



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Wilmington District

## Wilmington Harbor, NC (Navigation) (O&M)

- **Sponsor: State of North Carolina**
- **Maintenance dredging of the outer ocean bar, inner ocean bar, mid-river and anchorage basin channel reaches scheduled in FY 2014**



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 3 and 7

DATE: 8 April 2013

1. **AUTHORIZATION:** River and Harbor Act 1930, 1945, 1950, 1962, 1964, Section 107 of the River and Harbor Act 1960, WRDA 1986, WRDA 1996, and Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 1998.
2. **LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:** The project is located on the southeastern coast of North Carolina in Brunswick and New Hanover Counties. The existing project, including improvements made since August 1999, provides for a channel 44 feet deep through the ocean bar and an entrance channel changing to 42 feet deep extending to just downstream of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge at Wilmington, NC. Upstream of this point, the channel is 38 feet deep to the Highway 133 bridge; 32 feet deep to the Hilton Bridge over the Northeast Cape Fear River; and 25 feet deep from the Hilton Bridge to a point 1-2/3 miles above. The project also includes a northwestward connecting channel, 12 feet deep, from the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway at Snows Cut to the main river channel.
3. **FY 2012 FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION:** \$20,058,000 which included \$6,000,000 in FY 2012 Disaster Relief funds to restore portions of the project to pre-Hurricane Irene conditions. Funds were used to perform maintenance dredging of the outer ocean bar and the anchorage basin portions of the project and the channel reach above the anchorage basin to the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Funds were also used to perform outer ocean bar and mid-river channel reaches maintenance dredging with non-shoreline quality materials disposed in the ocean dredged material disposal site.

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4. **FY 2013 BUDGET AMOUNT:** \$16,409,000. Funds are being used to perform anchorage basin maintenance dredging with upland disposal to Eagle Island; perform inner ocean bar maintenance dredging with dredged material placed on Bald Head Island; perform outer ocean bar and mid-river channel reaches maintenance dredging with non-shoreline quality material disposed in the ocean dredged material disposal site; continue the dredged material management plan (DMMP); conduct project condition surveys; debris removal; mosquito control; and produce plans and specifications for the upcoming FY 2014 maintenance dredging contracts.

5. **FY 2014 BUDGET AMOUNT:** \$17,803,000. These funds would be used for maintenance dredging of the following: anchorage basin with upland disposal to the Eagle Island Dredged Material Disposal area; outer ocean bar with disposal to the ocean dredged material disposal (ODMDS) portion of project; anchorage basin; mid-river channel reaches to an 85 percent channel capacity with disposal to the ODMDS; Smith Island reach of the inner ocean bar with disposal to an adjacent shoreline; continue the DMMP; and for operations activities, hydrographic surveys for 30+ miles of channel, environmental monitoring, mosquito control activities plus produce plans and specifications for the upcoming FY 2015 maintenance dredging contracts. Additional funds in the amount of \$10,200,000 could be used to continue maintenance dredging of the inner ocean bar to an 85 percent channel capacity with disposal of an additional 400,000 cubic yards on Caswell Beach.

6. **ISSUE AND/OR STATUS:** On 28 Dec 2010, the village of Bald Head Island (BHI) filed suit against the Corps, several of its officials, and the Secretary of the Army, alleging the Corps had violated NEPA, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and alleged “contracts” between the Corps and BHI. Oak Island and Caswell Beach intervened as parties to the lawsuit. In November 2011, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina dismissed the lawsuit. The village has appealed that decision. The Corps continues to work with all stakeholders to address the underlying issues.

The Corps anticipated and planned to dredge the inner ocean bar channel every two years. Shoreline compatible material from this maintenance dredging action is placed on adjacent shorelines, as described in the sand management plan for the project. The sand management plan calls for a 1/3 to 2/3 split of material dredged from the inner ocean bar channel to be placed on Oak Island and Bald Head Island, respectively. To meet this requirement, the Corps rotates shoreline disposal locations among the adjacent islands, with Bald Head Island getting material from 2 of every 3 maintenance dredging contracts, with the third going to Oak Island. This ongoing maintenance dredging contract is expected to complete in April 2013, with the material placed on Bald Head Island.

The sand management plan also discussed a monitoring plan for the beaches and channel. The final reevaluation report of the sand management plan with recommendations is expected by September 2014.