

**GRANGER LAKE SEDIMENTATION AND WATERSHED CONSERVATION
IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT**

A Thesis

by

JASON ROSS MCALISTER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

December 2011

Major Subject: Rangeland Ecology and Management

Granger Lake Sedimentation and Watershed Conservation Implementation Assessment

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Bradford Wilcox
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ABSTRACT

Granger Lake Sedimentation and Watershed Conservation Implementation Assessment.

(December 2011)

Jason Ross McAlister, B.S., Texas State University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Bradford Wilcox

Sedimentation rates for many Texas reservoirs may be skewed by overstated estimates of design capacity and assumptions perpetuated through subsequent volumetric surveys. Multi-frequency reservoir surveys offer the means by which we may improve existing reservoir data and validate historic sedimentation rate estimates. To demonstrate application of this technology and value of its data derivatives, a multi-year, multi-frequency acoustic survey of Granger Lake, located in Williamson County, Texas was undertaken. Objectives of the study were to use hydro-acoustic survey techniques to verify assumptions of original reservoir capacity, examine the general accuracy of previously derived sedimentation rate, and document conservation implementation effectiveness. The intended benefit of these pre and post-watershed conservation implementation project surveys was to provide a temporal snapshot of sediment flux. Specifically, these data would be used as a tool to quantitatively estimate project success or non-success in annual sediment delivery reduction to the reservoir.

During the course of the Granger Lake Watershed Implementation project, Granger Lake lost on average 343 acre feet of water storage annually to watershed

sediment contribution. Sediment profiling results indicate pre-impoundment design estimates were overstated, thus skewing subsequent sediment deliver estimates. Since the mid-1990's, an accelerating sedimentation trend is apparent. Conservation implementation is not plainly responsible for the decrease in sediment delivery, and in fact may be undetectable for the foreseeable future.

The study illustrates the value of examining previously established reservoir sedimentation estimates and assumptions of reservoir life based on design capacity estimates and routine volumetric surveys. Insights from this research highlight the importance of validating historic reservoir survey data and significance regarding its use in quantifying historic and future conservation effects, or other reservoir sustaining strategies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Texas Water Development Board provided documentation for initial reservoir volume and post-impoundment bathymetry data for comparison. The original manuscript was significantly improved as a result of suggestions from committee members as well as Dr. June Wolf. Funding was provided through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant from the Brazos River Authority, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

NOMENCLATURE

BREC	Blackland Research and Extension Center
CPE	Conservation Pool Elevation
DGPS	Differential Global Positioning System
DOQQs	Digital Ortho Quarter-Quadrangle
kHz	Kilohertz
NAD 83	North American Datum 1983
NGVD29	National Geodetic Vertical Datum 1929
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
RWPA	Regional Water Planning Area
TIN	Triangular Irregular Network
TWDB	Texas Water Development Board
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA-FSA-APFO	United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Service Agency- Aerial Photography Field Office
USGS	United States Geological Survey

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reservoirs around the world lose about 1% of their storage capacity annually (WCD 2000), and historically, U.S. reservoirs lose an average of 0.22% per year as a result of sedimentation (Dendy and Champion 1978). However, rates at which individual reservoirs lose volume vary widely and are functions of the relative size of the reservoir, supplying watershed, soil type, climate, land use, and conservation practices (Allen et al. 1999).

Reservoir sedimentation is a process function heavily influenced by catchment and reservoir management. Reservoir sedimentation involves both soil losses from the surrounding watershed and deposition within the reservoir which leads to a reduction in storage capacity (Chanson and James 1998). These processes have large economic and environmental implications including accelerated coastal erosion, decrease in habitat, and downstream scouring of channels (WCD 2000; Crowder 1987; Syvitski 2003).

Assessment of watershed contribution poses many challenges because colluvial and alluvial deposits can buffer changes in sediment supply at the catchment scale. They can serve as a sink for sediments, eroded upstream, but can become a sediment source when the upstream sediment supplies decline.

This thesis follows the style of Journal of Soil and Water Conservation.

Improvements in land use management or the implementation of soil and water conservation measures does not necessarily result immediately in lower sediment yields. As an example, erosion in many agricultural areas has been declining in recent decades as indicated by the National Resource Inventory, and at least in some regions erosion has been dropping since the 1930s (Renwick 2005).

Unfortunately, even today, the effectiveness of many watershed conservation programs is not realized short term. Conservation programs historically have equal eligibility criteria throughout an area to encourage broad participation – often based on political subdivisions rather than watershed and target specific location criteria. They often do not place enough emphasis on placement or targeted conservation measures relative to areas of high erosion potential (Cox 2008). Furthermore, Garbrecht and Starks (2009) point out “funding for conservation programs is administered on an annual basis and spread over several years, leading to a gradual enrollment and corresponding incremental implementation of conservation practices, all adding to the lag time to full realization of conservation goals. These realities of on-the-ground program implementation suggest that it may take several years, even decades, before the extent of treated cropland is large enough for downstream sediment reduction and associated benefits to become noticeable or measurable at the watershed outlet.”

Taking in consideration the temporal and spatial variability in conservation program participation, soil erosion and sediment transport, and watershed storage and flushing effects, Renwick (2005) suggests “...it is not clear whether reservoir sedimentation rates have responded to this reduction in erosion, or whether they should

have responded. Lags in the sediment transport system may cause downstream sediment yields associated with a pulse of erosion to remain high well after upstream erosion rates decline. For this reason, and perhaps because of continued accelerated upland erosion, reservoir sedimentation rates in many areas may be steady or increasing” (Renwick 2005).

Hydrologic watershed models do offer advantage to demonstrating pre and post-conservation practice implementation by holding all other conditions constant and climatic drivers can also be introduced. These capabilities make watershed simulations/modeling a sensible approach (Santhi et al. 2005). However, as Garbrecht and Starks (2009) state, “...watershed-scale sediment storage effects, conditions for and recurrence of sediment mobilization, the dynamics of shifting sediment sources, and the spatial and temporal propagation of perturbations in the sediment budget within the watershed system are very difficult to quantify,” yet they are valuable to understanding conservation implementation effectiveness” (Garbrecht and Starks 2009). Simply put, watershed-scale sediment simulations require data. More often than not, pre and post-implementation monitoring data is not always readily available.

With the above complexities of watershed sediment yield assessment in mind, reservoir surveys are seen as more accurate than some alternative assessments of sediment export at the basin scale, since they provide direct measurements instead of indirect estimates (Strand and Pemberton 1982). They often provide information over long time spans and represent the effect of frequent and rare events. Reservoir surveys are often required to establish or update stage – volume curves for reservoir operation, to

calculate the sediment yield of the upstream hydrological basin, to assist reservoir designers with design of other reservoirs in the region, to predict the spatial distribution of sediment within the reservoir which may affect hydraulic structures such as intakes, and to evaluate methods of prevention or sediment removal.

Water storage volumes for many reservoirs were originally estimated by analyzing available topographic maps, pre-impoundment surveys, and range-line bathymetry surveys. Follow-up sediment survey results show a considerable underestimation of the sediment volume for all range line sets. The underestimation is more evident when range lines are sparse, and beyond a certain number of range lines there is no improvement of the overall estimation (Zarris and Lykoudi 2002). Because the original reservoir volume estimates were limited by the accuracy of existing topographic maps and land surveys, estimates of the current capacities for reservoirs not re-surveyed since their construction are subject to error (Morris and Fan 1997; Dunbar et al. 1999) .

As related to reservoir sedimentation projections, this error may be unknowingly perpetuated. Current assumptions of watershed contribution and hence, reservoir sedimentation rates, may be in error and simply the consequence of over-reliance on the universal soil loss equation (Odhiambo and Boss 2004) or overstated reservoir capacity (Dunbar et al. 1999). Successive volumetric surveys and assessments of conservation implementation effectiveness - no matter the integrity and intended good of the assessment – could be flawed from the offset. Failure to correctly reassess and/or revise

design capacity estimates may lead to ill-perceived valuation of historic and future conservation efforts (Davis et al. 1999).

Largely, rates of sediment accumulation are determined by directly measuring the volume of deposits or by acoustically determining a reservoir's current capacity and subtracting this from its original stated capacity or capacities derived from previous volumetric surveys. Acoustic surveying techniques remain a superior methodology for the accurate calculation of reservoir volume. A chief result of the improved spatial sampling and automation of reservoir surveys has been the realization that some older volumetric surveys had significant error. Some reservoirs, for example, appear to have increased in storage capacity since impoundment, despite several decades of sedimentation. Other reservoirs appear to have lost 12-17% of their initial capacity in little over a decade (Dunbar et al. 1999).

Modern technology allows the simultaneous operation of multiple transducers, i.e., collection of multiple transducer data separated by acoustic wave-length making possible spatially and temporally correlated collection of acoustically independent data. Independence of frequency means surveyors may utilize higher wavelengths to calculate water depth, while simultaneously utilizing the sediment penetrating capability offered by lower acoustic wavelengths (Dunbar et al. 1999). When calibrated by sparse coring or spud bar determinations of sediment thickness, multi-frequency acoustic surveys can produce accurate estimates of current reservoir capacity and long-term volume loss in one survey. This methodology offers a distinct advantage because of its non-reliance on historic reservoir survey data. Accurate long-term sedimentation rates can be determined

for older reservoirs for which only sparse-profile initial surveys were performed as well as reservoirs for which have no initial volumetric surveys (Allen et al. 1999).

Implementation this contemporary survey technology offers validation of initial reservoir design capacity while assessing current reservoir water capacity - allowing accurate and repeatable means by which reservoir sedimentation rates may be assessed. The much broader implication/benefit provides resource planners and researchers reliable reservoir data on which to base projections, and measure outcomes.

Further, reservoir survey data offers opportunity to understand watershed dynamics. Sedimentation data contained therein is an unexploited archive useful in answering important conservation and watershed resource management questions. For example, there is an increasing need to assess conservation implementation and its effects with drainage catchments. As often the case, little baseline water quality monitoring data is available for stream courses within these basins, therefore calculating the before and after effects of implementation is theoretical at best. Few models are available that focus on sediment export at the basin scale, incorporating both erosion and sediment delivery accurately. A reservoir, metaphorically, may be viewed as a large scale experiment – described as the outlet of a very large watershed plot (Ambers 2001; Verstraeten et al. 2003). As such, reservoir sedimentation studies offer a surrogate methodology for directly monitoring sediment delivery. It can serve as supplemental data resource for model validation, and snapshot of watershed sediment flux.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

In January, 2007 the Blackland Research & Extension Center (BREC) began a multi-year acoustic survey of Granger Lake, located in Williamson County, Texas. The purpose was to determine the effect of conservation practices being implemented through Granger Lake Watershed Conservation Implementation Project. High-resolution lake bathymetry and sediment distribution coverage for the reservoir was collected to serve as a pre-conservation implementation baseline -- a surrogate to historic water quality monitoring data, as none existed.

Reservoir capacity at conservation pool elevation (CPE) was identified using high frequency acoustics. Simultaneously, low frequency acoustics provided a sediment profiling ability used to identify the reservoir's pre-impoundment topography, penetrate and map spatial distribution of unconsolidated sediments, and quantify cumulative post-impoundment sediment to date. A second hydro-acoustic survey provided for temporal comparison of sedimentation.

Objectives of the study were to use hydro-acoustic survey techniques to verify assumptions of original reservoir capacity, examine the general accuracy of previously derived sedimentation rate, and document conservation implementation effectiveness.

Research Objective 1. Conduct a sediment profiling survey to identify Granger Lake's as-built pre-impoundment capacity.

Ho: Granger Lake USACE design capacity of 65,000 acre-feet is accurate.

Research Objective 2. Plot historic bathymetric datasets including pre-impoundment (year 1) surface determined by low frequency acoustics, identifying any changes in annualized sediment delivery curve to date.

Ho: Annualized sediment delivery rate is not changed.

