

**SUBJECT:** Meeting Notes – Morehead City Harbor Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) Alternative Formulation Briefing, held July 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Morehead City, NC

**1)** An Alternative Formulation Briefing (AFB) for the Morehead City Harbor DMMP was held from 1000 to 1300 on July 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Morehead City, NC. Individuals from the Wilmington District (SAW), the South Atlantic Division (SAD), the State of North Carolina, and the local beach communities, participated in the AFB (see pages 7-8 for list of attendees).

**2) Introduction** - The meeting began with brief remarks from Colonel Ryscavage (Wilmington District Commander) and Wilbert Paynes (South Atlantic Division, Chief of Planning and Policy). This was followed by the introduction of all meeting attendees.

**3) Project Overview** – Chris Frabotta (Project Manager) provided an overview of the DMMP process and the Morehead City Harbor navigation project. During this portion of the AFB presentation the following comment was made:

Comment 1: Carteret County asked the Corps to clarify why we are doing the DMMP. (R. Rudolph)

Corps Response 1: We are preparing the DMMP due to the lack of documented 20-year disposal capacity for the Harbor and the change in the management of Brandt Island – particularly the fact that we no longer plan to do Brandt Island pump –outs, which were offsetting navigation channel impacts to the beach.

Comment 1a: “Carteret County has been expressing concerns for a decade but not until we filed a lawsuit and part of the settlement was the timeframe to do this DMMP and we’re concerned that there is no reference to the lawsuit.” (S. Levitas)

**4) Coastal Analysis** - Kevin Conner (Coastal Engineer) provided a summary of the coastal analysis of the study area including ebb tide delta deflation, nearshore placement and the area of inlet influence. The following questions, comments and responses were exchanged during this portion of the presentation.

Question 2: Were other contours, besides the 20-foot contour, analyzed to in the conclusions regarding sediment movement in the nearshore? Were smaller (shallower) contours analyzed? (W. Paynes)

Corps Response 2: No, analysis was done only on the 20-foot contour. We could take a look at other contours, but contours typically parallel each other.

Comment 2: We believe there is NO movement (of sediment) in areas shallower than 20’ though the Corps has shown movement in depths less than 25’.

Question 3: How does the Corps plan to dispose in shallow water?

Corps Response 3: There are 6 to 7 dredges in the eastern U. S. that can work in depths less than 25 feet.

Question 4: Has the Monitoring Plan been vetted with the resource agencies and what is the duration of the monitoring plan?

Corps Response 4: The Plan has been through Agency Technical Review (ATR) but not public review. It's currently a proposed plan that is subject to change based on comments received during public review of the draft DMMP/EA. Some aspects of the Monitoring Plan, such as shoreline profiles used to determine beach placement, will need to continue for the life of the project, while the frequency of other aspects of the monitoring may be lessened over time. The Monitoring Plan is intended to be a living document and changes will be based on what we observe.

Comment 4: We just need to make sure the Plan is revised, as necessary (W. Paynes)

**5) Plan Formulation** - Jenny Owens (Planning Lead) provided a summary of the remaining items subject presented at the AFB including, plan formulation, environmental considerations, economics, upcoming actions and the DMMP schedule. The following questions, comments and responses were exchanged during this portion of the presentation.

Comment 5: Regarding beach placement, Carteret County asked that we flag the placement of sand within the 10- mile area (inlet influence area) as a concern (S. Levitas).

Corps Response 5: East of nodal point is an area of very significant erosion that we will replenish and continue monitoring and where we see erosion within that 10 mile length we will take this on a case by case basis and place material on hot spots.

Comment 6: Some of the sand will not be placed on the beach and that's unacceptable. (T. Roessler)

Corps Response 6: We need to put sand in the nearshore in some years but in Year 1 of the Interim Operations Plan (IOP), all sand will be placed on the beach including areas far past the nodal point (~ 6000').

Comment 6a: We need some guarantee of sand placement past the west nodal point. This year's IOP had sand placement past the nodal point as an option and it [happened to] work out well. (R. Rudolph)

Question 7: What is the western limit of placement on the beach? (D. Davis)

Corps Response 7: The inlet influence area, which is about 10.5 miles to the west of Beaufort Inlet. The NEPA document associated with the DMMP will include this entire area.

Question 7a: Have you considered placing material west of the nodal point as opposed to east of the nodal point to potentially slow movement into the channel? (Moffatt and Nichol)

Corps Response 7a: No, we have not looked at that, but it is something we could consider.

Question 8: Regarding the direct scoring value for ODMDS disposal of sand, do you really consider the ODMDS “environmentally acceptable”? (S. Levitas)

Corps Response 8: We don’t want to take sand out of the system, but technically, the ODMDS is “environmentally acceptable” for placement of any material from the Harbor.

Comment 8: This is not true according to DCM. (S. Levitas)

Comment 9: Regarding nearshore placement of sand, about ~50% of sand goes offshore due to weather and we’d like to see this eliminated. (B. Fugate)

Corps Response 9: Measures are included in the recommended plan to keep large amounts of material from being moved offshore. We need to consider different alternatives/measures to ensure this happens. We are open to considering options but we need to ensure the contractor can do dredging within the 90 day window even when there is bad weather. These options could also impact costs due to the limited number of hopper vessels (J. McCorcle).

