

**J O I N T**  
**P U B L I C N O T I C E**

**CHARLESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
69A HAGOOD AVENUE  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29403-5107**

and

**THE S.C. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL  
OFFICE OF OCEAN AND COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
1362 McMillan Avenue, Suite 400  
Charleston, South Carolina 29405**

**NOTE: THIS IS A CORPS OF ENGINEERS CIVIL WORKS PROJECT**

CESAC-PM-TE

October 3, 2003

Refer to: P/N: # 2003-1R-304

Port Royal Federal Navigation Project  
Beaufort County  
South Carolina

The Charleston District, Corps of Engineers Charleston, South Carolina, proposes to perform the work described herein with due consideration and review given to the relevant provisions of the following laws:

1. The Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251, et. seq.)
2. The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531, et. seq.)
3. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (U.S.C. 470, et. seq.) and the Preservation of Historical Archeological Data Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 469, et. seq.).
4. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, (42 U.S.C. 4321).

The purpose of the notice to advise all interested parties of possible maintenance dredging activities of the Port Royal Entrance Channel during the 2003-2004 dredging cycle (December 2003 – April 2004). This work will be performed only if sufficient FY 2004 Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funds are received. The dredged material will be placed at a proposed new offshore ocean dredged material disposal site (ODMDS) See Figures 1 and 2.

In order to give all interested parties an opportunity to express their views

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is hereby given that written statements regarding the proposed work will be received at this office until

**12 O'CLOCK NOON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2002**

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

### **PROJECT INFORMATION**

Port Royal is located on the Atlantic coast of South Carolina 57 miles southwest of Charleston, South Carolina and 23 miles northeast of Savannah, Georgia. Port Royal Harbor Federal Navigation Project was authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 1954. The authorized project provides for a channel leading from the Atlantic Ocean through Port Royal Sound to Port Royal, South Carolina. Very little dredging is conducted in Port Royal Sound, the Beaufort River or Battery Creek. However, the entrance channel requires regular maintenance to maintain the required project depth of -27 feet. Dredged material from this project has been disposed at the Port Royal Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) since 1959.

The Charleston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes to perform operation and maintenance (O&M) dredging during the 2003-2004 dredging cycle of the Port Royal Entrance Channel. The shoal extends from Station 34+00 to Station 176+00. Approximately 966,000 cubic yards of material will be dredged. If the dredging occurs, the material will be disposed of at a proposed ODMDS (note the site on Figure 2 which is labeled "Disposal Area") which has been used previously. O&M dredging is dependent on funding for Fiscal Year 2004 and will be pursued only following receipt of FY04 funds by the Charleston District. Dredging will be conducted between December 2003 and April 2004 in order to comply with restrictions associated with hopper dredging and sea turtles.

The Water Resources Development Act of 1992 (WRDA '92) amended Section 102(c) of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 as follows: "Beginning January 1, 1997, no permit for dumping of this Act shall be issued for a site unless such site has received a final designation pursuant to this subsection or an alternative site has been selected pursuant to Section 103(b)."

Final designation of the Port Royal ODMDS is on-going and an Environmental Impact Statement has been published for public comment. It may be found on the internet at: <http://www.sac.usace.army.mil/permits/index.html>. However, the site will not be designated prior to the 2003-2004 dredging cycle. As a result, the Charleston District is pursuing a one-time use and 103 designation of the site specifically for this dredging cycle.

A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the maintenance dredging of Port Royal Harbor, South Carolina was filed with the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) on 29 October 1976. Further, an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this one-time use and 103 Designation is being produced.

1. This project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program. By this notice, the Charleston District requests concurrence from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) that the proposed activity is consistent with the State's Coastal Zone Management Program. Concurrence is conclusively presumed if no state action is received within 45 days of receipt of this notice.
2. This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Implementation of the proposed project would impact marine waters and associated substrates (see project description) utilized by various life stages of species comprising the red drum, shrimp, and snapper-grouper management complexes. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial individual or cumulative adverse impact on EFH or fisheries managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the NMFS.
3. Grain size analysis from various past sampling efforts indicates that the proposed dredged material is predominantly sand and as such, would not be expected to contain contaminants at concentrations of concern. Further, the sandy sediments would have a rapid settling rate, which would reduce turbidity concerns.
4. A listing of threatened and endangered species under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service has been requested. Review of species lists from previous dredging cycles for this project reflect various species on the list that may be potentially affected by the continuous maintenance dredging, however, established precautions are followed during dredging operations to avoid impacts through visual and scheduling measures. None of the previously listed species have been known to be negatively impacted during past dredging cycles.
5. Archeological and historical resources were originally addressed in the Environmental Statement for Maintenance Dredging in Port Royal. Since maintenance dredging and disposal at the proposed ODMS have occurred since project completion in 1959, the continued maintenance and disposal activity at the proposed ODMS should have no impact on archaeological or historical resources. Further coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office will be conducted.

