



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
MOBILE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P. O. BOX 2288  
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE  
U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
AND  
STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
FOR THE  
CONTINUED MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND DREDGED MATERIAL  
PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
MOBILE HARBOR NAVIGATION PROJECT  
A FEDERALLY AUTHORIZED PROJECT**

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District proposes to continue maintenance dredging of the Mobile Harbor Federal navigation project, Mobile County, Alabama. We request the recipient of this notice to review the proposed action as it pertains to water quality, relative to Section 404(b)(1) of the *Clean Water Act* and the *Marine Protection, Resource and Sanctuaries Act*. We also request comments on any other potential impacts.

**LOCATION:** Mobile County, Alabama, and the Gulf of Mexico.

**DESCRIPTION OF ENTIRE AUTHORIZED PROJECT:** The existing Mobile Harbor Project provides for:

- a. A 57' x 700' channel from the Gulf of Mexico for about seven miles to Mobile Bay;
- b. A 55' x 550' channel from the mouth of Mobile Bay for a distance of approximately 29 miles to the mouth of Mobile River, including a passing lane two miles long and 625' wide at mid-bay;
- c. A 55' x 750' x 4,000' anchorage area just south of McDuffie Island;
- d. A 55' x 1,500' x 1,500' turning basin opposite McDuffie Island;

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- e. A 40' deep channel with the width varying from 700', near the Mobile River mouth, to 500', near the new Cochrane Bridge (U.S. Highway 98), a distance of about six miles;
- f. A 40' x 800' - 1,000' x 2,500' turning basin opposite the Alabama State Docks between river miles 1.0 to 1.5;
- g. A 40' x 1,000' x 1,600' turning basin just south of the New Cochrane Bridge;
- h. A 25' x 250' x 16,000' channel within Chickasaw Creek;
- i. A 27' x 150' channel (Arlington-Garrows Bend Channel) from Mobile Bay Channel westerly for 1.6 miles to a 800' x 600' turning basin and continuing for 1.1 miles to a 250' x 800' turning basin in Garrows Bend west of McDuffie Island;
- j. A 40' x 400' channel (Theodore Ship Channel) from the main ship channel in Mobile Bay to the shoreline, a distance of about 5.3 miles, including a 300' x 1,200' anchorage area, and a 40' x 300' x 10,000' landcut section, a 42-acre, trapezoidal shaped turning basin that is 40' deep, continuing with a 12' x 100' x 6,500' barge channel, with a 300' x 300' turning basin at the western terminus of the channel.

The full authorized dimensions of all features of the Mobile Harbor Project have not been constructed. The depth of the bay channel is 45' and the outer bar channel is 47'. Each of these areas are maintained to a depth that is 10' less than the authorized depth. Several additional features of the authorized project have not been constructed at this time. The turning basin and anchorage areas, that would be located south of the mouth of the Mobile River have not been constructed, and the bay channel and the bar channel, have not been widened. These channels remain at 400' and 600' wide, respectively.

In addition to the Congressionally authorized channel dimensions providing for navigation, four sediment basins in the lower Mobile River and three sediment basins in the bay channel, have been previously approved and have been constructed to provide improved channel maintenance efficiency. Each of these basins are several thousand feet long and have depths about 10 feet lower than the existing navigation channel bottom. The basins decrease the dredging quantity or frequency of the overall channel by trapping sediment and thereby, decrease the general shoaling rate in the channels and minimize adverse effects to navigation.

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**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION:** The majority of the Gulf Disposal Area is located within the territorial waters of the United States and is certified pursuant to the requirements of the *Clean Water Act, Final Rule for Operation and Maintenance of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Projects Involving the Discharge of Dredged Material into Water of the U.S. or Ocean Waters, 33 CFR Part 336.2(c)*.

Water quality certification for a five-year period is being requested from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for the proposed maintenance dredging and placement activities associated with the Mobile Harbor navigation project. Upon completion of the required comment period a decision relative to certification will be made by ADEM.

**COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY:** Pursuant to the requirements of the *Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)*, concurrence with the Mobile District's determination of coastal zone consistency has been requested from ADEM. Our review of the *Alabama Coastal Management Program* finds that the continued maintenance activities of the Mobile Harbor Project remains consistent with the program to the maximum extent practicable. A determination relative to the issuance of a consistency certification will be made by ADEM after completion of the required comment period.

