SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION REPORT

Little River Inlet Navigation Project

Horry County, South Carolina and Brunswick County, North Carolina

US Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District

November 2025

The purpose of this Supplemental Information Report (SIR) is to update environmental compliance efforts and confirm the validity of the 1977 Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Little River Inlet Navigation Project. This SIR was prepared in accordance with Part 3.6 of the *Department of Defense National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures*. The SIR accompanies the Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Little River Project completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (USACE) in 1977. This SIR specifically documents updated environmental compliance efforts for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The results of these compliance efforts confirm that the proposed maintenance does not present any new circumstances that would have a material bearing on the need for the proposed action, the range of appropriate alternatives, the environmental impacts of the proposed action, or substantive areas of concern identified by parties commenting on the prior EIS. Supplementation of the EIS is not required per Part 3.6 *Department of Defense National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures* because substantial changes to the proposed action have not occurred, nor do the changes have significant bearing on the findings of the final EIS. Additionally, Section 1.22 of the 1977 Revised EIS described the operation and maintenance of the Little River Inlet Navigation Project, which included removal of sandy material from the inner channel to stabilize the sand dikes as needed.

BACKGROUND

The Little River Inlet Navigation Project was authorized by the Senate Public Works Committee and the House Public Works Committee on October 12, 1972, under authority of Section 201 of Public Law (PL) 89-298, 1965 Flood Control Act. The authorized project provides for a 12-feet deep, 3,200-feet long, 300-feet wide entrance channel across the ocean bar, and a 10-feet deep, 9,050-feet long, 90-feet wide inner channel. The channel is stabilized by two jetties, with sand-transition dikes connecting the structures to the shore.

USACE prepared a Final Environmental Statement for the project in 1972 that was filed with the Council of Environmental Quality on September 19, 1972. A Revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared that incorporated the results of additional studies completed since 1972. The revised draft EIS was distributed for public review in 1976. The Revised Final EIS incorporated all comments received and was finalized in June1977. Section 1.22 of the 1977 Revised EIS described the operation and maintenance of the Little River Inlet project. Section 1.23 specifically described that material removed from the inner channel would be used to stabilize the adjacent shoreline and sand dikes. South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control issued a 401water quality certification for the Little River Inlet and other dredging projects on September 18, 1978 (P/N 74-4A-324).

Construction of the Little River Inlet was completed in 1984. In 1982, initial dredging of the entrance channel removed 513,000 cubic yards of material which was subsequently used to construct the sand dikes associated with the jetties. In 1984, an additional 292,000 cubic yards of new work material was removed from both the entrance and inner channel and placed on the front beach of Waties Island, South Carolina. No maintenance dredging has occurred since the initial construction was completed.

DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING PROJECT

Little River Inlet is located on the North Carolina-South Carolina state line in Brunswick County, North Carolina and Horry County, South Carolina, Figure 1. The natural inlet is the ocean entrance to the towns of Little River, South Carolina and Calabash, North Carolina and to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW). The project affords the only connection between the AIWW and the Atlantic Ocean along 68 miles of coastline from Shallotte, North Carolina to Georgetown, South Carolina.