Research Objective 3. Identify annualized sedimentation rates prior to Granger Lake Watershed Assessment and Implementation Project and compare post-implementation reservoir capacity to quantify changes in watershed sediment delivery.

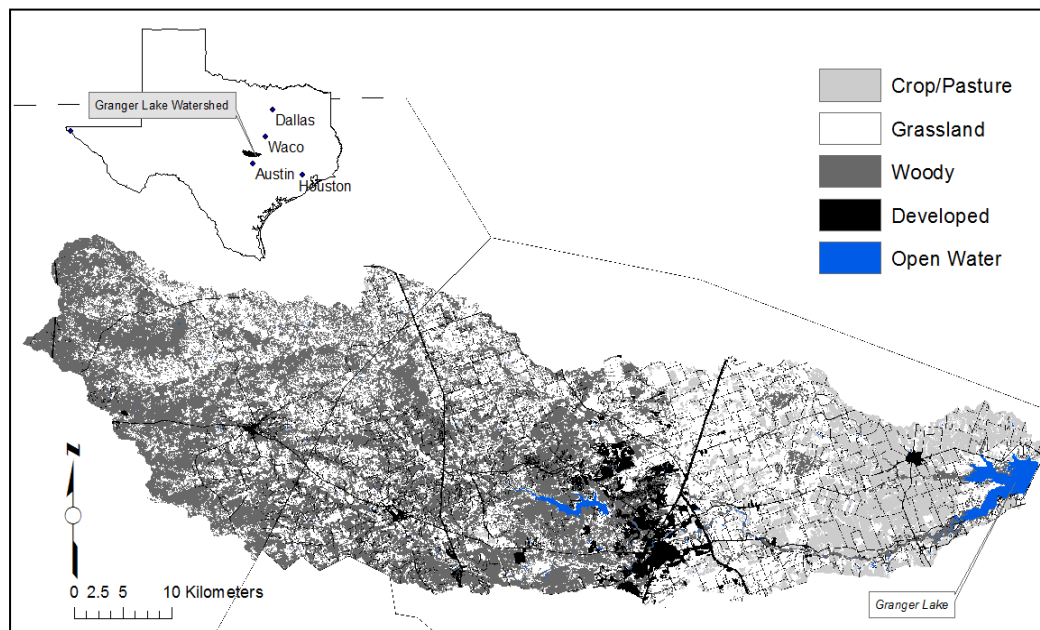
Ho: There is no change in watershed sediment delivery as a result of conservation practice implementation.

2. STUDY AREA

2.1 Granger Lake

Granger Lake is located approximately seven miles east of the City of Granger (Figure 1). Construction of Granger Dam began in October of 1972, with deliberate impoundment of the Brazos River Basin's San Gabriel River beginning on January 21, 1980 (USACE 2011). This 4000 acre lake is owned by the U.S. Government and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District (TWDB 1973), and functions as a flood control, water conservation, fish and wildlife habitat, and general recreation reservoir (USACE 2011). Over the last two decades, Granger Lake sedimentation has been a major concern to state and regional water planners.

Figure 1: Granger Lake Watershed and land use/land cover.



2.2 History

In 1980 when Granger Lake first started impounding water, initial storage calculations estimated that the volume of the lake at the conservation pool to be 65,510 acre/feet. In 1995, a volumetric survey determined capacity to be 54,280 acre/feet, a loss of 11,230 acre/feet (748.67 acre/feet per year) – a 17% storage capacity loss over 15 years (TWDB 1995).

In 2002 a similar survey was conducted to determine reservoir capacity changes since the last survey. Results indicated a loss of 1,319 acre/feet (202.92 acre/feet per year) over 6.5 years (TWDB 2002). There is a distinct difference in the annual loss of volume in the lake between 1980-1995 and 1995-2002. This difference is thought to be rainfall and storm intensity related.

In 1999 the Natural Resources Conservation Service Water Resource Assessment Team, at the request of the Brazos River Authority conducted a separate study of the Granger Lake Watershed using the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT). Flow and sediment loads were assessed as well as effectiveness of various erosion mitigating conservation practices. Modeling results indicated that conventional conservation practices, used in combination, had the potential to reduce sediment loads by 20-30% (NRCS 1999).

Sediment accumulation rates based on original design estimates and volumetric surveys have demonstrated capacity loss at an alarming rate, while prior modeling assessment has simulated conservation practice effectiveness. Addressing the perceived

sedimentation problem continues to be a focus of natural resource and water availability planners.

2.3 Granger Lake Watershed

The Lake Granger Watershed is located in Central Texas. This 188,856 hectare watershed is located in Williamson County, extending slightly into Burnet County. Lying within the IH-35 corridor with Highway 183 in the southwestern part of the Williamson County, with its close proximity to Austin Texas, the watershed's urban component is rapidly expanding (Table 1).

Table 1: Changes in land use/land cover extracted from 2001 & 2006 NLCD raster datasets.

Land Use / Land Cover	2001	2006
<i>Crop/Pasture</i>	11.3%	11.1%
<i>Grassland/Herbaceous</i>	40.9%	38.1%
<i>Woody</i>	41.4%	39.7%
<i>Developed/Developing</i>	5.1%	9.7%
<i>Open Water</i>	1.4%	1.4%

Agricultural land uses are dominant in the drainage area. Without adequate treatment and management, soils are subject to accelerated erosion with subsequent increased reservoir sedimentation. Soil conservation practices such as grass planting, alteration of tillage practices, and installation of impoundment structures for preventing reservoir sedimentation are currently being implemented (Table 2).

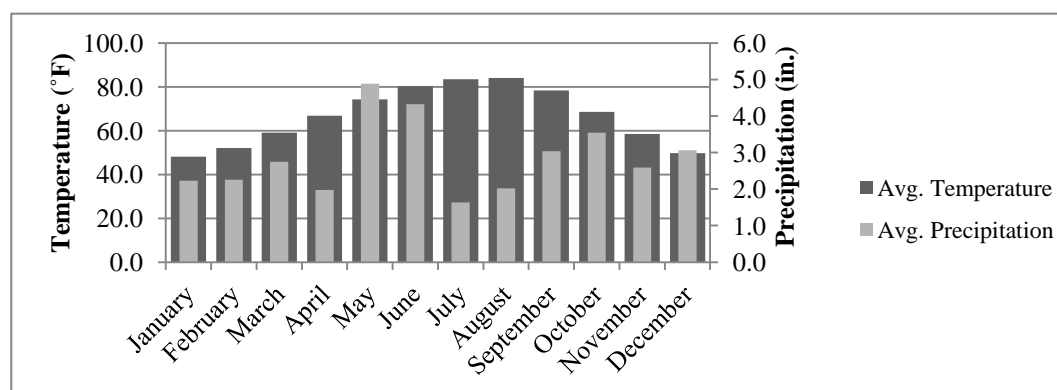
Table 2: Granger Lake Watershed conservation practices cost-shared 2007-2010.

Practice	Quantity	Unit
512 - Pasture/Hayland Planting *	1022.6	ac.
600 - Terraces Installed *	270247.0	linear ft.
412 - Grassed Waterways *	87.0	ac.
378 - Livestock Pond *	10.0	ac.
342 - Critical Area Planting *	17.3	ac.
330 - Contour Farming	6636.4	ac.
511 - Forage Harvest Management	659.0	ac.
328 - Conservation Crop Rotation	6890.4	ac.
528A - Prescribed Grazing	3484.0	ac.
590 - Nutrient Management	10622.1	ac.
595 - Pest Management	10540.0	ac.
329 - Conservation Tillage	4656.0	ac.
344 - Residue Management-Seasonal	6890.4	ac.
* Practices installed to date (2007-2010)		

2.4 Climatic History

The climate is sub-humid. Granger Lake Watershed is characterized by hot summers and cool winters; average temperature range from 49°F in winter to 83°F in summer (Figure 2). Typically, summers are hot and winters are mild with intervals of freezing temperatures as cold fronts pass through the region. Average annual precipitation ranges from about 34.2 inches in Williamson County to 30.5 inches in Burnet County. Sixty percent of annual precipitation usually falls between April and September (Werchan and Coker 1983).

Figure 2: Historical monthly average temperature (°F) and monthly average precipitation recorded by NOAA at Granger Dam weather station from 1980 – 2010.



2.5 Soils

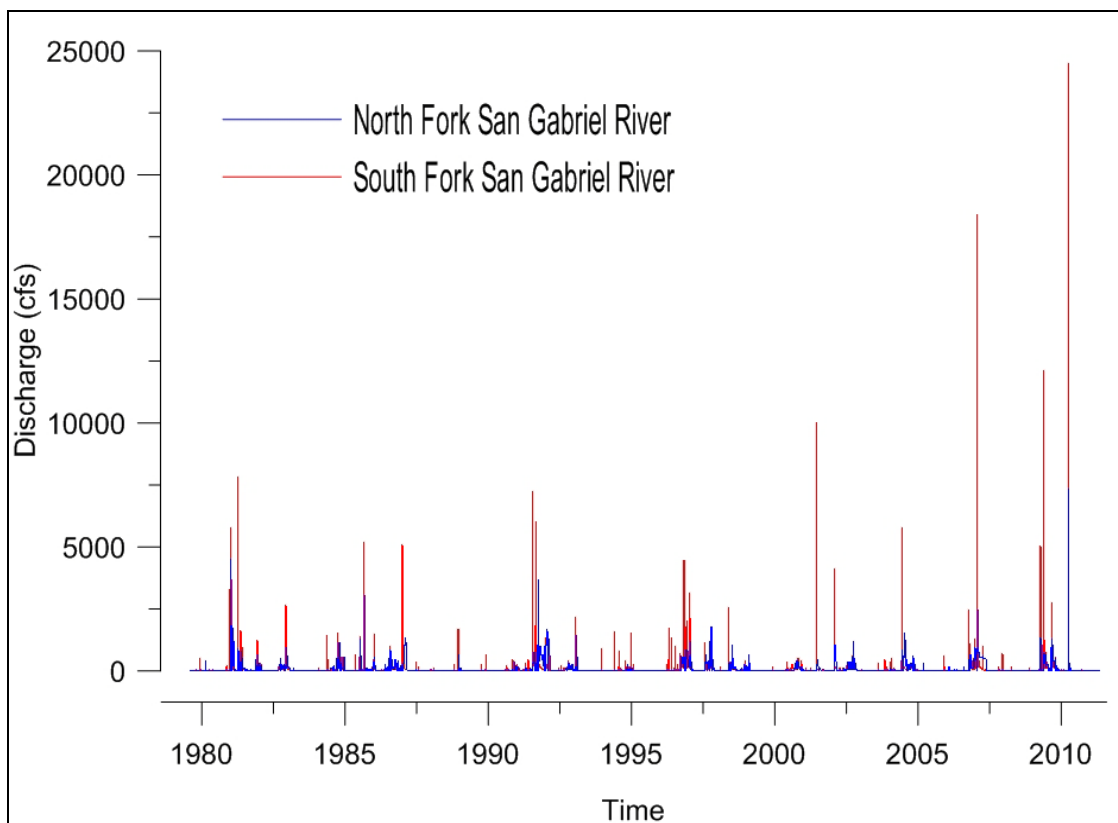
The watershed is within portions of the Edwards Plateau, Grand Prairie, and Texas Blackland Prairie Major Land Resource Areas. Soils range from shallow loamy or clay, stony and cobbly soils in the Edwards Plateau region to deep fine textured montmorillonitic clays in the Blackland Prairie. Soil depths vary from very shallow to deep. Upland topography ranges from nearly level to steeply sloping.

2.6 Watershed Hydrology

The San Gabriel River and Brushy Creek are the main watercourses within the county. They flow in a west-east direction, and all drainage is in the Brazos River Watershed and TWDB Regional Planning Area G. Daily discharge data for North and South San Gabriel Rivers are provided (Figure 3). Georgetown and Granger Lakes account for approximately 5,710 surface acres of water. Lake Georgetown controls about 34% (63,795 hectares) of the Granger Lake Watershed in the upstream portion of

the basin. There are seven NRCS flood control structures and numerous surface water components including 45 Brushy Creek watershed structures, hundreds of farm ponds and several streams - adding approximately 7,052 surface acres of water resources within Williamson County (Werchan and Coker 1983).

