



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

MODIFICATION

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE

**U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MOBILE DISTRICT**

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES

MOBILE HARBOR NAVIGATION PROJECT

MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

SAND ISLAND BENEFICIAL USE AREA

DESIGNATION

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District proposes to conduct maintenance dredging of the Mobile Harbor navigation project. As described in preceding Public Notice Number FP95-MH07-2. In addition, modification to Public Notice Number FP95-MH07-2, request for water quality certification and concurrence with coastal zone consistency is proposed for the designation of a beneficial use placement area specifically termed the Sand Island Beneficial Use Area.

We request the recipient of this notice 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, Research and Sanctuaries Act. We also request comments on any other potential impacts. We request that the recipient of this notice review the proposed action as it may impact on water quality, relative to the requirements of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Comments on any other potential impacts are also requested.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: Mobile Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico, Mobile County, Alabama.

DESCRIPTION OF ENTIRE AUTHORIZED PROJECT: The existing Mobile Harbor, Alabama navigation project (**Figure 1**), consists of the following:

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;
- 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;
- k. 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 authorized dimensions of all segments 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.

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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 frequency of dredging to provide a more cost effective and reliable channel.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Maintenance dredging and placement activities are proposed for the Mobile Harbor navigation project. (**Figure 1**). A complete description of the proposed action can be found in the preceding public notice Number FP95-MH07-2 dated June 13, 1995.

In addition, a modification to Public notice FP95-MH07-2 and request for water quality certification and concurrence with coastal zone consistency is proposed for the designation and use of a beneficial use placement area specifically termed the Sand Island Beneficial Use Area. The proposed beneficial use area would be located on the west side adjacent to the southern portion of the Mobile Harbor Ship Channel between Dauphin Island and Little Sand Island (**Figure 1**). Erosion has occurred in the vicinity of Dauphin Island and suitable material placed in the proposed Sand Island Beneficial Use Area would aid in beach nourishment through the littoral transport process.

The proposed beneficial use area would be utilized for the placement of sandy materials deemed compatible from a biological and physical standpoint according to guidelines established by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As opportunity allows, suitable material from various channel locations would be placed in the Sand Island Beneficial Use Area west of the -30 foot contour mean lower low water (MLLW) or in the ocean dredged material disposal area (ODMDS)(**Figure 1**), depending upon logistical factors and the type of dredging equipment utilized during a particular dredging event. Accordingly placement activities would be accomplished by hopper dredge, hopper barges or hydraulic pipeline dredges.

Quality of the materials proposed for placement in the Sand Island Beneficial Use Area ranges from sands to silty sands. Appropriate quantities of suitable material would be placed in the area over a five year period depending upon dredging need. Initial placement activities are scheduled for mid to late 1997.

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The proposed site would also be utilized for placement of suitable material from other navigation projects on an as needed basis. All necessary environmental coordination for placement of suitable material from channels other than the Mobile Harbor navigation project would be performed prior to commencement of placement activities.

COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT (CBRA) CONSIDERATIONS: The Mobile District has determined that the proposed action associated with the proposed Sand Island Beneficial Use Area (**Figure 1**) for maintenance dredging activities associated with the Mobile Harbor navigation project would qualify as an exemption under Section 6(a)(2) of CBRA. In compliance with the CBRA the proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) by this public notice.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Pursuant to the Clean Water Act, state quality certification is required for the proposed action. Water quality certification has been requested from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for a five (5)-year period. A decision relative to water quality certification will be determined by ADEM after completion of the required comment period for this public notice.

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. The Mobile District has determined that the proposed action is consistent with the Alabama Coastal Program to the maximum extent practicable. A decision relative to concurrence with coastal zone consistency will be determined by ADEM upon completion of the required comment period for this modification.

USE BY OTHERS: The proposed action for the Mobile Harbor navigation project is not expected to cause any significant land use changes in the adjacent areas. Use of waters within the proposed beneficial use site include commercial fishing and shrimping and recreational boating. Material will be placed in such a manner as not to impede navigation.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS: In accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) impacts associated with navigation improvements for the Mobile Harbor navigation 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

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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.

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to address impacts associated with the proposed placement activities in the proposed beneficial use area. Appropriate revisions will be incorporated into the final EA if information is received during the coordination process that would indicate the need to revise the draft report. Copies of these documents are available for review in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District Office, Planning and Environmental Division.