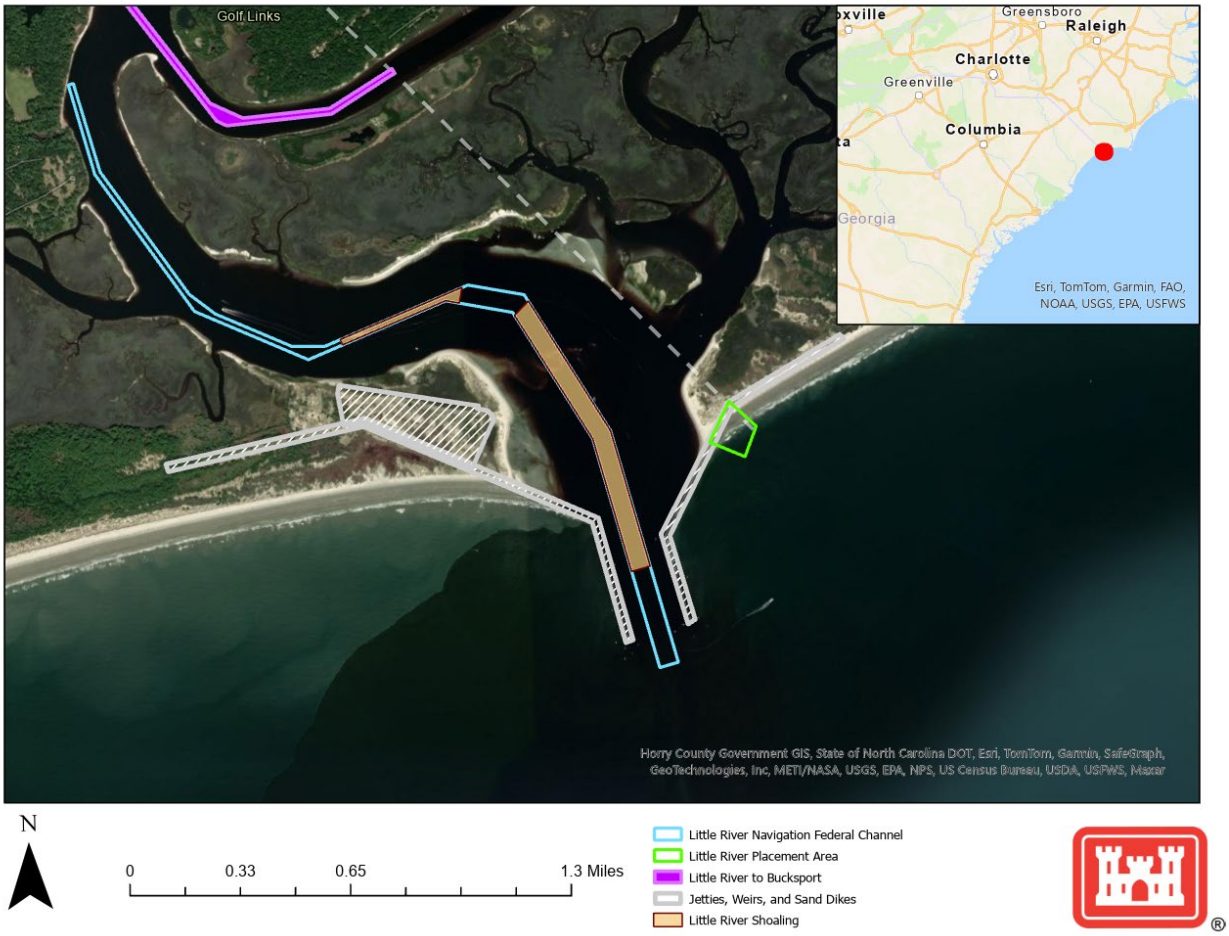

Figure 1. Little River Inlet Navigation Project Overview Map

The proposed action involves hydraulic cutterhead dredging of the Federal navigation channel to its authorized depth of 12 feet and width of 90 feet in the inner channel and 300 feet width in entrance channel. Approximately 100,000 cubic yards of beach quality sand will be removed from the inner channel shoaling areas and used to stabilize the existing upcoast sand dike and rebuild the associated berm. Upon completion of the construction of the rehabilitation, the sand dike will be planted with appropriate native vegetation to aid in erosion control. Construction will occur within the winter work window (November 16 to April 30) to minimize and avoid impacts to resources that may occur within the project area.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

USACE has previously described the affected environment and evaluated environmental effects of the Little River Inlet Navigation Project in the 1972 and 1977 Revised EIS. The 1972 EIS determined that the project would not cause any known significant effects. A revised EIS was prepared in 1977 to incorporate the results of studies completed since 1972. The Revised 1977 EIS also concluded that the project would only have minor, short-term impacts. Both documents evaluated impacts associated with the continued operation and maintenance of the project.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973 (16 U.S.C. §1531 *et seq*.)
The 1977 Revised EIS concluded that the project would not adversely affect listed species known to occur in the area. The U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred that the project would not result in significant adverse effects by letter dated August 15, 1977.

Several new species have been listed since the 1977 EIS was prepared. An updated list of Endangered Species Act (ESA) species known or expected to be on or near the project area was obtained using USFWS' Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool. Additionally, a list of ESA species for the state of South Carolina was obtained from National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) website. USACE has made determinations of may affect, but not likely to adversely affect for the following species under USFWS' jurisdiction: piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), red knot (*Calidris canutus*), seabeach amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilis*), West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*). A may affect, not likely to adversely affect determination has also been made for federally proposed critical habitat for *rufa* red knot. USFWS concurred with USACE's determinations on June 17, 2025, via email. See attachments.

Impacts to species and their critical habitats under NMFS' jurisdiction have been previously analyzed in the South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion (SARBO) (NMFS 2020) which is incorporated here by reference. USACE will adhere to all applicable project design criteria (PDC) as outlined in the 2020 SARBO. Consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service with regard to marine species protected under the ESA is not required due to the applicability of SARBO. USACE has also determined that further consideration under the Marine Mammals Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. § 1371, et seq) is not required.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA) OF 1966 (54 U.S.C. § 300101 *et seq*.)
The 1977 Revised EIS concluded that no significant archaeological resources would be affected by the construction of the project. A reconnaissance survey of the upcoast (east) sand dike area was conducted in 1980. The results of the survey determined that it is highly unlikely that any significant cultural resources are located in the impact area. The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with these findings in a letter dated November 10, 1980.

In September 2025, the USACE performed submerged cultural resources surveys within the Little River Navigation Project area to fulfill USACE's obligations under the NHPA, as amended, and its implementing regulation, 36 CFR Part 800. A singular magnetic anomaly was identified; plausibly representing a historic buoy anchor due to its proximity to navigational channel 9. USACE will avoid the magnetic anomaly by utilizing a 100 foot buffer.