Figure 3: North and South Forks of San Gabriel River – Daily Discharge (1980-2010)



3. METHODOLOGY

Digital echo sounder profiles were obtained on overlapping grids in order to provide high resolution sediment distribution coverage. Precision geo-referenced depth measurements were acquired with Knudsen Engineering 320 B/P dual-frequency sonar and Trimble DGPS. Using frequencies of 200 kHz and 28 kHz, high-resolution lake bathymetry and sediment distribution coverage was obtained running predetermined survey lines perpendicular to the shoreline. Sediment probing implemented to confirm system calibration and verify sediment thickness. The resulting data set was used to create digital terrain models of the pre- and post-impoundment lakebed morphology - the basis for quantifying spatial mapping of post-impoundment sediment deposition.

3.1 Pre-Survey Setup

The digitized reservoir boundary was created from aerial photographs or digital ortho quarter-quadrangle images (DOQQs) at an approximate scale of 1:1,500 (Table 3). The quarter-quadrangles that cover Granger Lake are Granger NE, Granger SE, Granger Lake NW, and Granger Lake SW. Each quarter quadrangle image was photographed on January 23, 1995. The water surface elevation for this day averaged 504.18 feet. These photographs have 1-meter resolution; therefore, the physical lake boundary is within +/- 1 meter of the location derived from the manual delineation. Additionally, island boundaries were verified and/or correctly digitized based on a more current 2005 United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Service Agency-Aerial Photography Field Office

(USDA-FSA-APFO) natural color county mosaic. Verification of island boundaries was necessary because of the dynamic morphology of these landforms, especially in close proximity to stream/lake confluence. Although the more recent (2005) imagery has a more coarse resolution (2m), there are strong biophysical cues that indicate terrestrial boundaries and were digitized with a reasonably high level of accuracy. Lake elevation at the time of the 2005 imagery was at 503.83. Boundary sets were digitized at the land water interface visible in the photos; given resolution of imagery and closeness to conservation pool elevation at the time of photography, resulting contours were assigned elevations of 504.0 feet (conservation pool elevation) accordingly.

Table 3: Aerial photography utilized for pre-survey setup.

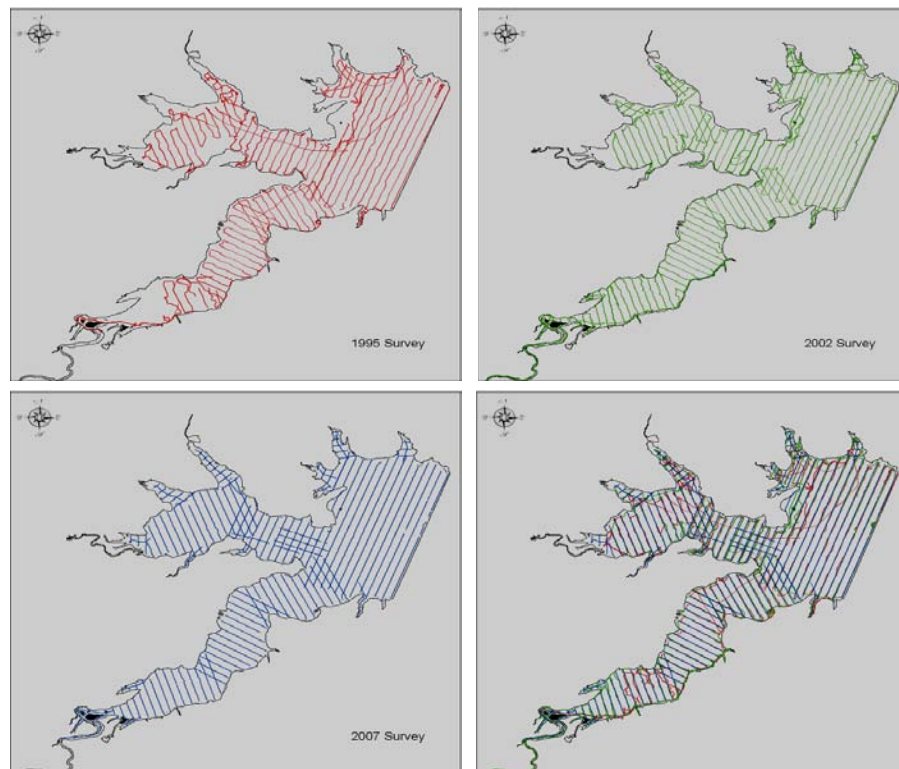
Aerial Imagery	Resolution	Date of Acquisition	Lake Elevation (ft)
Texas Orthoimagery Program Granger NE	1m	23-Jan-1995	504.18
Texas Orthoimagery Program Granger SE	1m	23-Jan-1995	504.18
Texas Orthoimagery Program Granger Lake NW	1m	23-Jan-1995	504.18
Texas Orthoimagery Program Granger Lake SW	1m	23-Jan-1995	504.18
USDA-FSA-APFO Williamson County, Texas (Mosaic)	2m	21-Oct-2005	503.83

3.2 Positioning

Coastal Oceanographic's HyPack Max software was used to assign geodetic parameters, import background files, and create planned survey lines or transects.

Horizontal positions were acquired with a Trimble® differential global positioning system (DGPS). This system integrates a Trimble® GPS receiver with a Trimble GeoBeacon® radio beacon receiver. With this system, Coast Guard radio signals were input from an array of base stations to improve horizontal positioning accuracy to better than 0.5 m (1.6 ft) (Trimble Navigation 2004). TX. The datum for this gage is reported as National Geodetic Vertical Datum 1929 (NGVD29) or mean sea level. The horizontal datum for this research is the North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83) and the horizontal coordinate system is State Plane Texas Central FIPS 4203 (feet). Pre-planned survey transects spaced 500 feet apart were created as close as possible to transects used by previous Texas Water Development Board surveys in 1995 and 2002

Figure 4: Replicated survey track-lines illustrating agreement between surveys.



(Figure 4). Reasoning behind replicating the established routes was to enable comparative analysis with previous volumetric surveys. Additionally, although not in the scope of analysis, utilization of previous data collected under similar methods provide the opportunity to identify “active” sediment transport zones within Granger Lake – allowing targeted sediment mitigation in future watershed conservation efforts.

3.3 Equipment Calibration and Operation

A bar check was performed, incorporating the survey vessel’s static draft and the sound velocity throughout the water column, ensuring accuracy of depth measurements. An iron plate measuring 12” in circumference was lowered 5’ below the static water line and draft corrections were applied to the echosounder until the depth reads 5’. Next, the bar (or plate in our case) was lowered to the maximum expected survey depth. Once lowered and identified on the echogram, sound velocity was adjusted until the echosounder displays the correct value. The bar was raised again to 5’ where a slight adjustment to draft can be made, then return to the maximum intended survey depth to correct (as necessary) the sound velocity. This was an iterative process until physically and acoustically measured depths agree throughout the range with no adjustment. Additionally, direct sediment depth measurement (probing) was implemented to confirm low frequency acoustic profiling data.

For verification of positional accuracy, a geodetic control survey was conducted by static GPS techniques from a known monument with published positions. At the beginning of each survey, a position verification of the GPS was performed using

monument BZ0824, X, Y coordinate 31 04 04.18773 (N), 097 27 53.90621 (W), North American Datum 1983 (NAD 83). The GPS unit was positioned directly on the monument while collecting X, Y coordinates. A series of observations were made with redundant comparisons to document accuracy of the survey. When the points were averaged, they were within 3 ft of the monument.

3.4 Field Survey

The survey vessel used in this research was an eighteen-foot pontoon boat. This vessel was equipped with an integrated navigation and data acquisition system and a custom through-deck mount for the Knudsen Engineering dual-frequency transducer.

The hydro-acoustic sediment profiling system used in the survey was developed by Knudsen Engineering, Ltd. Knudsen echosounders are used for precision measurement of water depths for hydrographic survey, dredging, ship navigation, defense, and scientific applications. The system used consists of a Knudsen Engineering 329 BP echosounder, and a dual frequency (200/28 kHz) acoustic source. The 200 kHz acoustic impulse provides approximately 1 cm vertical resolution and is used primarily to acquire detailed hydrographic data. The 28 kHz acoustic impulse penetrates fine-grained lacustrine sediment to provide an indication of sediment thickness (Knudsen Engineering 1998). Power for the system is provided by 12-volt marine batteries.

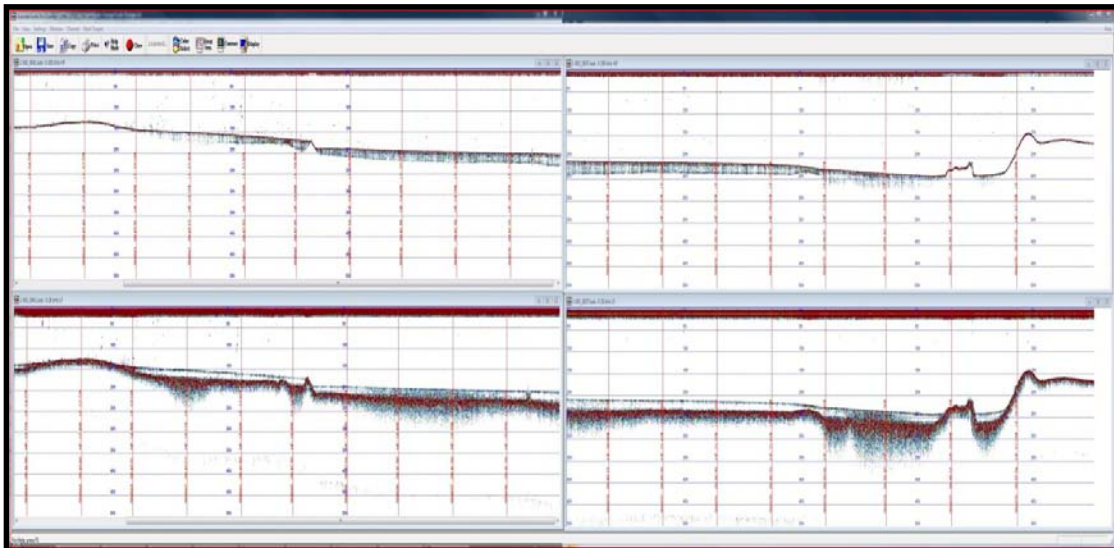
Data acquisition was controlled via Knudsen Engineering Ltd. Sounder Suite® and Coastal Oceanographic's HYPACK MAX software. Using frequencies of 200 kHz and 28 kHz, sonar data was collected by running slow, uniform lines in a systematic

pattern and perpendicular to the shoreline. Adjustments were made to scale and gain settings, as required, to maximize data resolution. During the survey, preliminary hydrographic data was displayed in real-time. Direct sediment depth measurement (probing) was implemented, confirming low-frequency acoustic profiling data.

3.5 Analytical Methodology

Post-processing of sonar data was carried out utilizing HyPack® Single Beam Max. The HyPack® Single Beam Max software allows for simultaneous viewing of the dual-frequency sonar data (Figure 5) to analyze anomalies on the lake bottom during post-processing. Water-level data was applied to adjust all depth measurements to conservation pool elevation. Daily gage observations, at 30 minute increments were applied to all survey measurements on their respective day and time of acquisition.

Figure 5: Digital echogram of Granger Lake illustrating 200kHz (top) and 28kHz (bottom) acoustic profiles of lake-bottom morphology.

