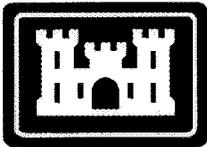


DEC 03 2003



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Baltimore District

Planning Division
***Study Information and
Coordination Notice***

**Poplar Island Expansion Study (PIES)
Chesapeake Bay
Talbot County, Maryland**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District (Corps) and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) under the auspices of the Maryland Port Administration (MPA), are investigating the potential expansion of the existing Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project (PIERP), located in the upper-middle portion of the Chesapeake Bay, approximately 34 nautical miles south-southeast of the Port of Baltimore and one mile northwest of Tilghman Island in Talbot County, MD (Figure 1). The purpose of this notice is to inform you of the study and our upcoming efforts. A Notice of Intent (NOI) for this project was published in the Federal Register on June 5, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 108, Page 33685).

The PIERP is an environmental restoration project currently under construction that is restoring over 1,100 acres of island habitat, half uplands and half wetlands, using dredged material from Federal navigation channels in the upper Chesapeake Bay. The goal of the Poplar Island Expansion Study (PIES) is to modify the project to provide additional capacity and increase habitat. Options include raising the final design height of the existing dikes within the upland cells and/or constructing a lateral expansion of the existing island footprint. Also to be considered with the expansion are environmental enhancements on Poplar Island and within Poplar Harbor, increased recreational and educational opportunities, and potential acceptance of dredged material from additional channels. Material from Baltimore Harbor within the Patapsco River will not be considered for placement at Poplar Island in accordance with the PIERP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Examples of potential dike alignments for lateral expansion are shown in Figure 2. Dredging for a new access channel and placement of breakwater(s) may also be considered in the investigation of these alternatives.

A General Reevaluation Report (GRR) is being conducted under the existing PIERP authorization, Section 537 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996,

which authorizes using material dredged from the Chesapeake Bay approach channels to the Port of Baltimore to restore Poplar Island to its approximate 1847 footprint. The GRR is a decision document that will be used to determine the Federal interest in modifying the PIERP. An Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that addresses the potential raising of the upland dikes above the authorized height of 23 feet and expansion of the island footprint is also being prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Please notify us if you would like to receive a copy of the environmental documentation (Draft SEIS), and/or the list of recipients also receiving this notice.

For Federal and State resource agencies receiving a copy of this notice, we request that you provide information concerning interests within your organization's area of responsibility or expertise within 30 days from the date of this notice to the address below. Some agencies will also receive specific requests for information from our office in the near future. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Ms. Gwen Meyer of our Civil Project Development Branch at (410) 962-9502 or by e-mail at gwendolyn.c.meyer@nab02.usace.army.mil.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District
ATTN: CENAB-PL-P (Meyer)
P.O. Box 1715
Baltimore, Maryland 21203-1715


for Wesley E. Coleman, Jr.
Chief, Civil Project Development Branch
Planning Division

