



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Baltimore District

Public Notice

Honga River Channel Maintenance Dredging Record of Environmental Consideration

February 9, 2024

ALL INTERESTED PARTIES: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District (Corps), is planning to perform maintenance dredging for the Federal navigation channel in the Honga River, Dorchester County, Maryland during fiscal years of 2025 and/or 2026. Please be advised that implementation of this maintenance dredging is dependent on the availability of funds. The Corps' notification and review procedures for dredging in Federal navigation channels is found under Sections 313 and 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 USC 1323 and 1344).

The proposed work consists of dredging the Honga River channel to its authorized depth of seven feet and a width ranging from 60-140 feet. The Corps plans to hydraulically dredge approximately 325,000 cubic yards of material consisting of mud, sand, silt, and shell and combinations thereof from the Federal channel. The dredged material will be placed within the historic footprint of Barren Island, along the southwestern portion of the most southern extent. The placement site along Barren Island is being used to help with the recovery and restoration of Barren Island as part of the greater Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Restoration.

A review of data generated for preparation of the Record of Environmental Decision (REC), including a preliminary 404(b)(1) evaluation, indicates that no significant environmental impacts are expected. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted. The proposed dredging complies with and will be conducted in a manner consistent with the approved Maryland Coastal Zone Management Program. The project will comply with the Endangered Species Act, and provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The proposed placement site along Barren Island was coordinated and approved previously (in 2021). This public notice is only for maintenance dredging of the Honga River Federal Navigation channel.

The Corps has previously coordinated with the following Federal, State and local agencies: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service; Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and Maryland Historical Trust; and Dorchester County, Maryland when conducting reviews and reports for the Barren Island Supplemental Environmental Assessment and Barren Island Borrow Area Environmental Assessment. The Corps will also coordinate with Maryland Department of the Environment for a Water Quality Certification.

The decision whether to accomplish the work proposed in this public notice will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed work on the public interest. The decision will reflect the national concern for the protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, for example, conservation, aesthetics, fish and wildlife values, environmental concerns, economics, historic values, navigation, energy needs, recreation, safety, water quality, food production, and public welfare. The work will not be accomplished unless it is found to be in the public's interest.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, will apply for Water Quality Certification from the State of Maryland, which is required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Any comments relating to water quality concerns should also be forwarded to the Maryland Department of the Environment, Standards and Certification, Montgomery Park Business Center, 1800 Washington Boulevard, Suite 430, Baltimore, Maryland 21230 within 30 days of the date of this notice. The draft REC is available via the USACE website: <https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Mid-Bay/>

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by this dredging operation may request a public hearing. A request for a public hearing can be sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, Attn: Chris Johnson, Planning Division, 10th Floor, 2 Hopkins Plaza, Baltimore, MD 21201, or can be submitted electronically to: Christopher.a.johnson@usace.army.mil, within 30 days of the date of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity.

Enclosures



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