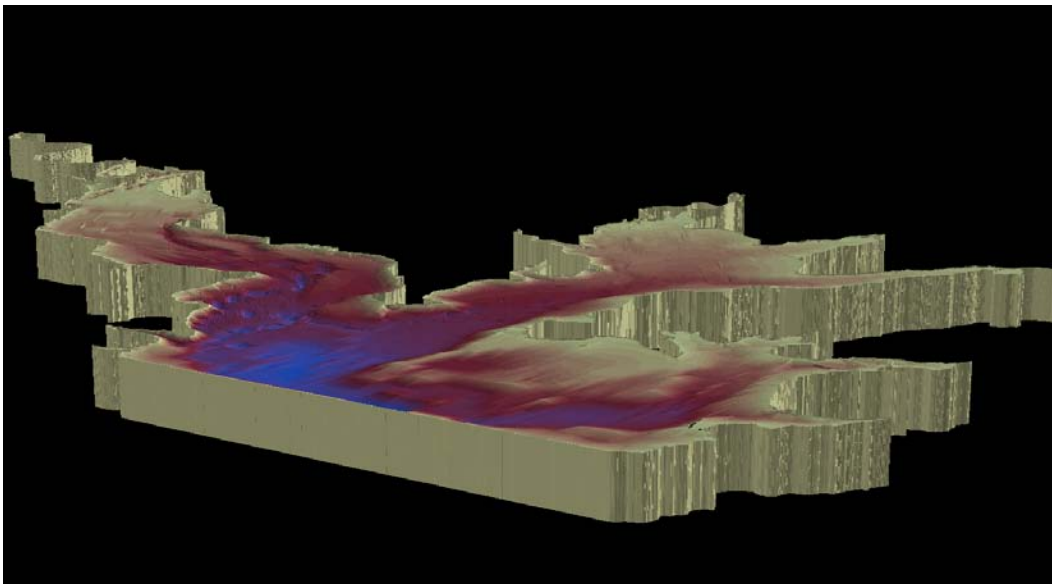


Volume and area calculations were referenced to water levels provided by the Granger Lake USGS gage.

Processing of acoustic data began with review of each survey line using HyPack's Single Beam Max. Position and sensor data was reviewed and accepted if no outliers were present, or rejected if erroneous data was observed. Sounding data was reviewed and edited for anomalies such as bottom multiples, and returns from submerged debris. These data points were flagged as rejected and not used as part of the final data set.

Volumetric and area calculations were derived using a triangular irregular network (TIN) surface model (Figure 6). The TIN model was created within ArcGIS, and uses Delaunay's criteria for triangulation placing a triangle between three non-uniformly spaced points which includes field survey data points and the lake boundary

Figure 6: Digital terrain model created from acoustic data collection.



vertices. Granger Lake pre-impoundment capacity and current capacity was calculated by dividing the TIN into tenth of a foot reference planes between lowest and shallowest recorded depth.

Contours, depth ranges, and the shaded relief map were derived from the TIN. Bathymetric maps were created using ArcGIS spatial analyst “Topo to Raster” tool. Specifically, reservoir boundary files and collected data points were used for interpolation of a digital raster grid and hillshade model illustrating depth ranges (Appendix C). Contours were generated and lightly smoothed using polynomial approximation algorithm to improve cartographic quality.

Sediment range lines previously established by Brazos River Authority were used as a comparison of Granger Lake bathymetry since its deliberate impoundment in 1980. These range lines were collected for documentation purposes only. Representative cross- sections were extracted from TIN surfaces. The bathymetric surfaces used for comparison were a pre-impoundment datum, derived from 2007 28kHz acoustic profiling data, and pre-conservation implementation (2007) and post-conservation implementation (2010) 200kHz volumetric datasets. Cross-sectional views of Granger Lake bathymetry offers a discrete and coarse approximation of lake-bottom morphology in time, therefore should be viewed as just that – a rough approximation. Although the TIN is useful for assessing volumetric change and its ability to interpolate landforms while preserving “real” data, differences in spatial coverage of survey data can reveal large elevation differences locally; such differences were apparent in discrete cross sectional profiles where data points were available for one survey, but not for another

(Figures 7 & 8). However, volumetric differences due to incomplete survey data are minimized in the final digital terrain model due to overall breadth of survey coverage - unlike what might be observed using range lines alone. The majority of range lines observed closely match in coverage (Figure 9).

Figure 7: Range line location and aerial photos depicting temporal survey accessibility.



Figure 8: Example of range-line extracted from TIN where pre and post-implementation survey location is accessible.

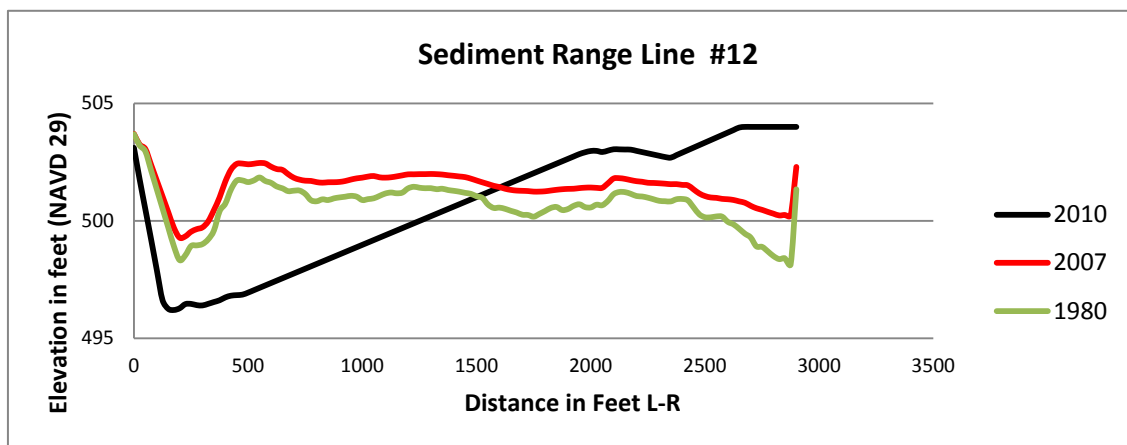
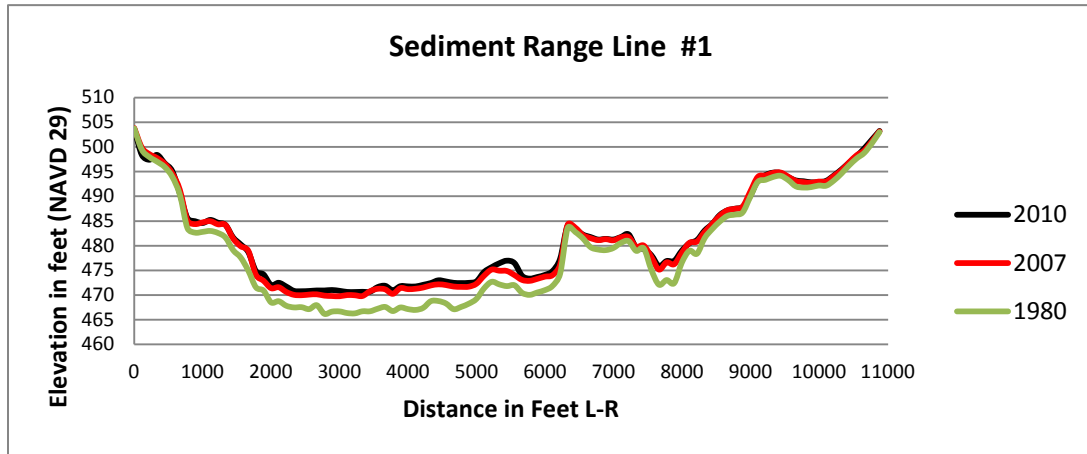


Figure 9: Example of range-line extracted from TIN illustrating change in channel morphology and inaccessibility of survey area.



4. RESULTS

The conservation implementation survey period took place between January 11th-12th, and 24th-26th 2007. During this time, bathymetric (volumetric capacity) reservoir data, as well as acoustic profiling data was collected. The post-conservation implementation bathymetric survey took place June 23-25th 2010. Once filtered, over 900,000 data points were used during the course of this research.

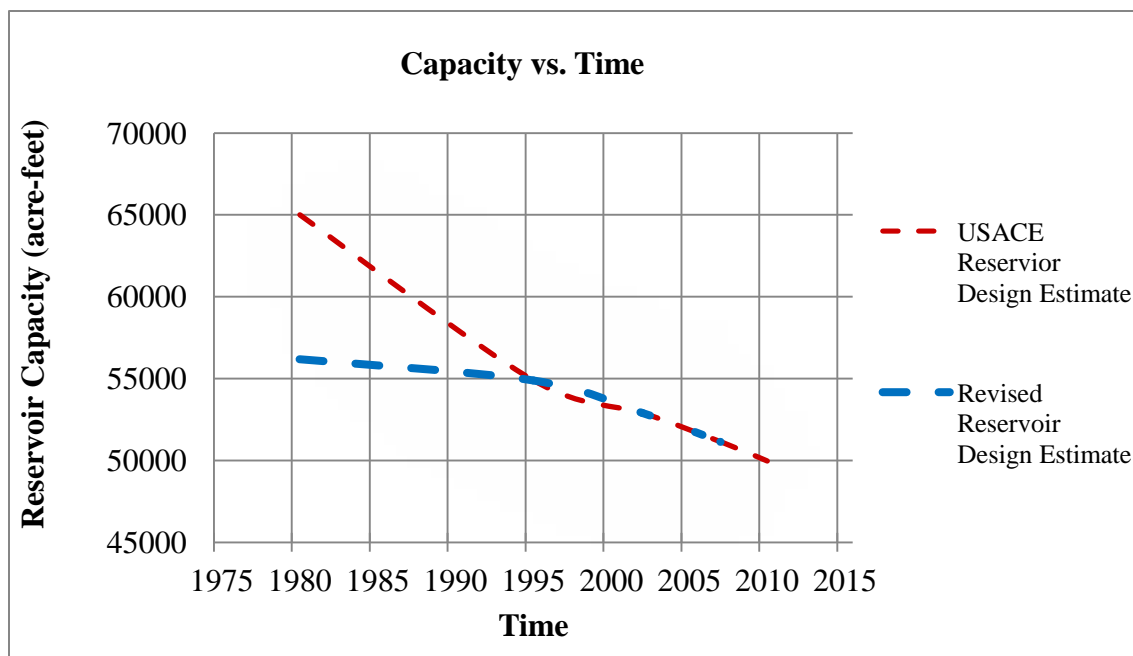
4.1 Assessment of Pre-impoundment Capacity

A baseline estimate for pre-impoundment (pre-1980) water storage capacity was assessed using low frequency sediment profiling data to create a pre-impoundment digital terrain model using ArcGIS. Analysis of low-frequency acoustic profiling data provided a cumulative post-impoundment (1980-2010), and 2010 volumetric data provided a total sediment deposition value of 6,218 acre-feet. Granger Lake reservoir was assessed to have originally impounded 56,189 acre-feet of water. As confirmed by sediment profiling data, initial reservoir capacity estimate of 65,510 acre feet provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, appears to have been overstated. This equates to 9,321 acre-feet of water storage previously thought available to water resource planners. From a watershed perspective, the previously assumed 19.2% loss in storage (1980-2002) due to erosion and soil loss has been overstated by 13.4%. Our assessment reveals an 11.1% capacity reduction over 30 years (1980-2010).

A mean sediment thickness of .78 feet was observed with heavier deposits (approaching 5.5 feet) primarily in the area of western and southwestern fork convergence. Sediment accumulation appears to be concentrated in the reservoir's western fork (Appendix D). Baring significant in-lake currents or re-circulation/re-suspension of sediments, this concentration of deposits may indicate long term deposition and sediment origin within the Willis Creek drainage. Although the notion of an active depositional zone driven by Willis Creek and its supplying watershed is evidenced by chronological comparison of bathymetric surfaces, this idea is speculative and identifying areas of "active" deposition was not within the scope of this research.

4.2 Revised Post-Impoundment Sedimentation Trend

Figure 10: Revised trend in post-impoundment reservoir sedimentation.



