



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SAVANNAH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
100 W. OGLETHORPE AVENUE
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3640

Planning Division

March 17, 2014

PUBLIC NOTICE
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) for the Savannah District portion of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW), South Carolina and Georgia.

Notice of the following is hereby given:

a. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, notice is hereby given that the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes to implement a new 20-year DMMP for the AIWW from Port Royal Sound, South Carolina to Cumberland Sound, Georgia.

b. Savannah District announces the availability to the public of a Draft EA and Draft FONSI concerning maintenance of the Savannah District portion of the AIWW. In the proposed DMMP, sediments dredged to maintain authorized navigation depths in the AIWW would be placed in existing upland dredged material containment areas in South Carolina and Georgia; previously used open water placement areas and existing sediment placement tracts in Ossabaw and Buttermilk Sounds, Georgia; or in existing and new Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Sites located off the Georgia coast. Creation of new Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Sites will require additional site investigations, preparation of environmental assessments, and separate approval from federal and state agencies. Dredging of the AIWW would occur in accordance with the DMMP subject to availability of funding for the project. Copies of the Draft EA and unsigned FONSI can be downloaded from the District website at <http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsandOffices/PlanningDivision/PlansandReports.aspx>. Copies may also be obtained through email request to the following address: CESAS-PD@usace.army.mil, or by contacting Mr. Charles (Win) Seyle at (912) 652-6017.

c. Written statements regarding the Draft EA and FONSI for the proposed action will be received at the Savannah District Office until

12 O'CLOCK NOON, APRIL 16, 2014

from those interested in the activity and whose interests may be affected by the proposed action.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway is a 739-mile inland waterway system between Hampton Roads, Virginia, and St. John's River, Florida, which enables sheltered passage for waterborne vessels between these two destinations. The portion of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway within the Savannah District Civil Works boundaries is located between miles 552 and 713 of the AIWW. Roughly, this area falls between Port Royal Sound, South Carolina, on the north and Cumberland Sound, Georgia on the south, which is located at the Georgia-Florida border. Savannah District's portion of the waterway constitutes approximately 22 percent of the AIWW. The 161-mile section of the AIWW within Savannah District is comprised of a 24-mile section in the State of South Carolina and 137 miles located in the State of Georgia. This authorized 161-mile long project was initially constructed in the early 1940s and has been maintained periodically since construction. The proposed new DMMP outlines a 20-year maintenance plan that identifies dredged material disposal options and evaluates problems associated with the maintenance of the AIWW. Based on the technical analyses and collaboration with other agencies, a recommended plan (the proposed DMMP) was developed that allows continued use of the waterway and minimizes adverse environmental impacts.

Alternative plans were developed as part of the planning process. The alternatives that were considered were as follows:

a. **Without Project Condition/No Action Alternative: Previously Approved Dredged Material Containment Areas (DMCAs).** This alternative would place dredged sediments in existing upland DMCAs that are already approved for placement of AIWW sediments. There are three such DMCAs available: DMCA 14-B, 9-A, and Crab Island.

b. **Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative): Previously Approved Dredged Material Containment Areas (DMCAs), Geo-Tubes, and Open Water/Ocean Placement.** This alternative would place dredged sediments in four diked upland sites: DMCA 14-B, 9-A, Andrews Island, and Crab Island; would use open water placement at current AIWW open water sites; the existing Savannah Harbor ODMDS, the existing Brunswick Harbor ODMDS, a new ODMDS near Sapelo Sound, and a new ODMDS near Altamaha Sound. In conjunction with the AIWW open water sites, this alternative would use geo-tube confined placement. This placement would only be for sediments from specific reaches of the channel that do not meet the requirements for open water, near channel placement. The geo-tubes would be used to confine the new material to portions of the placement sites that are already impacted.

c. **Alternative 2: Previously Approved Dredged Material Containment Areas (DMCAs), Geo-Tubes, New Upland Sites, and Open Water/Ocean Placement.** This alternative would place dredged sediments in four diked upland sites: DMCA 14-B, 9-A, Andrews Island, and Crab Island; would create two new upland DMCAs in Bryan and McIntosh Counties, Georgia; and would use open water placement at current AIWW open water sites, the existing Savannah Harbor ODMDS, the existing Brunswick Harbor ODMDS, a new ODMDS near Sapelo Sound, and a new ODMDS near Altamaha Sound. In conjunction with the AIWW open water sites, this alternative would use geo-tube confined placement. This placement would

only be for sediments from specific reaches that do not meet the requirements for open water, near channel placement. The geo-tubes would be used to confine the new material to portions of the placement sites that are already impacted.