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. A draft Section 404(b)(1) evaluation report has been prepared to address any potential impacts associated with the placement of material in the proposed beneficial use placement area. Appropriate revisions will be incorporated into the final report if information is received during the coordination process that would indicate the need to revise the draft report.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Several species listed as endangered or threatened are occasional visitors to the vicinity of the project area. The Mobile District has determined that none would be effected by the proposed action. In compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service.

CULTURAL RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS: In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, the proposed action is being coordinated with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (ASHPO). A preliminary cultural and historic resources investigation has been performed and indicates that ~~there are no properties listed on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register that will be affected by the proposed action.~~ It is anticipated that the ASHPO will concur with the proposed action. Copies of this notice are being sent to the ASHPO and the Department of Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta, GA.

The Sand Island Light which is listed on the National Register is located in the vicinity of the proposed work - This property will not be affected by the proposed work.

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FARMLAND PROTECTION POLICY ACT CONSIDERATIONS: The provisions of the act are not applicable to the proposed action since no upland disposal is being considered.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to proceed with the proposed action will be based on evaluating the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits which may be reasonably expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shore 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. 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, designation of the proposed placement sites associated with this Federal project is being made under guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the EPA in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army.

If these guidelines alone prohibit designating these proposed placement sites, any potential impairment of the maintenance of navigation, including any economic impact on navigation and anchorage which results from the failure to use this site 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
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries
Service, Protected Species Management Branch,
St. Petersburg, Florida

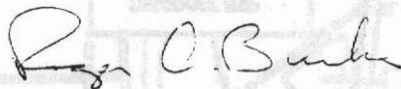
CESAM-PD-EC
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP97-MH08-02

March 17, 1997

Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,
Game and Fish Division
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,
Marine Resources Division
Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Other Federal, State, and local organizations, and United States Senators and Representatives of Alabama are being sent copies of this notice and are asked to participate in coordinating this proposed action. It is requested that the information contained in this notice be communicated to any other parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.

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. FP97-MH08-02 and should be directed to the District Engineer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Mobile, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, ATTN: CESAM-PD-EC in time to be received prior to April 15, 1997. Ms. Karen H. Dethloff, telephone number 334/694-4106, may be contacted for additional information.