In August 2008 TWDB conducted a routine volumetric survey to assess reservoir capacity at CPE. Supplemental to their standard volumetric survey techniques, and included at the request of the Brazos River Authority, was a separate sedimentation study for assessing water intake relocation feasibility. Pre-impoundment capacity, cumulative post-impoundment sediment volume, and volumetric capacity were reported. TWDB's 2008 volumetric survey was useful in validating revisions to pre-impoundment capacity and re-evaluate annual reservoir capacity loss (Figure 10). Adjustment in pre-impoundment (year-1) capacity, existing data provided by TWDB surveys in 1995 and 2002, and our supplemental data provided by survey years 2007 and 2010 result in an adjusted annual sedimentation average of 208 acre-feet per year.

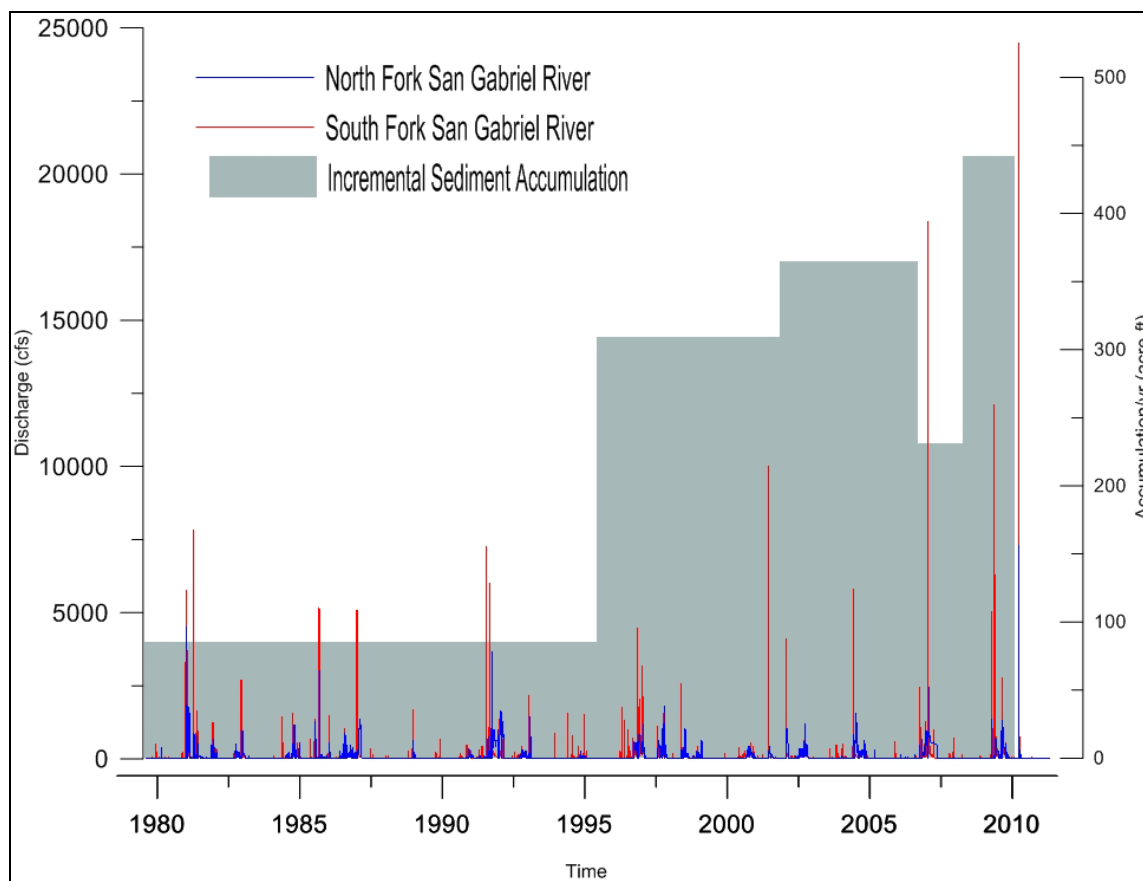
4.3 Watershed Conservation Effect on Reservoir Sedimentation

Analysis indicated pre-implementation (2007) conservation pool storage of 51,144 acre-feet. In 2010, in anticipation of Granger Lake Watershed Implementation Project's end, a final hydro-acoustic survey provided a post-project benchmark for comparison. Granger Lake's 2010 conservation pool water storage capacity was 49,971 acre-feet.

During the course of the Granger Lake Watershed Implementation project, as represented by hydro-acoustic data, Granger Lake lost 1173 acre-feet in capacity or 2.3% of its available capacity at CPE. Between February 2007 and July 2010, Granger Lake lost an average of 343 acre feet of water storage per year.

By supplementing the pre and post-conservation implementation period surveys with intermediate TWDB (2008) volumetric data, we further resolve the flux in sediment delivery (Figure 11). However, occasionally high discharge from the contributing watershed may dilute any measureable effect of conservation implementation over the short term.

Figure 11: Incremental changes in conservation implementation period sediment accumulation (refined) with TWDB 2008 survey data.



5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary

Granger Lake's USACE estimated capacity appears to be overstated. This error in year-one capacity has been perpetuated in subsequent reservoir capacity loss estimates, thus misleading water and watershed resource managers to assume an accelerated reservoir sedimentation rate since the reservoir's impoundment.

After adjusting Granger Lake's pre-impoundment capacity, trajectory of sedimentation appears less acute. Without this adjustment, resource managers and policy-makers would falsely conclude a 23.7% reduction in reservoir capacity over thirty years when in reality, Granger Lake has experienced 11.1% capacity loss. With this single adjustment (correction of pre-impoundment capacity), a mid-1990's acceleration of reservoir sedimentation becomes evident. Albeit unsubstantiated, this acceleration in capacity loss may coincide with the mid-1990s development boom occurring in Round Rock and Georgetown, Texas - in the IH-35 corridor/San Gabriel Watershed; certainly this hydrologic change is evidenced by South Fork San Gabriel River daily discharge data.

Granger Lake lost approximately 2.3% of its available capacity during the conservation implementation period (2007 – 2010). Results indicate a slight reservoir sedimentation decrease compared to 1995-2007 estimates. It is reasonable to suggest this is a consequence of climate variability, specifically the frequency of high intensity

rainfall events. Conservation implementation is not plainly responsible for the decrease in sediment delivery, and in fact may be undetectable for the foreseeable future, given the brevity of response time prior to assessment and limited scope of conservation program participation (i.e., watershed area enrolled vs. total watershed acreage). The spatially and temporally dynamic nature of this watershed system and “noise” of system variables may require a longer assessment period or perhaps a more insulated assessment area.

5.2 Conclusions

This research illustrates the value of examining previously established reservoir sedimentation estimates and assumptions of reservoir life based on design capacity estimates and routine volumetric surveys. Pre-impoundment capacity was found to be significantly less than that stated by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Revised pre-impoundment capacity (1980-2008) assessed in 2007 differ by only 36 acre feet (0.6%) from a separate study conducted by Texas Water Development Board engineers (TWDB 2009). These comparable findings illustrate the high degree of repeatability using similar methodology.

Overall, the study provided a highly resolute and comparable snapshot of reservoir sedimentation, augmenting historic datasets with current volumetric and sediment profiling data. The data may be used as a tool to further direct watershed and resource conservation strategies.

Key to conserving this water resource and mitigating increased sedimentation lies in further assessment and mining of existing data. For example:

Overlay of available discharge data from the North and South Forks of the San Gabriel River may suggest some correlation between accelerated reservoir sedimentation associated and high intensity rainfall events. Source of these high-flow events may be strongly linked to land use / land cover change occurring around the mid-watershed IH-35 corridor. This area is rapidly growing and may be impacting the hydrological regime. An area of particular interest is that contributing to the South San Gabriel River, as the North San Gabriel River Watershed contribution is regulated by Lake Georgetown discharge.

Digital terrain models representing temporally discrete volumetric survey periods may hold the key to identifying areas of active sedimentation within Granger Lake, and their hydraulically linked and erosion prone upland counterparts. Time-lapse comparison of Granger Lake 2002, 2007, and 2010 bathymetry reveals active deposition zones. Zonal isolation and assessment of active deposition areas and their contributing sub-catchments may help researchers more accurately quantify targeted conservation effects.

Insights from this research highlight the importance of validating historic reservoir survey data and significance regarding its use as a direct measurement technique - for quantifying historic and future conservation effects, or other reservoir sustaining strategies. It can be a useful indicator of watershed erosion or other perturbation within the surrounding landscape. With population and statewide water use

increasing, water shortages are a real possibility in places where storage capacities are significantly less than what is assumed from the original or previous surveys (Furnans and Austin 2008). Proper management of existing surface-water storage capacity as well as prediction of future water supplies requires knowledge of the rates of reservoir volume loss. Current and best available sediment/storage information for reservoirs is crucial for their continued operation and management.

