



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

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

CESAM-PD-EC
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP17-DI01-12

June 7, 2017

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE

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

AND

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

**MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES
DAUPHIN ISLAND BAY NAVIGATION CHANNEL**

MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mobile District proposes to conduct maintenance dredging and placement activities associated with the Federal Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project. Request for renewal of water quality certification and coastal zone consistency is proposed for all previously certified portions of the Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project.

This public notice is issued in accordance with rules and regulations published in the Federal Register on 26 April 1988. These laws are applied whenever dredged or fill materials may enter waters of the United States, or for the transportation of dredged material during placement into ocean waters. The recipient of this notice is requested specifically to review the proposed action as it may impact water quality, relative to the requirements of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Review of any other potential impacts are also requested.

PROJECT AUTHORIZATION: The navigation channel dredging in Dauphin Island Bay began with the enactment of the 1945 Rivers and Harbor Act (H. Doc. 333, 76th Congress, 1st Session); the 1954 Rivers and Harbor Act (H. Doc. 394, 82nd Congress, 2nd Session) and Section 107 of the Rivers and Harbor Act 14 July 1960. Improvements to deepen the channel from Fort Gaines to Dauphin Island Bay from 4-feet to 6-feet were approved in April 1992.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The proposed action is located in Dauphin Island Bay, Mississippi Sound, Mobile County, Alabama.

DESCRIPTION OF AUTHORIZED PROJECT: The authorized Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project includes the following:

- a. A seven foot deep x 500-square foot anchorage basin at Dauphin Island Village Channel;
- b. A seven foot deep x 100-foot wide x 8,300-foot long entrance channel extending into the Mississippi Sound;
- c. A seven foot deep x 150-foot wide channel from Mobile Bay;
- d. A seven foot deep x seven acre anchorage basin north of Fort Gaines;
- e. A six foot deep x 40-foot wide x 4,070-foot long channel extending into Dauphin Island Bay; and
- f. A jetty and revetment to protect the entrance channel.

The authorized dimensions of all segments of the Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project have been constructed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action is the continued operations and maintenance of the Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project. The Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project is divided into three general areas: the Dauphin Island Village Entrance Channel and anchorage basin, the Fort Gaines Channel and anchorage basin, and the Government Cut. The maintenance activities include the placement of dredged material originating from the project into previously approved disposal areas. The complete description of the proposed action is presented below, and the project features are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Dauphin Island Village Entrance Channel and anchorage basin - This portion of the project provides for an entrance channel seven feet deep by 100 feet wide and an anchorage basin seven feet deep by 500 feet long and 500 feet wide. Approximately 150,000 to 175,000 cubic yards (CY) of material per dredge event would be dredged with a combination of mechanical and cutterhead dredges from the entrance channel and anchorage basin (**Figure 2**). The open-water disposal areas (DA) consists of DA-64 which is divided into two segments by a channel and DA-63. The material would be placed in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) open-water DA 64 or DA-63 per dredging event. Dredged material consists primarily of fine to medium sand, silt and clay. Water depths in the proposed open-water sites generally range between 8.5 to 10 feet mean low water (MLW). Dredged material would be distributed in the open-water sites to minimize build-up. The disposal of this material would not impact operation and maintenance dredging of the GIWW.

Fort Gaines Channel and anchorage basin - This portion of the project provides for an entrance channel from Mobile Bay seven feet deep by 150 feet wide north of Fort Gaines on Dauphin Island and an anchorage basin seven feet deep and approximately seven acres in size.

Approximately 13,000 to 71,000 CY of material per dredge event would be dredged with a combination of mechanical and cutterhead dredges per dredge event. This dredged material would be placed in the existing shoreline disposal site on Little Dauphin Island or the upland disposal site at the eastern end of Dauphin Island (**Figure 2**). Dredged material consists primarily of fine to medium sand, silt and clay. Dredged material would also be used to maintain the Pass Drury closure when needed.

