND
AND PROPOSED NORTHBOUND BRIDGE
NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
TYPICAL SECTION
AUGUST 2014 SHEET 9 OF 10



PLAN
(CATWALK NOT SHOWN FOR CLARITY)

- LEGEND:**
- EXISTING FENDER TO BE REMOVED
 - EXISTING FENDER PILE
 - EXISTING BATTERED FENDER PILE
 - PROPOSED FENDER PILE
 - PROPOSED BATTERED FENDER PILE
 - PROPOSED CONCRETE PILE
 - EXISTING CONCRETE PILE
 - EXISTING BATTERED CONCRETE PILE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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 AND PROPOSED NORTHBOUND BRIDGE
 NEAR FREEPORT, WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
 FENDER SYSTEM LAYOUT
 AUGUST 2014 SHEET 10 OF 10