



# Public Affairs Office

United States Army Corps of Engineers

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## Emergency Dredging of Topsail Creek and Banks Channel Approved

**Wilmington, N.C.** – The Wilmington District Corps of Engineers received special permission from the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries to dredge Topsail Creek and Banks Channel because of severe shoaling, which was impeding safe navigation by commercial fishing vessels. “Some areas have shoaled to 2.8 feet,” said Bob Sattin, Chief of Navigation for the Corps. “The channel needs to be at least 5 feet deep for safe navigation.” Topsail Beach and Banks Channel provide the only navigation route from Topsail Beach to New Topsail Inlet.

Dredging, which began in Topsail Creek on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, will be done using one of the Corps sidecaster dredges—the MERRITT. Areas with shoaling will be cleared to a depth of 7 feet. Dredging in Topsail Creek should be completed by Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. Dredging in Banks Channel will commence on Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> and should be completed by Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Once surveys show the channel is clear and safe for navigation, the Corps will ask the Coast Guard ANT to mark the channel alignment, which is expected to be done the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Topsail Creek and Banks Channel are scheduled for maintenance dredging by a Corps contractor in December 2002 or January 2003, if funding is available.

NOTE: Topsail Creek is incorrectly labeled “Howards Channel” on the NOAA Chart.