

## **Fact Paper**

**Project Name:** Savannah Harbor, Georgia Maintenance (O&M & GaDOT)

**Project Purpose:** Maintenance of the Savannah Harbor navigation channel for safe and efficient passage of harbor ship traffic.

**Project Description:**

O&M – For Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Savannah Harbor is a major deep-water port with 11.4 miles of ocean channel and 21.3 miles of inner harbor channel. The ocean channel is 44 feet deep mlw and 600 feet wide. The inner channel is 42 ft. deep mlw and 500 ft. wide to the upper end of Kings Island Turning Basin, 36 ft. deep mlw and 400 ft. wide to the upper end of Argyle Island Turning Basin and 30 feet deep mlw and 400 ft. wide to the upper limit of the project. Bend wideners assist passage of ships through the harbor. The inner harbor has six turning basins and an inactivated Tide Gate structure adjacent to a Sediment Basin. Kings Island Turning Basin (42 ft. deep mlw, 1500 ft. wide and 1600 ft. long) is the primary turning basin and lies adjacent to the bulk of Georgia Port Authority docks. The District's general policy is to have a dredge "on-the-way" when the channel is deficient in two adjacent channel quarters. Monthly controlling depth surveys taken along the entire length of the harbor are used to monitor harbor sedimentation.

GaDOT – Georgia Department of Transportation (GADOT) became the local sponsor in Dec. 1999 and funds the District 100% for maintenance of dikes and structures for harbor dredging. There are 8 upland diked areas and 1 offshore area with 42 miles of dikes having elevations varying from 16 to 52 ft mlw. enclosing 5291 acres. Once the Water Resources Act of 1996 (WRDA 96) is invoked, the Federal Government will pay 100% maintenance.

**Project Background:** Concurrences and environmental clearances received for the 1993-94 Savannah Harbor Deepening Project and subsequently formalized in agreements with Federal and State environmental resource agencies through the Long Term Management Strategy for the Harbor Project control the Savannah District's use and management of the dredged material disposal areas for harbor dredging. The Savannah District Corps of Engineers holds strong perpetual or 50 year easements on the dredged material containment areas located in South Carolina.

**Project Sponsor:** The Georgia Department of Transportation (GaDOT).

**Project Budget:** Appropriation: 3123 O&M

**Status:** The five-year average maintenance federal expenditures for Savannah Harbor O&M as of FY 03 are approximately \$13.4 million/FY of which dredging contract expenditures average approximately \$11.5 million/FY. Two maintenance-dredging contracts are typically used each year to maintain harbor depths. Our expenditures have been below average for the past several years due to a recently ended drought that caused reduced shoaling in the harbor.

**Additional Information:** Our major challenges are:

Upstream Dredged Material Storage Capacity - Upstream storage for containment of sediments is severely limited. Future dredging will require increased pumping distance at

additional cost as the dredged sediments are pumped to downstream containment areas if new containment area(s) are not developed.

Environmental Constraints - Environmental constraints limit our ability to freely dredge the harbor. We face restrictions on use of containment areas when colonial nesting birds are present and cannot dredge certain portions of the harbor and entrance channel during specified dates due to striped bass spawning or the presence of sea turtles. Ocean channel hopper dredges are also restricted in terms of sailing speed when right whales are spotted within ten miles of the project.

**Project Manager:** Lyle Maciejewski