

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release Monday, June 8, 1970

SECRETARY HICKEL SEEKS 15-MONTH MORATORIUM ON CROSS
FLORIDA BARGE CANAL CONSTRUCTION WHILE TASK FORCE STUDY IS MADE

Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel announced today that he has written Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor requesting a 15-month moratorium on construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal while a special Interior Department task force studies the ecological, hydrological, and other problems involved.

Construction of the Canal, begun in 1964 by the Army Corps of Engineers, now is somewhat more than 25 percent complete. It would provide a 185-mile navigable waterway from the Intracoastal Waterway near Mayport, Florida, to the Gulf of Mexico near Yankeetown, Florida.

Conservationists contend that insufficient consideration had been given to the scenic and fish and wildlife aspects during project planning.

The task force will be composed of representatives of several Interior agencies: Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Federal Water Quality Administration, Geological Survey, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and National Park Service. The Corps of Engineers, Forest Service, and State agencies involved will be consulted.

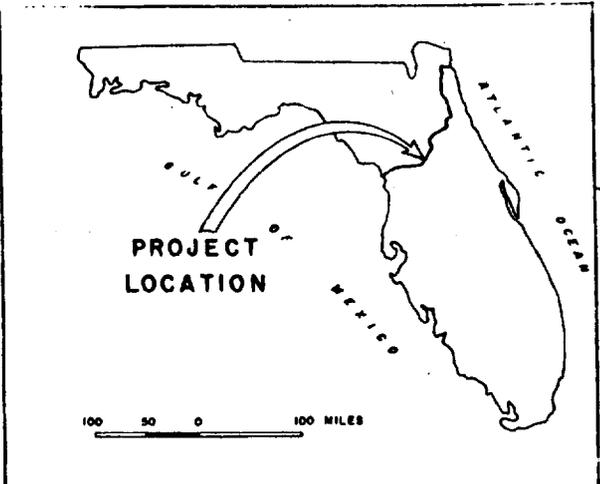
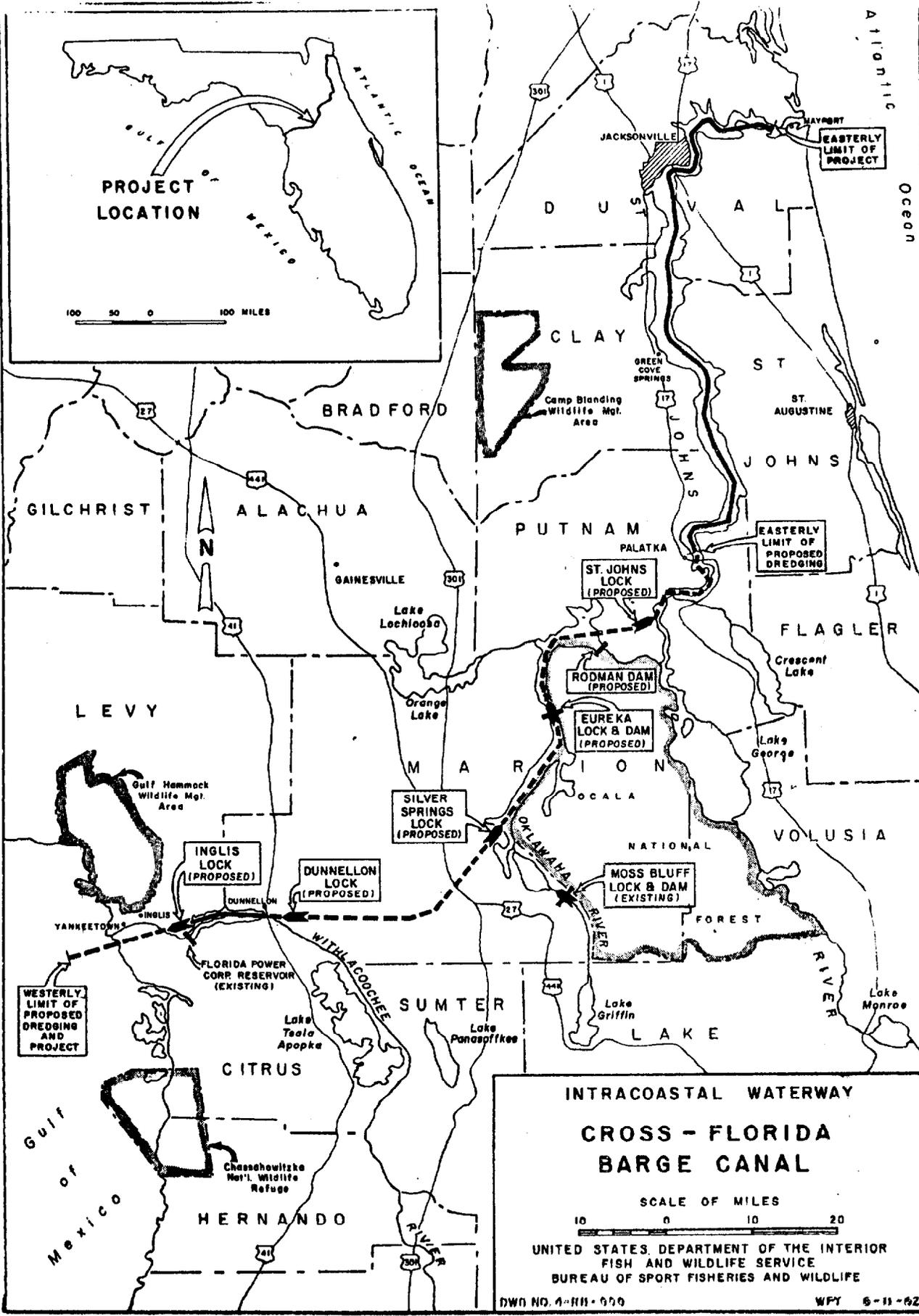
The Fish and Wildlife Service in 1963 studied the authorized project plan under provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. The Service developed some recommendations concerning public access, spoil disposal, discharge of water from reservoirs, reservoir clearing plans, and other features for the protection of fish and wildlife.

Earlier this year, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife's regional office at Atlanta conducted a new appraisal of the Canal project regarding its impact on fish and wildlife resources. In his letter to the Secretary of the Army, Secretary Hickel wrote: "I have reviewed the appraisal report and believe that several items of importance to this Department should be more fully considered in relation to the construction of this project."

Secretary Hickel said he had also addressed a letter to W. Don Maughan, executive director of the Cabinet-level Water Resources Council, asking that the Council staff make a new, independent appraisal of the Canal's benefit-cost ratio and report back by June 30, 1971.

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**INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY
CROSS - FLORIDA
BARGE CANAL**

SCALE OF MILES

10 0 10 20

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

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