d. Alternative 3: Previously Approved Dredged Material Containment Areas (DMCAs), Diking Saltmarsh Placement Sites, and Open Water/Ocean Placement. This alternative would place dredged sediments in four diked upland sites: DMCA 14-B, 9-A, Andrews Island, and Crab Island; would create nine new upland DMCAs by constructing dikes around existing saltmarsh disposal tracts; and would use open water placement at current AIWW open water sites, the existing Savannah Harbor ODMDS, and a new ODMDS near Altamaha Sound. In conjunction with the AIWW open water sites, this alternative would use geo-tube confined placement. This placement would only be for sediments from specific reaches that do not meet the requirements for open water, near channel placement. The geo-tubes would be used to confine the new material to portions of the placement sites that are already impacted.

e. Alternative 4 (Past Practices): Previously Approved Dredged Material Containment Areas (DMCAs), and Closest Previously Used Sites. This alternative would place dredged sediments in four diked upland sites: DMCA 14-B, 9-A, Andrews Island, and Crab Island; would use unconfined placement of sediments in 17 existing saltmarsh disposal tracts; and use open water placement at current AIWW open water sites. In conjunction with the AIWW open water sites this alternative would use geo-tube confined placement. This placement would only be for material for portions of specific reaches that does not meet the requirements for open water near channel placement. The geo-tubes would be used to confine the new material to portions of the placement sites that are already impacted.

Maps 1-6 on the following pages show the location of the Savannah District's portion of the AIWW and the locations of sediment placement sites under the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1).



Source: Esri, Intergraph, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community



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MAP 1
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT SITE
SAV-1 TO SAV-8
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC TO
WILMINGTON ISLAND, GA

Legend
 Preferred Alternative Placement Site
 AIWW Stationing
 AIWW Channel

Date: December 2012
Created by: Piper Bazemore (SAS-EN-GS)
 1 in = 2 miles
 0 1 2 4
Miles



Source: Esri, InRoads, USDA, USGS, AEX, GeoEye, Getmapping, Aergrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community



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MAP 2
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT SITE
SAV-9 TO SAV-13
WILMINGTON ISLAND, GA TO
OSSABAW ISLAND, GA

