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Local Motion seeks Corps of Engineers permit to build new docking facility, repair abutment in South Hero

CONCORD, Mass. – Local Motion is seeking a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct work in waters of the United States in conjunction with a new docking facility for a ferry in Lake Champlain in South Hero, Vermont.

The permit applicant proposes to place and maintain a new docking facility for a ferry and repair and rehabilitate an existing abutment off an existing causeway at “The Cut” in Lake Champlain in South Hero. The purpose of the project is to provide ferry service for bicyclists and pedestrians between the two sides of “The Cut,” and to provide improved recreational access to the lake.

The proposed work involves placing and maintaining two “T”-shaped floating main docks: an 8-foot-wide, 48-foot-long dock will be placed parallel to the causeway; a 24-foot wide, 55-foot long dock will be placed perpendicular to the causeway. The dock will be accessed by a 6-foot-wide, 40-foot-long gangway. The gangways will be attached to concrete ramps constructed on the causeway. The docks will extend a maximum of 95 feet beyond ordinary high water (OHW). The floating docks will be anchored to the lake bottom by helical anchors.

The applicant proposes to place and maintain two floating 20-foot-wide, 84-foot-long wave attenuators extending a maximum of 135 feet beyond OHW. The attenuators will be anchored to the lake bottom by helical anchors. The project also involves placing and maintaining about 25 cubic yards of rock fill below OHW in conjunction with the construction of the concrete ramp to access the southern dock. This work will impact about 410 square feet of lake bottom.

The project will also involve placing and maintaining about 90 cubic yards of rock fill below OHW in conjunction with the rehabilitation of the lakeward end of the northern causeway. This work will impact about 805 square feet of lake bottom. The northern abutment will be rehabilitated into a viewing area. This work will impact about 50 square feet of the abutment below OHW. About one-half cubic yard of concrete will be placed below OHW for this work.

Also, 11 wooden piles will be cut at the lake bottom lakeward of the northern abutment and removed.

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The only alternative considered was the construction of a pedestrian bridge. A bridge would interfere with navigation on the lake. The no-build alternative would not accomplish the project purpose of providing improved recreational access to the lake and would not prevent the continued erosion of the causeway.

The application for the federal permit was filed with the Corps of Engineers in compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge or fill of material in United States waters, including wetlands; and with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, which provides for federal regulation of any work in, or affecting navigable waters of the United States.

The Corps public notice, with more detailed information on the proposed project, can be reviewed online at the Corps website <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select Regulatory/Permitting and then weekly public notices and search by file number or state.

Public comments on the Corps permit review (File # NAE-2009-383) should be forwarded no later than Sept. 3, 2010 to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Vermont Project Office (ATTN: Michael Adams), 8 Carmichael Street, Suite 205, Essex Junction, Vermont 05452. Additional information is available from Permit Project Manager Michael Adams at 802-872-2893 or by email to michael.s.adams@usace.army.mil.

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