



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**  
New England District

# News release

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## Corps proposes navigation improvement, dredging of Bass Harbor in Tremont

**CONCORD, Mass.** – At the request of the Town of Tremont, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District is proposing the improvement of navigation as well as maintenance dredging of the Federal Navigation Project in Bass Harbor in Tremont, Maine.

The purpose of the proposed navigation project is to improve the local commercial navigation. The existing Federal navigation project, constructed under Section 107 authority, was built in 1964 to provide a 10-foot by 8-acre combined entrance channel/anchorage area in the lower harbor, with two 6-foot anchorage areas, totaling about 16 acres, located west and north of the 10-foot area. The existing project has not required maintenance dredging since its construction in 1964 due to very low shoaling rates.

“Maintenance dredging is currently needed to restore the authorized dimensions of the Federal Navigation Project,” said Study Manager Mike Tuttle, of the Corps’ New England District Engineering/Planning Division. “Maintenance dredging would remove approximately 3,800 cubic yards of silty material from the northern 6-foot anchorage and approximately 800 cubic yards of silty material from the western 6-foot anchorage.”

The recommended improvement plan would be carried out concurrently with the maintenance dredging and consist of: (1) re-designating an 80-foot wide portion of the existing 10-foot anchorage as channel to better access the town landing; (2) dredging a compensatory area of an 8-foot anchorage 80-feet wide east of the 10-foot anchorage to replace capacity lost to the channel; (3) providing a short channel 8-feet deep by 80 feet wide east of the central ledge connecting the upper and lower basins of the inner harbor; and (4) expanding the existing upper 6-foot anchorage by 5.8 acres.

Public comments on this proposed work should be sent to the Corps by March 23, 2006.

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## **Corps proposes dredging, improvement of Bass Harbor/2-2-2-2-2-2**

“Approximately 53,400 cubic yards of silty material and 1,000 cubic yards of rock ledge will be removed for the improvement project,” Tuttle said. Disposal of all dredge material will be at a deep-water site located 4 miles northwest of Bass Harbor in the Eastern Passage west of Mount Desert Island, as recommended by local fishermen. The work will be performed during an approximate four-month period within an environmental window beginning Oct. 1 and ending April 15.

The Eastern Passage site was recommended as the disposal site due to its close proximity (6 miles) to Bass Harbor. Approximately 53,400 cubic yards of silty material and 1,000 cubic yards of ledge from the improvement project, as well as approximately 4,600 cubic yards from maintenance dredging, will be placed at the open-water site. Using the Eastern Passage site would enable the work to be completed within the allowable dredging and disposal window using only one scow.

The improvement study resulted after local officials and harbor users expressed a concern for the lack of adequate public anchorage to efficiently accommodate a commercial fishing fleet that has grown significantly since the design of the existing project more than 40 years ago.

“The feasibility study objectives were to provide a clear designated channel to connect the Town wharf with the harbor entrance, expand the available public anchorage area, and provide more direct channel connection between the harbor entrance and Town wharf and between the upper and lower harbor areas,” Tuttle said. In addition, evaluations were made in the alternative process to eliminate harbor congestion, groundings in shallow harbor areas and other inefficiencies that constrain commercial operations.

“Portions of the existing Federal Navigation Project have shoaled to depths that inhibit safe passage for the Bass Harbor fleet at certain tides,” Tuttle said. “Maintenance dredging of the existing Federal Navigation Project will restore the authorized dimensions to the project area and remove the hazardous shoal areas.”

A number of navigation improvement alternatives were developed and analyzed during the early stages of the planning study. These alternatives included the possibility of transferring a portion of the existing fleet to other areas or harbors and various channel/anchorage improvements involving dredging and disposal options.

An Environmental Assessment and Clean Water Act Section 404(b)1 analysis for this work has been prepared and is available for review upon request.

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### **Corps proposes dredging, improvement of Bass Harbor/3-3-3-3-3**

Coordination with National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that the proposed activity is not likely to affect any endangered species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act.

Dredging may have a temporary adverse affect on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Potential impacts to Essential Fish Habitat from the dredging, blasting, and disposal activities associated with this project include temporary increases in turbidity from dredging activities, potential burial of demersal organisms during disposal, fish mortality from pressure waves, and the temporary loss of benthic organisms associated with the dredged material and disposal areas. The impacts from the dredging process (turbidity and loss of benthos) are expected to be short-term and localized as the dredging and disposal events will be intermittent, since benthic recolonization is generally a rapid process. A construction window of Oct. 1 through April 15 with an embedded dredging window of Nov. 1 through April 15 will be used to reduce impacts to EFH for managed species in the area.

The proposed improvement of navigation and maintenance dredging work is being coordinated with the following Federal, state and local agencies: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Maine State Planning Office, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Maine Department of Marine Resources, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, the Bass Harbor Management Committee, the Town of Tremont Board of Selectmen, and the Town of Tremont Conservation Commission.

More information about this proposal, including the Environmental Assessment and Public Notice, is available on the Corps website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select “project” and then “Bass Harbor” or go directly to the link at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projets/ma/bassharbor/bassharbor.htm>.

Public comments on this proposed work should be forwarded no later than March 23, 2006 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Engineering/Planning Division (ATTN: Mr. Mike Tuttle), 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751.