



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New England District

Public Notice

In Reply Refer to: Mr. Mark L. Habel

Mark.L.Habel@usace.army.mil

Planning Division

Date: January 19, 2021

Comment Period Closes: February 18, 2021

696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

30-DAY PUBLIC NOTICE

NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENT OF GREAT CHEBEAGUE ISLAND, MAINE

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District, plans to perform work in the navigable waters of this District, subject to the provisions of Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-532) and subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (P.L. 91-190). USACE is proposing channel improvements to increase the ability of the Stone Wharf Landing at Great Chebeague Island (town of Chebeague Island, Maine) to accommodate safe and efficient ferry and commercial barge services and commercial fishing vessel operations from the landing. The project is authorized under Section 107 of the River and Harbor Act of 1960. Attachment No. 1 lists pertinent laws, regulations, and directives.

Project Description: The proposed project will make navigation access improvements to the Stone Wharf Landing at Great Chebeague Island in Chebeague Island, Maine. A feasibility study developed and analyzed several alternatives for navigation channel improvements and the benefits that each alternative provides. The Recommended Plan, as shown in Figure 1, would establish a 10-foot mean lower low water (MLLW) by 100-foot-wide federal channel extending about 1,200 feet from deep water west of Great Chebeague Island to the Stone Wharf, widened alongside the wharf to 150 feet for maneuvering of ferry boats, with an 8-foot MLLW turning basin, 100-foot-wide by about 230-foot-long inshore of the channel to access the barge ramp. Approximately 34,000 cubic yards (CY) of mixed gravel, sand, and silt will be removed from the proposed project area using a mechanical dredge. The dredged material has been determined suitable for ocean disposal and will be loaded onto scows and towed about 15 miles south to the Portland Disposal Site (PDS), an U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated ocean

disposal site for dredged material for placement. Construction will occur between October 1 and April 1 and is expected to take three to four months to complete. Construction will occur in any given year in which funding becomes available. This improvement project is authorized under the continuing authority of Section 107 of the River and Harbor Act of 1960, as amended.

Purpose of Work: The principal navigation issue at Great Chebeague Island's Stone Wharf Landing is that the existing conditions do not accommodate safe and efficient operations of the ferries, cargo barge operators, commercial fishermen and other vessels accessing and working from the island. Shoaling of the wharf approaches and maneuvering/turning area has begun to limit waterside access. This leads to delays and inefficiencies that have become problematic for the operators and island residents.

Providing a new channel and turning basin will alleviate the delays and inefficiencies with navigation access to the Stone Wharf. The ferries will be able to maintain a schedule, cargo barges and other craft will have better access to the barge ramp, and the fishing fleet will have easier access to all areas of the landing. USACE has tentatively selected a plan that recommends dredging a new channel to and alongside the wharf with a turning basin inshore of the channel to access the barge ramp. These improvements will allow vessels to safely reach berthing and loading areas.

Alternatives Considered: Alternatives considered included fleet relocation, building a bridge to connect the island to the mainland, constructing a new heavy-duty landing elsewhere on the island, and dredging to improve access to the existing Stone Wharf. Except for dredging, these alternatives were determined to be more costly and impractical. Channel and turning basin depths of six to 12 feet were evaluated for project depth optimization. Alternatives examined for disposal of dredged material included re-handling material ashore for dewatering and transport to an upland disposal facility, nearshore placement, beach placement, or ocean disposal.

Various combinations of channel and turning basin depths were examined, with the basin depth two feet less than the channel depth in each case to account for the different depths needed by the different types of vessels using each area. The selected plan is based on consideration of economic efficiency, minimization of environmental impacts, navigational safety, and the needs of local stakeholders. Establishing a 10-foot channel with 8-foot turning basin results in the greatest net benefits and is the preferred National Economic Development (NED) plan.

Placement Area: Disposal of the dredged material will be at the EPA-designated Portland Disposal Site offshore of Casco Bay (Figure 2). The proposed haul route is found in Figure 2.