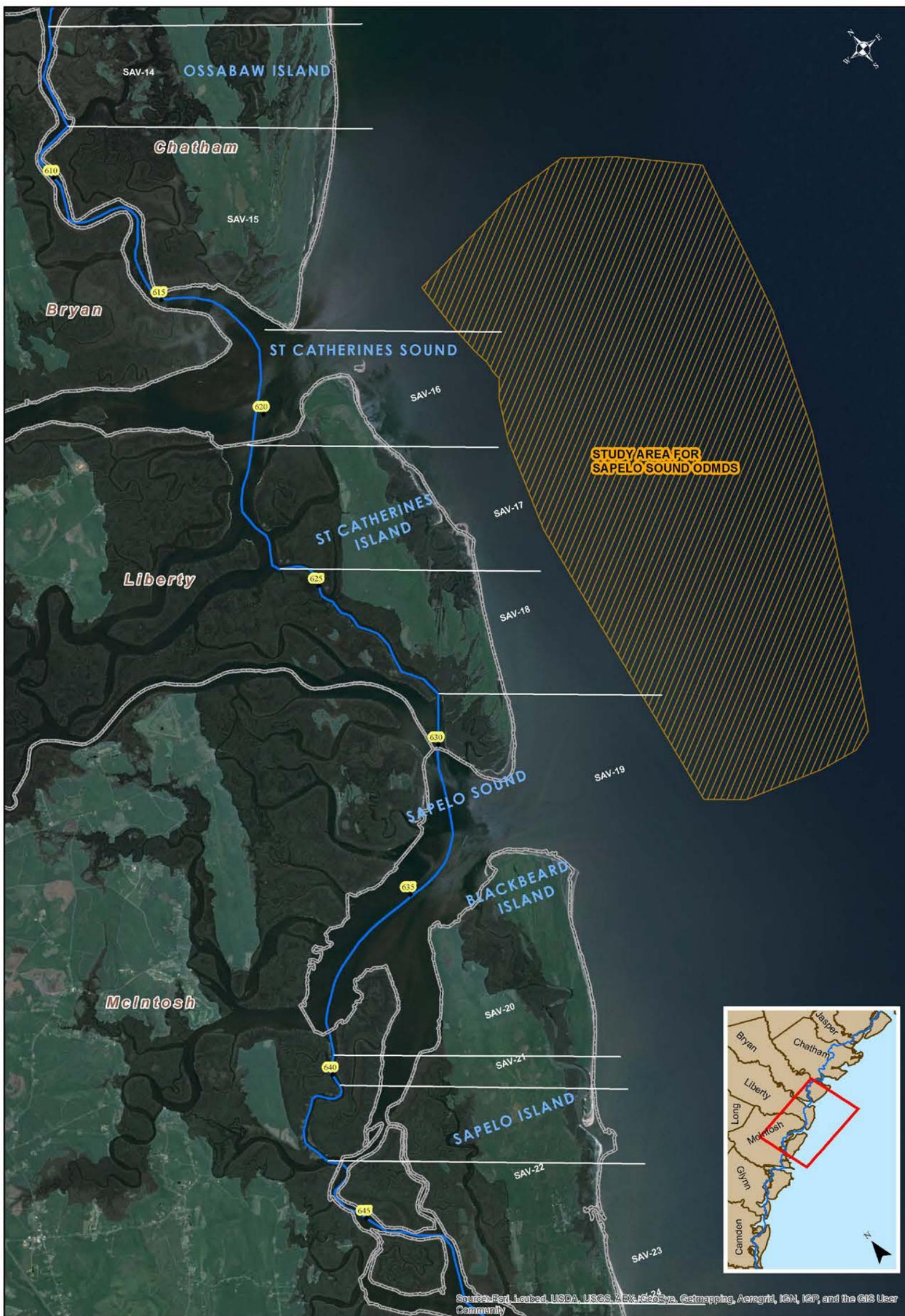
Legend

- Preferred Alternative Placement Site
- AIWW Stationing
- AIWW Channel

Date: December 2012
Created by: Piper Bazemore (SAS-EN-GS)

1 in = 2 miles

0 1 2 4
Miles



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MAP 3
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT SITE
SAV-14 TO SAV-22
OSSABAW ISLAND, GA TO
SAPELO ISLAND, GA

Legend
 Preferred Alternative Placement Site
 AIWW Stationing
 AIWW Channel

Date: December 2012
Created by: Piper Bazemore (SAS-EN-GS)

1 in = 2 miles

0 1 2 4
Miles



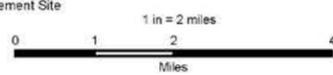
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MAP 4
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT SITE
SAV-23 TO SAV-27
SAPELO ISLAND, GA TO
WOLF ISLAND, GA