**USE BY OTHERS:** The proposed action is not expected to cause any significant land use changes in adjacent areas, or impacts to water uses or water users, in the vicinity of the project.

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT CONSIDERATION:** In accordance with the requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*, impacts associated with navigation improvements for the Mobile Harbor Project were addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated October, 1980. In addition, a Supplemental EIS, dated December 13, 1985, was prepared to address impacts associated with the offshore placement (Gulf Disposal Area) of dredged material from construction of navigation improvements and channel maintenance activities, and for the designation of an offshore placement site(s). The Record of Decision implementing the harbor improvements was signed January 8, 1987. The EIS and Supplemental EIS were coordinated with all applicable Federal, state and local agencies and the interested public. These documents are on file and available for review in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District Office. Several actions have occurred since the last clearances were received. We have prepared and coordinated separate Environmental Assessments (EAs) and Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSIs) to cover these revisions to the overall Mobile Harbor maintenance plan.

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For convenience, we are combining these revisions into one concise EA. Since the action is primarily an administrative process, we have made a preliminary determination that the activities are appropriately covered by a FONSI.

**ENDANGERED/THREATENED SPECIES:** The proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) by this public notice. Several species listed by the FWS and NMFS as endangered or threatened are occasional visitors to the vicinity of the project area. However, our assessment determined that the continued maintenance of the project would not affect any critical habitat, or any threatened or endangered species likely to occur within the project area.

**SECTION 404(b)(1) EVALUATION REPORT:** Water quality impacts associated with the proposed action have been addressed in an evaluation report prepared in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. The report is on file and available for review in the Mobile District Office. Appropriate revisions will be incorporated into the Section 404(b)(1) evaluation report if information is received during the coordination process that would dictate the need to revise the draft report.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSIDERATION:** The proposed action was previously coordinated with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (ASHPO). Maintenance dredging and material disturbance activities will be limited to existing channels and disposal areas. The material placement activities would also be limited to existing and previously approved placement sites. No significant impacts to cultural resources have occurred in the past and none are considered likely to occur as a result of the continued maintenance of the project. A copy of this public notice is being sent to the ASHPO and the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta, Georgia.

**MARINE PROTECTION, RESEARCH AND SANCTUARIES ACT CONSIDERATIONS:** The suitability of the placement of dredged material in the Gulf Disposal Area was evaluated in accordance with the criteria established under the authority of Section 102(a) of the *Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA)* of 1972 (40 CFR 227 and 228). The results of the evaluation are contained within the Supplemental EIS for the project. Results of the study indicate the site is suitable for the placement of dredged material.

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**EVALUATION:** The decision whether to continue the maintenance of the Mobile Harbor Project as proposed, will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity, and on the public interest. This decision will reflect the national concern for both the protection and utilization, of important resources. The benefits which may be reasonably expected to accrue from implementing the proposed action will be balanced against reasonably foreseeable consequential detriments. The proposed action will proceed unless it is found to be contrary to the overall public interest.

Inasmuch as the proposed action involves the discharge of materials into navigable waters, redesignation of the proposed placement sites that are associated with this Federal project is being made under guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army. If these guidelines alone prohibit the redesignation of a site(s), any impairment of the maintenance of navigation, including any economic impact on navigational interests, which results from the inability to use an affected site(s), will also be considered.

**COORDINATION:** Among the agencies receiving copies of this public notice are:

- Region IV, Environmental Protection Agency.  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Daphne, Alabama.  
Regional Director, National Park Service.
- U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service,  
Panama City, Florida.  
Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District.  
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.  
Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer.  
Alabama Department of Environmental Management.  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation  
Service.

Other Federal, state and local organizations, United States Senators and Representatives of Alabama are provided copies of this notice and are invited to participate in coordinating the proposed action. We request that the information contained in this Public Notice be communicated to any parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.

CESAM-PD-EC  
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP95-MH07-2

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**CORRESPONDENCE:** Any person who has an interest which may be affected by this proposed activity may request a public hearing. Any comments or request for hearing must clearly set forth the interests which may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected.

Correspondence concerning this Public Notice should refer to Public Notice No. FP95-MH-07-2 and should be directed to the District Engineer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Attention: CESAM-PD-EC, Mobile, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, in time to be received prior to July 13, 1995. Ms. Karen D. McPherson may be contacted at 334/694-4106 for additional information.



N. D. McCLURE IV  
MOBILE DISTRICT  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS