



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT
69A HAGOOD AVENUE
CHARLESTON SC 29403

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

MAINTENANCE DREDGING OF THE TOWN CREEK FEDERAL NAVIGATION CHANNEL

CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

August 2023

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (Corps) prepared a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, to assess the potential environmental effects of conducting maintenance dredging of Town Creek Federal navigation channel (Town Creek) in Charleston County, South Carolina. The dredged sediments will either be side-cast approximately 100 feet from the channel or be placed nearshore of Lighthouse Island. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) summarizes the results of the Corps evaluation and documents the Corps' conclusions.

The proposed maintenance dredging project will remove material from the Federal navigation channel. A total of 190,000 cubic yards is expected to be dredged. Maintenance dredging will be by means of either a side-cast dredge, with the material being side-cast outside the federal channel downdrift, or a modified hopper dredge that will transport the material to the proposed nearshore placement along Lighthouse Island within Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge. The Proposed Action also includes 4.5 acres of advanced maintenance dredging of the Town Creek Federal navigation channel (up to an additional 60,000 cubic yards of material) and realignment of the entrance channel to follow deep water.

The No Action Alternative is the same as the most probable future condition without the proposed project. A basic alternative to any proposed plan of improvement is the "No Action" alternative. Adoption of this alternative implies acceptance of the existing conditions in the proposed project area.

Alternative measures for dredged material disposal were evaluated based on compliance with environmental laws and regulations, compliance with executive orders, level of environmental impacts including impacts to climate, land use, water resources and aquatic habitat, terrestrial resources and wildlife, air quality and noise, cultural resources, endangered species, hazardous toxic and radioactive waste, and socioeconomics, cost effectiveness, engineering feasibility, compliance with the Federal standard, and the ability of the Alternative to meet the project purpose and need. The Proposed Action, Side-Cast Only Alternative (no advanced

maintenance) and the No Action Alternative are the only Alternatives that were evaluated in detail in the EA. For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS:

A summary assessment of the potential effects of the proposed action is listed and described below.

Table 1. Summary of Potential Effects of the Proposed Action

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Unaffected by action
Water Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Terrestrial Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquatic Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essential Fish Habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coastal Zone Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coastal Barrier Resources System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Visual Resources (Aesthetics)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Air and Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Socioeconomics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Natural Areas, Parks, and Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>*Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation: For any resources that fall in this category, a description of the required mitigation is included in the paragraphs following this table</i>			

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan for the modifications. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed throughout the EA will be implemented, as appropriate, to minimize impacts.

Pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the Corps determined that the recommended plan may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the

following federally listed species: piping plover, rufa red knot, West Indian manatee, loggerhead sea turtle, green sea turtle, Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, and seabeach amaranth. Furthermore, the Corps determined that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect critical habitat or proposed critical habitat for piping plover, red knot and loggerhead sea turtle. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the Corps' effects determinations on December 15, 2022. Regarding NMFS' ESA jurisdiction, the project would be implemented in compliance with the 2020 SARBO issued by NMFS. If the project occurs during the warmer months, standard manatee conditions for in-water construction work will be followed to ensure that any manatees in the vicinity are not harmed or harassed.

Pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the Corps determined that no historic properties will be affected by the Proposed Action. The SHPO concurred with the Corps' determination on July 3, 2023.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the recommended plan has been found to be compliant with section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230). The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines evaluation is found in Appendix F of the Final EA.

A water quality certification pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act was obtained from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). All conditions of the water quality certification shall be implemented in order to minimize adverse impacts to water quality.

A determination of consistency with the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management program pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 was obtained from the SCDHEC Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. All conditions of the consistency determination concurrence shall be implemented in order to minimize adverse impacts to the coastal zone.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials has been completed.

The draft Supplemental EA and FONSI was distributed for a 30-day comment and review period. The final Supplemental EA addresses the comments received during this review period. Since the Corps has determined that the proposed action of maintaining the existing navigation channel would not result in significant adverse individual or cumulative effects to environmental resources or human health, and does not represent either a substantial change to the Project relevant to environmental concerns or present significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns, the preparation of a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted, and the issuance of a FONSI is appropriate. The Supplemental EA for the proposed action can be downloaded from the internet (in PDF format) at <https://www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/NEPA-Documents/>.

Date _____

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