Government Cut - The existing six foot deep by 40-foot wide Federal project channel begins at the Billy Goat Hole anchorage basin and extends northward 4,070 feet to the intersection with the seven foot deep Dauphin Island Bay (state maintained) channel. Approximately 10,000 to 30,000 CY of fine to medium sand, silt and clay material would be dredged from Government Cut with a combination of mechanical and cutterhead dredges per dredge event. Material would be placed in the existing shoreline disposal site on Little Dauphin Island and at the upland disposal site on the eastern end of Dauphin Island. Additionally, dredged material may be placed for the maintenance of the Pass Drury closure when needed (**Figure 2**).

For all channel segments an additional -2 feet of advance maintenance dredging and -2 feet of overdepth dredging would be conducted to maintain the channel. Maintenance dredging of soft-dredged material with hopper, mechanical, and/or hydraulic cutterhead dredges tends to disturb the bottom sediments several feet deeper than the target depth due to the inaccuracies of the dredging process. An additional -3 feet of sediment below the -2-foot paid allowable dredging cut may be disturbed in the dredging process with minor amounts of the material being removed.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Pursuant to the requirements of the Clean Water Act (CWA), state water quality certification is required and will be requested from Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for a 10-year certification. A decision relative to water quality certification will be made 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), the USACE, Mobile District 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 made by ADEM upon completion of the required comment period.

USE BY OTHERS: The proposed action for the Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project is not expected to cause any significant land use changes in the adjacent areas. Use of the waters within the auspices of the Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project include recreational and commercial fishing, shrimping, and boating.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS: In accordance with the requirements of the NEPA, impacts associated with the navigation recertification activities for Dauphin Island Bay Navigation Project were addressed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) dated November 2012 and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on December 2012. The 2012 EA can be found at www.sam.usace.army.mil/missions/planning-environmental/environmental-assessments.

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 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 404(b)(1) of the CWA. A Section 404(b)(1) evaluation report was prepared to address any potential impacts associated with the proposed action. The Section 404(b)(1) evaluation report is available for review at the following website: www.sam.usace.army.mil/missions/planning-environmental/environmental-assessments.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Several species are listed as endangered or threatened within the project area. The USACE, Mobile District has determined the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect those protected species or their critical habitat. In compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH): EFH is defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) as “those waters and substrate necessary for fish to spawn, breed, feed or grow to maturity.” The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council in accordance with the MSFCMA (PL 94-265) has developed management plans for the following fisheries in the vicinity of the proposed action: shrimp, red drum, and coastal migratory pelagic. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Plans (2017) identifies EFH in the project area to be inter-tidal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, non-vegetated bottoms, shell reefs, and the estuarine water column. No inter-tidal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, shell reefs or estuarine water column would be impacted. The proposed activities would not adversely impact non-vegetated bottoms. Impacts to non-vegetated bottoms would be temporary in nature associated with the maintenance dredging and placement activities of the project.

The proposed activities would not significantly affect coastal habitat identified as EFH in the project area. Based on the extent of this habitat and the temporal nature of the impact, the overall impact to fisheries resources is considered negligible.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS: In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and other authorities, the proposed undertaking will be coordinated with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (ALSHPO) and interested Federally Recognized Tribes (Tribes). Fort Gaines which is listed on National Register of Historic Places is located in close proximity to the undertaking. The USACE, Mobile District Archaeologists conducted a site visit in the vicinity of Fort Gaines and observed no cultural resources within the current project footprint. The proposed undertaking as described in this public notice would be limited to maintenance dredging of existing channels and placement in previously utilized DAs. The USACE, Mobile District is seeking any additional information from the public pertaining to cultural resources that could be impacted by this proposed action.

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 that may be reasonably expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All environmental resources/factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. The proposed action will proceed unless it is found to be contrary to the overall public interest.

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

Region 4, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Fish and Wildlife Service
National Park Service
National Marine Fisheries Service, Habitat Conservation Division
National Marine Fisheries Service, Protected Resources Division
Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District
Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer
Alabama Department of Environmental Management
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Game and Fish Division
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources
Division
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Federally Recognized Tribes

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Other Federal, state, and local organizations are being sent copies of the notice and are asked to participate in coordinating this proposed work. 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 that may be affected by the proposed activity may request a public hearing. Any comments or requests for a public 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 be sent within 30 days from date of this notice, refer to Public Notice No. FP17-DI01-12, and should be directed to the District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, Attention: CESAM-PD-EC to Ms. Amy Gavin, or by phone at (251) 694-3737 or by email at amy.k.gavin@usace.army.mil.