Corps Response 9a: We’ll continue to work to refine the solution (W. Paynes).

Corps Response 9b: We should include the Coast Guard in these discussions since they are the agency that licenses the contractors. (D. Davis)

Comment 9a: It would be interesting to look at past weather conditions when sand has been placed in the nearshore versus ODMDS. (T. Roessler)

Comment 10: Sand has not moved into littoral zone <20’ and the DMMP recommendation looks like more of the same. (B. Fugate)

Corps Response 10: This is not a new concern and I hope the PDT has taken this into consideration. (W. Paynes)

Comment 10a: Based on operational limitation of dredges and environmental windows, the expansion of the nearshore west and adding the nearshore east will help

address these concerns. The original EA for the nearshore west set the nearshore depth as 25-30' to allow space for a vessels 300' long. In addition, the delta has deflated so you will see greater depths than what previously existing, but the vast majority of depths in the nearshore are < 35'. (C. Frabotta)

Discussion Summary 10: Regarding nearshore placement, all parties agreed to work on continuing to refine how to accomplish the goal of minimizing or eliminating the placement of sand in the ODMDS.

## **6) Environmental Considerations**

Question 11: Will the Corps be addressing impacts to the entire system? We have a concern related to making sure that all impacts of all decisions are considered. Are the relative positive impacts considered? (S. Levitas)

Corps Response 11: Yes, we are looking at impacts to the ebb tide delta, longshore transport, etc. The EA will also address cumulative impacts.

## **7) Recommended Plan**

Question 12: Based on what's shown in the DMMP in Year 2 of the 3-year cycle it looks as if the plan is to go to the existing nearshore west, not the expanded area. Is this correct? (T. Roessler)

Corps Response 12: The figures in the DMMP for both Years 2 and 3 of the plan that show only the existing nearshore west placement area (not the expanded area) need to be corrected to include the entire nearshore west site, including the expanded area. This correction will be made in the draft report and text will be revised as necessary to clarify this.

## **8) Economic Summary**

Question 13: What assumptions are you making to come up with costs? (T. Roessler)

Corps Response 13: The economic summary presented is annualized costs assuming we dredge to full project dimensions (depth and width). The DMMP addresses the fully authorized project, although we no longer receive full funding to dredge to full dimensions of the channel. We typically get about \$6 to \$7 million annually.

Question 14: What are the annual average benefits? (W. Paynes)

Corps Response 14: About 4 million tons, which allows us to have costs up to \$2/ton. The proposed sand placement is based on coastal analyses not economics.

Comment 14: So you are using the “worst case” to develop based on maximum width and depth of channel.

Corps Response 14a: In developing costs we looked at historical costs plus depth with a large pipeline dredge. Tables are in the formal report. The 20-25% contingency applied is for the market impacts with a small number of bidders. Costs are based on depth, equipment, environment etc. (C. Caldwell). In addition, Chris F explained that although we considered full channel width and depth (worst case), the costs of the disposal alternatives were weighed against each other to formulate the recommended plan. The recommended plan would not change if reduced channel dimensions were used in the analysis.

**9) Upcoming Actions & Milestones** - At the conclusion of the presentation, each attendee was given the opportunity to provide any final comments. Below is the input received:

Corps of Engineers (B. Lamson): Please ensure your verbal comments and concerns are reflected in your written comments on the DMMP AFB package ASAP and no later than 01 September. Remember this is not a formal comment and review and we will not be answering each comment individually but comments will influence the formulation of solutions. The formal public review will come later during NEPA review. (B. Lamson)

Corps of Engineers (W. Paynes): SAD has begun our review of the AFB report but has not completed the review. There weren't many comments thus far from SAD and comments were not significant. Some clarification regarding the scoring process is needed. SAD comments should be completed in the next couple of weeks.

Corps of Engineers (D. Davis): Looks like good plan but we want to retain flexibility, especially with limited equipment in the industry. Try to retain as much flexibility as you can in accomplishing the plan.

NC Division of Coastal Management (D. Huggett): Still reviewing the report and taking into account today's discussion.

NC Wildlife Resources Commission (Dave Allen): On one map in the report it looked like the channel went through western part of Shackleford Banks. One of NC WRC concerns is ephemeral bird habitat. Is this channel static?

Corps Response: Yes, the channel is static and dredging of the area in question will be addressed outside of the DMMP. The Corps is aware that the area contains piping plover critical habitat and consultation with the USFWS will be required.

NC Wildlife Resources Commission (D. Allen): Regarding AFB, report still under review. Comments will be submitted soon.

NC Division of Water Resources (T. Reeder): Excellent discussion today. I understand the project and concerns better.

Carteret County (R. Rudolph): What about rainbowing [sidecasting] into the nearshore?

Corps Response: Rainbowing sand is not currently a viable option due to lack of dredge plants. Currently, the McFarland is the only dredge that could do this work. This could be looked at when/if plants are built in the future. In addition there are potential environmental impacts that would have to be considered (C. Frabotta/D. Small).

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**15-Jul-10**

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