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**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Philadelphia District

Public Notice

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Homepage <http://www.nap.usace.army.mil>

In Reply Refer to: Environmental Resources Branch

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
NATIONAL REGIONAL SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT (RSM)
PROGRAM
WRDA 2016 SECTION 1122
BENEFICIAL USE PILOT PROJECT
Oyster Creek Channel
Barnegat Inlet Federal Navigation Project
Ocean County, New Jersey**

Pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Philadelphia District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has completed a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the National Regional Sediment Management (RSM) Program under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2016 Section 1122 Beneficial Use Pilot Project at Oyster Creek Channel, NJ. Section 1122 of WRDA requires the USACE to establish a pilot program to carry out ten projects for the beneficial use of dredged material. The Barnegat Inlet Beneficial Use Pilot Project was one of ten projects selected from a field of 95 proposals, based on criteria contained in Section 1122 of WRDA, as having a high likelihood of delivering environmental, economic, and social benefits.

The purpose of the pilot project is to maintain the authorized depths within Oyster Creek Channel Federal navigation channel and placing the high quality dredged material in an aquatic area within Barnegat Bay to keep the material in the system and reduce water depths and eventually over time establish an emergent island. There is strong support for island creation at this site as the depths are believed to be in excess of SAV to proliferate. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Bureau of Coastal Engineering is the non-Federal sponsor. There is considerable opportunity within the sediment-rich Barnegat Inlet complex to use dredged material from state and Federal channels for beneficial use.

The EA evaluates existing environmental, cultural, and socio-economic conditions and the effects of the pilot project (Beneficial Use of Sediments – Proposed Action) on existing resources at the proposed project site. The EA also evaluates the effects on

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existing resources of not dredging Oyster Creek Channel, which connects Barnegat Inlet to the New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway (No Action Alternative) and the current maintenance dredging and placement practices (Current Practice).

The Barnegat Inlet Federal Navigation Project, a complex and dynamic coastal system along the New Jersey Atlantic Coast, was adopted in House Document (HD) 73 19 in 1935, modified in HD 74 85 in 1937 and HD 79 358 in 1946 and again as a result of the Supplemental Appropriation Act of 1985. Originally constructed in 1940, the navigation project consists of a dual jetty system with an inlet channel that is 300 feet wide to an authorized depth of 8 feet Mean Low Water (MLW). The inlet channel extends from the outer bar in the Atlantic Ocean to the north end of the sand dike in Barnegat Bay. The Federal project channel then extends in a northwesterly direction from the gorge in the inlet to Oyster Creek channel to provide access to deep water in the bay and a connection to the New Jersey Intercoastal Water Way Federal channel. Maintenance dredging for this 1122 pilot project will occur in the Oyster Creek channel portion of the project (Figure 1).

The channel at Oyster Creek is 200 feet wide by 8 feet deep (MLLW). The western portion of the channel shoals frequently and is typically dredged every 3 years based on when funding is appropriated. USACE proposes to initially dredge approximately 25,000 cubic yards (cy) to bring the channel back to authorized depth. Dredging will be conducted utilizing a hydraulic pipeline (cutterhead) dredge and the material will be placed at an aquatic placement area known as Site 6 in Barnegat Bay west of previously created islands known as Sites 26A and 26B. In subsequent maintenance dredging operations, USACE proposes to place approximately 3,000 cy annually at either Site 6 or at nearshore locations identified as Sites 10 and 11 to provide a supplemental sand source for shoreline protection and to promote marsh migration in an areas of shoreline erosion (Figure 2).

In accordance with NEPA, the draft EA is being circulated to the appropriate State and Federal agencies and other public interests.

Impacts to Water Quality have been evaluated in accordance with Section 404(b)(1) guidelines of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and are not adverse. In accordance with Section 401 of the CWA, Water Quality Certification is being requested from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

In accordance with Section 307 (c) of the Coastal Zone Management Act, an activity affecting land or water uses in a State's coastal zone must comply with the State's Coastal Zone Management Program. Concurrence with our determination of compliance is being requested from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

It has been determined that the proposed work is not likely to adversely affect listed species or their critical habitat pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as amended. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service is on-going and will be completed in compliance with Section 7 of the ESA.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267), requires all Federal agencies to

consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). A preliminary assessment of the effects of the proposed action on Federally-managed species and their life stages within this area indicates the project would not adversely affect EFH.

