



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

January 26, 2024

Regulatory Division
SAS-2005-01790

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE
Savannah District/State of Georgia

The Savannah District has received an application for a Department of the Army Permit, pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. § 403) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344), as follows:

Application Number: SAS-2005-01709

Applicant: James Dohm, Commander
Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay
910 USS Hunley Avenue, Building 215
Kings Bay, Georgia 31547

Agent: Gretchen Ehlinger
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, Florida 32207

Project Purpose as Proposed by Applicant: The applicant's stated project purpose is "to dredge the existing Kings Bay Naval Submarine channel for navigational purposes within waters of the United States".

Location of Proposed Work in SAS Jurisdiction: Naval Submarine Base (NSB) Kings Bay is located in Camden County, Georgia adjacent to the town of St. Mary's and across the St. Marys River and Cumberland Sound from Fernandina Beach, Nassau County, Florida. Ocean access to the base is by way of two contiguous channel segments: Kings Bay Entrance Channel (KBEC) and as Kings Bay Inner Channel (KBIC). The KBEC, also known as St. Mary's Entrance Channel, separates Amelia Island, Florida to the south from Cumberland Island, Georgia to the North. The KBIC and KBEC juncture is located at the southwestern side of Cumberland Island at confluence of the Amelia River and lower Cumberland Sound estuary at Cut 1N STA 0+00. However, the split between the Kings Bay Submarine Base and Kings Bay Submarine Base Entrance Channel projects has been moved. The KBEC project now includes portions of the KBIC channel segment while the Sub Base project has been reduced in size from the previously-permitted limits, but still lying entirely within the

Inner Channel Segment and the State of Georgia. The Sub Base project boundary is located at STA 30+368 of Range-D at the northwestern side of Cumberland Island, north of Drum Point Island in the Cumberland Sound estuary.

Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers SAS:

To maintain these channels, annual maintenance dredging of up to 1,600,000 cubic yards (CYs) within Georgia is required. Table 1-1 breaks down the dredging areas and potential dredged quantities channel stationing and Corps of Engineers district and state. The annual average maintenance quantities are approximately half of the potential quantities.

Table 1-1: Corps District Permitting Boundaries

Channel Demarcation	State	Corps District	Dredging Area (SF)	Potential Dredging Quantity (CY)
Inner Channel				
Sta. 30+368 to Sta. 48+242	GA	SAS	14,700,000	1,200,000
Sta. 37+504 to St. 30+368 (Overlap Area with SAJ permit)	GA	SAS /SAJ	6,970,000	270,000
Other Facilities ¹	GA	SAS	Varies	400,000

1. Other facilities included the following: Refit wharfs, Small Boat Basin, Explosive Handling Wharf and Basin, Site Six areas, Magnetic Silence Facility, Dry Dock Caisson Gate and Sill, Crab Island Access Channel and Port Security Barrier Mooring Area.

Channel and Dredging Areas

Main Navigation Channels

Table 1-2 provides the main navigation channel dredging depths per the identified stationing. The main navigation channel does not include any facilities, berthing areas, basins, or other miscellaneous areas outside of the main channel.

Table 1-2: Main Navigation Channel Dredging Depths

Location	Stations	Width	Depth (MLLW)	State
Kings Bay & Upper Cumberland Sound	48+242 to 30+368	500' +/-	46'- 49'	GA

Berths and Other Facilities within Kings Bay Sub Base (all within SAS permitted boundary)

