



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

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

CESAM-PD-EC
PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP16-PA01-09

JUNE 10, 2016

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

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

**PASCAGOULA HARBOR FEDERAL NAVIGATION PROJECT
PASCAGOULA RIVER CHANNEL AND UPPER PASCAGOULA CHANNEL
DEEPENING FLOOD CONTROL AND COASTAL EMERGENCIES**

JACKSON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mobile District, proposes to conduct previously-authorized new work and maintenance dredging associated with the federally authorized Pascagoula Harbor Federal Navigation Project in Jackson County, Mississippi. Two beneficial use placement areas are being proposed for this project. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to address any potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action. A Section 404(b)1 Evaluation has also been prepared to address fill in the waters of the United States. A copy of the EA, the Section 404(b)1 Evaluation, and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are available for review on the Mobile District's website at <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/PlanningEnvironmental.aspx>.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action consists of new work and some subsequent operations and maintenance (O&M) material from deepening the Upper Pascagoula Channel and Pascagoula River Channel segments of the Pascagoula Harbor Federal Navigation Project from the existing depth of -38 feet mean lower low water (MLLW) to the federally-authorized channel depth of -42 feet MLLW and to maintain the channel at the specified depths in the future. This would include an additional -2 feet of advance maintenance dredging and -2 feet of allowable overdepth for a total maximum depth of -46 feet MLLW. 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. Dredged material would be placed within two beneficial use areas, the Singing River Island Semi-Confined Site and Round Island, as well as previously approved, utilized open-water sites adjacent to the channel. Dredging will be accomplished most likely using a hydraulic cutter-head dredge. Continued maintenance of the Pascagoula River Channel and Upper Pascagoula Channel is anticipated to be required every 36 months and 18 months, respectively, based on previous record

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTIRE AUTHORIZED PROJECT: The authorized Pascagoula Harbor, Mississippi Navigation Project includes the following channels:

a. An entrance channel 44 feet deep and 550 feet wide from the Gulf of Mexico to Horn Island Pass, including a 2,200-foot long by 200-foot wide sediment trap situated on the east side of the channel, a channel 44 feet deep and 600 feet wide through Horn Island Pass, including a 4,700-foot long sediment trap situated on the east side of the channel 44 feet deep and 175 feet wide.

b. A channel 42 feet deep and 350 feet wide in Mississippi Sound and the Pascagoula River to the railroad bridge at Pascagoula, including a turning basin 2,000 feet long and 950 feet wide (including the channel area) on the west side of the river below the railroad bridge.

c. A channel 42 feet deep and 350 feet wide from the ship channel in Mississippi Sound to the 1,150-foot turning basin at the mouth of Bayou Casotte, then 350 feet wide for about one mile to the northern turning basin, 900 feet wide and 1,750 feet long.

d. A channel 22 feet deep and 150 feet wide up Pascagoula River from the railroad bridge to the mouth of Escatawpa River (Dog River), thence up the Escatawpa River to the Highway 613 Bridge.

e. A channel 12 feet deep and 125 feet wide from the Highway 613 Bridge, via Robertson and Bounds Lakes to mile 6.0 on the Escatawpa River.

f. A channel 12 feet deep by 80 feet wide extending from deep water in the Pascagoula River to a turning basin in Krebs Lake a distance of about 1,500 feet, then along the south bank of the lake a channel 10 feet deep and 60 feet wide, terminating at a second turning basin, a distance of 2,700 feet from the first.

PLACEMENT AREAS

Singing River Island Semi-Confined Site: This sediment placement area is 450 acres in size located directly adjacent to Singing River Island and the construction of the rock breakwater was completed in 2013. Six fish passages remain open within the rock breakwater to allow for tidal flushing and fish habitat. One hundred and fifty acres within the site will be converted to wetland habitat through vegetative planting or natural succession. This site was designated for the placement of maintenance dredged material from the federally-authorized Pascagoula Harbor Federal Navigation Project.

Round Island Beneficial Use Site: The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) has obtained a USACE Department of Army permit for the construction of a 220-acre beneficial use site adjacent to Round Island. Currently, the site is only constructed to approximately 70 acres, however, the MDMR is expanding the site to accept additional suitable material.

Open-Water Placement Sites: Dredged material from the project would also be placed in previously authorized open-water disposal areas. Open-water sites numbers 5, 6, 7, and 8 adjacent to the channel would be used for placement of O&M material from this event.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Pursuant to the requirements of the Clean Water Act, State Water Quality Certification has been received from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control.

COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY: Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act, the proposed action is consistent with the Mississippi Coastal Management Program to the maximum extent practicable. Concurrence with this determination has been received from the MDMR.

ENDANGERED/THREATENED SPECIES:


The USACE, Mobile District determined a may affect, but not likely to adversely affect any listed threatened or endangered species and their associated designated critical habitat. The proposed project was coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) by letter dated April 12, 2016. The USFWS concurred with this determination on May 19, 2016.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT ASSESSMENT (EFH): EFH is defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) "as those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth 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: shrimp, red drum, reef fish, stone crab, spiny lobster, coral and coral reef and coastal migratory pelagic. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Plans (1999) identifies EFH in the project area to be inter-tidal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, non-vegetated bottoms, shell reefs and the estuarine water column. The proposed new work and maintenance dredging activity is not anticipated to adversely alter the present EFH. The NMFS-Habitat Conservation Division concurred with the Mobile District's determination by letter dated April 22, 2016.

CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSIDERATION: In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and other authorities, the USACE, Mobile District conducted a records and literature search of the state-wide survey and site files at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), as well as other data as available, in order to identify existing resources. A literature and background check was made of all areas of potential effect (APE) of the proposed project including the placement areas in 2011. The investigation was updated in July 2015. No sites were identified within the project APE. A no-effect determination on cultural resources was made by the USACE, Mobile District Archaeologist and submitted to the MDAH and SHPO on July 27, 2015. The SHPO office concurred with this determination by letter dated, August 6, 2015.

CLEAN AIR ACT: The project area is in attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards parameters. The proposed action would not affect the attainment status of the project area or region. A State Implementation Plan conformity determination (42 United States Code 7506 [c]) is not required since the project area is in attainment for all criteria pollutants.

CORRESPONDENCE: Any comments on the EA, Section 404(b)1 Evaluation, or the Draft FONSI should be submitted to U.S. Army Engineer District, Mobile, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, ATTN: Ms. Lekesha Reynolds, CESAM-PD-EC within 30 days of the date of this public notice. For additional information please contact Ms. Lekesha Reynolds by phone at (251) 690-3260 or by email at lekesha.w.reynolds@usace.army.mil.



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