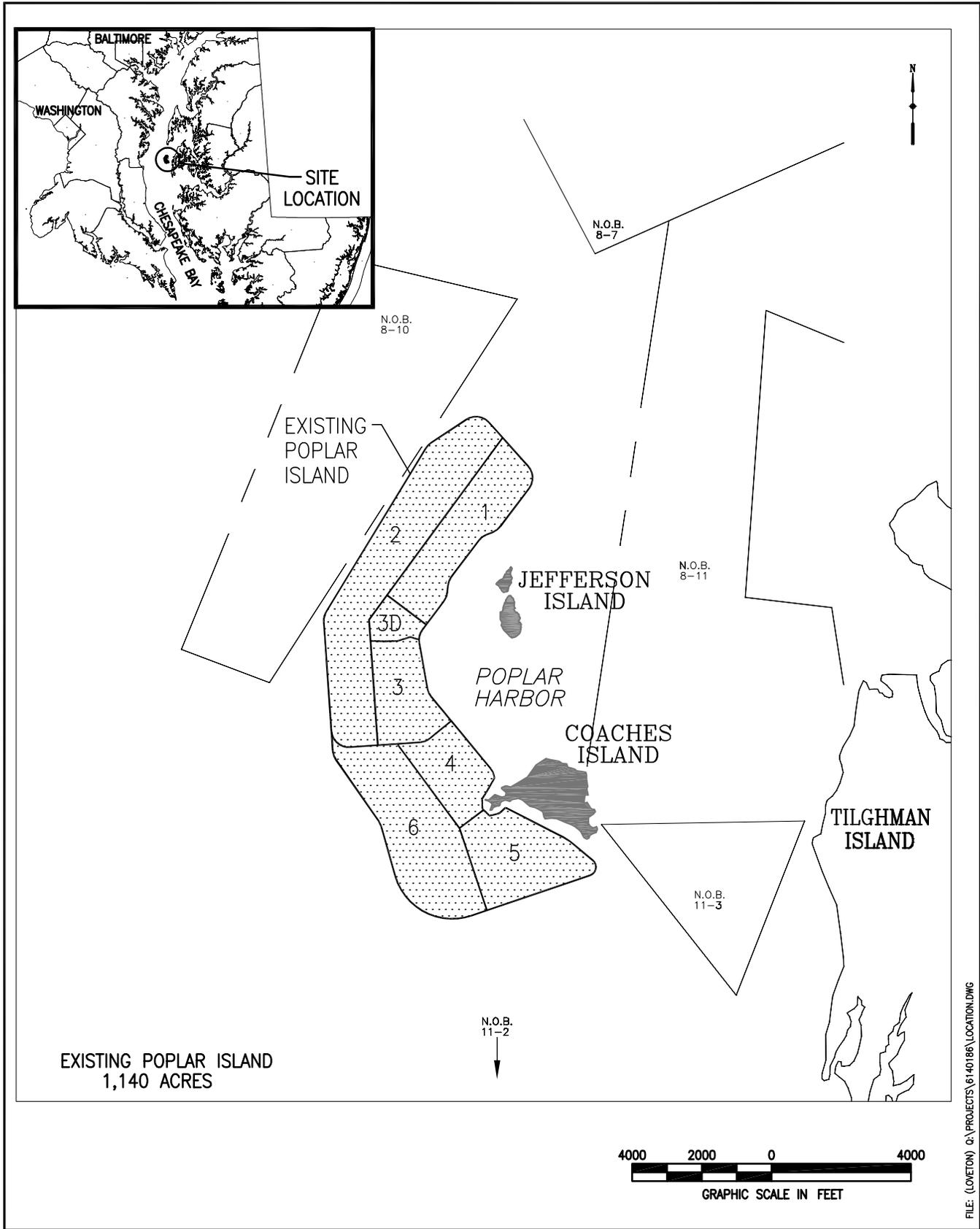
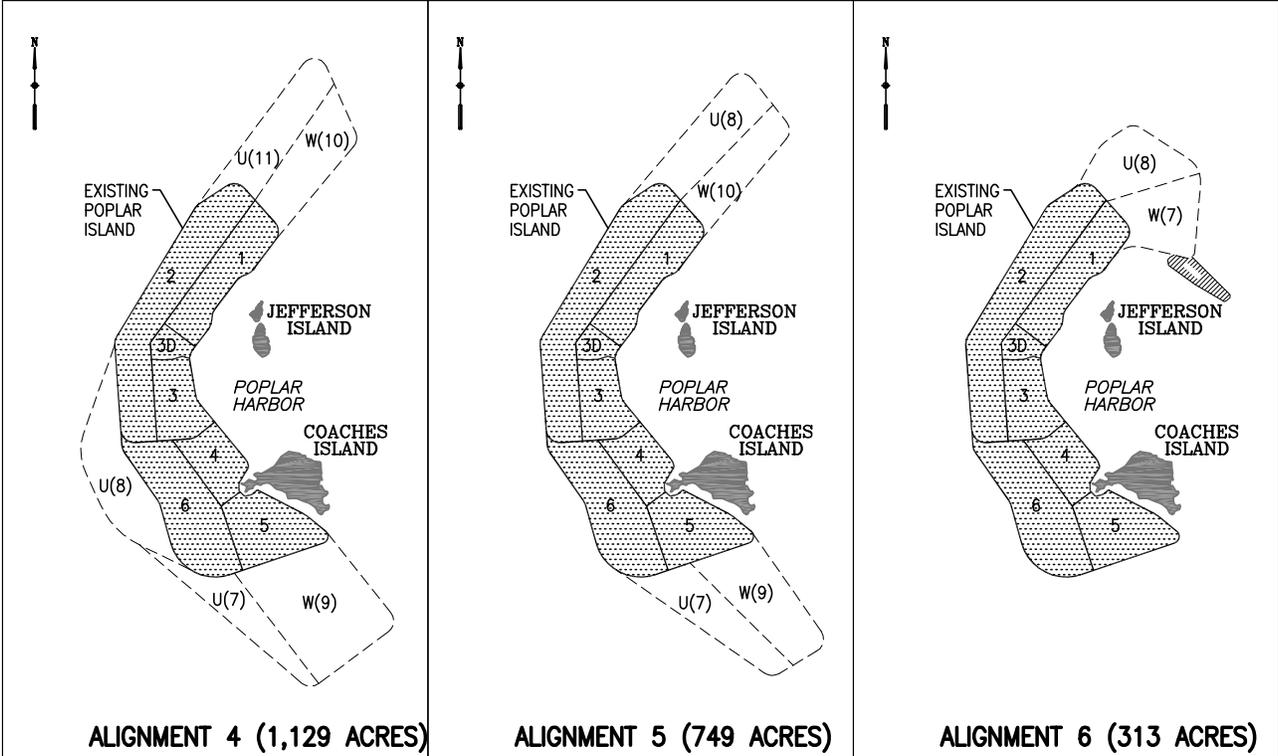
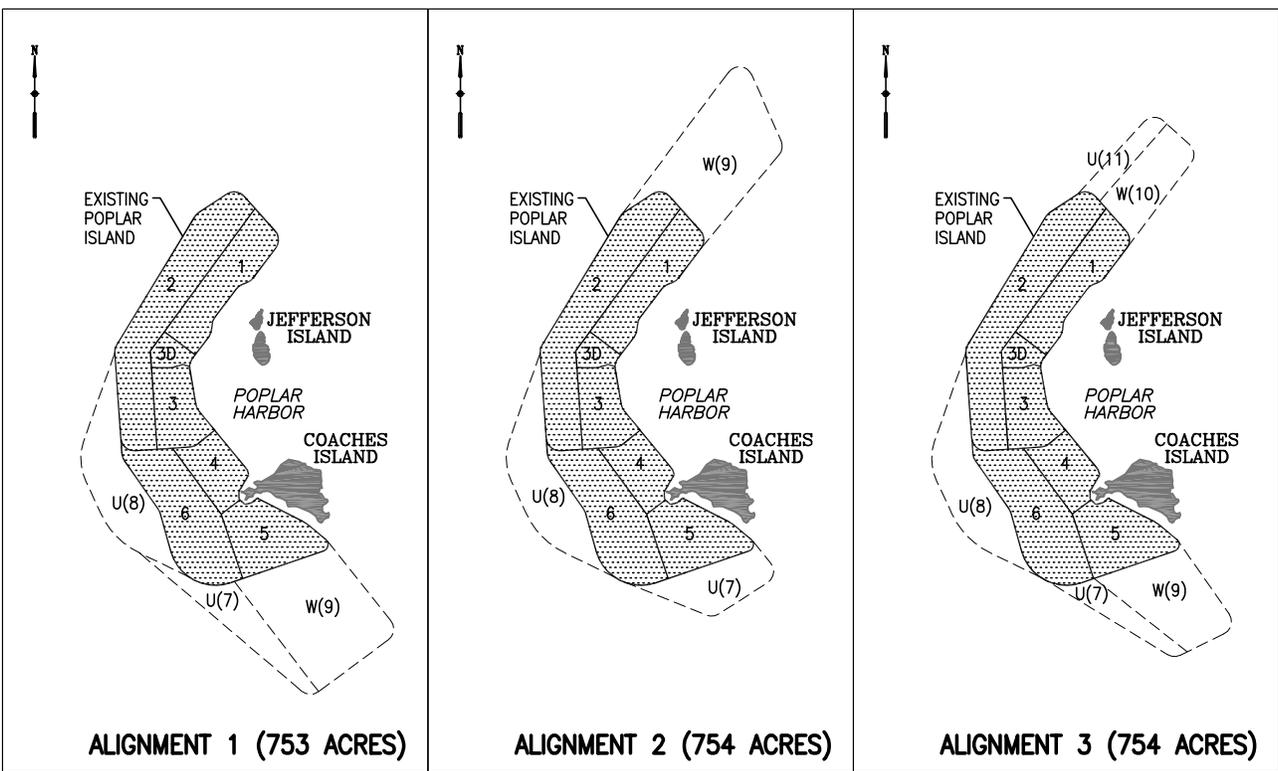
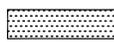


FIGURE 1. EXISTING POPLAR ISLAND CONFIGURATION AND SURROUNDING NATURAL OYSTER BARS (NOB)



 EXISTING POPLAR ISLAND
 PROPOSED CELL OUTLINE

U(#) = UPLAND CELL (CELL #)
 W(#) = WETLAND CELL (CELL #)

FIGURE 2. EXAMPLE ALIGNMENTS FOR EXPANSION OF POPLAR ISLAND, TALBOT COUNTY, MD.