



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Philadelphia District

Public Notice

Public Notice No.
CENAP-PLE-26-05

Date:
May 22, 2026

In Reply Refer to:
Environmental Resources Branch

LITTLE RIVER FEDERAL NAVIGATION CHANNEL MAINTENANCE DREDGING PROJECT

KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE

Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Philadelphia District is initiating the scoping phase to evaluate the proposed maintenance dredging of the Little River Federal navigation channel (FNC) and the associated beneficial use of dredged material (BUDM) placement within the Little Creek Wildlife Area (Figure 1). In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) NEPA Implementing Procedures Part 1.8, this notice serves as the initiation of the scoping process for any potential project or Federal action.

The Philadelphia District is evaluating the proposed maintenance dredging of the Little River FNC to remove shoaling for the purpose of maintaining safe and reliable navigation in the authorized channel. Between approximately 75,000 to 80,000 cubic yards of material is proposed to be dredged utilizing a contracted hydraulic cutterhead dredge where depths are less than the authorized five feet mean lower low water (MLLW). The Little River FNC provides recreational boaters with a 40-foot wide and five-foot-deep channel from the Route 9 (Bayside Drive) bridge to approximately two miles east to the Delaware Bay shoreline. From the Delaware Bay shoreline, the Little River FNC provides an approximately 2,100-foot-long entrance channel into the bay which is 60 feet wide and five foot deep at MLLW. While recreational boaters are the primary users of Little River via the public boat ramp adjacent to the Route 9 bridge, the Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company also utilizes the Little River FNC for firefighting and search and rescue missions in the Delaware Bay with their fleet of vessels. The latest USACE surveys depicting the depths in the Little River FNC are provided at this link under the Little River Range:

<https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Surveys/Projects/DelawareInlets/>

The primary objective of this evaluation and proposed maintenance dredging project is to remove shoaling from the Little River FNC, providing safe navigation conditions for recreational boat use and the Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company. A secondary objective is the proposed BUDM placement within the Little Creek Wildlife Area to improve degraded tidal wetlands and wildlife habitat. The Little Creek Wildlife Area is owned and managed by the Delaware Department of Environmental Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). The proposed BUDM placement includes an approximately 84-acre primary placement area and an approximately 81-acre secondary placement area. The proposed BUDM

placement areas include predominately low tidal marsh habitat with pockets of stressed tidal high marsh habitat. A goal of the BUDM placement is to improve degraded hydrology conditions within the wildlife area to enhance the diversity of vegetation and nesting habitat for shorebirds, including the saltmarsh sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*) and the federally threatened eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis*). The proposed BUDM placement areas are being designed in collaboration with DNREC DFW and other project stakeholders. In 2024, sediment, water quality, and grain size analysis samples were obtained from shoaled areas within the Little River FNC for the proposed maintenance dredging and BUDM placement project areas. The material proposed to be dredged from the Little River FNC is primarily fine-grained sediment (silts and clays) with lesser amounts of fine and medium grained sands. Based on the results of the 2024 sediment sampling and chemical analysis, the proposed maintenance dredging and BUDM placement within the Little Creek WA is not expected to cause any adverse effects to aquatic life or human health.

All practical alternatives, including the No Action alternative, in accordance with the NEPA regulations, are being considered. This evaluation includes an analysis of any environmental, cultural resources, and socio-economic impacts associated with the proposed maintenance dredging of the Little Creek FNC and the associated proposed BUDM placement within the Little Creek Wildlife Area. This notice initiates scoping procedures as outlined in the DoD NEPA Implementing Procedures Part 1.8. Scoping is an early and open process for identifying any significant issues related to the proposed Federal action. Participation of the general public and other interested parties and stakeholders in identifying significant issues and alternatives is being solicited by means of this public notice. The public and other interested parties are invited to participate in the project scoping by providing written comments, questions, and concerns to this office within 30 days from the date of this notice.

