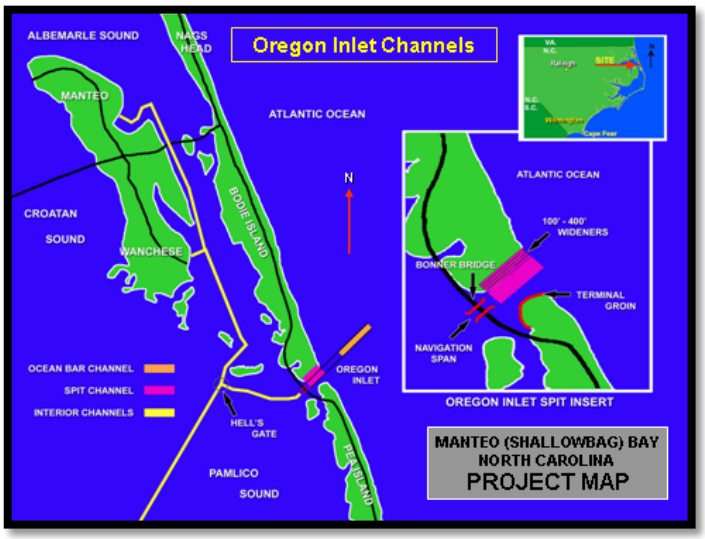
US Army Corps of Engineers
Wilmington District

Manteo (Shallowbag) Bay, NC (Navigation) (O&M)

- **Sponsor: State of North Carolina.**
- **CEQ and the Corps' consensus guidance – Provide more frequent depth surveys for navigating the inlet. Develop alternative approaches for improving navigation**
- **Oregon Inlet continues to be a difficult project feature to provide adequate depths for safe navigation year round**



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 3 DATE: 6 March 2014

1. **AUTHORIZATION:** River and Harbor Acts of 1910, 1940, 1950 and 1970; and under Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act, as amended.

2. **LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:** The project is located along the outer banks portion of Dare County, North Carolina. The project provides for an entrance channel 14 feet deep by 400 feet wide from the Atlantic Ocean through Oregon Inlet, and under the Herbert C. Bonner bridge, a 14-ft deep by 400-ft advanced maintenance widener adjacent to the entrance channel, and project interior channels 12 feet deep by 100 feet wide from Oregon Inlet to Pamlico Sound, Wanchese Harbor, Shallowbag Bay Harbor and Albemarle Sound. Length of all channels is 25.4 miles.

3. **FY 2013 FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION:** $10,242,000, including $9,000,000 in FY 2013 Disaster Relief funds.

4. **FY 2014 FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION:** $1,308,000. Funds are being used to perform operation activities, hydrographic surveys and minor channel maintenance dredging of Oregon Inlet, a critical harbor of refuge.

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5. **FY 2015 BUDGET AMOUNT:** $800,000. Funds would be used to perform operation activities and hydrographic surveys and very minimal channel maintenance dredging of Oregon Inlet, a critical harbor of refuge. Additional funds in the amount of $18,600,000 could be used as follows: $600,000 to perform hydrographic surveys and environmental monitoring; $3,500,000 to perform maintenance dredging of navigation channel at the Bonner Bridge providing 65% channel availability; $4,400,000 to perform full maintenance dredging of interior channels (12 ft) and dredging of isolated shoals; and $10,100,000 to perform contract maintenance dredging of the navigation channel at the Bonner Bridge (Spit) (14ft) to provide approximately 85% channel availability.

6**.** **CURRENT PROJECT CONDITIONS:** The Oregon Inlet navigation channel at the Bonner Bridge currently provides a navigable depth of no more than 4 feet under natural conditions which has effectively impacted the passage of navigational traffic thru this portion of the bridge. Navigational traffic is often using an alternative passageway thru the bridge that has 7 feet of depth and width restrictions of about 80 feet between an unprotected pair of bridge piers. No fender protection is provided at these piers leading to possible impact to the overall safety of the bridge if a boat accidentally collides with these piers. The U.S. Coast Guard has issued a notice of prohibition of large vessels from using the alternative passageway. If the bridge is closed due to damage from boat impact, vehicular access to Hatteras Island would be closed. Historically the North Carolina Ferry Division has provided emergency service until the bridge is repaired and reopened.

7. **OTHER INFORMATION:** The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), NOAA, and the Corps agreed in May 2003 that the proposed jetties on the Oregon Inlet portion of the Manteo (Shallowbag) Bay project would not be constructed and to develop alternative approaches for improving navigation.

Oregon Inlet, similar to other unprotected inlets on the Atlantic Coast, has historically migrated toward the south. This migration was halted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation's installation of a terminal groin located on the north end of Pea Island to stabilize the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge. Although the inlet stopped its migration, the accretion of material from the north continues to build up on the southern end of Bodie Island. Although there is sufficient depth, the location of the navigation span of the Bonner Bridge does not align with the natural deep water. The channel position is authorized based on following the course of the naturally deep water.

The state of North Carolina, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, is poised to replace the Bonner Bridge. The terminal groin is expected to remain in place and the replacement bridge design should include multiple navigation spans. These measures will greatly reduce, and possibly eliminate, the need for dredging through the Oregon Inlet gorge (Oregon Inlet Spit Channel).