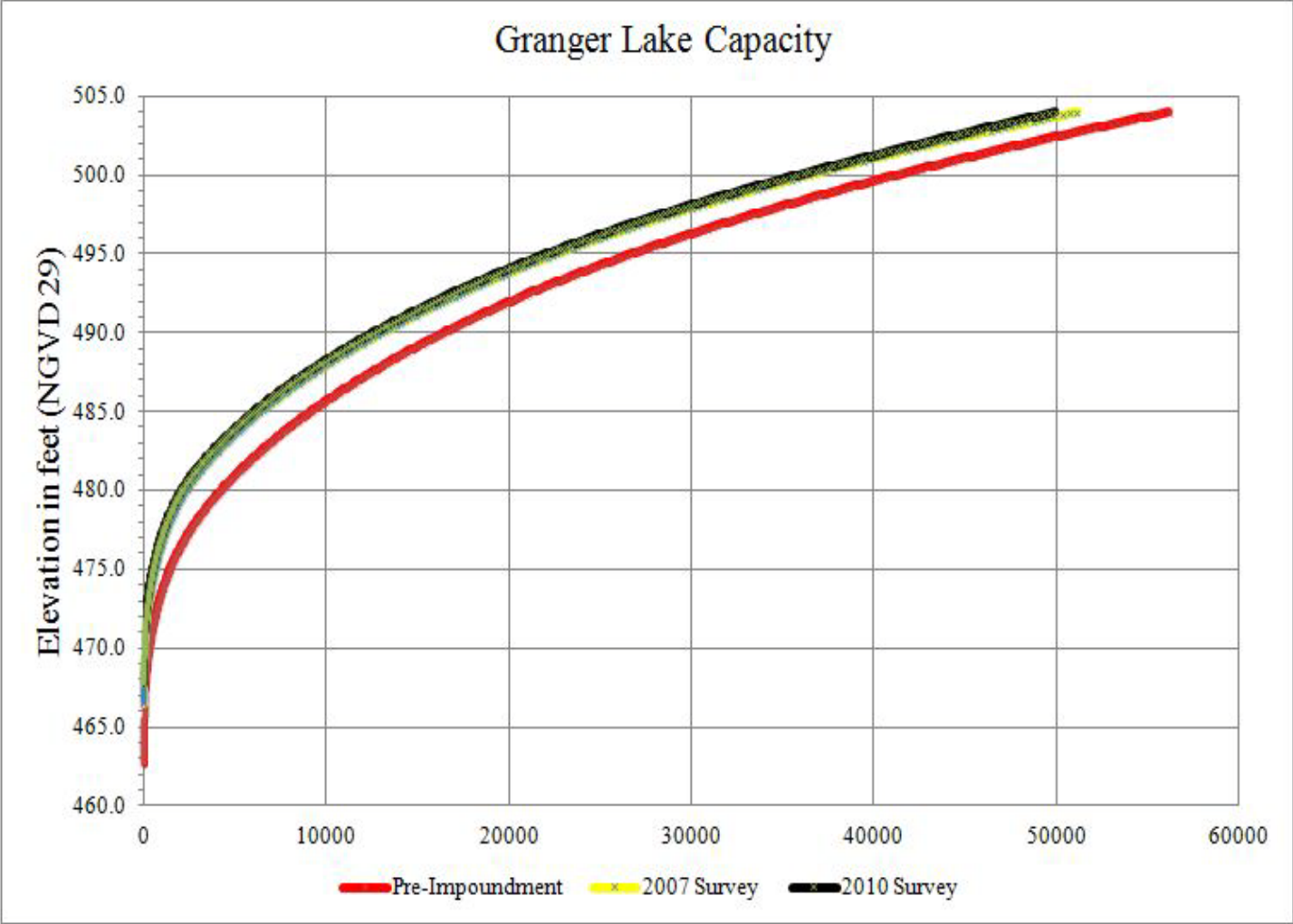
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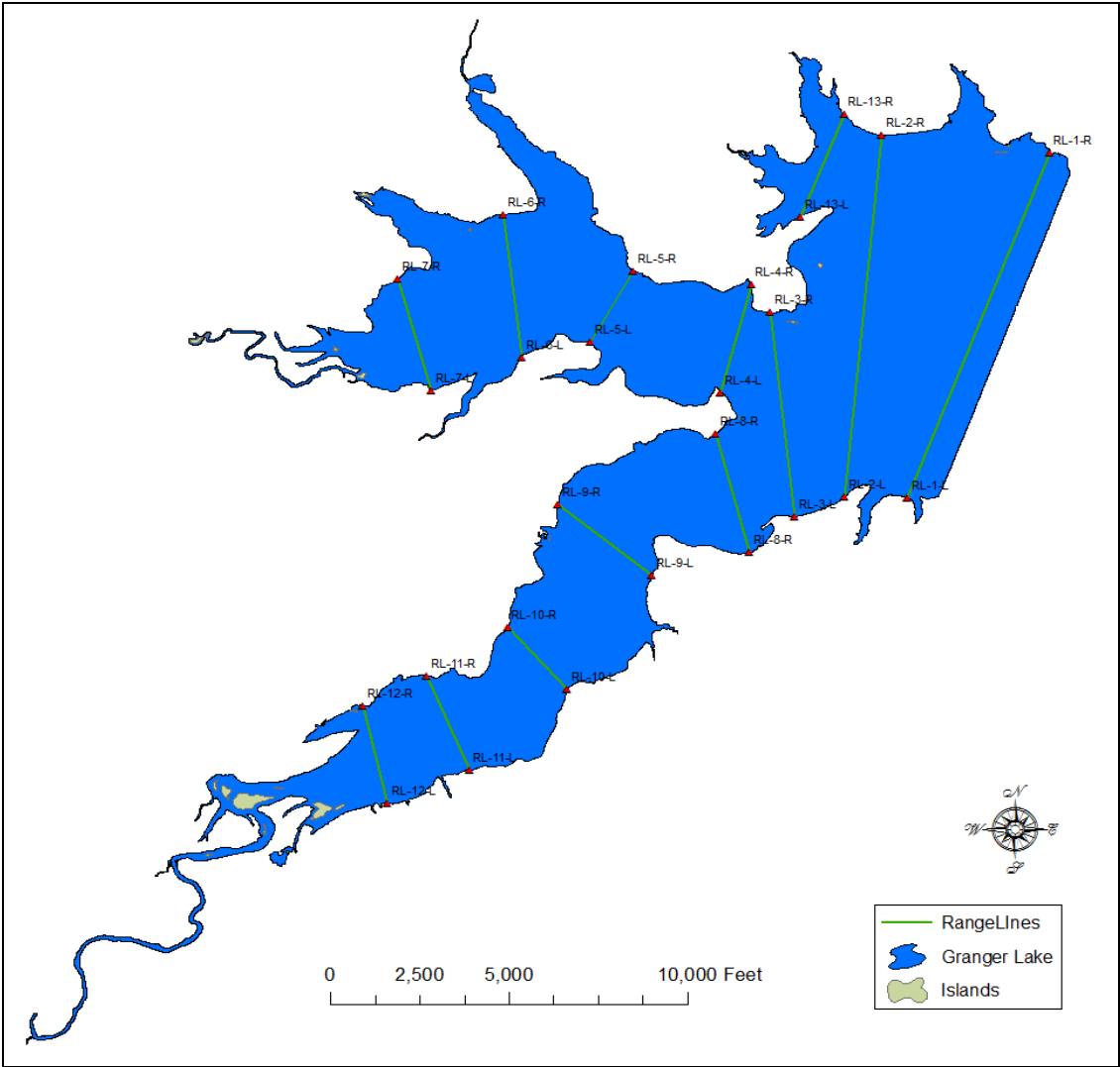
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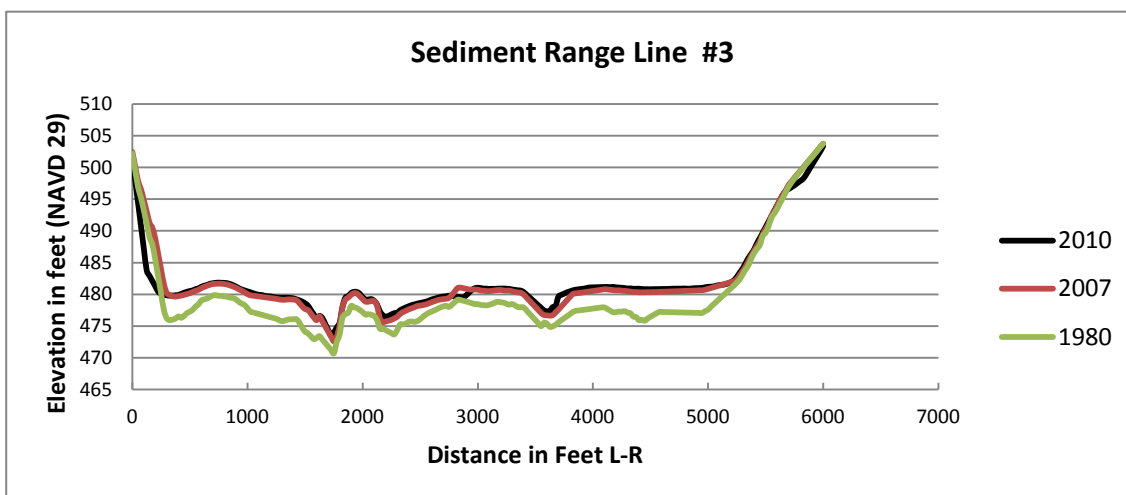
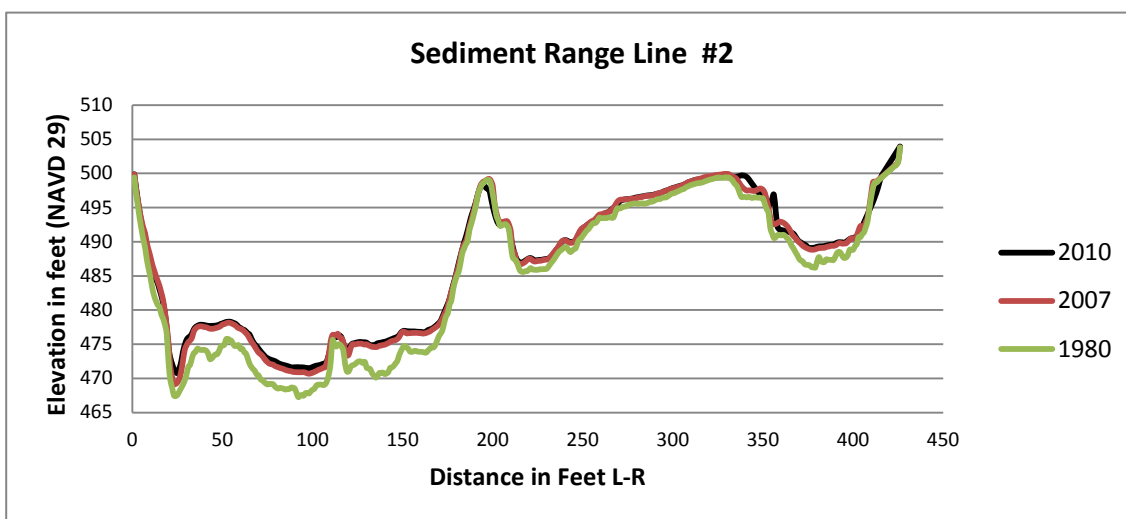
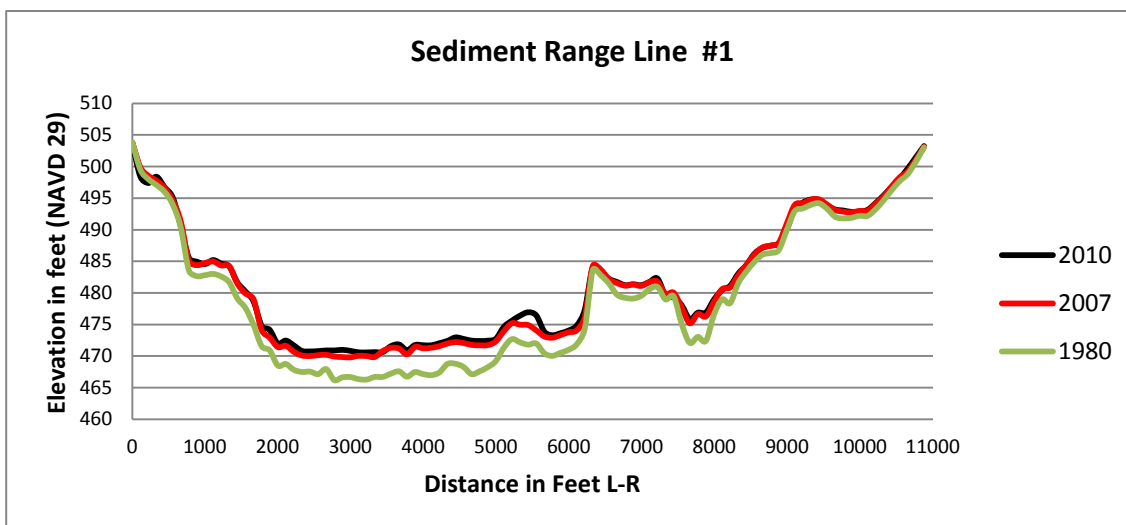
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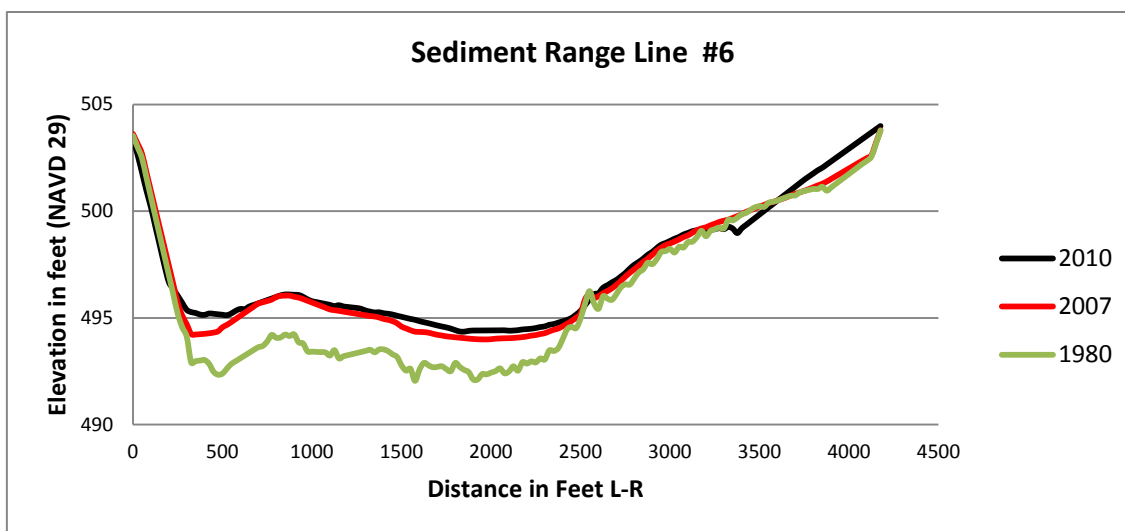
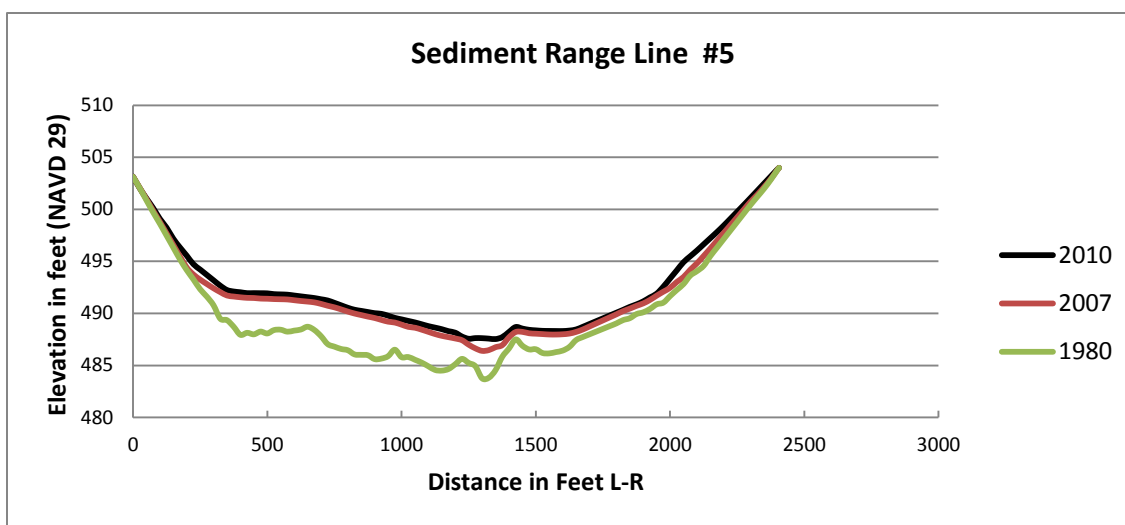
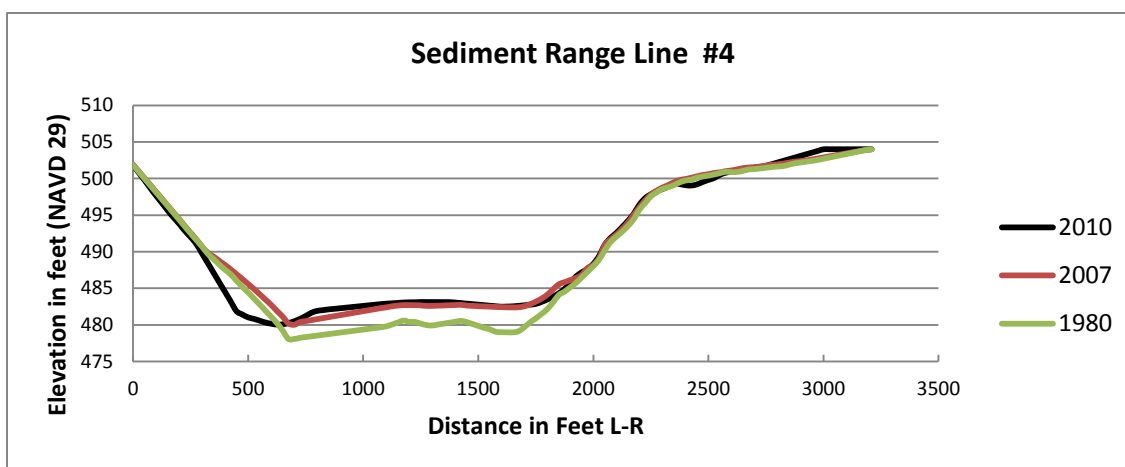
APPENDIX A

