



Media Advisory

This is not a news release. It is for media information only.
July 25, 2003

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Savannah District and Georgia Ports Authority will host a joint news conference at Old Fort Jackson on Wednesday, July 30, at 10 a.m. to inform the public of the dive work going on in the Savannah Harbor in connection with the Confederate ironclad C.S.S. *Georgia*. That work began July 18 and will continue for six to seven weeks.

Savannah District uses remote sensing equipment to monitor conditions at the wreck site, and data from the last few years indicate that the site is deteriorating, even though the Corps has long since altered its dredging practices to avoid impacts to the site. Divers are using high-tech electronic equipment to determine what is causing the deterioration and what alternatives are available to mitigate this impact. They will also examine the effect of various channel-deepening scenarios associated with the proposed Savannah Harbor Expansion Project and alternatives available for mitigating and/or avoiding those impacts. That diving is being conducted in partnership with Georgia Ports Authority on a 50-50 cost share basis.

More than 150 guests are expected to attend the news conference, including U.S. Congressman Jack Kingston, a strong supporter of the harbor expansion project. Kingston will make brief remarks and will be joined by Representative O. Max Burns, Georgia 12th Congressional District; the Honorable Floyd Adams, Jr., mayor of Savannah; the Honorable Lonice Barrett, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Rodger Stroup, Ph.D., director and state historic preservation officer, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Scott W. Smith, executive director of the Coastal Heritage Society, and the co-principal investigators for the dive subcontractors.

Conference co-hosts Col. Roger A. Gerber, commander of the Savannah District, and Doug Marchand, executive director of Georgia Ports Authority, will speak from the dais and also be available to the media after the conference, along with Corps archeologist Judy Wood, a leading expert on the CSS *Georgia*.

Access to the dive vessel must be pre-arranged, and no transportation will be available Wednesday to take the media to the dive site, so photographers are advised to bring a long-focal lens. The dive site is about 600 feet from the fort.

The news conference is expected to end about 11 a.m., followed by a small reception for invited guests, who include private citizens and representatives from a cross-section of federal, state and private-sector organizations interested in preserving the *Georgia*.

Please contact the Public Affairs Office at 652-5758 if you plan to cover this event.