



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SAVANNAH DISTRICT
100 W. OGLETHORPE AVENUE
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3604

June 9, 2020

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

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District (Corps), in collaboration with the Georgia Ports Authority, has evaluated the feasibility of increasing transportation cost efficiencies in the deep draft Federal navigation channel at Brunswick Harbor, Glynn County, Georgia. A draft Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR)/Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) under the authority of Section 1201 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016 and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, have been prepared to present the results of the study, and to analyze impacts of the proposed measures on the environment.

Notice of the following is hereby given: Pursuant to the NEPA, the Corps evaluated an array of alternatives, including the No Action Alternative (NAA), to determine the recommended plan, Alternative 8, which is a combination of the bend widener, turning basin expansion, and meeting area at St. Simon's Sound (Figure 1).

The Draft IFR/EA and Draft FONSI are available for public review and comment. The documents can be downloaded from the Corps 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.SAS@usace.army.mil.

The Comment period closes July 9, 2020

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAFT RECOMMENDED PLAN: The recommended plan, Alternative 8, includes removal of 205,000 cubic yards of material at the bend widener and 346,000 cubic yards at the turning basin expansion. No dredging is needed at St. Simon's Sound as it is naturally deep and only requires realignment of the authorized channel dimensions. At this time all the dredged material would be placed in the Andrews Island Dredged Material Containment Area. Beneficial use of a portion of material from the bend widener is being considered for placement on the existing Bird Island to address erosion concerns.



Figure 1: Proposed Recommended Plan- Alternative 8

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY EVALUATION:

Environmental Assessment: The Corps has prepared a Draft IFR/EA and found that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required for this action. The Draft IFR/EA is being coordinated concurrently with Federal and State natural resource agencies and the public for review and comment.

Threatened, Endangered and other Protected Species: With implementation of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service best management practices and the Project Design Criteria in the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion for Dredging and Material Placement Activities in the Southeast United States, the Corps has determined that the proposed actions may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the following federally listed species: West Indies manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricate*), shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), and Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*).

The Corps has also determined that the proposed actions will have no effect the following federally listed species: Piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), red knot (*Calidris canutus*), North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) and sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*).

Cultural Resources: The Draft IFR/EA contains a detailed analysis of the cultural resources and historic properties that are within the study area and potential impacts for all alternative actions as well as the no action. Adverse effects to submerged cultural resources such as shipwreck remains and prehistoric archaeological sites could occur from damage caused by the dredging equipment and by the mooring and anchoring of the dredge. As project designs are refined and optimized, impacts to cultural resources will continue to be minimized and avoided where possible. Because the Corps cannot fully determine how the project may affect historic properties prior to finalization of this feasibility study, a Programmatic Agreement (PA) will be used to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). The PA will allow the Corps to complete the necessary archaeological surveys and investigations during the follow-on Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) phase of the project, after the dredging areas have been fully identified. Therefore, pursuant to 54 U.S.C. 306108, 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2), and 36 CFR 800.14(b)(1)(ii), the Corps is deferring final identification and evaluation of historic properties until after project approval, and prior to construction, by executing a PA.

Essential Fish Habitat: With implementation of the proposed action, there is the potential to alter Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) within the project area as described in the IFR/EA. The Corps has determined that these alterations are not adverse because the temporary and minor impacts do not reduce either the quality or quantity of EFH in the project area. Further, given the amount of EFH in the area, the conversion of one EFH type to another as a result of the proposed action will not eliminate, diminish, or appreciably disrupt EFH in the project area.

Water Quality Certification: The Corps will comply with the existing 401 Water

Quality Certification in place for the Andrews Island Dredge Material Containment Area where effluent from the dredge events be discharged into the Turtle River.

Coastal Zone Consistency: The proposed project will have localized, minor adverse impacts on coastal resources within the existing previously disturbed project area. However, the proposed project will have beneficial impacts to coastal uses by reducing transportation cost inefficiencies resulting from navigation maneuverability limitations due primarily to the existing width of a channel bend near the Cedar Hammock Range and turning basin near Colonel's Island Terminal. Therefore, in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), and as detailed in Appendix J of the report, it has been determined that the proposed project would be carried out in a manner which is fully consistent with the enforceable policies of Georgia's coastal management program.

Clean Air Act: With implementation of the draft recommended plan, no changes in Air Quality are anticipated as no additional vessel traffic would occur with this project. In addition, Glynn County, Georgia is currently in attainment for all criteria pollutants. Therefore, the project area is under no Federal or State restrictions for the purpose of improving air quality to meet any air quality standards.

Application of the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: At this time all the dredged material would be placed in the Andrews Island Dredged Material Containment Area. Beneficial use of a portion of material from the bend widener is being considered for placement on the existing Bird Island to address erosion concerns. Therefore, a Section 404(b)(1) evaluation is not required at this time.

Consideration of Public Comments: The Corps 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 Corps in its deliberations on this action.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment to the Savannah District on the draft recommended plan should submit comments no later than the end of the comment period shown in this notice, in writing, to: CESAS-PD.SAS@usace.army.mil. Questions may be directed to the undersigned at (912) 652-5968.

Kimberly L Garvey

Kimberly L. Garvey
Chief, Planning Branch