



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Philadelphia District

Public Notice

Public Notice No.
CENAP-PL-E-20-03

Date
November 6, 2020

In Reply Refer to:
Environmental Resources Branch

**Draft
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
NEW JERSEY INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY
BENEFICIAL USE OF DREDGED MATERIAL AT EAST POOL- EDWIN B
FORSYTHE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Atlantic County, New Jersey**

In accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, notice is hereby given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District, is issuing a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) titled: *New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway - Beneficial Use of Dredged Material at East Pool- Edwin B Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge*. The purpose of this document is to evaluate the placement of approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sandy and fine-grained sediment obtained from maintenance dredging of the New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway (NJIWW) to be utilized for saltmarsh habitat restoration within the East Pool of Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (EBFNWR).

The USACE is proposing to conduct maintenance dredging of the New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway (NJIWW) in the vicinity of Shad Island in Atlantic County and to beneficially place the material within the East Pool of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) – Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (EBFNWR), Oceanville, NJ, which is an intertidal saltmarsh impoundment (Figures 1 & 2). The Service reports significant losses of intertidal marsh habitats due to subsidence and conversions to open water, which are important for trust wildlife species including the eastern black rail and saltmarsh sparrow. The Service proposes to restore the marsh habitats by building elevation to intertidal elevations, with an ultimate goal of restoring tidal flow and elevations to match those surrounding the impoundment.

Approximately 6,000 to 10,000 cubic yards of silts, fine sands, and clays would be hydraulically dredged to remove shoals between USCG markers 152 and 160 along the NJIWW for a one-time dredge and fill placement project for a period of 2 – 3 weeks in December 2020. The dredged material placement site within the East Pool was developed in coordination with the Service. Tidal range within the East Pool is very narrow where mudflat occurs approximately 0.75 ft. off of the base impoundment

elevation of +0.2 ft. NAVD and marsh ranges occur at 0.75 -1.0 ft. Elevations higher than 1.0 ft NAVD are inhabited by *Phragmites*. The selected plan includes placement of a thin layer (approximately 1 ft.) of dredged material to raise the substrate elevations of open-water habitat to an intertidal mudflat and/or marsh elevation. Monitoring of material behavior (settlement placement) and marsh vegetation recruitment will occur. Ultimately, and with the ability to manage water levels, the refuge hopes to incrementally restore full tidal flow in the East Pool over time while gradually building elevation and salt marsh vegetation extent using a range of restoration strategies. High marsh is an essential breeding habitat for both saltmarsh sparrow and Eastern black rail and both species occur in the surrounding salt marshes of the Great Bay. Approximately 10 to 15 acres of subtidal open water in the impoundment are anticipated to become intertidal mudflat and saltmarsh and a surrounding approximately 50 acres of subtidal open water may receive a thin layer deposition of sediment from the placement operations. The fill material would be dredged from the adjacent channel and brought to the impoundment via a floating pipeline. The material would be piped through a "Y" distributor directly into the pool for infilling to the surrounding marsh elevation. Containment of the fill will be employed utilizing several techniques that will be evaluated including hay bales, coir logs/wattles, and open (unconfined) placement. The project is expected to take approximately 2- 3 weeks during the month of December 2020.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, a draft Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact (EA/FONSI) has been prepared for this project, and is being circulated to the appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and the interested public. Requests for this document should be made to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District, Environmental Resources Branch at (215) 656-6559 or by obtaining it from:
<http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/PublicNoticesReports.aspx>.

In accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, 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 of 1972, an activity affecting land or water uses in a State's coastal zone must comply with the State's Coastal Zone Management Program. A certification of compliance is being requested from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

It has been determined that the proposed work would not adversely affect listed species or their critical habitat pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as amended.

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

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.

All practicable means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects have been incorporated into the recommended plan. The public and all agencies are invited to comment on this proposal. More detailed information on this work is available for public review at the Philadelphia District Office.

