



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Baltimore District

September 7, 2023

Planning Division

Notice of Availability

Mid-Chesapeake Bay Islands Ecosystem Restoration Project at Barren Island – Barren Island Borrow Area, Dorchester County, Maryland

All Interested Parties: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District in partnership with the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA), the project's non-federal sponsor, has prepared a draft supplemental environmental assessment (sEA) for the Barren Island Borrow Area component of the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Islands Ecosystem Restoration Project. Barren Island is an element of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The sEA is specifically focused on identifying a borrow area from which to dredge sand for use in restoration efforts as part of the overall restoration at Barren Island. Two locations, a Northern and a Southern Borrow Area were considered (enclosure). It is proposed, based on public and federal and state agency's input, environmental analysis, and material sampling, that the Southern Borrow Area would be used to provide material for the restoration of Barren Island. The proposed action would involve dredging approximately 300,000 cy of material from a Focus Area within the Southern Borrow Area for the restoration of Barren Island.

The Mid-Chesapeake Bay Islands Ecosystem Restoration Project recommends remote island restoration at James Island and Barren Island, both on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in Dorchester County, Maryland, through the beneficial use of dredged material. Section 7002 of Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 authorized the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Islands Ecosystem Restoration Project, as described in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief's Report, dated August 2009 and the *Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*, dated September 2008 (and updated in April 2009). The Record of Decision was signed in July 2019 initiating the next phase of the study, Preconstruction, Engineering, and Design (PED). As part of the PED effort, USACE prepared and completed a supplemental EA on March 7, 2022, to update documentation for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, focused on the Barren Island component of the project. A supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is underway for the James Island component.

The authorized project consists of restoring approximately 83 acres at Barren Island by constructing stone sills and breakwaters, modifying existing sills, and restoring 2 bird islands in combination with the restoration of James Island (2,072 acres). The source of dredged material to be placed at Barren Island will be local federally maintained navigation channels. A borrow area is being evaluated to provide sand to construct containment for dredged material placement, bird island restoration, and to enable construction of a portion of the sill where the existing foundation is unsuitable. Detailed information on the specific components of the project can be found in the

March 2022 sEA and the recommended plan section and engineering appendix of the *Final Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report & Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*, dated September 2008 (and updated in April 2009). These documents, as well as additional information about the project, are available online at www.nab.usace.army.mil/mid-bay.

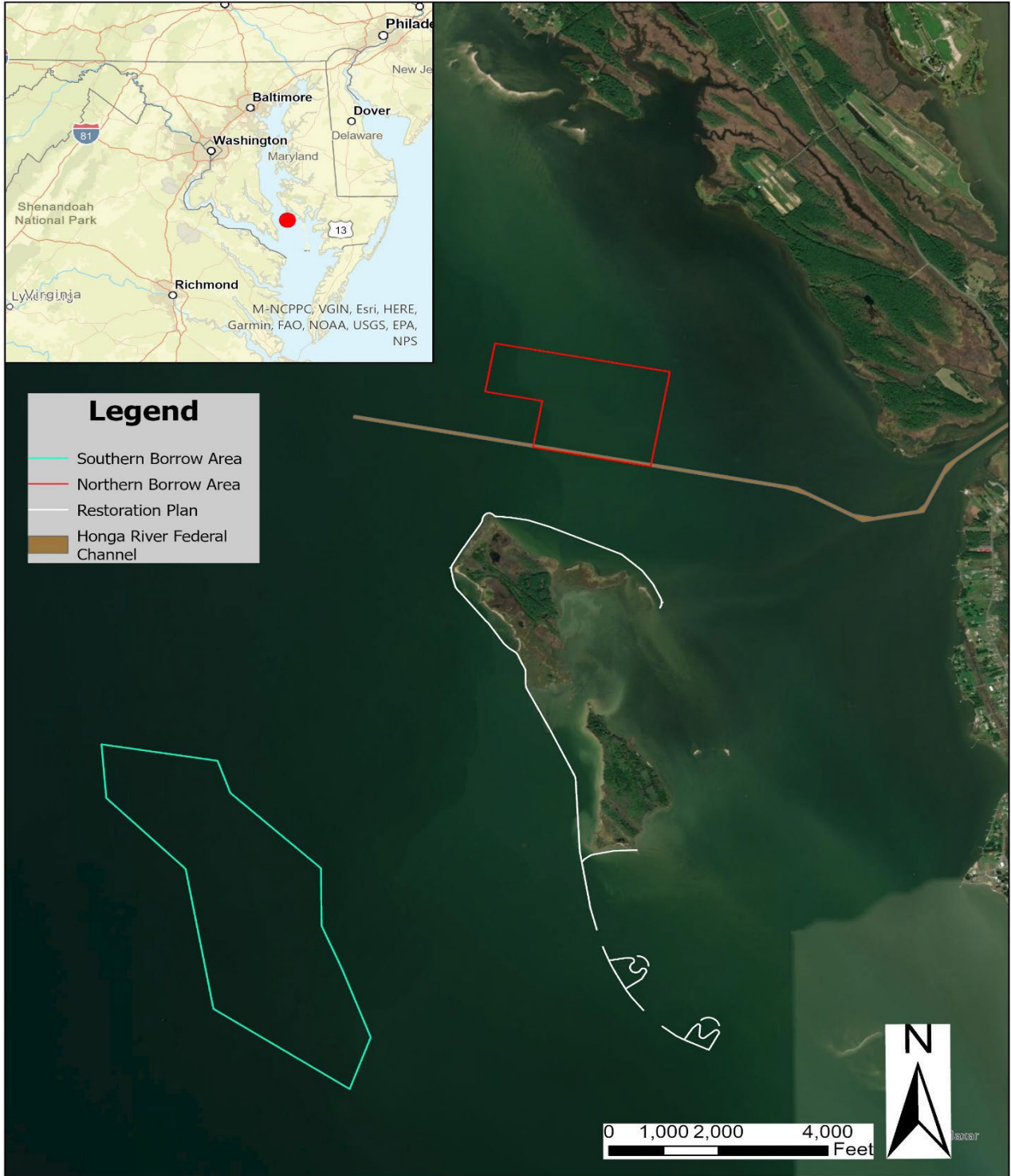
In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), USACE and MPA have prepared this draft sEA and evaluated potential effects on the natural, cultural, and human environment. All applicable environmental laws have been considered.

The purpose of this notice is to inform the public of the availability of the sEA for their review and comment. USACE and MPA request comments regarding the draft sEA by October 9, 2023. For federal and state agencies receiving a copy of this notice, we request that you provide comments concerning your responsibilities. The draft sEA is available at the USACE website: <https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Mid-Bay/>. Comments can be submitted electronically to: midbayislands@usace.army.mil. Written comments can be sent to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn: Angie Sowers, Planning Division, 10th Floor, 2 Hopkins Plaza, Baltimore, MD 21201. If you have any questions, please contact Angie Sowers by telephone at (410) 962-7440 or by email at the address above.



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Enclosure



Barren Island Potential Borrow Areas