Additional Information: Additional information may be obtained from Mr. Mark Habel, Planning Division, at the address shown above, by telephone at (978) 318-8871, or by email at Mark.L.Habel@usace.army.mil.

Coordination: The proposed work is being coordinated with the following federal, state, and local agencies and Federally recognized tribal nations:

Federal

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Coast Guard

State

Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Maine Department of Marine Resources
Maine Coastal Program
State Historic Preservation Office

Federally Recognized Tribes

Passamaquoddy Tribe

Local

Town of Chebeague Island
Chebeague Transportation Company

Environmental Impacts: A draft Environmental Assessment for this work has been prepared and is available for review upon request. USACE has made a preliminary determination that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice.

Federal Consistency with Maine's Coastal Zone Management Program:

USACE finds that the improvement dredging of the Great Chebeague Island navigation project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with Maine's approved coastal zone management plan established as a result of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

Other Information:

- a. Local Sponsor: The town of Chebeague Island, Maine, is the non-federal sponsor for the proposed work.
- b. Previous Dredging: The areas proposed to be dredged for navigation improvement have been dredged to a minor extent by the town in 2004.
- c. Alternate Placement Methods: Alternate placement options that have been considered were ocean placement, nearshore placement, upland disposal, and beach placement. The preferred alternative for the placement of dredged material from the proposed project is ocean placement.
- d. Non-Federal Dredging: To date there are no non-federal dredging projects proposed in connection with the proposed federal improvement dredging. Facility owners within the harbor who may be interested in performing non-federal dredging concurrently with this project should be aware that work will require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 10 of the River and Harbor Act and, depending on the location of the non-federal dredged material disposal, may also require a USACE permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In order to be disposed of in ocean waters, private dredged material must be determined to be suitable for such disposal.
- e. Endangered Species: USACE made the preliminary determination that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect any state or federally listed threatened or endangered species.
- f. Floodplain Management: The proposed project is not located within the floodplain, so it will not result in further development of the floodplain and will not result in any long or short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of the floodplains.
- g. Cultural Resources: The proposed work will not affect any cultural or archaeological features or resources in the area of dredging, disposal, or mitigation activities, and coordination was completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and implementing regulations (36 CFR 800). The Passamaquoddy Tribe was also consulted about the work and had no further comment.

- h. Essential Fish Habitat Assessment: USACE has determined that dredging and placement activities will have temporary and permanent adverse effects on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Approximately 47,195 square feet of eelgrass habitat will be permanently lost as a result of the dredging of the channel and turning basin. Additionally, the dredging of the turning basin will permanently convert 26,830 feet of intertidal area to subtidal area. These permanent impacts to EFH will be mitigated for by restoring eelgrass elsewhere within Maine waters. The temporary impacts to EFH from dredging include the temporary loss of the benthic resources within the dredge footprint and temporary and localized increases in turbidity in the vicinity of the construction equipment during dredging. These short-term impacts will not significantly affect EFH for any of the managed species noted to occur in the project area.
- i. Additional Requirements: A 401 Water Quality Certificate will not be required as the discharge of dredged material will occur within Federal waters at the PDS.

The decision whether to perform the proposed work will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact 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 reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal will be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered; among these are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, historic values, fish and wildlife values, flood damage prevention, land use classification, and the welfare of the people.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all interested parties and should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751, ATTN: Mr. Mark Habel, or to email address Mark.L.Habel@usace.army.mil within 30 days of this notice.

John A. Atilano II
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Attachments

Attachment 1:

PERTINENT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND DIRECTIVES

Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.)

Clean Water Act, of 1977 as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1456)

Code of Federal Regulation, Title 33, Parts 335 through 338

Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)

Estuary Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.)

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601-12 et seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 472a, et seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-666c)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.)

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996

Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. (33 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.)

Migratory Marine Game-Fish Act (16 U.S.C. 760c-760g)

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4347)

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470)

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, 11 February 1994

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Health Risks and Safety Risks, 21 April 1997

River and Harbor Act of 1960

Figure 1: Proposed Channel and Turning Basin at the Stone Wharf



Figure 2: Proposed Tug/Scow Haul Route