CURTIS M. FLAKES
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mobile District

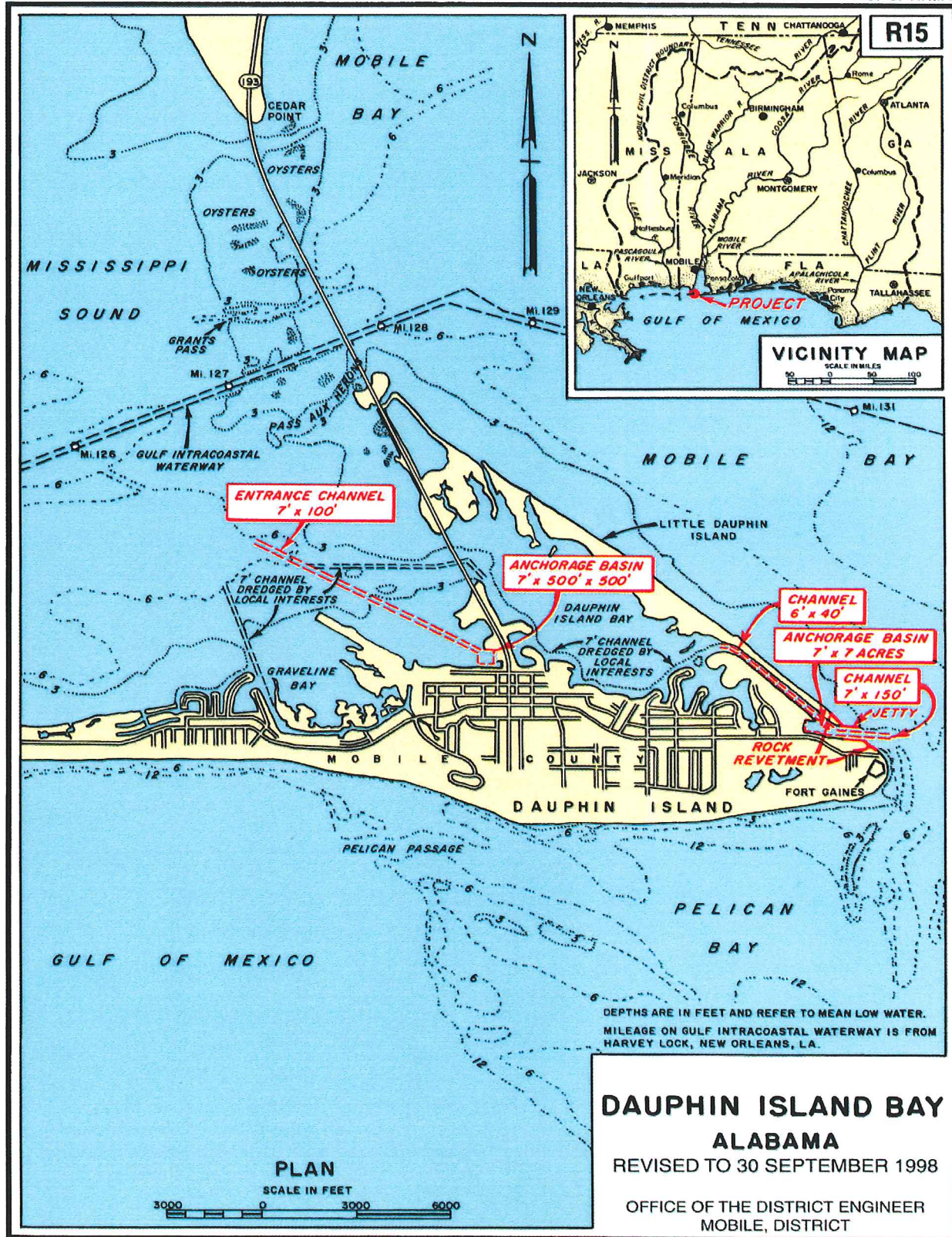


