

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Dredged Material Management Plan Agency Coordination Meeting

ATTENDEES: See Attached Sheet

1. The Baltimore District study team met with the various Federal and Maryland agencies to initiate the Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) Study at the Baltimore District Office in Baltimore Maryland on 11 April 2002. See attached sign in sheet for attendees (enclosure 1).
2. Dan Bierly, Planning Division, conducted the meeting. A hand out of the power point presentation was provided to all (enclosure 2). After welcome and introductions, Dan stated the purpose of the meeting. The Corps is initiating the DMMP study and inviting the agencies and other interested parties to provide input and suggestions to the process. The DMMP process, which is required by Corps regulations, will provide the District with a management tool for placement of dredged material from Port of Baltimore projects for a minimum of 20 years. Aside from coordinating with the agencies through meetings, the Corps will be conducting three public scoping meetings in June 2002 in the Baltimore, Annapolis, and Queen Anne's County areas to inform the general public of the DMMP process and to solicit input from the general public. Agency coordination meetings will be held throughout the process. In addition, the Corps' goal is to make this study as transparent as possible by being available for meetings, phone calls, e-mails. A website for the DMMP study will be set up in the near future for the latest available information on the study.
3. The Corps updated the agencies on the Federal dredging responsibilities. The Corps is 100 percent responsible for maintenance of Federal navigation channels up to the 45-foot depth. For other channels deeper than this, maintenance is cost shared 50/50 with MPA or others. In the case of the Baltimore Harbor and Channels system in Maryland, the cost of dredging to 50 feet is 100 percent Federal. This is because when the channels were deepened to 50 feet, it was determined that there would be no additional maintenance dredging need compared to maintenance of the 42-foot channels. Dan went over the amount of annual maintenance for the Port of Baltimore. The total annual maintenance is approximately 4,500,000 cubic yards of material. There is a need for dredging and with this is a need for placement sites.
4. The Corps reviewed the regulations outlining the need to develop a DMMP for the next 20 years. The DMMP needs to include an assessment of beneficial use for environmental purposes including habitat restoration. Ecosystem restoration is the best way to use the dredged material beneficially and enhance the environment. The DMMP will be 100 percent Federally financed under the Operations and Maintenance Program.

5. The Corps explained how the Corps DMMP differs from the process that the State is currently following as required by their legislature. The Federal process will need to be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and will have public and agency interest and participation. Projects are evaluated from a national interest perspective. State law cannot limit the Federal agencies. Although implementation of a recommendation that goes against state law will not occur, it may be used to determine the base plan for economic purposes. Most likely the Corps will produce a tiered document to satisfy NEPA. This is not a duplicative process of what the State has done so far. The State's work will be incorporated and used in the Corps process where appropriate.
6. There is a difference in the time frame that the State plan will be complete (a progress report on the recommendations and options for further study is due to the Governor by December 2002) and the Corps study will be complete (final EIS expected in September 2004). The Corps will not approve the State plan, as we will need to conduct our NEPA evaluation. Most likely a tiered process with the production of an umbrella document (Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)) that studies the options for dredged material placement. This document will evaluate the identified options for placement and recommendations for programming future dredging. These will be evaluated and proposed recommendations for further study will be made. These recommendations will lead to more detailed studies and will be evaluated through supplemental environment assessments or EISs. The agencies were concerned about how this process and documentation will be conducted. The tiered process will allow the Corps to look at all of the different types of placement options and categorize and evaluate them. Such categories could include, but are not limited to, large island restoration, small island restoration, shoreline protection and restoration, upland placement, innovative uses, and recycling. The Corps assured that the process was open to suggestions.
7. The agencies asked what the no action alternative would be for this process. NEPA requires that the no action alternative be evaluated. It was brought up that deauthorization of the projects may be a no action alternative. However, deauthorization of a channel or channels could not be assumed to be the no action alternative. Deauthorization or reauthorization (i.e., modifying the project) would require a separate study for the specific projects. For the DMMP study, the no action alternative would need to assume the continued operation and maintenance of channels and that there is no coordinated plan to manage the placement of the dredged material.
8. The agencies stated that they were concerned how the NEPA document will address the need for maintenance dredging. It was suggested that new technologies be investigated that would avoid or minimize the amount of maintenance dredging. Also mentioned innovative shoreline erosion control and ways to minimize other sedimentation problems. The Corps assured the agencies that these issues would be addressed in the document. Furthermore, the Corps has other authorities that can be used to consider projects that will help to reduce sedimentation in the Bay. Although

the DMMP is not broad enough to evaluate all such options in great detail, recommendations for further study can be identified.

9. The agencies also stated that there needs to be a way to program the efficient use of the dredged material placement sites. This could be done by changing the project schedule for new work. This needs to be addressed to assure that we are not always compromising the process.
10. The Corps explained the dewatering process of the dredged material to demonstrate the need for the amount of placement sites. Best management is to leave a 3-foot layer of dredged material for 12 to 18 months to let it dry properly. Currently we only have approximately 6 months for crust management. Ideally, we need approximately 1800 acres of placement site to properly manage 3 million cubic yards of material annually.
11. The agencies stated that the Corps could reduce need by postponing some of the start up of new projects. Also stated that we do not necessarily need to have one large site to address the need. Several smaller projects could be implemented and on line prior to the closing of the larger sites. The Corps stated that to do this we need to factor in costs, economics, getting the site up to speed to accept the material, etc; however, it is agreed that any combination of projects that allows for sufficient capacity would be acceptable.
12. The agencies stated that the NEPA document needs to address specifics. Also, we need to determine how the options (i.e., innovative uses) versus specific sites will be addressed. There is a need to stress beneficial use in the Chesapeake Bay. This should be spread throughout the area versus within one area.
13. The Corps identified that some projects have been approved for study as early start initiatives. These projects may be considered prior to completion of the DMMP process. The NEPA documents for these projects will not be completed until after the NEPA for the DMMP is completed. If these studies are justified based on the DMMP study, then the feasibility phase will be completed and the projects will proceed. These projects were given the go-ahead for early consideration to ensure that there would be capacity available to make up for the current deficiency in placement sites that is anticipated in 7 to 10 years as determined by the DMMP initial assessment. The projects that were selected for early start consideration were chosen based on the Corps' experience in dredged material planning and the "sense of the agencies" that has developed during the Maryland's process. These options, mid-Bay island restoration and Poplar Island expansion, were determined to be worthy of further study.
14. The agencies wanted to know at what point detailed information would be included in the NEPA document. The Corps explained the umbrella EIS would spawn more detailed tiers of study. The agencies stressed that new projects should be deferred. Also wanted to know how the documentation or evaluation of specific sites versus

concepts will be conducted without more detail. It was also noted that there is a problem with early initiation of specific projects, i.e., Poplar Island is currently ranked farther down than other options/sites. Therefore, why are we studying this now? This effort seems pre-decisional. The agencies are concerned that the document may dictate islands as the only options. The Corps needs to figure out how their document will compare options versus specific sites and at what point the detailed information such as footprint of the project will be evaluated. The Corps welcomed all comments. Reiterated that this process is an open process and that all recommendation suggestions, etc. will be considered. The Corps is requesting input from all to create a comprehensive decision document.

Michele L. Gomez
Biologist
Planning Division