For further information on this assessment, please contact:

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FOR

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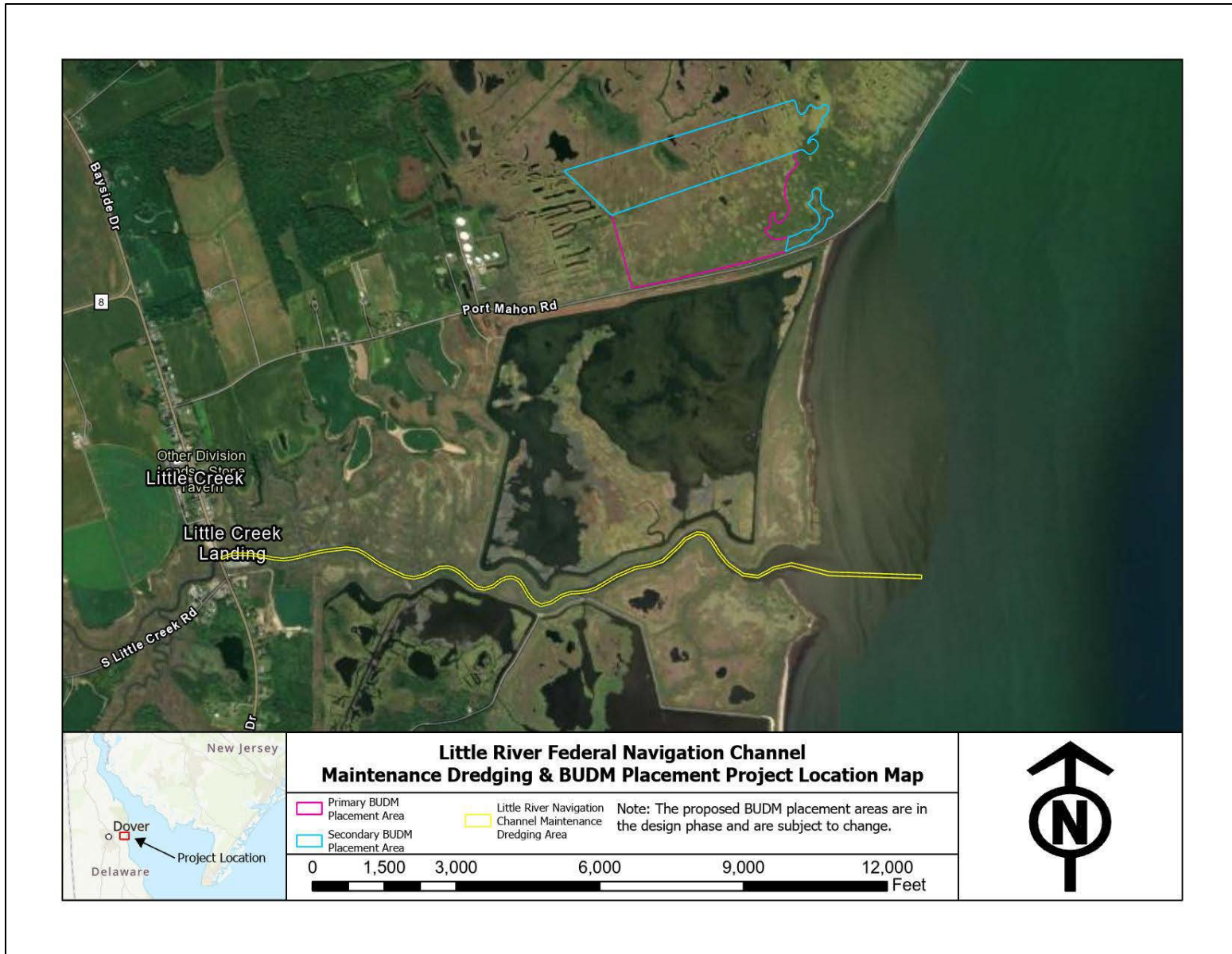


Figure 1: Little River Maintenance Dredging and Proposed Little Creek Wildlife Area BUDM Placement Area Project Location Map.