Review of the National Register of Historic Places indicates that no registered properties, or properties listed as eligible for inclusion, would be impacted.

All practicable means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects have been incorporated into the plan.

The public and all agencies are invited to comment on this proposal. The EA can be downloaded from our District website:

<http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/PublicNoticesReports.aspx>.

Please provide any comments within 45 days of the date of this Notice. If you have any further questions regarding this project or the EA, please contact Ms. Monica Chasten at Monica.A.Chasten@USACE.army.mil.

All comments on the work described in this public notice and/or in the report titled: "Environmental Assessment, *National Regional Sediment Management Program, WRDA 2016 Section 1122 Beneficial Use Pilot Project Barnegat Inlet, NJ*" should be directed to Mr. Peter R. Blum, ATTN: Environmental Resources Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3390.

Peter R. Blum, P.E.
Chief, Planning Division
Philadelphia District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

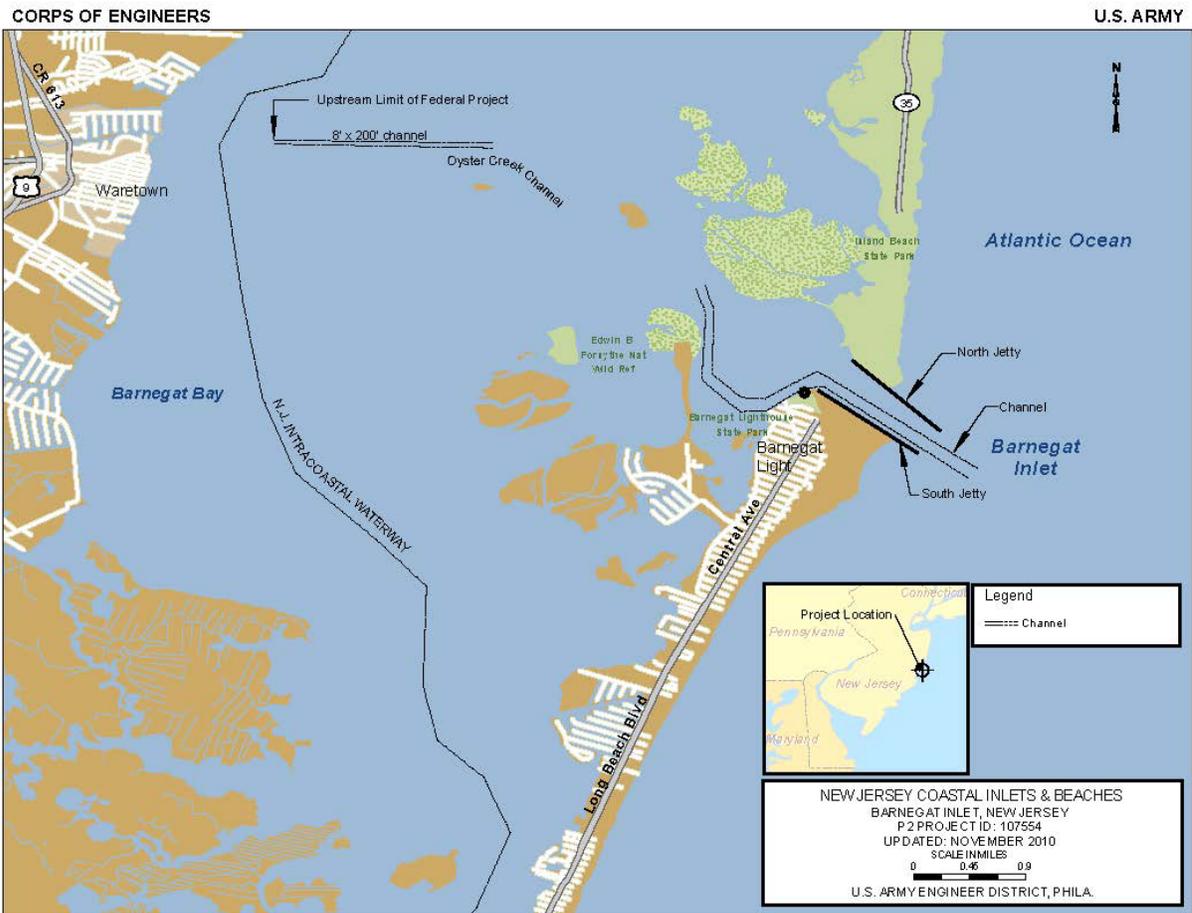


Figure 1. Barnegat Inlet Federal Navigation Project.

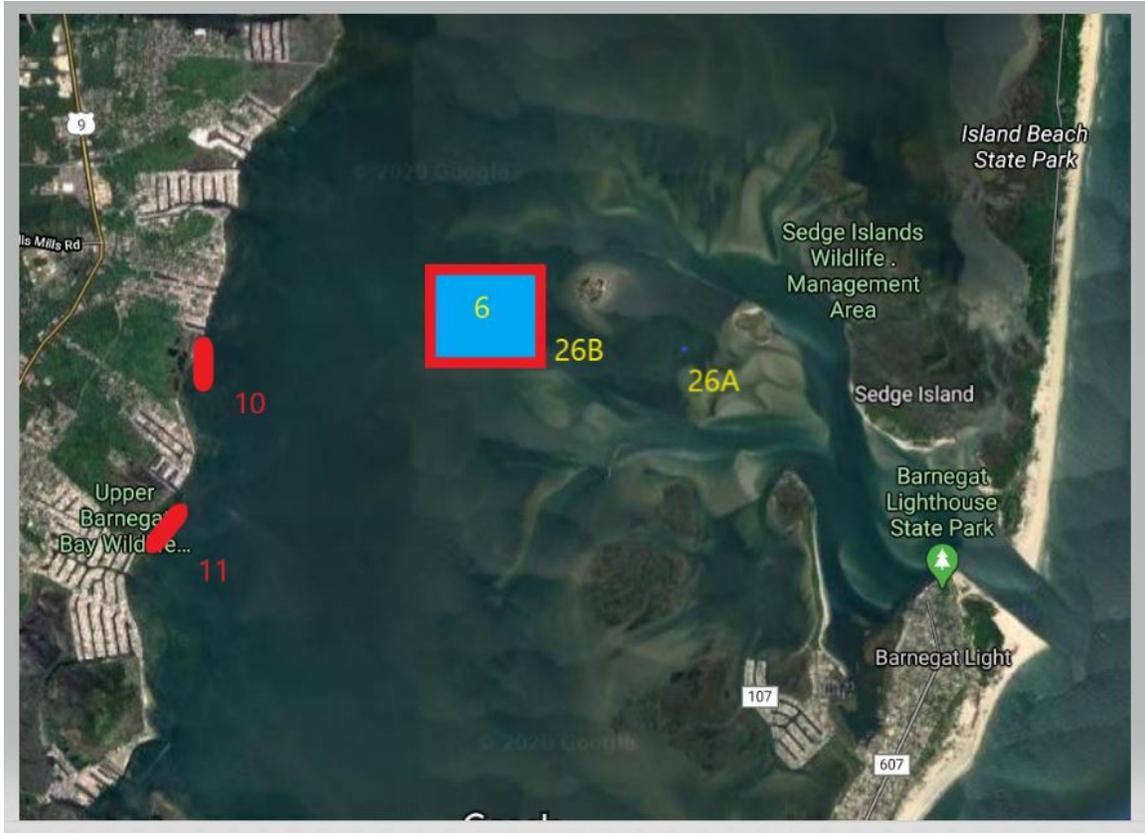


Figure 2: Blue box indicates the Section 1122 initial placement location (Site 6) west of created islands Sites 26A and 26B. Areas shown in red (Sites 10 and 11) are proposed nearshore placement locations for maintenance dredging in future years to provide a supplemental sand source to combat shoreline erosion.