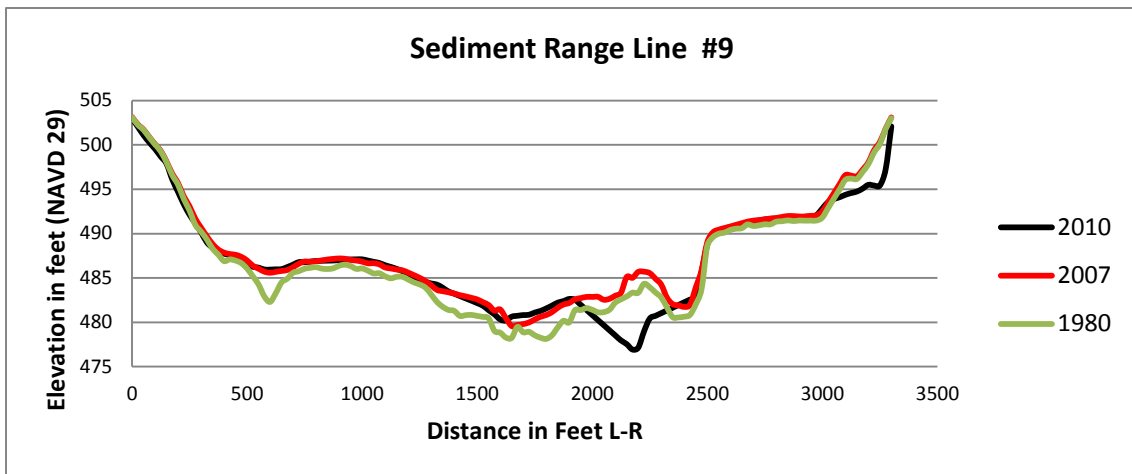
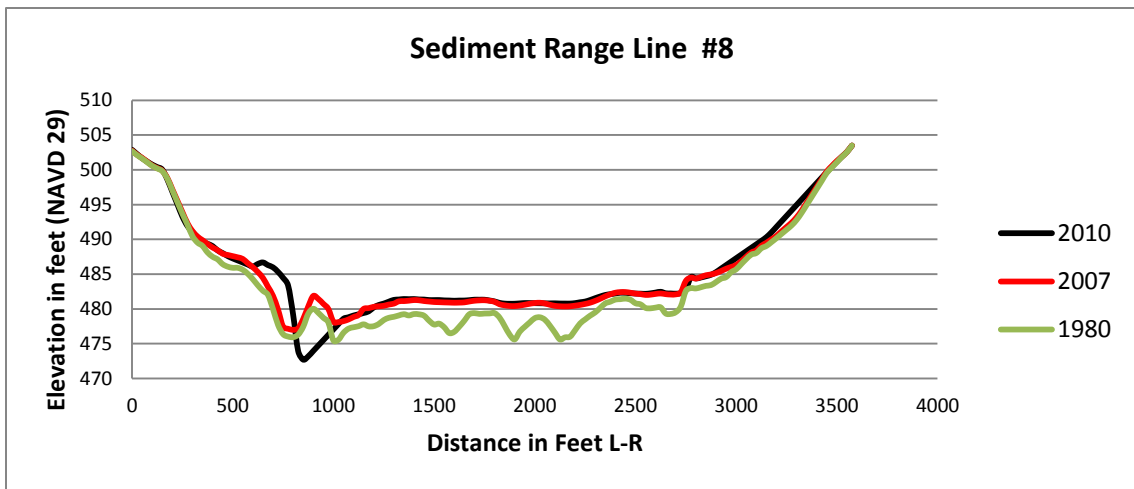
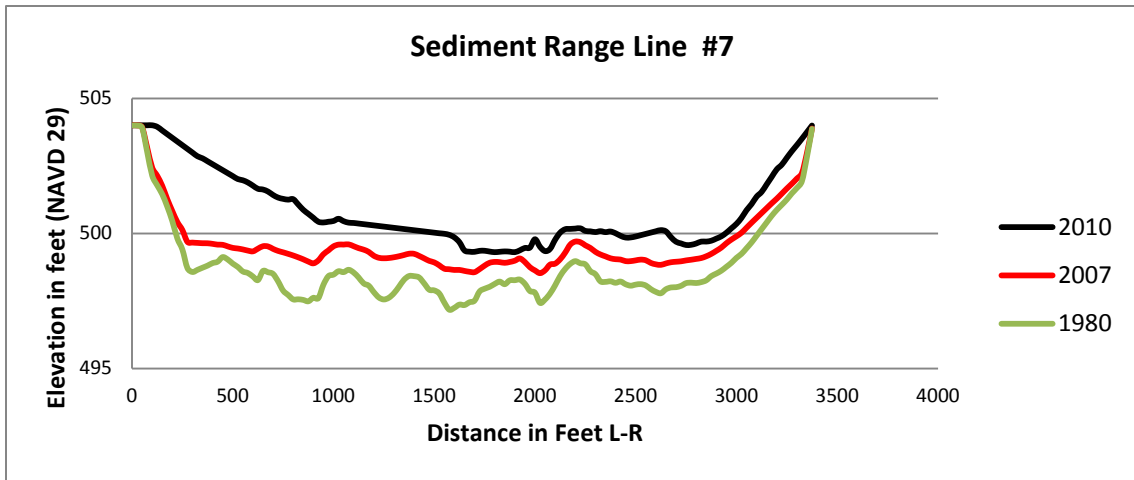