Roger A. Burke
MOBILE DISTRICT
U.S Army Corps of Engineers

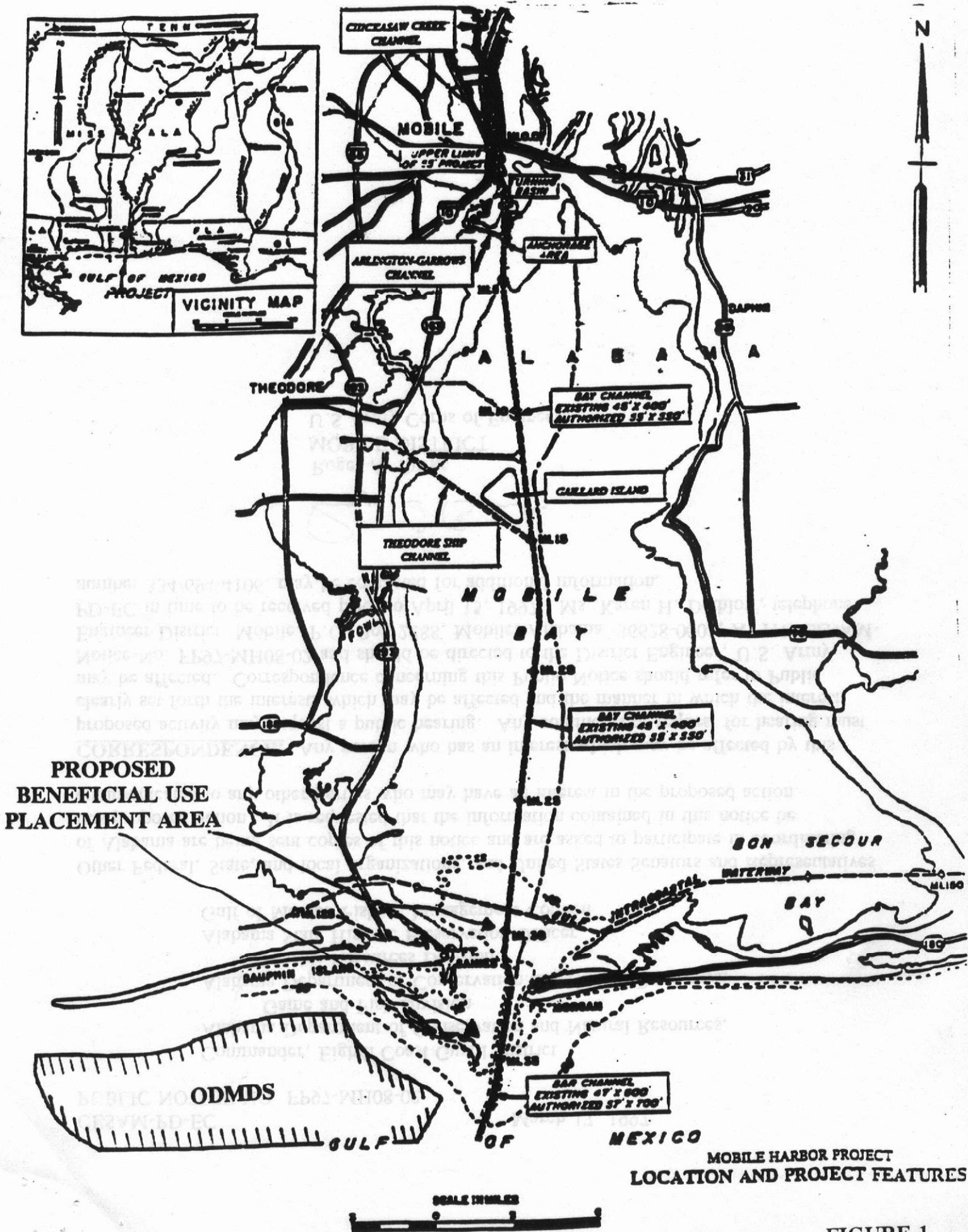
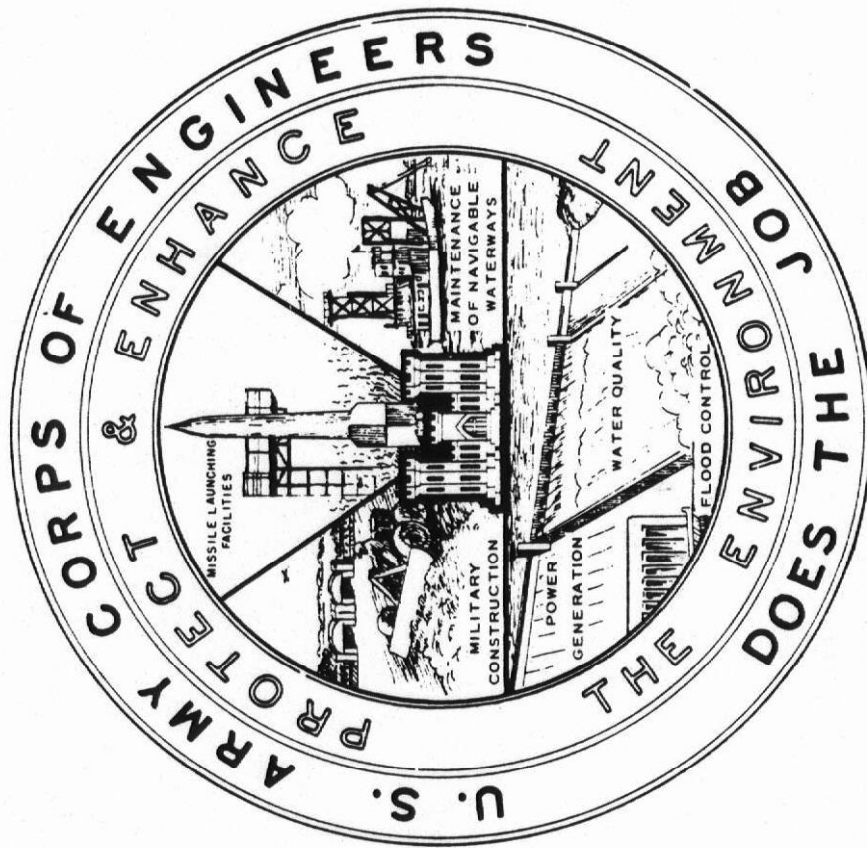


FIGURE 1



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U.S. POSTAGE
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