6. Unavoidable adverse impacts would be related to any minimal, temporary changes in water quality associated with turbidity. In addition, some benthic organisms would be destroyed during the dredging of the channel and others may be covered during the disposal process at the ODMDS. These impacts are not considered significant since they are temporary in nature, and the areas would be re-colonized following the dredging and disposal activity to the extent that they are now being used.

7. The site management plan for the Port Royal ODMDS provides for continued coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for placement of materials, and to conduct basic monitoring during and following disposal.

8. The one-time use of the ODMDS under the authority of Section 103 of the Marine, Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act should not cause any long-term modifications in bottom characteristics. Further no long-term, unacceptable adverse impacts are expected to occur as a result of this one-time use.

9. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this proposed project. Requests for a public hearing shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. These requests should be made to DHEC at the address listed above.

10. The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to proceed with the project. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment 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.

11. Questions or comments concerning this notice should be directed to:  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, PM-TE (Robin Coller-Socha), 69-A Hagood Avenue,  
Charleston, South Carolina 29403-5107.

  
Joseph A. Jones  
Chief, Planning Branch



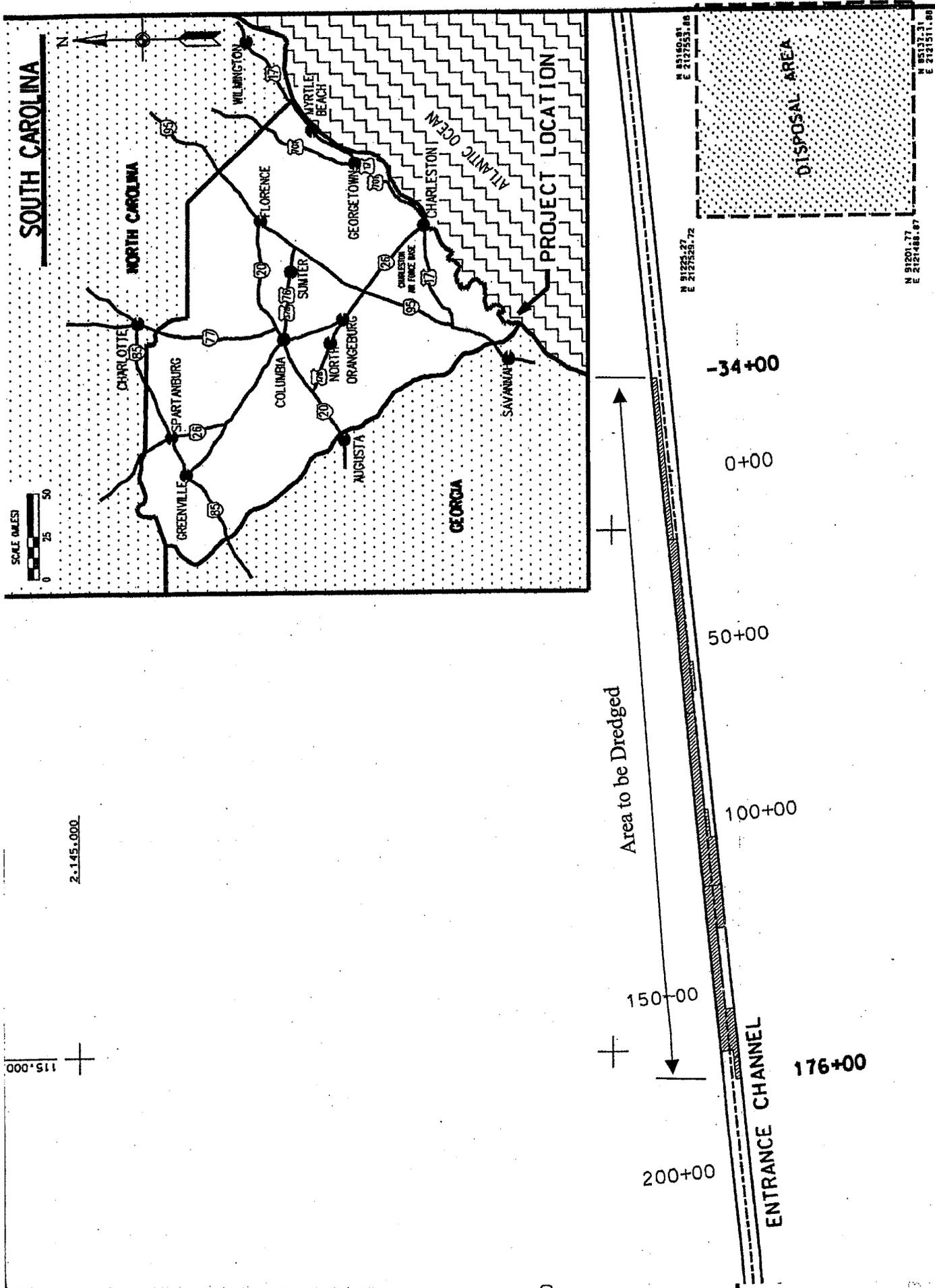


Figure 2: Port Royal Entrance Channel Dredging Location and Disposal Area