



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

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

**CESAM-PD-EC**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP20-TA-01-10**

**February 5, 2021**

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE**

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS MOBILE DISTRICT  
AND  
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**PROPOSED DREDGING OF THE TWO-MILE FEDERAL NAVIGATION CHANNEL**

**A FEDERALLY AUTHORIZED PROJECT**

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mobile District proposes to dredge the Two-Mile Federal Navigation Channel Project at Apalachicola, Franklin County, Florida. The material will be placed in a previously constructed upland placement area.

This public notice is issued in accordance with rules and regulations published in the Federal Register on April 26, 1988. These regulations provide for the review of the dredging programs for federally authorized projects. These laws are applicable whenever dredged or fill material may enter navigable 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. We also request comments on any other potential impacts.

**WATERWAYS AND LOCATION:** Apalachicola Bay, Apalachicola, Franklin County, Florida and Gulf of Mexico.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE AUTHORIZED PROJECT:** Improvements at Two-Mile were authorized initially November 21, 1963 by Chief of Engineers under authority in Section 107 of the River and Harbor Act of 14 July 1960. Modifications to the Two-Mile project included breakwaters paralleling the existing channels, an extension channel 6 feet deep by 100 feet wide and approximate 9,000 feet long, extending eastward to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), by the Chief of Engineers under 107 authority. Other features of existing project were authorized by River and Harbor Acts of September 3, 1954 (H. Doc. 557, 82d Congress, 2d Sess.), July 3, 1958, and prior acts.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING PROJECT:** The Two-Mile Federal Navigation Channel is located in Apalachicola Bay south of the city of Apalachicola, Franklin County, Florida. The project includes a six-foot-deep by 100-foot-wide channel that parallels the shoreline of Apalachicola and intersects the GIWW at the mouth of the Apalachicola River. The project also includes a six foot by 200-foot perpendicular connector that extends approximately 9,000 feet to the south into Apalachicola Bay.

A previously approved placement area to the northwest of the channel will be utilized for sediment placement. The upland placement area was constructed in September of 1999. The dikes surrounding the site were constructed to +20 feet Mean Lower Low Water, with a slope of 2:1 and a crown width of 8 feet. The site has four interior cells and four weir boxes, allowing increased settling time for fine-grained sediments. With regular use, the placement area has an expected 50 years of useful life.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:** The proposed action consists of removing approximately 450,000 cubic yards (cy) of sediment to bring the channel back to the federally authorized dimensions. Future maintenance dredging to remove approximately 50,000 cy of sediment will occur approximately every 5-10 years. The channel will be dredged to a design depth of -6 feet (ft) mean lower low water plus 2 ft. of advanced maintenance and 2 ft. for allowable overdepth. Material dredged from the Two-Mile channel will be placed in a 40-acre upland placement site on the Apalachicola Airport property north of U.S. Highway 98. Dikes surrounding the site were constructed to +20 ft Mean Lower Low Water, with a slope of 2:1 and a crown width of 8 ft. The site has four interior cells and four weir boxes, allowing increased settling time for fine-grained sediments. The water will be allowed to evaporate and infiltrate into the ground below. Minor rehabilitation of the dikes will occur prior to use.

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION:** Pursuant to the requirements of the Clean Water Act, State Water Quality Certification was requested, for a period of 10 years, and is currently under review by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). All State water quality standards would continue to be met.

**COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY:** USACE, Mobile District determined that the Proposed Action is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program to the maximum extent practicable. Consistency for the Proposed Action was requested, for a period of ten years, and is currently under review by FDEP.

**USE BY OTHERS:** The Proposed Action would not create any significant impacts on land use plan, within the adjacent areas.

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS:** In accordance with the requirements of the NEPA, impacts associated with the Proposed Action have been considered in an Environmental Assessment (EA). Based on the conclusion presented in the EA, it is determined that the implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in long-term adverse impacts would occur. The EA and a copy of the Section 404(b)(1) report are available on USACE, Mobile District

website: <https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/Planning-Environmental/Environmental-Assessments/>. The EA will be updated if comments are provided that necessitate inclusion. Upon finalization of the EA, a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) will be prepared.

**SECTION 404 (b) (1) EVALUATION REPORT:** A Section 404(b)(1) evaluation has been prepared to evaluate impacts associated with the Proposed Action in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Impacts associated with this action include a temporary increase in turbidity and suspended solids concentrations within the project area. It also includes short-term loss of benthic organisms and localized short-term degradation of aesthetics at the placement area. A Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation Report has been prepared and is available on USACE, Mobile District website in the link provided above.