- 1) Dry Dock Caisson Gate Mooring Facility (Sta 48+220), Length: 120', Width: 24', Depth: 48' MLLW.
- 2) Dry Dock Caisson Gate Sill (Sta 48+220), Length: 120', Width: 75', Depth: 48' MLLW.
- 3) Transponder Removal Station (TRS) Basin Trench (Sta 47+270 to 47+545), Width: 83', Depth: 55' MLLW (clamshell dredging only).
- 4) Refit Wharves (Sta 45+900 to 48+220), Depth: 49' MLLW.
- 5) Small Boat Basin (Sta 43+497.5 to 45+207.1), Depth: 26' MLLW.
- 6) Explosive Handling Wharves (Sta 41+420 to 43+320), Width: 86', Depth: 49' MLLW.
- 7) Explosive Handling Basin (Sta 38+956.9 to Sta 39+600), Depth: 46' MLLW; (Sta 39+600 to Sta 42+777.5), Depth: 49' MLLW.
- 8) Site Six Operational Area (ARDM, Warrior Wharf, Tender Area (old name)):
 - a) Site Six – South (includes Warrior Wharf) (Sta 34+233.1 to 36+548), Depth: 47' MLLW.
 - b) ARDM Operating Basin (Sta 35+783.4 to 36+548), Width: 100', Depth: 56' MLLW.
 - c) Site Six – North (Tender Area) (Sta 36+850 to 39+259.1), Depth: 41' MLLW.
- 9) Magnetic Silencing Facility (MSF):
 - a) MSF Operating Basin (Sta 34+291.3 to Sta 30+368.3), Depth: 46' MLLW.
 - b) MSF Boat Ramp Channel (Sta 32+412.2 to Sta 31+721.2), Depth: 14' MLLW.
- 10) Port Security Barrier Mooring Area (Sta 46+100 to Sta 47+390), Width: 260', Depth: 14' MLLW.
- 11) Crab Island Access Channel (Sta 38+195 to Sta 38+475), Width: 50', Depth: 14' MLLW.

Turning Basins

- 1) Upper Turning Basin is located between Stations 48+175 and 46+239 in Kings Bay. Depth: 49' MLLW.

Dredge Type

Material dredged from Kings Bay and Upper Cumberland Sound, between STA 48+242 and 37+504 of the Sub Base would be primarily dredged by cutter suction dredge. Material dredged within the remaining portions of the Sub Base and Inner Channel, from STA 37+504 to 30+368 (which overlap with the SAJ permit boundaries) would be excavated by hydraulic dredges, primarily by hopper dredges, but may also be dredged by cutter suction dredges. Clamshell dredging would occur only in the Transponder Removal Station (TRS) Basin Trench located within the Sub Base. The project areas and their proposed dredge types can be seen in further detail on the DA 10/404 permit plates.

The project would also require incidental movement of up to 25 CYs of material associated with maintenance of the turbo scour system at the MSF. Use of an air jet, eductor, or similar device would also be used to force small amounts of accumulated sediments into the water column on ebb tides for the purpose of removing sediments from drydock gate sills or from areas with sensitive equipment. This activity would be performed by divers using hand-held air jets. A single sediment removal event would be limited to a maximum of 25 CYs of material. Not more than a cumulative total of 200 CYs of material would be removed annually from both the Dry Dock Caisson Mooring Area, Refit Wharves, and the MSF. Air jetting by divers would only be used when other methods are not practicable.

Diver-operated, hand-held, non-cutterhead hydraulic dredging would also be utilized with initial disposal of dredged material in a containment barge. This method of dredging would be authorized to remove sediments from small areas with sensitive equipment where more than 25 CYs of material requires removal. This technique would be used to annually remove no more than 1000 CYs of material. Diver operated dredging equipment would be used to pump a slurry into the containment barge. Once the containment barge is filled, dredging operations would stop for a minimum of 8 hours before supernatant water is pumped from the barge back into the waterway. Filter fabric would be used in such a manner to limit levels of suspended solids that are pumped from the barge into the waterway. Dewatered sediments remaining in the barge would be mechanically removed and beneficially reused or placed in a CDF.

Disposal and Placement Areas

Dredged material may be placed in one or more existing confined disposal facilities (CDFs): Crab Island (D/A-C), Mainside (D/A-M), Disposal Area 1 (D/A-1), or Disposal Area 2 (D/A-2). The dredging stations and their prospective placement areas can be seen in Table 1-3 and in further detail on the DA 10/404 permit plates.

Table 1-3: Disposal and Placement Area Per Channel Section

STATION	DREDGE PLACEMENT AND DISPOSAL LOCATION
Inner Channel and Sub Base	
Sta. 48+242 to 30+368	D/A-C, D/A-M, D/A-1, D/A-2

BACKGROUND

On July 9, 1981, SAS issued Department of Army (DA) permit 074-OYN-004217 to the US Navy authorizing dredging of the inner harbor and access channel landward from Station 0 at the mouth of St. Mary’s River to the upper end of the harbor at Station 48+390. This permit expired on September 30, 1996.

