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Corps of Engineers releases final report on Savannah Harbor Expansion

SAVANNAH, Ga. – Officials from the [Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) have released the final report on the [Savannah Harbor Expansion Project](#).

The final report—consisting of a General Re-evaluation Report (GRR) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)—concludes that deepening the harbor from its current depth of 42 feet to 47 feet is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and in the best interests of the United States.

“Today’s release culminates 14 years of intense study, analysis, and coordination with state and federal agencies, stakeholders and the general public,” said Col. Jeff M. Hall, Commander of the Savannah District. “The cooperating agencies have unanimously agreed to the release of the final report.”

The following agencies served as Cooperating Agencies in preparing the final report: Environmental Protection Agency - Region IV; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service - Southeast Region; US Fish and Wildlife Service - Southeast Region; and the Georgia Ports Authority.

“The Final Report represents the most comprehensive study for harbor deepening in the nation’s history,” Hall said. “We are confident that our report is thorough and strong, and that the project will enhance the nation’s global competitiveness while sustaining the natural environment.”

The final report recommends the 47-foot plan, which is also the “National Economic Development” Plan. Signing of the Record of Decision—the final step in the process before construction can begin—is anticipated in late 2012.

The GRR-EIS study, authorized by Congress, reflects an extensive analysis of the engineering alternatives, environmental impacts, and economic costs and benefits of deepening the Savannah Harbor and shipping channel. Funded by the federal government and the state of Georgia, the study examined the characteristics of future international shipping fleets, current and future trade routes, and the capacity of the Garden City Terminal on the Savannah River.

Based on analyses within the report, the 47-foot plan would bring \$174 million in annual net benefits to the nation, with a cost-to-benefit ratio of 5.5 to 1. Essentially, for every \$1 invested in the project, the nation would yield nearly \$6 in returns. The estimated total cost for the project, based on fiscal year 2012 levels, is \$652 million, cost-shared by the Federal government and the State of Georgia.

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Of the total cost, 45 percent accounts for environmental mitigation features at \$292 million. Environmental features include flow-rerouting for marsh restoration, a fish bypass upstream near Augusta for the endangered Shortnose Sturgeon, a dissolved oxygen injection system, recovery of the ironclad CSS Georgia, a 10-year post-construction monitoring period, and more.

The public can view the report online at <http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/shexpan/Home.html> . Comments can be submitted in writing to: Headquarters, US Army Corps of Engineers, CECW-P (SA), 7701 Telegraph Road, Alexandria, VA 22315-3860. The official closing date for the receipt of comments is May 20, which is 30 calendar days from the date the notice of availability appears in the Federal Register.

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About Us: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' [Savannah District](#) manages [three lakes and hydroelectric dams](#) along the Savannah River. It also oversees a multi-billion dollar [military construction](#) program at 11 Army and Air Force installations in Georgia and North Carolina. Corps' projects range from barracks, hospitals and clinics to maintenance facilities, headquarters buildings and aircraft hangars. The Savannah District also has oversight and maintains additional civil works projects – from the Savannah and Brunswick harbors to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.