**ENDANGERED/THREATENED SPECIES:** Pursuant to 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 (NMFS). USACE, Mobile District has determined that the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the West Indian manatee. Dredged material would be removed from the channel by a hydraulic pipeline or mechanical dredge and placed in a confined disposal area. The action may affect but is not likely to affect sea turtles and gulf sturgeon. Since dredging would be done via a hydraulic cutterhead pipeline dredge, impacts from this type of dredge have been discountable as determined by the NMFS-PRD in 2003 in the Gulf Regional Biological Opinion for Dredging of Gulf of Mexico Navigation Channels and Sand Mining Areas Using Hopper Dredges by USACE Galveston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Jacksonville Districts (GRBO) (Consultation Number F/SER/2000/01287) dated November 19, 2003 and amended in 2005 and 2007. Impacts associated with activities should be temporary and isolated to actual construction limits.

The project is located within Gulf sturgeon critical habitat Unit 13 which encompasses a total of 168,773 acres. Gulf sturgeon has been documented by sightings, incidental captures, and telemetry studies throughout Apalachicola Bay and Saint George Sound. This unit provides winter feeding and migration habitat for juvenile and adult species from the Apalachicola River Gulf sturgeon subpopulation.

**ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH):** EFH is defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as "those waters and substrates necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity." The designation and conservation of EFH seeks to minimize adverse effects on habitat caused by fishing and non-fishing activities. The NMFS, Habitat Conservation Division (HCD) has identified EFH habitats for the Gulf of Mexico in its Fishery Management Plan Amendments.

These habitats include estuarine areas, such as estuarine emergent wetlands, seagrass beds, algal flats, mud, sand, shell, and rock substrates, and the estuarine water column. The habitat in the project area, which is located just outside the mouth of Apalachicola Bay, consists of Gulf of Mexico waters and fine sediment. The NMFS-HCD has

management plans for brown shrimp (*Penaeus aztecus*), white shrimp (*P. setiferus*), red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*), and Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*) within the project area. The proposed activities would not adversely impact intertidal wetlands nor vegetated waterbottoms. Impacts associated with the dredging activities would be temporal in nature.

The proposed activities would temporarily affect coastal habitat identified as EFH in the project area. Based on the extent of this habitat in the general vicinity of the project and the short-term nature of the impact, the overall impact to fisheries resources is considered negligible. USACE will coordinate this determination with the NMFS-HCD.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSIDERATION:** Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended and regulation 36 Code of Federal Regulation Part 800 requires USACE, Mobile District to consider the effects of its undertakings upon historic properties. This includes but is not limited to, historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources and to consult with other agencies and Tribal Nations to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects upon those resources. This project was reviewed by USACE, Mobile District archeological staff.

Consultation with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer will be conducted for the proposed project and a no effects to historic properties determination will be consulted upon for the upcoming maintenance and placement activities with the understanding that the proposed activities are within the previous project footprint. Use of the existing placement area for the proposed project will not affect any historic properties. The Two-Mile Site (8FR854) was determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places and will not be affected by the proposed project.

The records search and consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and appropriate Tribal Nations constitutes the full extent of cultural resources investigations unless comment(s) to the Public Notice are received. Comments should document that significant sites or properties exist which may be affected by this work, or that adequate potential exists for the location of significant sites or properties within the project area.

**EVALUATION:** The decision whether to proceed with the Proposed Action would be based on an evaluation of the overall public interest. That decision would reflect the national concerns for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits that may be expected to accrue from this proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to proceed and the conditions under which the activity would occur would be determined by the outcome of this public notice. All factors that may be relevant to the Proposed Action would be considered. Among these include such factors as: conservation, economics, and aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the public. The Proposed Action would proceed unless it is found to be contrary to the overall public interest. Inasmuch as

the proposed work would involve the discharge of materials into navigable waters, specification of the proposed placement sites associated with this Federal project is being made through the application of guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army. If these guidelines alone prohibit the specification of any proposed placement site, any potential impairment of the maintenance of navigation, including any economic impacts on navigation and anchorage that would result from the failure to use this site would also be considered.

**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, Panama City, Florida  
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, St. Petersburg, Florida  
U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Fisheries, Protected Species Branch, St. Petersburg, Florida  
Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District Florida State Historic Preservation Officer  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Other Federal, state, and local organizations, affiliated Indian Tribe interests, and U.S. Senators and Representatives of the State of Florida are being sent copies of the notice and are being asked to participate in coordinating this proposed work.

**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 be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within 30 days of the date of this public notice. A request for a hearing must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected. Correspondence concerning the public notice should refer to Public Notice No. FP20-TA01-10 and should be directed to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Attention: CESAM-PD-EC, Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001. For additional information please contact Mr. Justin Lashley via phone at (251) 694-3777 or via email at Justin.M.Lashley@usace.army.mil.

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Jeremy M. LaDart  
Chief, Planning and Environmental  
Division