On June 5, 1989, SAJ issued DA permit 871IPM-20972 to the US Navy authorizing maintenance dredging of the Entrance Channel. The permit expired on June 5, 1994, and authorized 1,400,000 CYs of material annually with disposal of all beach quality material on Amelia Island or Cumberland Island beaches in accordance with the MOU between the State of Florida and the Navy, and to transport all material unsuitable for beach disposal to an EPA designated offshore disposal site.

Both of the above authorizations have been reissued multiple times since 1981 and have consisted of similar dredging types and disposal methods. This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the Corps and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval. In addition, SAJ is currently processing a DA application for the maintenance dredging of the Kings Bay Entrance Channel. The public notice for that project can be found at the following link: <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Public-Notices/>

STATE OF GEORGIA

Water Quality Certification: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division would review the proposed project for water quality certification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Prior to issuance of a Department of the Army permit for a project location in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia, review for Water Quality Certification is required. A reasonable period of time, which shall not exceed one year, is established under the Clean Water Act for the State to act on a request for Water Quality Certification, after which, issuance of such a Department of the Army permit may proceed. The applicant did request a pre-certification meeting with Georgia EPD prior to submitting their application for a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

State-owned Property and Resources: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or another appropriate instrument.

Georgia Coastal Management Program: Prior to the Savannah District Corps of Engineers making a final permit decision on this application, the project must be certified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division, to be consistent with applicable provisions of the State of Georgia Coastal Management Program (15 CFR 930). Anyone wishing to comment on Coastal Management Program certification of this project should submit comments in writing within 30 days of the date of this notice to the Federal Consistency Coordinator, Coastal Management Program, Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, One Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia 31523-8600 (Telephone 912-264-7218).

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The Savannah District must consider the purpose and the impacts of the applicant's proposed work, prior to a decision on issuance of a Department of the Army permit.

Cultural Resources: Review of the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places and the Georgia Natural, Archeological and Historic Resources GIS database, indicates that no registered properties or properties listed as eligible for inclusion are located on the project site. Presently unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistorical or historical data may be located at the site and could be affected by the proposed work.

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH): This notice initiates the EFH consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The applicant's proposal may result in the destruction or alteration of EFH utilized by various life stages of species comprising the red drum, shrimp, bluefish or snapper grouper management complexes. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have an individual or cumulatively substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean. Our final determination relative to project impacts to EFH and the need for mitigation measures are subject to review by and coordination with the NMFS and the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council.

Endangered Species: A preliminary review the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) IPaC and the National Marine Fisheries Service's Protected Resource Divisions (NMFS PRD)'s Section 7 ESA Mapper indicate the following listed species may occur in the action area: Tricolored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*); West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*); Eastern Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. Jamaicensis*); Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*); Rufa Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*); Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*); Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon couperi*); Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia*

mydas); Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*); Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*); Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*); Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*).

In addition, the NMFS ESA Section 7 mapper states that the following species may occur in the action area: Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*); Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*); Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*); Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*); Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*); Smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*); Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*); and the Shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*).

Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), we request information from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; or, any other interested party, on whether any species listed or proposed for listing may be present in the area.

Public Interest Review: The decision whether to issue a permit would be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision would reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal would be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

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 this proposed activity. Any comments received would be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement 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.

Application of Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: The proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States. The Savannah District's evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest would include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

Public Hearing: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application for a Department of the Army permit. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for requesting a public hearing. The decision whether to hold a public hearing is at the discretion of the District Engineer, or his designated appointee, based on the need for additional substantial information necessary in evaluating the proposed project.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment on this application for a Department of the Army permit should submit comments by email to sarah.e.wise@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Mrs. Sarah Wise, 100 Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31401, no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. Please refer to the applicant's name and the application number in your comments.

If you have any further questions concerning this matter, please contact Sarah Wise, Lead Biologist, Coastal Branch at 912-652-5550.

Enclosures:

1. Project Drawings