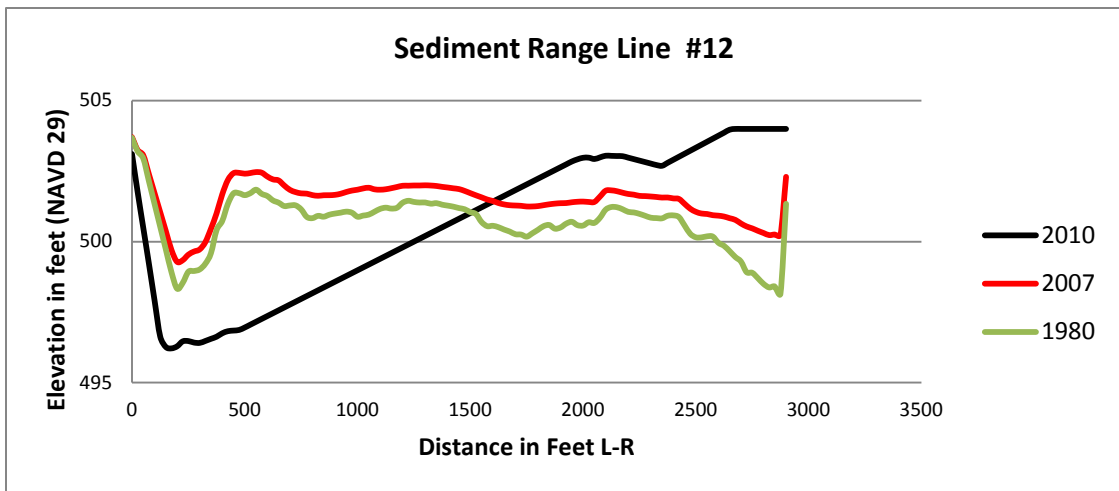
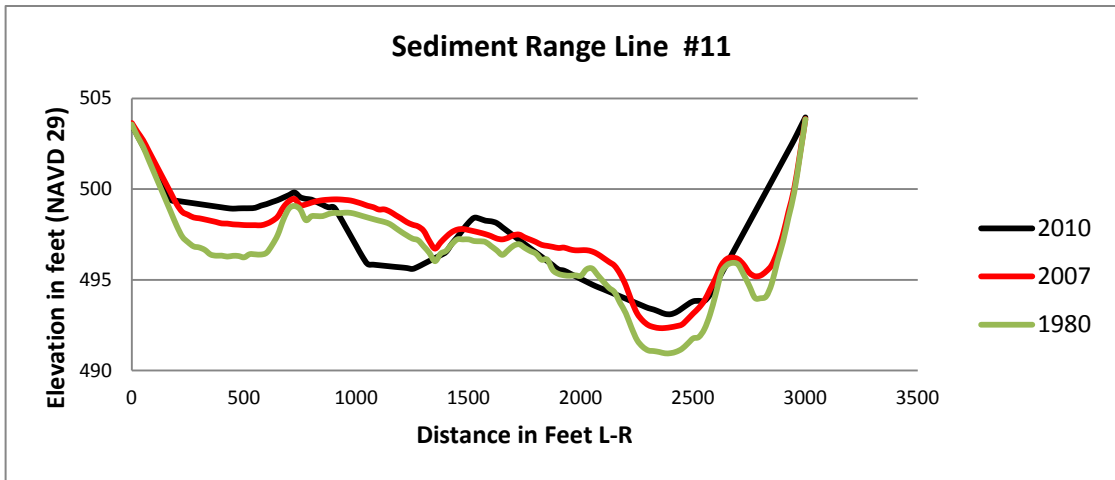
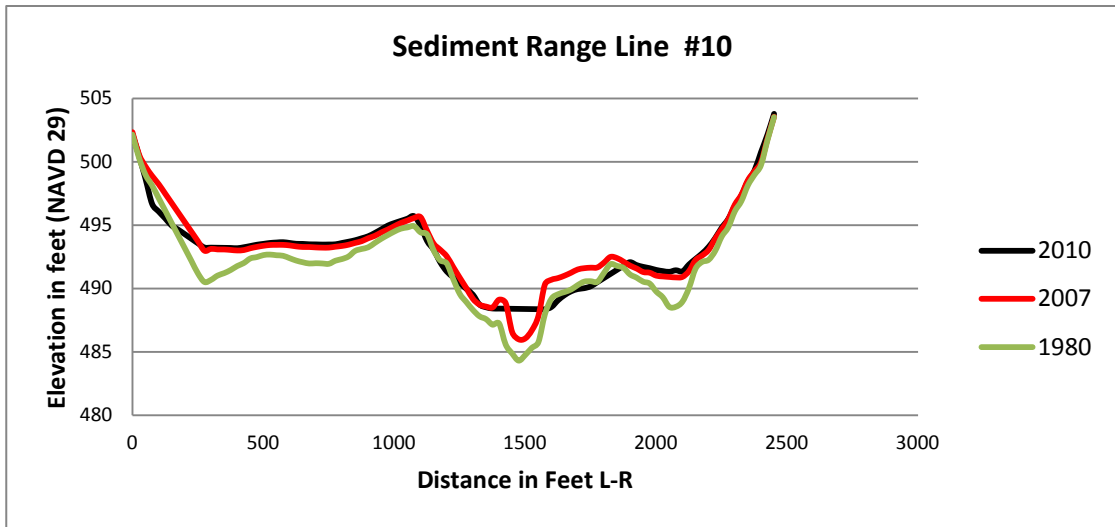
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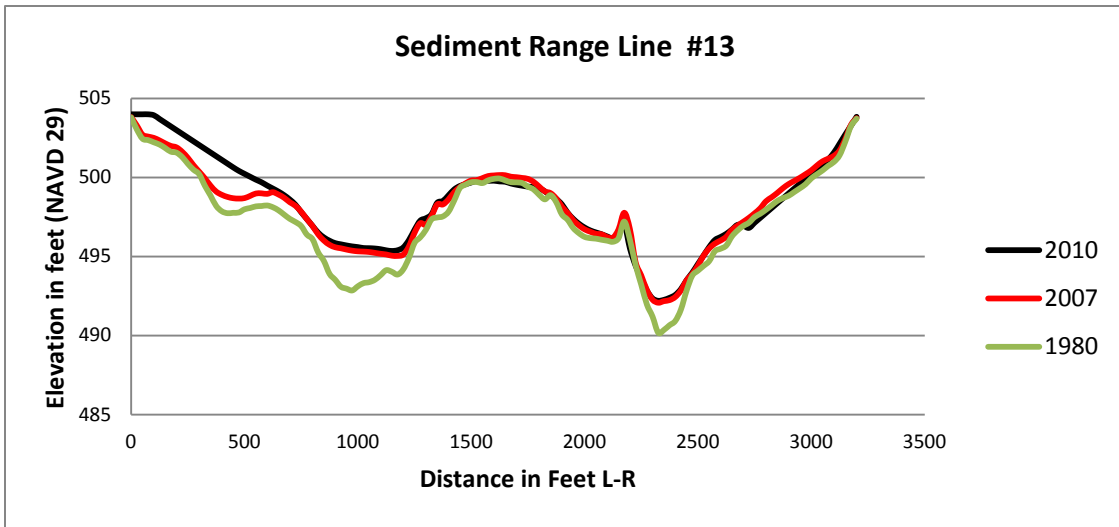




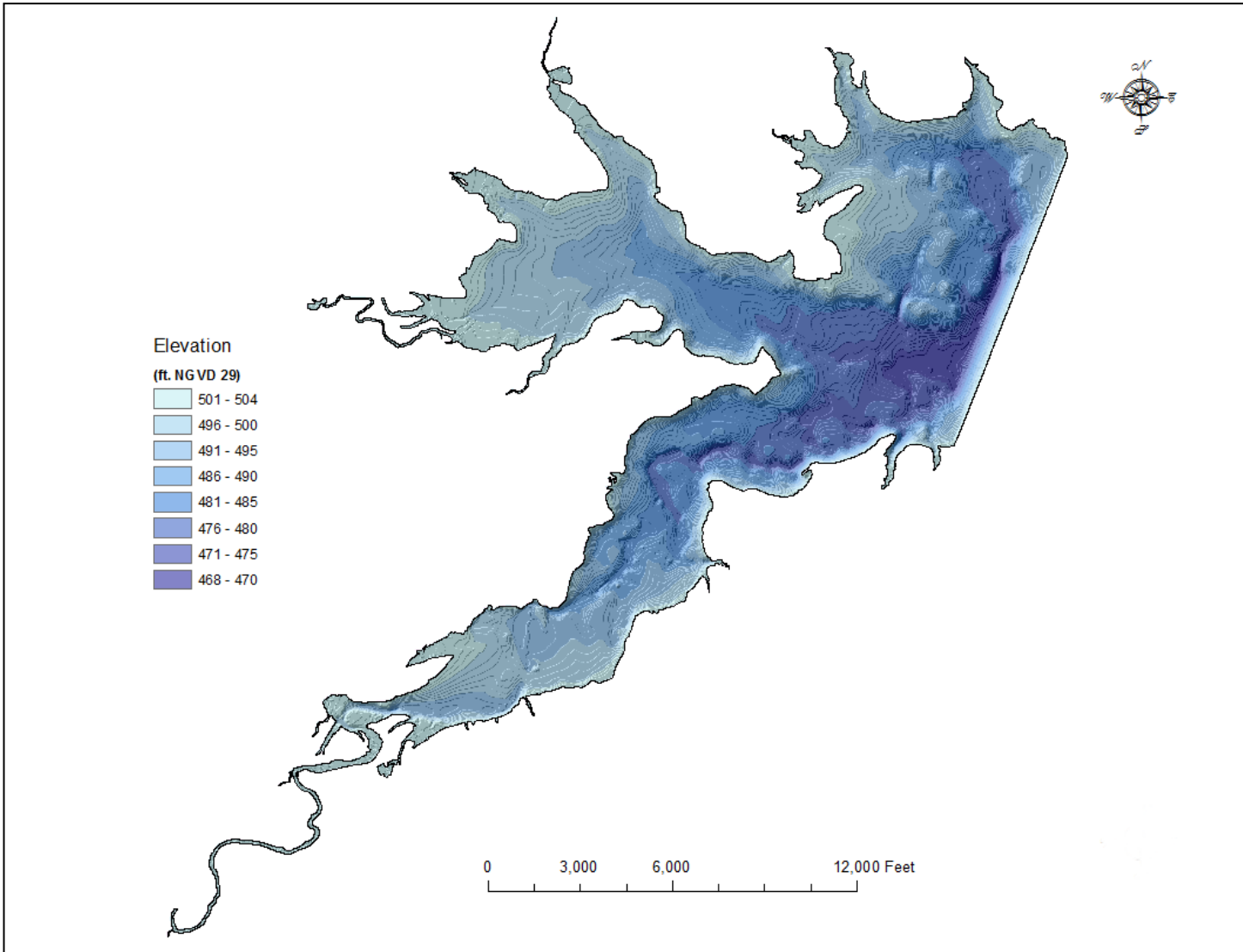




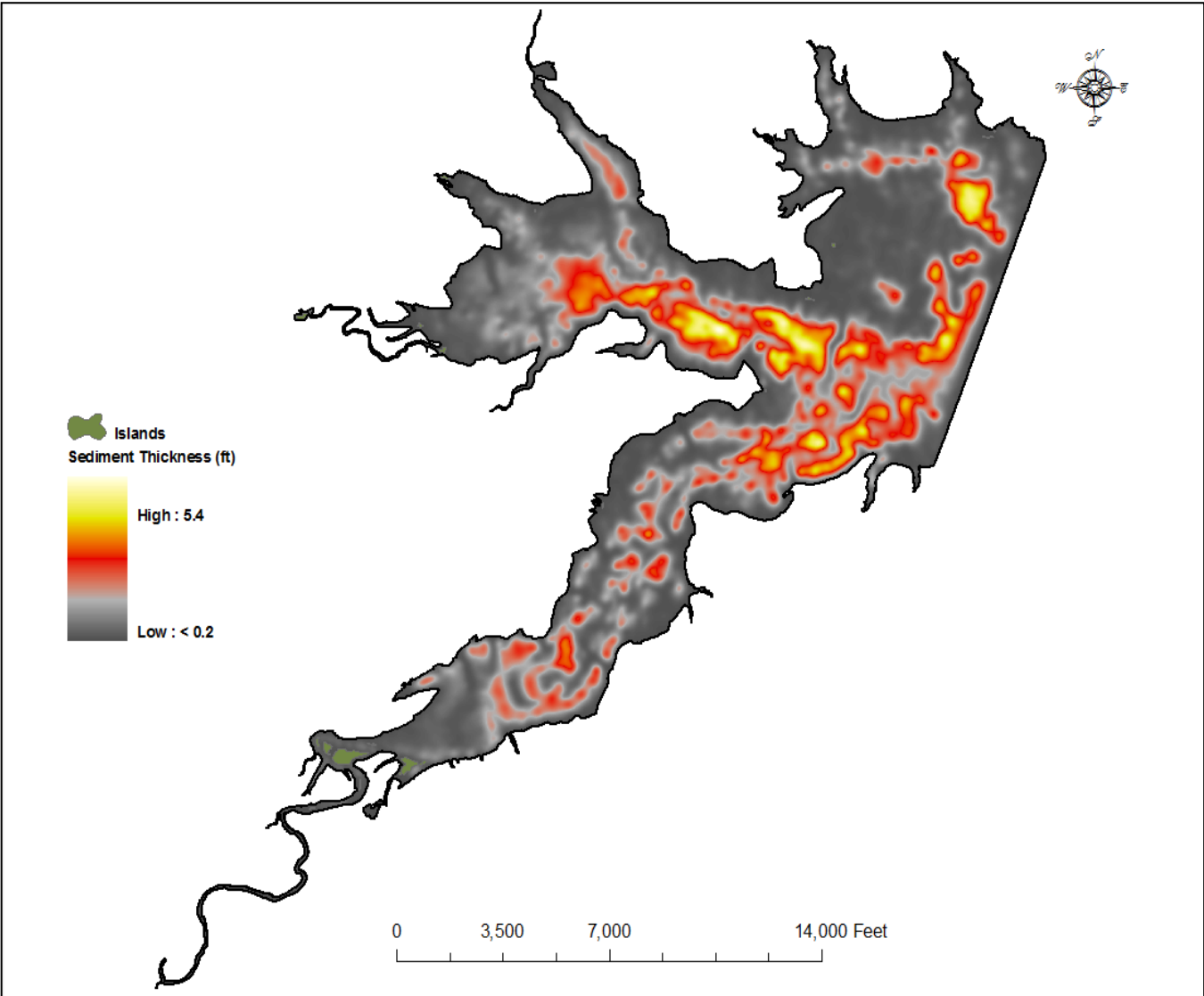




APPENDIX C



APPENDIX D



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