



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Baltimore District

Planning Division
Public Notice

Mid-Chesapeake Bay Islands Ecosystem Restoration, Barren Island, Dorchester County, Maryland

All Interested Parties: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), including guidelines in 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 230 (Procedures for Implementing NEPA), the Baltimore District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in partnership with the Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Port Administration (MPA), the non-federal sponsor, has prepared this draft supplemental Environmental Assessment (sEA) for the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project (Mid-Bay Island Project) at Barren Island. The Mid-Bay Island Project recommends remote island restoration at two locations, James Island and Barren Island, both on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in Dorchester County, Maryland, through the beneficial use of dredged material. The purpose of the Mid-Bay Island Project is to: restore and protect wetland, aquatic, and terrestrial island habitat for fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals; protect existing island ecosystems to prevent further loss of island and aquatic habitat; provide dredged material placement capacity for Federal navigation channels; increase wetlands acreage in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; decrease local erosion and turbidity; promote conditions to establish and enhance submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV); and promote conditions that support oyster recolonization. A separate NEPA compliance document will be developed in the future for construction of the James Island component of the Mid-Bay Island Project.

Section 7002 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 authorized the Mid-Bay Island Project, as described in the Chief's Report dated August 24, 2009 and the *Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*, dated June 2009. The record of decision (ROD) was signed in July 2019 initiating the next phase of the project, Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED). This sEA serves to update NEPA compliance during the PED Phase prior to construction of the Barren Island portion of the project. The sEA evaluates impacts and benefits associated with the 35% design, identifying any changes since 2009.

The Barren Island restoration project is the smaller component of the Mid-Bay Island Project. Currently, Barren Island, a satellite refuge of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex is approximately 138 acres (ac) in size. A portion of the northwestern shoreline is protected by 4,850 linear ft (lf) of stone sill. The Project assessed by this sEA includes the following: 13,023 linear ft of sill, modification of the current sill, creation of 8,173 lf of new sills, 4,620 lf of breakwater, 2 bird islands (8.5 ac total), and restoration of approximately 83 ac of wetland and intertidal mudflats.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), USACE and MPA have prepared this draft EA and evaluated potential effects on the 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 EA by January 18, 2022. For federal and district 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles W. Leasure', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charles W. Leasure, AICP
Environmental Policy Advisor
Civil Project Development Branch