The surveys were reviewed by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA), and the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). By letter dated November 21, 2025 SHPO concurs with the report recommendations that the undertaking will have no effect on historic properties with the 100 foot buffer in place and that further cultural resources management is not currently required (SHPO Number 24-RL0320).. See attachments.

CLEAN WATER ACT OF 1972 (33 U.S.C. §1341 *et. seq*. and 33 U.S.C. §1344(b) *et seq.*)
The proposed project would occur within the inlet and on the adjacent beach of Bird Island. As described in the 1977 EIS, any increase in turbidity or impacts to water quality are expected to be insignificant and short-term given the sandy nature of the material to be removed. Sediment samples were collected in January 2025. Grain size results ranged from 90-96% sand. Therefore, the conclusion reached in the 1977 EIS remains unchanged.

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control issued a 401 water quality certification for the Little River Inlet and other dredging projects on September 18, 1978 (P/N 74-4A-324). South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) issued a new Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 on September 4, 2025. See attachments.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act governs the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. Although the USACE does not process and issue permits for its own activities, the USACE authorizes its own discharges of dredged or fill material by applying all applicable substantive legal requirements, including public notice, opportunity for public hearing, NEPA, and application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines. A Section 404(b)(1) evaluation was completed for the 1977 EIS. The findings of these evaluations are still valid as applied to the current Federal project.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1972 (16 U.S.C. §1451 et seq.)
As part of the 1977 EIS, a determination of consistency with the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program was made. On May 22, 2025, USACE submitted a CZM federal consistency determination request based on the USACE's documentation that the currently

proposed project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the South Carolina CZM Program. SCDES concurred with the USACE determination by letter dated July 25, 2025. See attachments.

COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT OF 1982 (16 U.S.C. §3501 et seq.) AND COASTAL BARRIER IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1990 (16 U.S.C. §3501 *et seq.*)

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) of 1982 (19 U.S.C. §3501 et. Seq.), as amended by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act (CBIA) of 1990 limits Federally-subsidized development within CBRA Units to minimize the loss of human life by discouraging development in high risk areas and to protect undeveloped coastal barriers along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, including islands, spits, tombolos, and bay barriers that are subject to wind, waves, and tides such as estuaries and nearshore waters. At the time of the 1977 EIS, the Coastal Barrier Resources System had not been established. In 1990, the Waties Island Complex Unit (M01) was established. The entire project is located within this unit. Exception 16 U.S.C. § 3505(a)(2) for the maintenance or construction of improvements of existing federal channels applies to this project. On July 30, 2025, USFWS concurred that the project meets this exception. See attachments.

MAGNUSON-STEVENS FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT (16 U.S.C. §1801 *et seq.)*

The 1977 Revised EIS concluded that negative impacts to fish and fish habitat would be minimal. The construction of the jetties would provide substrate for new epifaunal communities and provide habitat for numerous fish species. The 1996 Congressional amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) (16 U.S.C. § 1802(10)) set forth requirements for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), regional fishery management councils (FMC), and other federal agencies to identify and protect important marine and anadromous fish habitat. These amendments established procedures for the identification of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and a requirement for interagency coordination to further the conservation of federally managed fisheries.

EFH within the project area includes estuarine and marine water column, unconsolidated bottoms, intertidal flats, and coastal inlet. As discussed in the 1977 Revised EIS, the disruption of benthic invertebrates would be short-term as recolonization from the adjacent areas would begin almost immediately. Given the sandy nature of the material being dredged, significant increases in suspended sediments are not expected to occur outside the immediate construction areas and turbidity levels and suspended sediments would be expected to return to background levels once construction ceases.

USACE intends to comply with the conservation recommendations and best management practices included in the *Programmatic Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for USACE Activities and Projects Regularly Undertaken in South Carolina.* Therefore, as previously described in the 1977 Revised EIS, impacts to EFH within the Little River Inlet project are expected to be temporary and will not result in significant effects on managed species. The turbidity plume created by the cutterhead would also primarily be restricted to the immediate dredging area given the sandy nature of the material being dredged. On May 23, 2025, NMFS

concurred with the determination that the proposed project is consistent with the Programmatic EFH Consultation, therefore, the project complies with the MSFCMA.

SUMMARY OF DECISION

USACE previously described the affected environment and evaluated environmental effects associated with the Little River Inlet project in the 1977 Revised EIS. The proposed maintenance of the sand dikes using material removed from the inner channel was described in Section 1.23 of the 1977 Revised EIS. Supplementation of the 1977 Revised EIS is not required per Part 3.6 *Department of Defense National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures* because substantial changes to the proposed action have not occurred, nor do the changes have significant bearing on the findings of the 1977 Revised EIS. All NEPA documentation incorporated by reference or mentioned in this SIR can be downloaded from the internet (in PDF format) at https://www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/NEPA-Documents/ or copies can be obtained by contacting Erica Fritz at erica.fritz@usace.army.mil or (843) 329-8167.

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