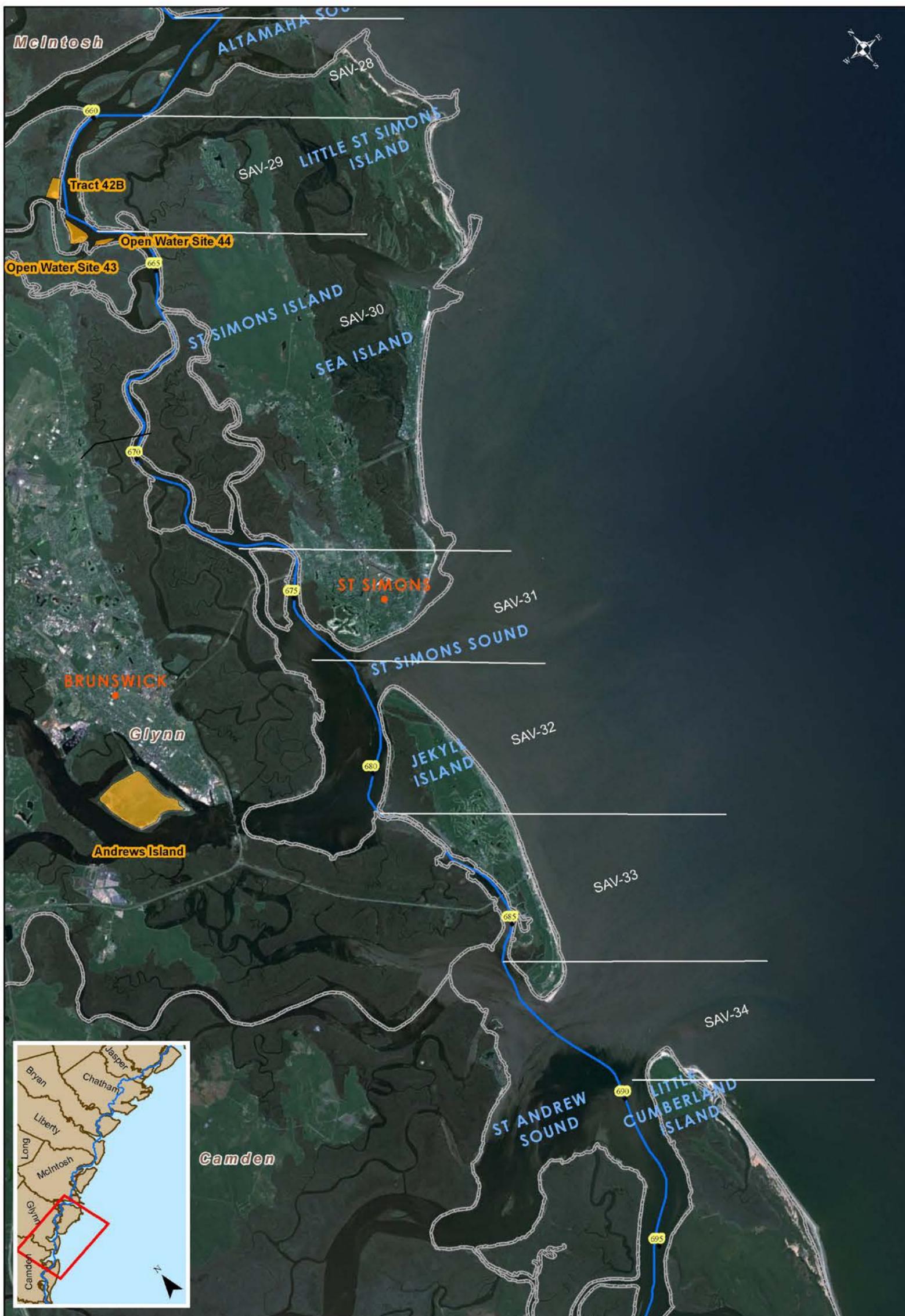
Legend

- Preferred Alternative Placement Site
- AIWW Stationing
- AIWW Channel

Date: December 2012
Created by: Piper Bazemore (SAS-EN-GS)



Source: Esri, Autodesk, USDA, USGS, AEX, GeoEye, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community



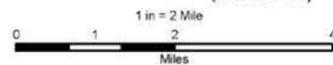
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MAP 5
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT SITE
SAV-29 TO SAV-32
LITTLE ST SIMONS ISLAND, GA TO
JEKYLL ISLAND, GA

Legend

- Preferred Alternative Placement Site
- AIVW Stationing
- AIVW Channel

Date: December 2012
Created by: Piper Bazemore
(SAS-EN-GS)





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MAP 6
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT SITE
SAV-33 TO SAV-36
JEKYLL ISLAND, GA TO
CUMBERLAND ISLAND, GA

Legend

- Preferred Alternative Placement Site
- A1WW Stationing
- A1WW Channel

Date: December 2012
Created by: Piper Bazemore (SAS-EN-GS)

1 in = 2 Mile
0 1 2 4
Miles

Source: Esri, DeLorme, USDA, USGS, AEX, GeoEye, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY EVALUATION:

Environmental Assessment: Savannah District has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and found that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required for this action. The Draft EA is being coordinated concurrently with this Notice to Federal and State natural resource agencies for review and comment.

