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News Release

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Hart-Miller waterway temporary restrictions to begin

Baltimore – A no-watercraft zone will be set up near the pier on the southeast side of Hart-Miller Island for up to 30 days starting Thursday, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District officials announced today. The area will be restricted as a safety measure while barges containing debris that includes military ordnance dredged from Baltimore Harbor are unloaded at the pier.

This start date is a change from the late-May date that was announced earlier. The harbor dredging took longer to complete than originally expected, a Corps official said.

“This project involves deepening and widening some channels, dredging areas that have not been dredged before,” said Russ Marsh, dredging manager for the project. “We’ve encountered conditions and soil types that are taking more time to work with.”

The Corps’ project team planned the waterway restrictions because it expected that military ordnance items might be found in the debris. Last year, World War II vintage ordnance items were discovered during harbor dredging operations, which also involved areas not previously dredged. Prior to 2002, no ordnance had been discovered during dredging.

Buoys will mark the perimeter of the restricted area around the Hart-Miller Island pier at 300-foot intervals. Signs on the buoys will state that no boats are allowed. Signs will also be posted on shore. The buoys and signs will be removed as soon as the unloading operation is finished, said project manager Claire O’Neill.

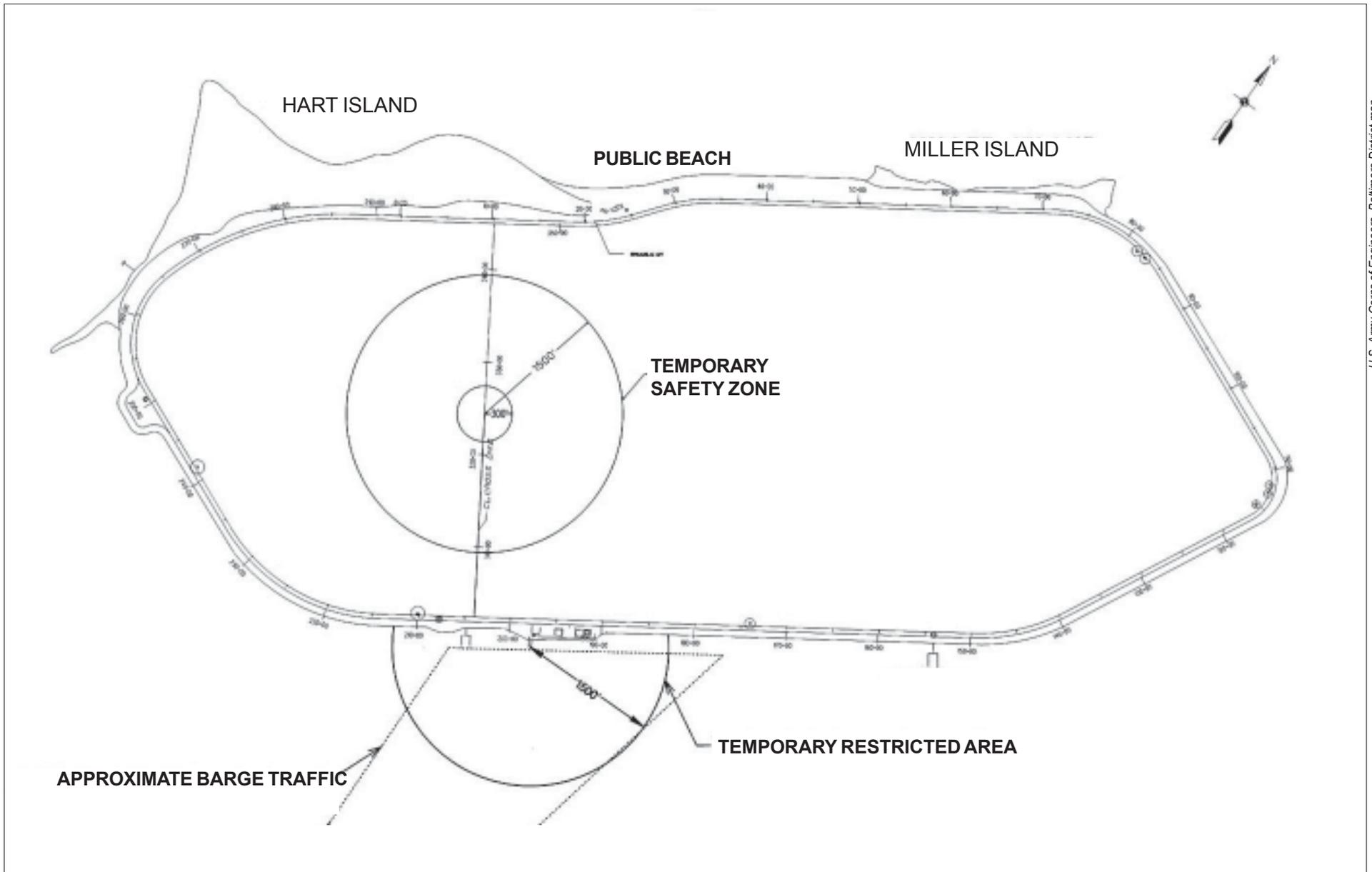
The restricted area extends 1,500 feet into the waterway from the pier. (See map.) Much of the restricted area lies within the channel used by barge traffic to and from the island.

Crabbers also operate in the area. O’Neill said watermen would be allowed to check pots in the restricted area until 7 a.m. Unloading will last about 10 hours a day, ending beyond the allowable crabbing hours.

The unloaded material will be sorted for ordnance items near the center of the island’s cross dike. If ordnance is found, it will be detonated there. During these activities, expected in the July to September timeframe, a 300-foot-radius safety zone will be established. The zone will be expanded to a 1,500-foot radius if needed. Neither of these safety zones reaches the public areas of Hart-Miller Island or the water surrounding the island. (See map.)

The Corps’ project team has coordinated this effort with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Maryland Watermen’s Association, the Baltimore County Watermen’s Association, the Baltimore County Bomb Squad, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Environmental Services, the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Committee and the Maryland Port Administration.

Hart-Miller Island Temporary Restricted and Safety Zones



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District map



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