Any person may request, in writing, to the District Engineer, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this proposal. Requests for a public hearing shall state, in detail, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

All comments on the work described in this public notice should be directed to Mr. Peter R. Blum, P.E. ATTN: Environmental Resources Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3396 no later than 30 days from the date of this notice.

FOR THE DISTRICT ENGINEER:

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

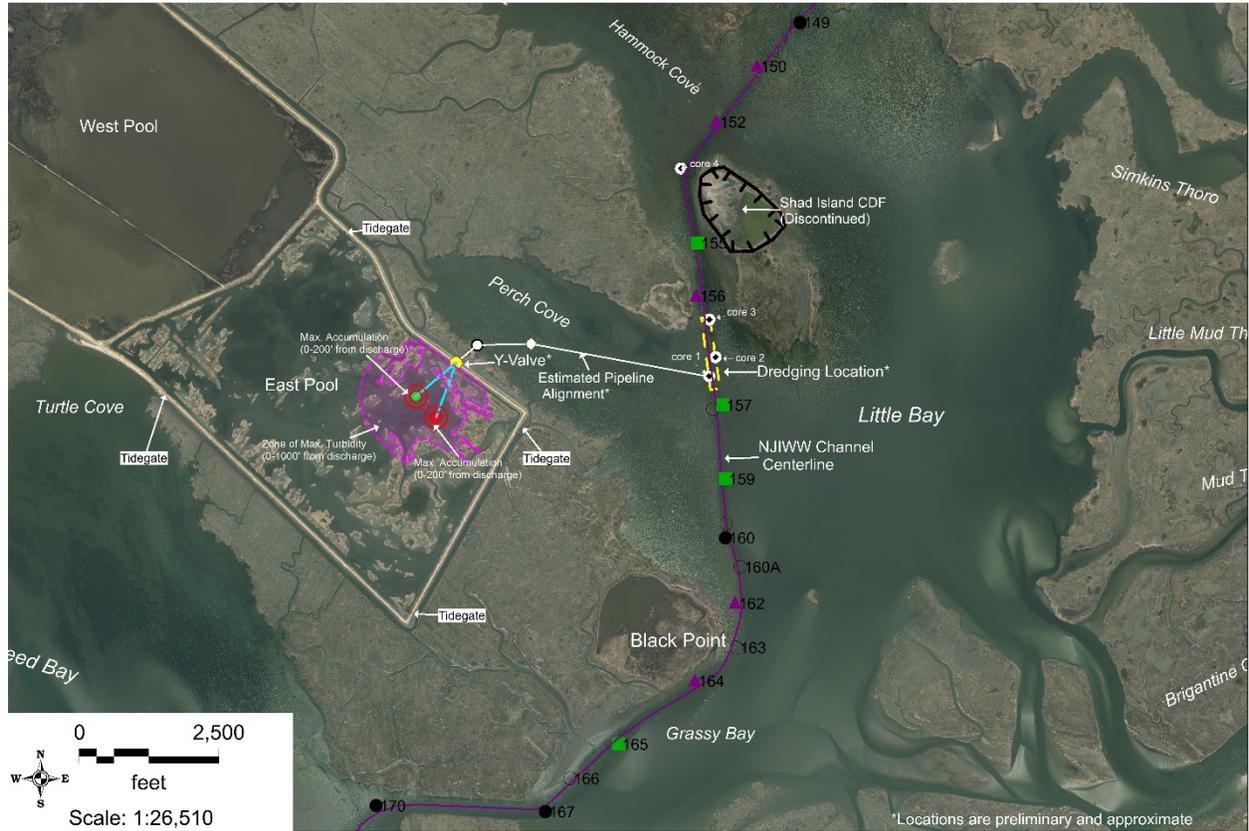


Figure 2. Detail of NJIWW Maintenance Dredging and Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Placement in East Pool impoundment of Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.