Wetlands: Implementing the new DMMP would result in impacts to 37.5 acres of saltmarsh as a result of placement of dredged material into existing impacted portions of three sediment disposal easements that have been used in the past. The DMMP proposes to use confining methods such as geo-textile tubes (geo-tubes) to contain dredged material to be placed in three existing impacted saltmarsh tracts. The District has developed a mitigation plan to compensate for the expected future impacts from implementing the DMMP. The mitigation plan is presented in the draft EA.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The District prepared a biological assessment (BATES) evaluating the potential impacts of the proposed action on threatened and endangered species and determined that the project, as currently proposed, would have “no effect” on the Red-cockaded woodpecker, American chaffseed, Pondberry, Canby’s dropwort, Kirtland’s warbler, Bachman’s warbler, Eastern indigo snake, Altamaha spinymussel, and Flatwoods salamander; “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” Wood stork; Piping plover; West Indian manatee; North Atlantic right, humpback, and sperm whales; leatherback, loggerhead, Kemp’s ridley, hawksbill, and green sea turtles; Shortnose and Atlantic sturgeons. The District further determined that the action “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect”, critical habitat for Piping plover (Georgia Units 1-16; South Carolina Units 12-15) or North Atlantic right whale (Southeastern United States Critical Habitat Area). The BATES is included as an appendix in the Draft EA. This proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Cultural Resources: In consultation with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the South Carolina SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Savannah District determined that implementation of the DMMP would have the potential to cause adverse effects on historic properties, and a Programmatic Agreement (PA) was signed by the listed parties. The PA would ensure the District complies with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as it addresses how the AIWW channel and associated placement sites (existing and new) will be surveyed for cultural resources, how sites will be evaluated for the National Register of Historic Places, and how determinations of effect will be made. The PA is included as an appendix to the Draft EA. Additionally a remote sensing survey of 12 reaches of the AIWW channel was conducted and no significant cultural resources were located but two paleolandforms were recorded. The District determined implementation of the DMMP would have no effect on cultural resources in the surveyed areas as the paleolandforms are below the authorized dredging depth.

Essential Fish Habitat: Savannah District evaluated the proposal’s potential effects on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). No significant impacts to essential fish habitat are expected. An

EFH appendix is provided in the Draft Environmental Assessment. This determination is being coordinated with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Water Quality Certification: Water Quality Certification for the proposed work is being requested from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Any person or agency who desires to comment, object, or request a public hearing relative to Georgia State Water Quality Certification must do so within 30 days of the State's receipt of this notice, in writing, and state the reasons/basis of objections, or request for a public hearing. Such comments should be submitted to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, 205 Butler Street, SE., Suite 1252, Atlanta, Georgia 30334. Any person or agency who desires to comment, object, or request a public hearing relative to South Carolina State Water Quality Certification must do so within 60 days of the date of this notice, in writing, and state the reasons/basis of objections, or request for a public hearing to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of Water Quality, Bureau of Water, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201-1708.

Coastal Zone Consistency: The Savannah District has evaluated the proposed project and found it is consistent with the Georgia Coastal Zone Management Program and the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program to the maximum extent practicable. The District is coordinating its consistency determination with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division and with the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Any person who desires to comment or object to Georgia Coastal Zone Management Consistency Certification must do so in writing within 30 days of the date of this notice to the Federal Consistency Coordinator, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division, Suite 300, One Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia 31520-8687 and state the reasons or basis for the objections. Any person who desires to comment or object to South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Consistency Certification must do so in writing within 45 days of the date of this notice to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management; 1362 McMillan Avenue, Suite 400, Charleston, South Carolina 29405 and state the reasons or basis for the objections.

Clean Air Act: This action is being coordinated with the United States Environmental Protection Agency. No violations of air quality standards are expected.

Application of the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: The District has conducted an evaluation of the proposed impacts in accordance with Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act and determined that the proposed discharge complies with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. This evaluation is included as an appendix to the Draft EA.

Public Interest Review: The decision whether to proceed with the project as proposed will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both the protection and use of important resources. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to

accrue from the proposal will be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof. Among these are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife, flood hazards, flood plains, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion/accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership, environmental justice, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

Consideration of Public Comments: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in its deliberations on this action. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, wetlands, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of the EA pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment to the Corps on this proposed action should submit comments no later than the end of the comment period shown in this notice, in writing, to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Planning Division, ATTN: Mr. Charles (Win) Seyle (PD), 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31401-3640, by FAX to 912-652-5787, or by emailing the comments to the following address: CESAS-PD@usace.army.mil.



William G. Bailey
Chief, Planning Division