Figure 1: Dauphin Island, Alabama Project Map

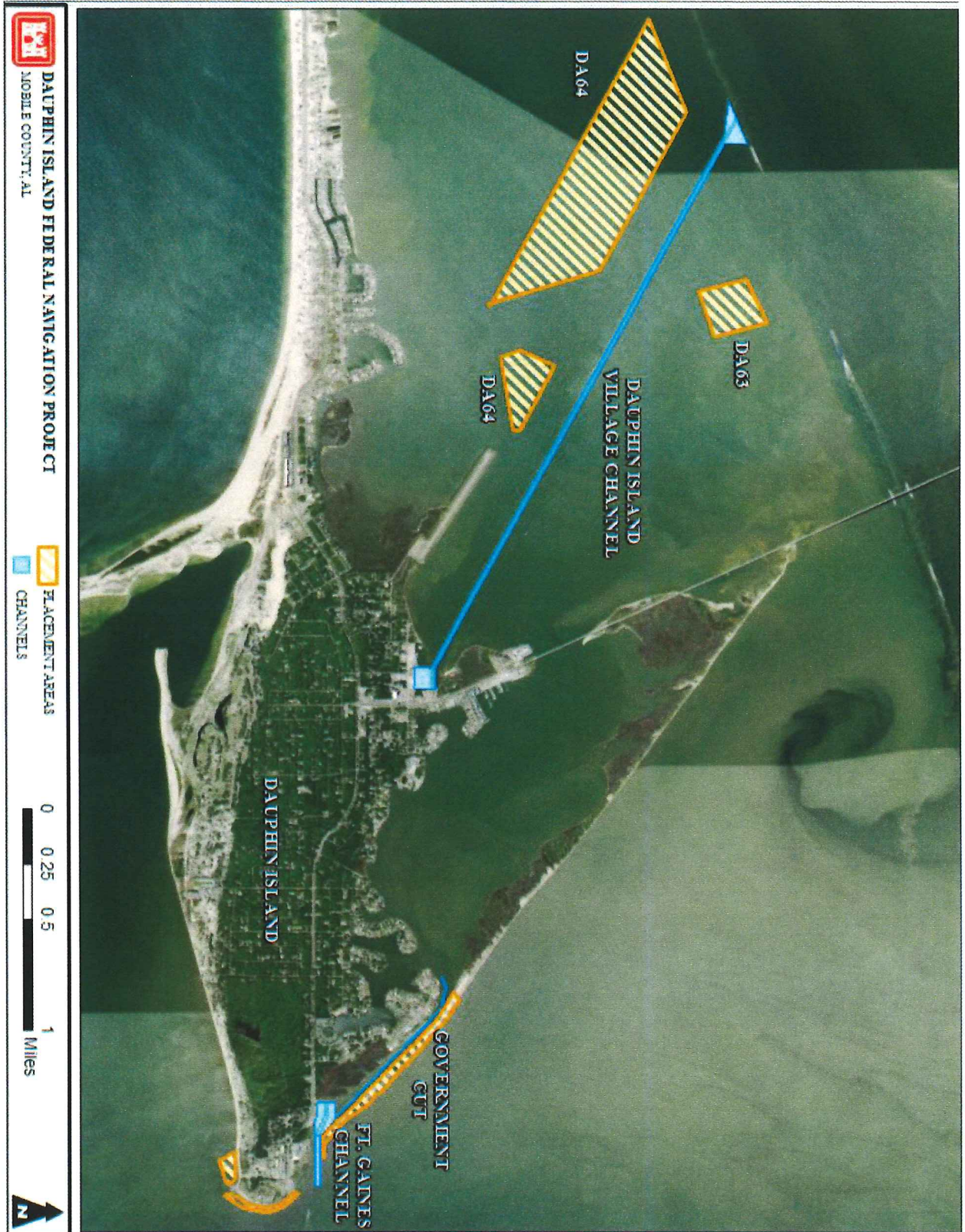


Figure 2. Disposal Area Locations