



# **Early Scoping Public Comment Period Summary Report**

Prepared by:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

The U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Wilmington District, is conducting an evaluation of technical and policy concerns noted in the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)'s May 2020 Review Assessment of the North Carolina State Ports Authority's February 2020 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 203 Feasibility Study. This study resulted in conditional authorization in Section 403 of WRDA 2020 to deepen the Wilmington Harbor main navigational channel to 47 feet (from the current depth of 42 feet) and extend its entrance by widening locations between Fort Caswell and Bald Head Island.

### 1.2 Purpose of Early Scoping

This scoping summary report documents the early scoping public process for the Wilmington Harbor 403 (WH403) Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). USACE conducted early scoping in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 US Code [USC] § 4321 et seq.) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1500-1508). The EIS is also under development in accordance with NEPA, which requires all federal agencies to analyze potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of their proposed actions, as well as to identify and consider reasonable alternatives to those actions.

Public scoping is one of the earliest phases in the development of an EIS. The purpose of an early public scoping process is to provide information to the public, narrow the scope of analysis to significant environmental issues, gather agency and public input on alternatives and issues of concern, and ensure full and open participation in early scoping for the Draft EIS. Scoping is not only an opportunity for USACE to explain project



goals, but also the earliest chance for the public to provide input regarding the “scope” of the issues to be evaluated in the Draft EIS. The intent of this report is to provide the public with information about the scoping process and issues that were raised by stakeholders during the early public scoping period.

The early scoping comments will be used to identify significant resources and issues of concern for consideration during the development of alternatives for the Draft EIS.

## 2.0 OUTREACH METHODS

Public and agency participation are an important part of the scoping process. USACE used a variety of methods to inform the public about the opportunities to engage with and provide comments regarding the WH403 Letter Report and EIS.

### 2.1 Public Notice

On May 30, 2023, the USACE published a Public Notice through email to stakeholder list, posting to website, and issuance through Wilmington District's Regulatory Public Notice distribution list. Using these methods, over 400 stakeholders received the public notice. The Public Notice advertised the WH 403 Letter Report and EIS Early Scoping Public Meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 13, 2023.

The Public Notice, found in *Attachment A*, is accessible via the following website:

[https://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Portals/59/siteimages/Public%20Affairs/403/WH403\\_EarlyScopingPublic%20Notice\\_30May2023corrected.pdf?ver=a68dwLNCD7iH692EFM\\_ttg%3D%3D](https://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Portals/59/siteimages/Public%20Affairs/403/WH403_EarlyScopingPublic%20Notice_30May2023corrected.pdf?ver=a68dwLNCD7iH692EFM_ttg%3D%3D)



## **2.2 News Release**

USACE published a news release on May 22, 2023, to provide notice of the Early Scoping Public Meeting. USACE printed the news release in *The Star News*, a local news platform, in an effort to notify residents and stakeholders living and working in Wilmington. A copy of this notice and the published ad are available for review in *Attachment B*.

## **2.3 Media**

The USACE's Public Affairs utilized social media and coordinated with media outlets to further share information ahead of the public meeting with the intent of educating and engaging the public and stakeholders. Examples of the social media posts and those articles resulting from coordination are found in *Attachment C* and listed in chronological order below:

- The Star News, article published on February 16, 2023:  
<https://www.starnewsonline.com/story/news/local/2023/02/16/officials-push-forward-with-wilmington-harbor-deepening-project/69881068007/>
- WECT News (NBC affiliate), article published on March 10, 2023:  
<https://www.wect.com/2023/03/10/us-army-corps-engineers-evaluate-proposal-deepen-harbor/>
- Wilmington Biz, article published on May 23, 2023:  
[https://www.wilmingtonbiz.com/maritime/2023/05/23/global\\_report\\_recognizes\\_port\\_of\\_wilmingtons\\_operations/24472](https://www.wilmingtonbiz.com/maritime/2023/05/23/global_report_recognizes_port_of_wilmingtons_operations/24472)
- WECT News during its news hour on May 30, 2023, and on its website:  
<https://www.wect.com/2023/05/30/army-corps-engineers-hold-public-open-house-discuss-deepening-wilmington-harbor/>
- May 30, 2023: USACE posts link to news release with picture of the Port of Wilmington on Facebook, Twitter (now known as X), and LinkedIn



- Port City Daily published on May 31, 2023:  
<https://portcitydaily.com/local-news/2023/05/31/public-open-house-scheduled-for-wilmington-harbor-project-comment-period-open/>
- WHQR Public Media published on June 1, 2023:  
<https://www.whqr.org/local/2023-06-01/heres-the-latest-on-the-project-to-deepen-the-wilmington-harbor>
- Coastal Review published by the North Carolina Coastal Federation on June 6, 2023: <https://coastalreview.org/2023/06/advocates-cite-risks-of-planned-shipping-channel-project/>
- WECT News aired a segment on June 13, 2023:  
<https://www.wect.com/2023/06/14/us-army-corp-engineers-wilmington-department-asks-public-comment-wilmington-harbor-403-enhancement-project/>
- Port City Daily published on June 14, 2023:  
<https://portcitydaily.com/local-news/2023/06/14/wilmington-harbor-deepening-enters-early-scoping-period-community-raises-environmental-concerns/>
- June 21, 2023: USACE posted photos and a summary of the public open house on Facebook, X, and LinkedIn.
- June 26, 2023: USACE posted a notification of the end of the comment period (June 30) and a list of ways to submit a comment on Facebook, X, and LinkedIn.
- Port City Daily published on July 20, 2023:  
<https://portcitydaily.com/latest-news/2023/07/20/former-engineer-sends-warning-to-usace-on-wilmington-harbor-deepening/>

Local news platforms also independently reported on the Early Scoping Public Meeting following the May 2023 press release. This included the Coastal Review published by the North Carolina Coastal Federation on May 30, 2023: <https://coastalreview.org/2023/05/open-house-on-wilmington-harbor-project-set-for-june-13/>



## **2.4 Website and Email**

USACE launched a project website that provides information about the Wilmington Harbor 403 letter report and EIS. This information includes an overview of the project, a proposed schedule, a catalog of frequently asked questions, and a guided tour of the Wilmington Harbor federal navigation channel and project area. The website also includes all of the materials presented at the Early Scoping Public Meeting. The website will be accessible throughout the development of the letter report and EIS and will be updated at key points during the process. The project website is accessible from the following web address: <https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>.

USACE also established a project email that is available for the public to submit questions or comments about the project. This email is: [WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil](mailto:WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil).

## **3.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **3.1 Early Scoping Public Meeting**

As part of the public scoping process, USACE hosted the Early Scoping Public Meeting on June 13, 2023, to engage with and inform the public on the development of the WH403 Letter Report and EIS, while also soliciting input and public comments. Copies of the meeting materials such as the Display Boards, Handout, Comment Card and Presentation are included in *Attachment D*. A copy of the video presentation can be found at the following link:

<https://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Dredging/Wilmington-Harbor-403-Letter-Report-and-EIS/>

#### **3.1.1 Venue**



USACE hosted an open house-style public meeting at Cape Fear Community College, Union Station Building, 502 North Front Street, Wilmington, NC 28401. The venue is in close proximity to the project and familiar to those with an interest in USACE projects due to it being the setting for previous public meetings for the NC State Port Authority's Study.

### 3.1.2 Attendance

The meeting was attended by a variety of guests, including the 49 guests that signed-in at the welcome station. The Early Scoping Public Meeting sign-in sheet is included in *Attachment E*. Guests had an opportunity to engage with USACE and WH403 project staff to learn more about the project's goals, proposed schedule and more. In addition to a number of individual citizens, the following agencies and organizations were represented at the Early Scoping Public Meeting:

- Southern Environmental Law Center
- HDR Engineering
- Village of Bald Head Island
- Brooks Pierce Law Firm
- WHQR (radio)
- University of North Carolina Wilmington
- Cape Fear River Watch
- Audubon NC
- NC Division of Coastal Management
- Wilmington/New Hanover Port
- Waterway Beach Commission
- US Environmental Protection Agency Region 4
- Brooks Law
- Town of Kure Beach
- Cape Fear Community College Marine Tech
- Port City Daily
- Historic Wilmington Foundation
- Bald Head Island Conservancy
- NC Division of Water Resources



- NC Coastal Federation
- Cape Fear Ocean Labs
- Clean Aire NC
- NC Sierra Club
- Moffatt & Nichol Cape Fear River Partnership

### 3.1.3 Content

USACE hosted the Early Scoping Public Meeting to offer opportunities for guests to interact with USACE staff during a presentation, which included an introductory video presentation and various information stations about the project. This meeting provided the public and stakeholders with the opportunity to engage members of the team, ask questions, and submit written comments. The meeting followed the schedule below:

- 4:00-4:30pm Welcome, Introduction Video, and Sign-in
- 4:30-7:00pm Open house, with themed informational stations
- 4:30-5:00pm Presentation by USACE
- 6:00-6:30pm Repeat Presentation by USACE

#### 3.1.3.1 Presentation

USACE Wilmington District Commander COL Benjamin Bennett welcomed the public with opening remarks and presented a brief video, which included historical context of the project. The presentation was repeated later during the open house.

#### 3.1.3.2 Materials

- **Handouts:** The Early Scoping Public Meeting brochure included an overview of the WH403 Letter Report and EIS project; the draft purpose, need, and timeline for the project; a list of questions to encourage engagement with the project team; a detailed list of frequently asked questions with answers; and a description of the options for submitting comments after the meeting. A separate comment card was available for guests to



leave their thoughts and concerns about the project at the open house or to mail in later.

- **Informational Stations:** At each of the following stations, project staff facilitated conversations with guests using engaging and relevant displays:
  - Welcome & Sign-In
  - Introductory Video (repeating every 10 minutes) & Overview Presentation
  - Deeper Dive! Discuss What You've Learned
    - Station with questions to review the facts of the project, reflect on what resonated with each guest, consider how the project is significant on a personal level, and determine if any action should be taken.
  - Project Background / Plan Formulation / Economics
  - National Environmental Policy Act & Environmental Resources
  - Engineering Considerations & Coastal Processes



Figure 1 Displays at Project Background, Plan Formulation, and Economics Station



- **Map Your Comments:** Guests were provided laptops to leave location-specific comments on an interactive map of the project. USACE staff were available to assist with utilization of the software.

### **3.2 Comment Period**

USACE accepted comments during the early scoping comment period through June 30, 2023. During the comment period, USACE provided a number of options for submitting comments, as outlined below.

### **3.3 Comment Submission Options**

#### *3.3.1 Early Scoping Public Meeting*

A USACE representative gave a comment card to each attendee as they entered the meeting space and signed in at the Welcome Station. A station with tables, chairs, and pens was provided for those who were interested in writing and submitting a comment during the meeting.

Additionally, laptops were available at the “Map Your Comment” information station for anyone who wanted to submit their comment using the USACE Public Comment Tool. Guests could utilize this tool to click on a point on the map and submit comments related to a specific location. The online comment form also had a series of drop-down menus guests could select to help categorize each comment during the comment analysis and summary exercise.

#### *3.3.2 Online*

A QR Code was included on Early Scoping Public Meeting materials to provide guests with mobile access to the project website and the USACE Public Comment Tool. This tool was incorporated on the project’s website for use by the general public, including those unable to attend the Early Scoping Public Meeting. Through the location-based designed tool (as described above), the public could inform the USACE of challenges,



opportunities, issues, and concerns they felt were important. The website also included all the materials presented at the Early Scoping Public Meeting.

### 3.3.3 Email

The USACE included the project’s email address on all public-facing documents, including display boards and handouts. This email address was utilized by members of the public to contact the project team with additional questions or comments.

### 3.3.4 U.S. Postal Service

Members of the public could submit physical copies of their comments to the USACE after the Early Scoping Public Meeting via the U.S. Postal Service. The following mailing address was included on all project materials and listed on the project website:

*US Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403*

### 3.3.5 Voicemail

The public also left comments via voicemail using USACE Wilmington District’s general phone number listed on the public website.

## 4.0 COMMENT SUMMARY

### 4.1 Advertising Survey

Guests who signed in at the Early Scoping Public Meeting were asked to share how they found out about the meeting. The results from this survey indicate that all forms of advertising were effective in some capacity and are included in Table 1.

*Table 1: Survey Question: “How did you hear about the meeting?”*

<b>Advertising Method</b>	<b>Count</b>
Public Notice	22



Advertising Method	Count
Other	16
Project Website	8
Social Media	6
Newspaper Ad	4

In addition, guests who used the USACE Public Comment Tool were asked to provide suggestions regarding how the USACE could engage and conduct outreach more effectively. These suggestions are summarized and listed below:

- Increase social media presence and op-eds in local newspapers to provide frequent project updates;
- Send project representatives to site of project to speak with residents;
- Post project information at all boat landings;
- Host project NEPA webinars;
- Contact local organizations, churches, community nonprofits, and governments to spread project information and to get residents more involved in the development process; and
- Attend Village of Bald Head Island council meetings.

#### 4.2 Receipt and Cataloging

The Early Scoping Public Meeting and the following comment period resulted in the submittal of 82 comments from 45 members of the public. As noted in Section 3.1.2, individuals representing a diverse number of organizations attended the meeting and submitted comments including one (1) federal agency, two (2) state agencies, three (3) local governments, six (6) non-governmental organizations, three (3) departments at University of North Carolina Wilmington, and 24 individuals. This data was self-reported as recorded via the following comment methods:

- USACE Public Comment Tool (61)



- Email (18)
- U.S. Postal Service (1)
- Comment Card at the Early Scoping Public Meeting (1)
- Voicemail (1)

It should be noted that individuals were permitted to submit comments through multiple means, which resulted in a greater total number of comments compared to the number of commenters. For example, general comments may have been submitted via email, while multiple location-specific comments could have been submitted on the USACE Public Comment Tool. As comments were received, the USACE cataloged and recorded each one. All original copies, including transcripts of verbal comments, are incorporated into the administrative record for this project. All public comments received are posted in a redacted form to the USACE project website.

### 4.3 Comment Analysis and Summarization

As a result of the Early Scoping Public Meeting, the members of the public submitted comments that represented multiple categories as noted in Table 2; these included Environmental Impacts, Mitigation, Alternatives Development, and general EIS/NEPA-related comments. Each comment often included multiple subcategories which are listed in Table 3, below. These categories represent a summary of the topics included in the comments; however, this data should not be considered an absolute accounting of comments, but rather a general overview of reoccurring general themes.

*Table 2: General Categorization of the Early Public Scoping Comments*

Category	Count*
Environmental Impacts	100
Mitigation	12
Alternatives Development	11
EIS/NEPA General	19



*\*Individual comments often included more than one category; therefore total counts will not equal the total number of individual comments.*

To further understand theming of the comments, the project team created subcategories to sort and filter the data. Table 3 includes a summary of subcategories, sorted by most frequently mentioned topics at the top.

*Table 3: Subcategorization of the Early Public Scoping Comments*

<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Count</b>
Erosion	47
Habitat	37
Fish and Wildlife	36
Saltwater Intrusion	28
Flooding	27
Ecology	26
Sea Level Rise	22
NEPA Process	19
Water Quality	17
Analytical Methods	16
Dredged Material Management	15
Cumulative Effects	12
Economic	12
Hazardous Materials	9
Cultural Resources	8
Environmental Justice	8
Ecosystem Services	7
Hydrology	7
Air Quality	6
Purpose and Need	5
Development (i.e. land use)	4
Recreation	3
Ballast Water	2
Socioeconomic	2
Supportive	1

The following figures present the data in a visual format to help readers quickly understand the most frequently mentioned topics and overall theming of public concerns.

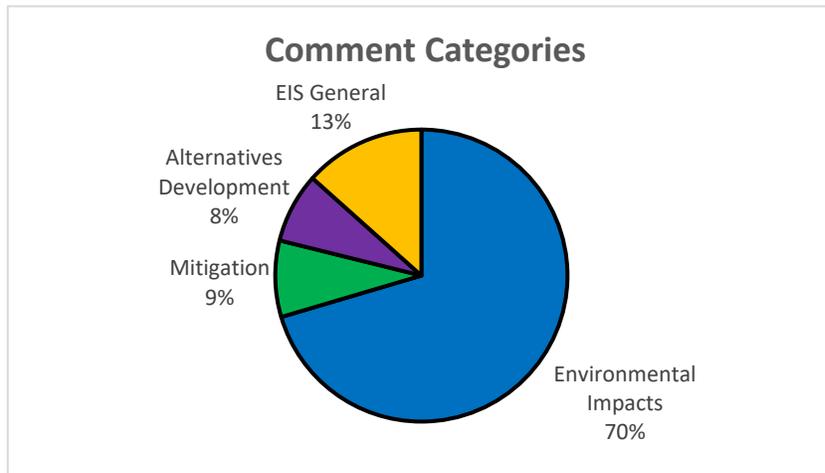


Figure 2. Primary Categorization of the Early Public Scoping Comments

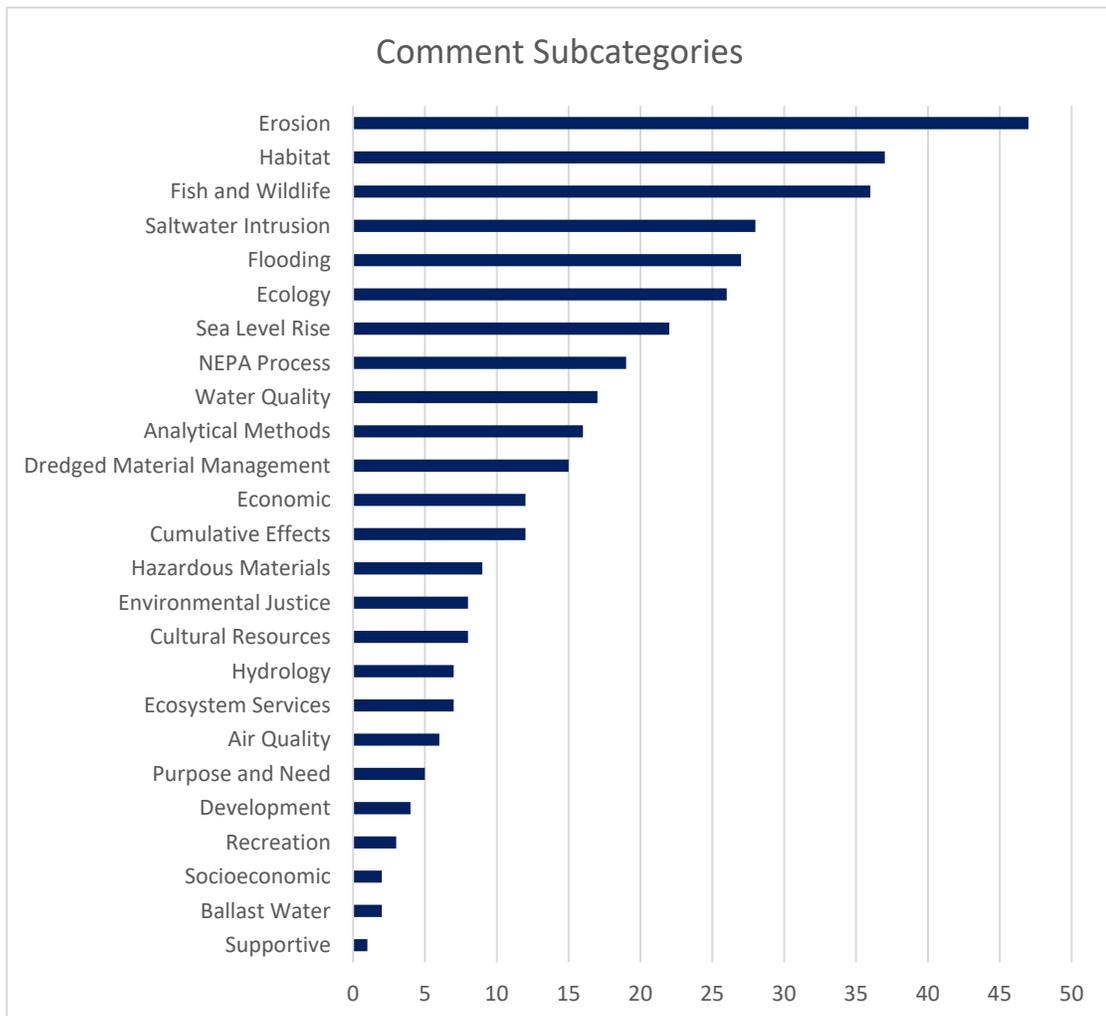


Figure 3. Subcategorization of the Early Public Scoping Comments



## **ATTACHMENT A**

WH403 & EIS Notice of Early Scoping Public Comment Period



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Wilmington District

## **CESAW-ECP-PE**

### **NOTICE OF EARLY SCOPING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

#### **WILMINGTON HARBOR 403 LETTER REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT WILMINGTON HARBOR NAVIGATION PROJECT, NORTH CAROLINA**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Wilmington District, in partnership with the North Carolina State Ports Authority (NCSPA), is advising Federal, State, and local governmental agencies and the public that the Corps, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is conducting early scoping to inform the environmental review for evaluating transportation improvements for the Wilmington Harbor Navigation Project, North Carolina, including deepening and widening of the navigation channel. The USACE will be conducting the environmental review in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR part 1500-1508), and USACE Procedures For Implementing NEPA (33 CFR part 230), and other related environmental review requirements.

USACE is conducting early scoping for the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and EIS and is inviting the public to comment on the scope of the analysis. Early scoping comments are used to identify significant resources and issues of concern that should be evaluated, and in the development of alternatives.

Comment Submittal: USACE is requesting receipt of comments by June 30, 2023. The public is invited to submit comments using one or more of the following methods:

Email: [WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil](mailto:WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil)

Mail: US Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403

Online: Online comments may be made through the Public Comment Tool. The Public Comment Tool can be found on the project website:  
<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

Public Meeting: USACE will be hosting an open house style public meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 4:00 PM Cape Fear Community College, Union Station Building, 502 N Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401.

The meeting will offer opportunities for participants to visit various stations to engage members of our team, learn about the project, ask questions, and submit written comments. The meeting schedule:

- 4:00-4:30pm Welcome, introduction video, and sign in
- 4:30-7:00pm Open house, with themed stations
- 4:30-5:00pm Presentation by USACE
- 6:00-6:30pm Repeat Presentation by USACE

Background Information: A draft environmental report and integrated feasibility study for potential navigation improvements to the Wilmington Harbor Federal navigation channel leading from the Atlantic Ocean to the Port of Wilmington, North Carolina, was prepared in 2020 by the NCSPA under the authority granted by Section 203 of Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986. The Port's study area was the existing Wilmington Harbor federal navigation channel that originates offshore and extends approximately 38 miles through the Atlantic Ocean and up the Cape Fear River to the City of Wilmington, NC where it services the Port of Wilmington. The existing project provides for a channel -44 feet Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) through the ocean bar and entrance channel, changing to -42 feet (MLLW) extending to just downstream of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. The Port of Wilmington has experienced increases in cargo volume and in the size of vessels calling at the port since the last major channel improvements were completed by the USACE under the Wilmington Harbor Project authorized under WRDA of 1996. The project was conditionally authorized under Section 403 of WRDA of 2020: Authorization of Projects Based on Feasibility Studies Prepared by Non-Federal Interests.

The WRDA 2020 Section 403 authorization for the navigation project, Wilmington Harbor, North Carolina, is conditioned upon the resolution of comments from the review assessment of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works (ASA(CW)), titled "Review Assessment of Wilmington Harbor, North Carolina Navigation Improvement Project Integrated Section 203 Study & Environmental Report (February 2020)" and dated May 17, 2020. This evaluation is being conducted in response to the comments from the ASA(CW) review.

For additional information about the project and to learn more about how to submit comments, please visit our website:

<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

*Bret Walters*

Bret Walters

Chief, Planning and Environmental Branch



## **ATTACHMENT B**

News Release & Newspaper Ad



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG.

For Immediate Release:

Contact:  
Dave Connolly, 910.251.4626

## **USACE Wilmington to hold a public open house for the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement**

**WILMINGTON, N.C.** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District is conducting a public comment period through 30 June 2023 and will host a public open house on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 4:00 PM at Cape Fear Community College, Union Station Building, 502 N Front St. Wilmington, NC 28401.

The meeting will offer an opportunity for participants to visit various stations to engage with members of our team and learn about the project. The public will be given opportunities to submit comments at the public meeting and provided information on how to engage and provide comments throughout the project.

### Open House Schedule:

- Welcome, introduction video, and sign in 4:00-4:30pm
- Open house begins 4:30-7:00pm

### During the open house:

- Presentation by USACE 4:30-5:00pm
- Repeat Presentation by USACE 6:00-6:30pm

We are partnering with the North Carolina State Ports Authority for the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We are committed to meaningful engagements with the public as early and often as possible and look forward to making that happen. For additional information about the project and to learn more about how to submit comments, please visit our website:

<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

Please provide Early Scoping Public Comments by June 30, 2023.

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**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS –WILMINGTON DISTRICT**  
69 DARLINGTON AVE, WILMINGTON, N.C. 28403  
WWW.SAW.USACE.ARMY.MIL

**U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Wilmington Harbor 403  
Letter Report and  
Environmental Impact  
Statement**

**The Corps Needs Your Input!**

The Corps of Engineers is currently requesting public comment regarding proposed transportation improvements for the Wilmington Harbor Federal Navigation Project. The Corps of Engineers will host a **public meeting** to gather your input and share information about the project. The meeting will offer opportunities for you to visit various information stations to engage with members of our team, learn about the project, ask questions, and submit written comments.

**Meeting Format:** A brief presentation will be given at 4:30 pm and repeated at 6:00 pm. All are encouraged to interact with Corps of Engineers staff at information stations during the open house event.

**Public Meeting Information:**

**DATE:** June 13, 2023

**LOCATION:** Cape Fear  
Community College  
Union Station Building  
502 N. Front St.

Wilmington, NC 28401

**MEETING TIME:** 4:00-7:00  
pm

\*Free parking is available on a first come-first serve basis in the Visitor Lot at 2nd and Walnut Streets.

**Early Scoping Comments  
due by June 30, 2023**

For more information and to submit comments, please visit the project website:

<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com>

Publication Dates L00000000



## **ATTACHMENT C**

Related News Articles & Social Media Posts

## LOCAL

# As other Southeast ports get deeper, what's the status of Wilmington's expansion project?

**Gareth McGrath** USA TODAY NETWORK

Published 5:02 a.m. ET Feb. 16, 2023

In a rare showing of political bipartisanship in Raleigh, the state's 25% portion of the cost for the massive and expensive \$846 million proposed infrastructure project has already been secured. And some of the biggest container vessels plying the U.S. East Coast already make stops in Wilmington – although they can't currently utilize their full potential when visiting the Port City.

Piece by piece, from the bigger ships and landside improvements needed to handle the increase in container traffic to the private sector adding more distribution and cold-storage space, the keys to keeping Wilmington a competitive port option as its neighbors dredge their shipping channels deeper are slowly falling into place.

But the biggest portion of the puzzle, deepening the Cape Fear River's shipping channel from 42 feet to 47 feet, remains a slow slog.

**RISKY BETS** Plan to assess risk of climate change on insurance, including in NC, courts controversy

From increasing concerns over climate change to navigating the halls of Washington to secure the necessary funding for the project's studies and then construction, plenty of hurdles remain before dredges can begin moving the estimated 26.9 millions of tons of sand and rock from the river bottom.

By design, the federal review and approval process is very deliberative, and that's OK with Brian Clark, who was been executive director of the N.C. State Ports Authority since 2020.

"Sure, we'd always like to see it move faster," he said. "But this is how multi-year projects like this, from inception to completion, work."

## Competitive necessity

Despite some post-pandemic economic headwinds, North Carolina continues to grow, adding people and businesses at a strong clip – and port officials are eager to capitalize on the Tar Heel State's booming economy, highlighted recently by a surge in automotive and aviation projects in the Triangle and Triad areas.

Although a smallish-sized commercial operation compared to some of its Southeastern port peers, Wilmington has historically capitalized on its uncrowded status and ease of entry and exit to appeal to its customers.

"We have the capability to offer those services, from a quick turnaround and proximity to market to our lower costs, and we intend to continue to market that," Clark said.

But if the biggest ships can't easily access the port, a lot of the ease and financial sense of using Wilmington would disappear.

That has led to the ports investing \$256 million in infrastructure improvement projects over the past five years, which included more huge container cranes, a new gate access, widened the port's turning basin, and launching several new multi-modal rail routes. Now, port officials want to see the roughly 26-mile-long channel linking Wilmington to the Atlantic deepened to 47 feet.

"The container market looks strong and is likely to grow stronger, and the continuing cascade of larger vessels coming out of the shipyards over the next couple of years is very, very high," Clark said. "It is a critical competitive requirement that we have the necessary infrastructure to continue to be able to serve these larger vessels."

**FUNDING THE FUTURE** A \$110M grant will help fund a new NC coastal bridge, but it isn't in Wilmington

The channel's last deepening project, completed in 2004 and with the federal government picking up roughly \$280 million of the project's \$400 million price tag, took the channel depth from 38 feet to 42 feet. The port has seen tremendous container growth since then, setting a record during the 2020-21 fiscal year with more than 324,000 TEUs (20-foot equivalent units, the standard measure for containers) handled. The number dipped to just under 300,000 in 2021-22, but is still nearly triple what it was two decades ago.

That number, however, is still just a fraction of the 5.9 million containers that flowed through Savannah's massive port in 2022. And the Georgia port, like the huge ports in

Charleston, S.C., and Norfolk, Va., are already deeper than Wilmington. Charleston now offers a 52-foot draft, while Savannah is at 47 feet at low tide. Norfolk's channel, which also serves the largest Navy base in the world, is aiming to have 55 feet of depth by mid-decade.

## Project study

In 2018 the ports authority funded a channel deepening feasibility study on its own. The study stated that while Wilmington with its 42-foot draft was relatively competitive with most East Coast ports, that situation wouldn't last long as neighboring ports got deeper.

A review by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, published in February 2020, raised several questions and concerns about the project. After signing a cost-sharing agreement with the port authority last fall, the corps is conducting "an evaluation of technical, policy and legal concerns" noted by the assistant secretary's review, said David Connolly, spokesperson with the Army Corps of Engineers' Wilmington District.

The corps-led \$8.3 million review is expected to take roughly four years. If the deepening project is approved and federal funding secured and with an estimated four-year construction window, it could be around the end of the decade before the deeper shipping channel reaches the Port of Wilmington just south of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge.

**CLIMATE CHANGE** Why flooding from hurricanes in the Wilmington area could get a whole lot worse

## Climate change concerns

While the economics of going deeper seem clear, even if it comes with a hefty price tag, what about the environmental impacts of digging a deeper Cape Fear River shipping channel?

Kerri Allen, a coastal advocate and Southeastern regional manager for the N.C. Coastal Federation, the coast's largest environmental watchdog group, said a deeper channel handling bigger vessels will create a new set of environmental concerns – some of which have become a bigger worry since the first look at potential impacts was done several years ago.

"We're not necessarily opposed to the project," she said, noting the economic benefits the deepening project is forecast to have for the Wilmington area. "But it's a massive undertaking, so we want to make sure regulators have the right information, the right data and the right forecasts to make sure they're analyzing it with all of the best information available to them."

Impacts to the estuary's flora and fauna could be compounded by environmental changes tied to climate change, notably sea-level rise and what a deeper cut in the river could mean in allowing more salt water to push farther upstream, and in greater quantities. A deeper channel also could create new issues for Brunswick County beach towns near the mouth of the Cape Fear, which already blame the shipping channel for some of their beach and shoreline erosion woes.

"We just want to make sure this project makes sense, from both economic and environmental perspectives," Allen said.

Clark said the ports is prepared to address any questions raised by the study and looks forward to working with local officials and parties to mitigate their concerns.

"From a ports standpoint, we want to ensure we are a good neighbor," he said.

*Reporter Gareth McGrath can be reached at [GMcGrath@Gannett.com](mailto:GMcGrath@Gannett.com) or @GarethMcGrathSN on Twitter. This story was produced with financial support from 1Earth Fund and the Prentice Foundation. The USA TODAY Network maintains full editorial control of the work.*

# U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate proposal to deepen harbor



Cape Fear River (WECT)

By [WECT Staff](#)

Published: Mar. 10, 2023 at 11:28 AM EST



WILMINGTON, N.C. (WECT) - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working on an approximately \$8.5 million evaluation of technical, policy and legal concerns surrounding a potential deepening of the Wilmington harbor.

According to the Corps, the NC State Ports Authority completed a feasibility study on the proposal in 2020, and it was conditionally authorized by Congress under Section 403 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020.

One of the conditions of that authorization was for the Corps to evaluate technical, policy and legal concerns brought up by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to make sure the study follows federal laws and regulations. An environmental review process will also be part of the evaluation.

"This project is a top priority in our district, and we value this great partnership with the Port," said Col. Benjamin Bennett, Commander of Wilmington District. "We recognize the importance of early, often, and meaningful public engagement during our evaluation process. Therefore, we will offer ample opportunity for the public to express ideas and concerns."

This evaluation will be done via a cost-share agreement with the NC State Ports Authority and is expected to be done over the course of about four years. The Wilmington District will report its findings back to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil works after the evaluation is done.

Back in 2019 before the bill passed, the Corps published a notice of intent to make a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the feasibility study for the project. With that bill now directing the Corps to evaluate the project, the Corps is withdrawing this notice.

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## Global Report Recognizes Port Of Wilmington's Operations

BY JENNY CALLISON, POSTED MAY 23, 2023

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The Port of Wilmington landed in the top spot among all ports in the U.S. and Canada in the 2022 Container Port Performance Index. (File photo)

A report card of sorts is out, and the Port of Wilmington has earned high marks.

A 2022 technical report, the Container Port Performance Index (CPPI), looks at data from 348 container ports around the world and compares them on the basis of productivity. On the global scale, Wilmington ranks 44th. Among all ports in the U.S. and Canada, it comes out on top.

“The way they measure productivity is based on the amount of time vessels spend in port to complete their workload,” N.C. Ports spokesperson Elly Cosgrove said Tuesday.

From 2021 to 2022, the Port of Wilmington moved up three spots on the rankings of North American ports, leapfrogging the Port of Virginia, the Port of Miami and the Port of Halifax, Nova Scotia, which led the 2021 list. On the global list, Wilmington moved up five spots from its 2021 ranking of 49th.

“This latest achievement is a testament to the dedication of all North Carolina Ports employees and stakeholders and their unwavering commitment to keeping goods and cargo moving,” said Brian Clark, executive director of the N.C. State Ports Authority, in a news release. “It is also proof that our critical infrastructure improvements have allowed us to maintain our best-in-class vessel productivity, exceed industry standards, and deliver on our mission to enhance the economy of North Carolina.”

These capital investments would not have been possible without the support of partners at the local, state and federal levels, as well as funding from the North Carolina General Assembly, Clark added.

That support has led to significant investments over the past five years, during which time N.C. Ports has invested more than \$356 million in

infrastructure improvement projects at its facilities, including a new container gate complex, container yard expansion, turning basin expansion and harbor deepening, and berth renovation and expansion.

“These enhancements allow N.C. Ports to maintain top-tier landside and waterside efficiencies and better meet the needs of an increasing customer base,” Clark said in the release.

Enhanced storage capabilities add to the port's efficiencies as well, Cosgrove said.

“We are in the process of expanding our ‘Reefer Yard,’ which are the racks that store refrigerated containers,” she said. “We are really excited that this line of business is growing as it helps us better support the state's agricultural stakeholders as North Carolina Ports has become a critical gateway for the movement of refrigerated cargoes. This project is another key component of N.C. Ports' capital improvement plan aimed at enhancing the efficiency at the Port of Wilmington.”

The N.C. State Ports Authority had forecast that container business would make up 47% of the Port of Wilmington's revenue and 35% of the total NCSPA's revenue for FY 2023, which ends June 30. Its projections for FY 2024 show container business making up 50% of Wilmington's and 37% of the total NCSPA budgeted revenue, Cosgrove said. This shipping segment continues to be very strong.

This is the third year that the World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence have teamed up to analyze how container ports compare in terms of efficiency. The global Container Port Performance Index is designed to be a reference point for key stakeholders in the global economy – from national governments to operators of supply chain services – according to the report. It not only compares ports and recognizes the quality of each one's performance, but also identifies gaps in performance and opportunities to improve.

The data used to compile the CPPI is from S&P Global's Port Performance Program, launched in 2009. The program includes 10 of the world's largest liner shipping companies that collectively operate close to 80% of global fleet capacity.

“With consistent, best-in-class productivity and service levels, more industry sectors are taking advantage of the Port of Wilmington's role in their supply chains,” Hans Bean, the N.C. State Ports Authority's chief commercial officer, said in the release. “They do it both to enhance their overall logistics performance and to optimize networks for future growth.”

NOTE: This version of the story adds information about the percentage of the Port of Wilmington's revenues container cargo represents. It also corrects Hans Bean's title to “chief commercial officer.”

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**Mike Sauter**

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# Army Corps of Engineers to hold public open house to discuss deepening of Wilmington harbor



According to the project's website, the project would deepen the main channel to 47 feet from the current 42 feet.

By WECT Staff

Published: May. 30, 2023 at 2:47 PM EDT



WILMINGTON, N.C. (WECT) - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wilmington District will conduct a public comment period and will host a public open house to discuss the latest on a project that would deepen the Wilmington harbor.

The public open house will be held Tuesday, June 13, at 4 p.m. at Cape Fear Community College's Union Station Building.

Open House Schedule:

- Welcome, introduction video, and sign in 4-4:30 p.m.
- Open house begins 4:30-7p.m.

During the open house:

- Presentation by USACE 4:30-5 p.m.
- Repeat Presentation by USACE 6-6:30 p.m.

"The meeting will offer an opportunity for participants to visit various stations to engage with members of our team and learn about the project," a news release states. "The public will be given opportunities to submit comments at the public meeting and provided information on how to engage and provide comments throughout the project."

The public comment period runs through June 30, 2023.

[The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working on an approximately \\$8.5 million evaluation](#) of technical, policy and legal concerns surrounding a potential deepening of the Wilmington harbor.

According to the project's [website](#), the project would deepen the main channel to 47 feet from the current 42 feet.

"Since the last major channel improvements completed by the Corps of Engineers through the Wilmington Harbor 96 Act Deepening (entrance channel from 40' to 44', and from 38' to 42' main channel) took place over the period 2000-2013, the Port of Wilmington has experienced growth in cargo volume and in the size of vessels calling at the port," the website states.

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# USACE Wilmington to hold a public open house for the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement

USACE WILMINGTON

Published May 30, 2023

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**WILMINGTON, N.C.** --WILMINGTON, N.C. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District is conducting a public comment period through 30 June 2023 and will host a public open house on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 4:00 PM at Cape Fear Community College, Union Station Building, 502 N Front St. Wilmington, NC 28401.

The meeting will offer an opportunity for participants to visit various stations to engage with members of our team and learn about the project. The public will be given opportunities to submit comments at the public meeting and provided information on how to engage and provide comments throughout the project.

### Open House Schedule:

- Welcome, introduction video, and sign in.....4:00-4:30pm
- Open house begins..... 4:30-7:00pm

### During the open house:

- Presentation by USACE.....4:30-5:00pm
- Repeat Presentation by USACE..... 6:00-6:30pm

We are partnering with the North Carolina State Ports Authority for the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We are committed to meaningful engagements with the public as early and often as possible and look forward to making that happen. For additional information about the project and to learn more about how to submit comments, please visit our website: <https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

Please provide Early Scoping Public Comments by June 30, 2023.

--30--

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS –WILMINGTON DISTRICT**  
**69 DARLINGTON AVE, WILMINGTON, N.C. 28403**  
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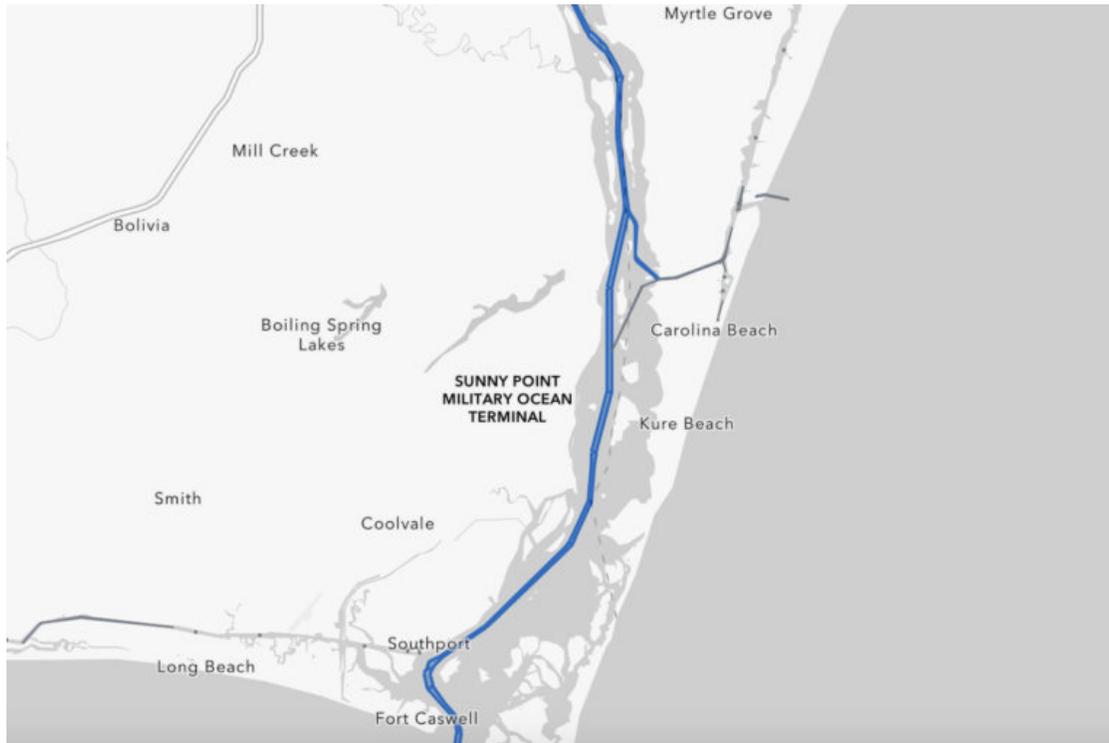
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910-251-4626

Release no. 23-004

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## Public open house scheduled for Wilmington harbor project, comment period open

By Port City Daily Staff May 31, 2023



*The project scope of proposed Wilmington harbor improvements. (Courtesy USACE)*

WILMINGTON – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District is conducting a public comment period through June 30 and will host a public open house on June 13.

USACE, in partnership with the North Carolina State Ports Authority, is conducting an evaluation of technical and policy concerns in improvements to the Wilmington harbor, including deepening the main channel from 42 feet to 47 feet. The report and environmental impact statement is estimated to cost \$8.5 million with an anticipated timeline of four years.

Community members can submit public comments on the project's [web page](#) through June 30.

Building – will allow the public to visit various stations, ask questions and learn more about the project. Upon arrival, participants will view an introduction video with the open house following at 4:30 p.m. During the event, USACE will give presentations at 4:30 p.m. and a repeat presentation at 6 p.m.

---

*Tips or concerns? Email [info@portcitydaily.com](mailto:info@portcitydaily.com)*

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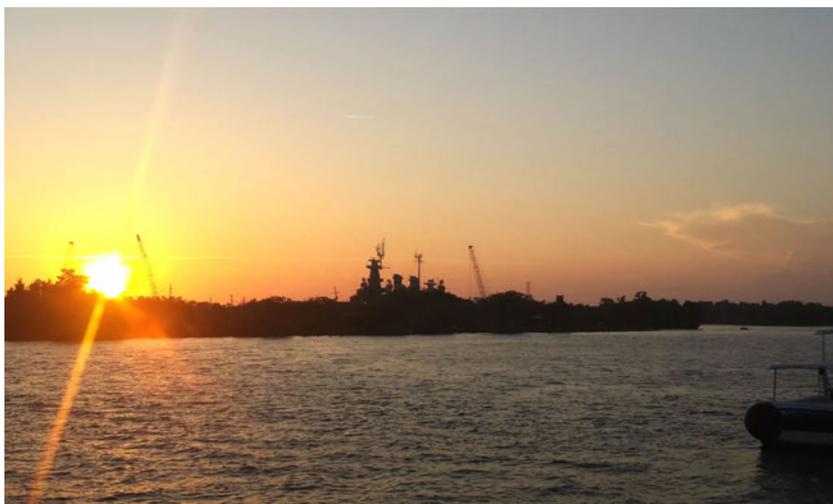
# Here's the latest on the project to deepen the Wilmington harbor

WHQR | By **Grace Vitaglione**

Published June 1, 2023 at 2:47 PM EDT



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Vince Winkel / WHQR

The NC Ports Authority proposed to deepen the Wilmington Harbor from 42 feet to 47 feet.

## The US Army Corps of Engineers will hold an open house later this month to provide more information about the proposed project.

Wilmington harbor was deepened several times over the last century. The North Carolina ports authority wants to do it again – from 42 feet to 47 feet – to bring in larger cargo ships.



storm surge.

"It makes it easier for the water to move in and out, and so with a storm driving water up the Cape Fear, it can more easily come up the Cape Fear," he said.

Shew said another inch of flooding can be significant, especially when taking rising sea levels into account.

Dredging can also lead to a loss of marshland. Shew said some might suggest adding more marshland elsewhere in the Cape Fear area – but he said different areas have different ecosystems, so it's not always a comparable replacement.

The evaluation costs around \$8.5 million, a price tag that USACE and the NC Ports Authority are splitting.

The public open house to learn more about the project will be June 13, 4:00 PM at Cape Fear Community College.

The USACE will also have three public comment periods in May to June 2023, Fall 2024, and Fall 2025.

The USACE will release a draft environmental impact statement in the fall of 2025 and send a finalized version to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works in 2027.

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## Grace Vitaglione

Grace is a multimedia journalist recently graduated from American University. She's attracted to issues of inequity and her reporting has spanned racial disparities in healthcare, immigration detention and college culture. In the past, she's investigated ICE detainee deaths at the Investigative Reporting Workshop, worked on an award-winning investigative podcast, and produced student-led video stories.

[See stories by Grace Vitaglione](#)

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## Advocates cite risks of planned shipping channel project

06/06/2023 by [Trista Talton](https://coastalreview.org/author/tristatalton/) (<https://coastalreview.org/author/tristatalton/>)



A NeoPanamax ship, which describes ships of roughly 1,200 feet in length, about a 168-foot beam and drawing about 50 feet with a cargo capacity of about 120,000 tons — the general size limits for ships transiting the Panama Canal since 2016 — arrives at the North Carolina Port of Wilmington in April 2019, the third such vessel to call at the port. Photo: State Ports Authority

WILMINGTON — North Carolina's largest river basin faces more than its fair share of threats, advocates say.

The Cape Fear River watershed is the most industrialized in the state. Swine and poultry factory farms, paper and wood pellet mills, chemical plants, yet-to-be cleaned coal ash ponds, countless small dams and several large dams, feed and textile mills, explosive commercial and residential development, and climate change endanger this river basin of about 9,000 square miles and home to about 2 million people.

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Environmentalists and river advocates are taking aim at what they consider to be the latest threat to the lower Cape Fear River — the proposed deepening and widening of the Wilmington Harbor.

Attendees at Cape Fear River Watch (<https://capefearriverwatch.org/>)'s second annual State of the River forum Thursday were urged to consider the potential impacts to the river's habitat, the species that rely on that habitat and the communities and cultural resources that line the river's banks.

The N.C. State Ports Authority (<https://ncports.com/>)'s plan to make room for larger container ships to travel 26 miles from the river's mouth at the Atlantic Ocean to the Wilmington port would likely change the water, sand and riverside communities, said Hannah Nelson, an associate attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center's Chapel Hill office.

"Now is really the perfect time to start thinking through the tough questions on this project," Nelson said to an audience of dozens gathered at the forum held in Cape Fear Community College's Union Station building in downtown Wilmington.

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## PBS North Carolina | State of Change

PBS North Carolina's **State of Change** initiative examines the impact of climate change on coastal and inland communities across the state and how communities

and individuals have responded with innovative solutions. **Learn more and watch digital shorts and climate portraits** (<http://pbsnc.org/stateofchange>).

The ports authority announced four years ago a proposal to deepen the harbor from 42 feet to 47 feet, widen it in areas by 100 feet up to 300 feet, and extend the ocean entrance to the river from 44 feet to 77 feet.

Those new depths and widths would allow the Wilmington port to remain competitive with other East Coast ports by making room for larger container ships coming from Asia, according to the state ports authority.

The changes would accommodate large vessels that can carry 14,000, 20-by-8-foot shipping containers that have been traveling through the Panama Canal since its expansion in 2016.

**Related: Open house on Wilmington Harbor project set for June 13 (<https://coastalreview.org/2023/05/open-house-on-wilmington-harbor-project-set-for-june-13/>)**

But making room for larger ships could exacerbate saltwater intrusion, a phenomenon already occurring with sea level rise, through to the Northeast Cape Fear River, Sturgeon Creek and Town Creek, Nelson said.

“We expect to see this increased salinity throughout the river system,” she said.

Increased salinity is worrisome, Nelson said, because saltwater encroachment will force species to either migrate or altogether cease to exist in the river, kill off freshwater plants and habitat and destroy wetlands, which are nature’s storm buffers.

The proposed project is also expected to change the river’s tidal range and increase the mean high water level throughout the channel because the project would reduce the speed at which the water flows, she said.

Millions of cubic yards of sand will have to be removed, destroying nearly 1,000 acres of soft-bottom habitat and converting that habitat into deepwater habitat. Many of those acres make up primary nursing area for juvenile fish, Nelson said.

“If we dig all of that up, it can no longer be suitable for those young fish,” she said.

Sea turtles, including endangered loggerheads, rest and forage on the floor of the harbor. Bigger ships could increase erosion rates on the river banks, threatening recreational use of the river, shorebird habitat, communities, including environmental justice communities, and cultural resources.

There’s also concern that the sand that would be moved during construction of the proposed project could be laden with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, which are human-made chemicals that have contaminated the river, the raw drinking water source for tens of thousands of people in the region, for decades.

Other possible impacts to communities on both sides of the harbor are increased vehicle traffic transporting containers, noise and land development.

“We’ve seen this play out in our neighboring states,” Nelson said.

Land in both Georgia and South Carolina on either side of the Savannah Harbor has experience a building boom of industrial warehouses since that harbor’s expansion project wrapped last year.

Nelson said that between 2019 and 2022, 77 warehouses of various sizes were built in the area around the expansion.

“These are just a couple of the environmental impacts that could happen with this project,” she said. “We don’t have to continue down the path of deepening and deepening and deepening because that’s what we’ve already done.”

The project received authorization under the Water Resources Development Act in late 2020.

Nonfederal-sponsored projects, such as those led by states or state agencies like the ports authority, have to get federal authorization before moving forward. In order to receive federal funds, projects must undergo an environmental assessment known as the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA process, which is headed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps is partnering with the ports authority to develop the Wilmington Harbor Clean Water Action Section 403 letter report and environmental impact statement, or EIS, which are estimated to cost \$8.5 million and be completed in four years.

The public will have an opportunity to speak with Corps representatives submit comments at an [open house next week](https://coastalreview.org/2023/05/open-house-on-wilmington-harbor-project-set-for-june-13/) (<https://coastalreview.org/2023/05/open-house-on-wilmington-harbor-project-set-for-june-13/>) hosted by the Corps' Wilmington District. Public comments will be accepted through June 30.

The open house is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. June 13 in the Union Station building, 502 N. Front St.

For more information about the project and to submit comments visit <https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/> (<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>)

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## About Trista Talton

Trista Talton joined Coastal Review as staff writer Feb. 1, 2022, but she has covered coastal issues for us since our publication's inception. She is a native North Carolinian and graduate of Appalachian State University. Her career as a journalist spans more than 20 years, most of which has been reporting on issues in southeastern North Carolina. Her reporting experience includes more than 10 years of covering the military, including an embed with Marines in Kuwait leading up to the start of the war in Iraq in 2003, time in New Orleans with North Carolina National Guardsmen in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and offshore patrols of New York and New Jersey aboard a Coast Guard cutter following the Sept. 11 attacks. She lives with her husband and two sons in Jacksonville.

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# US Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District asking for public comment on Wilmington Harbor 403 enhancement project



US Army Corps Engineers Wilmington Department asks for public comment on Wilmington Harbor 403 enhancement project

By [Emma Dollenmayer](#)

Published: Jun. 13, 2023 at 11:27 PM EDT



WILMINGTON, N.C. (WECT) - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is asking for public comment regarding the [Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact statement](#).

The enhancement project would deepen the Wilmington harbor from 42 feet to 47. This expansion comes as Wilmington continues to experience more growth in cargo volume and in the size of vessels at the port.

USACE is taking comments regarding this expansion during its early scoping period, which runs from May 30 to June 30.

The corps is asking the public to submit questions, suggestions and concerns on the project after the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) noted technical and policy concerns, which resulted in the conditional authorization of the project from Congress.

Col. Benjamin Bennett, commander of the Wilmington District, says the three aspects the project was asked to further develop were the environmental, economic and engineering impact.

Mayor Bob Bloszinsky of Kure Beach says the negatives of the environmental impact, despite the positive economic one, is what concerns him most.

"We have been concerned for quite a while on the interaction of potential surface water and the groundwater which we use from the Castle Hayne aquifer. A lot of the communities in the area use it, and we have a concern of potential contaminants, either from salinity or from the river that could actually get in the aquifer and create issues for our major water supply," said Bloszinsky.

"The Corps will use scoping comments to formulate and refine alternatives," according to a document provided by USACE. "The 403 effort will analyze the feasibility, benefits, costs and environmental impacts [of the project] of a range of alternatives, including the 'no action' alternative. For an improvement plan to be feasible, the benefits must exceed the costs and the project must be acceptable."

Public comments will not be answered individually, but “the Corps will consider each comment during the draft EIS,” according to the document.

The Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement are estimated to cost \$8.5M with an anticipated timeline of four years.

To comment on the project and provide feedback, visit the [Public Comment tab](#) on Wilmington Harbor’s 403 website, send an [email](#) or mail a statement to Wilmington Harbor 403, 69 Darlington Avenue, Wilmington, NC 28403.

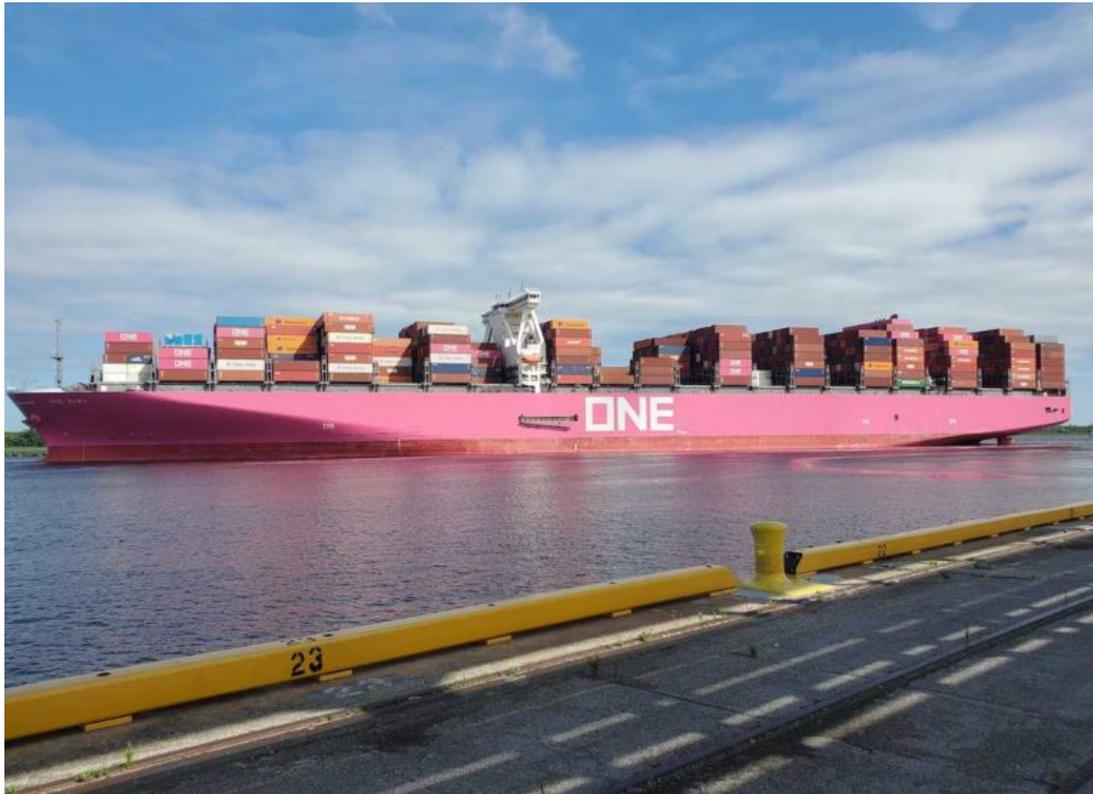
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## Wilmington harbor deepening enters early scoping period, community raises environmental concerns

By [Brenna Flanagan](#) June 14, 2023



*USACE is exploring the feasibility of deepening the Wilmington harbor from 42 feet to 47 feet, as well as expanding the entrance channel, located between Fort Caswell and Bald Head Island. (Port City Daily/file photo)*

WILMINGTON – The years-long process analyzing the impact of deepening the Wilmington harbor and expanding its entrance is underway.

**READ MORE: [USACE reverses course again to use Masonboro Inlet for WB dredge under emergency exception](#)**

The United States Army Corps of Engineers held its first public feedback event on Tuesday. The federal agency is charged with delivering a report and environmental impact statement on the proposed plan. USACE will also explore alternatives to the project and their impacts in comparison to the harbor deepening.

between USACE Wilmington District and the North Carolina State Ports Authority. The latter submitted its own feasibility study for the expansion in 2019; based on that, Congress authorized the project in 2020 on the condition that the economic, environmental impacts and alternatives be explored, and a mitigation plan be submitted.

The current proposal is to deepen the channel from 42 feet to 47 feet and expand the entrance channel, located between Fort Caswell and Bald Head Island. The changes will allow for the accommodation of larger container ships to navigate the harbor.

The harbor was last deepened from 2000 to 2013 from 38 feet. Since then, container ships increased in size, allowing more cargo to be carried in fewer trips. USACE data shows ship size has increased, along with the drafts they pull, calling for deeper channels.

The project would allow the port to keep pace with several ports along the East Coast, many of whom have upgraded their harbors in recent years, and maintain its presence as a port-of-call for major containership services. To be able to accommodate growing fleets, the Port of Wilmington deepening could maintain efficiency in operation and attract more import and export business.

The Wilmington harbor is one of two deep-water ports in North Carolina, the other located in Morehead City. Almost \$13 billion is contributed to the [state's economy](#) through the Port of Wilmington's transportation of goods, while Morehead City's contributions are around \$2.5 billion.

According to the North Carolina Ports Authority, every billion dollars represents 5,696 jobs in the state, with the agency supporting 87,700 jobs – all of which could increase with the expansion.

As acknowledged by the USACE team at Tuesday's meeting, along with others in the community, the upgrade has to be levied with any negative environmental, economic, cultural and social impacts. Some were discussed at Cape Fear River Watch's State of the River event earlier this month.

"At some point, we need to pause in that competition and we need to ask ourselves: Do we truly need a deep water port along every harbor in the southeast?" Hannah

event.

Bringing in larger ships with more containers could increase on-land vehicular traffic, as well as industrial development along the river's banks – land also vied by housing projects.

She explained one of the biggest impacts will be changes to the tidal range and salinity of Cape Fear River. By deepening the channel, the SELC estimates an increase in the mean water level, which in turn increases the water level and high and low tide. Nelson said these changes would be most visible in downtown Wilmington.

The city is located 36 feet above sea level and prone to flooding during storms. According to a study from University of Central Florida researcher and professor Thomas Wahl, the City of Wilmington had the most extreme tidal range out of all other locations studied.

Per [the study](#), the city's tidal range has increased by approximately 0.38 meters since 1936 mainly due to extensive dredging, channel deepening, and associated reduction of hydraulic drag.

The increase in mean water level, and therefore flooding, caused by another channel deepening will also exacerbate the effects of climate change. According to data from NOAA, sea levels are expected to rise 10 to 18 inches by 2050, and 17 to 79 inches in the next hundred years.

The deepening and expansion of the harbor entrance to allow for easier ship navigation could also affect the salinity of the water. When saltwater and freshwater meet, as it does in the Wilmington harbor, it creates an estuary, an ecologically diverse area for marine life.

As Nelson explained, the deepening would disrupt 1,000 acres of soft-bottom habitat and convert it to deep-water habitat – a drastic change for the plants and animals accustomed to the harbor's current state. As a result, animals may have to migrate, and the marine life that can't move or adjust might cease to exist in the area – and that's if they survive the dredge.

for [renourishment](#) – runs the risk of catching animals along the way. This could be especially detrimental to endangered species that use the harbor, such as loggerhead sea turtles.

The public has already begun to submit concerns to USACE.

Thomas Scheetz, a project engineer, said he was anxious about exacerbating erosion along the Southport waterfront.

“The increased ship traffic has & will negatively impact the marsh habitat, cause erosion to the shoreline, & potentially damage private & public bulkheads,” Scheetz wrote on the [project’s website](#).

An unidentified commenter affiliated with UNCW’s Department of Physics and Physical Oceanography said impacts from the previous deepening should be analyzed, something the commenter said he could not find evidence of.

“The thing that concerns me about the harbor deepening is that there does not seem to be a plan to continuously monitor the river and its environment before, during and after the project,” the commenter wrote. “If you decide the deepening will have a given set of impacts, what will be done to measure them and verify (or not) your projections?”

According to the proposed project timeline, USACE will gather public comment until June 30 as it completes its scoping period. From there, the agency will develop alternatives and file its notice of intent in fall of 2024, where another 30-day public comment period will open.

USACE will use the feedback to refine alternatives, complete an impact analysis and draft an environmental impact statement, to be revealed in the fall or winter of 2025. A 45-day public comment period will commence thereafter, before USACE will submit its final report in the fall of 2026.

A final decision on the project will be made by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works).

*[Ed. Note: A previous version of this article attributed a public comment to Kurt Scheetz; the article has been updated to reflect his son, Thomas Scheetz, made the*

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Reach journalist Brenna Flanagan at [brenna@localdailymedia.com](mailto:brenna@localdailymedia.com)

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June 21, 2023  
USACE LinkedIn Page



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Follow the link to view details of our news release on the upcoming public open house regarding the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter and Environmental Impact Statement.

<https://lnkd.in/gYDFJAmA>

13 2 reposts

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Last week the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wilmington hosted a public open house regarding the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement. This public open house allowed participants to visit various stations to engage with our team members and learn about the project. The public was given opportunities to submit comments at the open house and information on engaging and providing comments throughout the project. #team #project #environmental #engineers

13

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**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District** June 21 · 🌐

Last week the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wilmington hosted a public open house regarding the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement. This public open house allowed participants to visit various stations to engage with our team members and learn about the project. The public was given opportunities to submit comments at the open house and information on engaging and providing comments throughout the project.

2

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**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District**  
June 26 · 🌐

Thank you all for the comments already received regarding the 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement. The comment period will close June 30, 2023, so make sure to get your comments in by the end of this week!

You can submit comments via

Email: [WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil](mailto:WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil)

Mail: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Ave, Wilmington, NC, 28403... [See more](#)

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Email: [WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil](mailto:WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil)

Mail: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Ave, Wilmington, NC, 28403

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Reactions



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 Add a comment...

June 26, 2023  
USACE X Page (Formally Known as Twitter)



**Wilmington District**  
[@USACEWilmington](#)

Thank you all for the comments already received regarding the 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement. The comment period will close June 30, 2023, so make sure to get your comments in by the end of this week! See the tweet below for ways to submit comments 📌



9:34 AM · Jun 26, 2023 · 55 Views

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Home › News & Politics › Business

## Former engineer sends warning to USACE on Wilmington harbor deepening

By [Brenna Flanagan](#) July 20, 2023



*A former engineer at the United States Army Corps of Engineers is hoping to help his former employer realize the environmental impacts of deepening the Port of Wilmington in a recently penned letter. (Port City Daily/Amy Passaretti Willis)*

WILMINGTON – A former engineer at the United States Army Corps of Engineers is hoping to help his former employer realize the environmental impacts of deepening the Port of Wilmington in a recently penned letter.

**READ MORE:** [Wilmington harbor deepening enters early scoping period, community raises environmental concerns](#)

Having worked in several USACE districts (albeit not Wilmington), Brayton Willis retired 13 years ago as a project engineer. He sent a letter, shared with Port City Daily, to the federal agency on June 29 suggesting the project combined with the effects of climate change might outweigh the economic benefit.

and former secretary of the North Carolina NAACP, to assess the potential expansion.

The proposal is to deepen the channel from 42 feet to 47 feet and extend its entrance, located between Fort Caswell and Bald Head Island. The changes will allow for the accommodation of larger container ships to navigate the harbor, thus improving the economic capacity of the port and its competitive standing among others along the Atlantic coast.

Exploring a potential expansion has been in the works since 2019, when the North Carolina State Ports Authority prepared a 203 report, reviewed by the assistant secretary of the Army, civil works. Congress authorized the project in 2020 on the condition that USACE undertake a review of the effects of the deepening as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

USACE's Wilmington District is now in the process of developing an environmental impact statement and preparing a report that addresses the comments on the 203 report. As a first phase, USACE launched the project's early scoping period and public comment in June.

The road to a final report is scheduled to take three years and cost \$8 million, split between USACE Wilmington District and the North Carolina State Ports Authority.

From there, USACE is tasked with putting together a report on the economic and environmental impacts, alternatives to deepening the harbor, and a mitigation plan.

"The USACE [Environmental Operating Principles] rightly emphasize the need to preserve and protect critical natural resources, such as clean air, clean water, and healthy ecosystems for future generations," Willis writes in his letter.

"Unfortunately, for many years, the pursuit of economic prosperity has been at the expense of these resources."

Based on the 203 report, Willis urged USACE to fully consider the cumulative effects of another harbor dredge coupled with rising sea levels, stronger storms, decreased biodiversity and more. He feared these effects were not being given as much credence as the economic potential and need to compete with other port cities.

located in Morehead City. Almost \$15 billion is contributed to the [state's economy](#) through the Port of Wilmington's transportation of goods. According to the North Carolina State Ports Authority, every billion dollars represents 5,696 jobs in the state, with the agency supporting 88,200 jobs – all of which could increase with the harbor deepening.

But Willis argued a financial burden would also be placed on taxpayers to fund mitigation projects to combat flooding, storm damage and other problems associated with a warming planet. According to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, sea levels are expected to rise 10 to 18 inches by 2050, and 17 to 79 inches in the next hundred years – which local municipalities will have to address.

Willis pointed out Boston, his hometown, spends millions protecting infrastructure lining the harbor; the city just released a [\\$1.2 billion resiliency plan](#) to prepare it for the rising seas.

At the State of the River event in June, Hannah Nelson, associate attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center, explained one of the biggest impacts of deepening the harbor will be changes to the tidal range and salinity of Cape Fear River. By deepening the channel, the SELC estimates an increase in the mean water level, which in turn increases the water level and high and low tides. Nelson said these changes would be most visible in downtown Wilmington, which already has a [more extreme tidal range](#) than average.

“Risk and uncertainty analysis is critical to understanding for our Congress and for our citizens, to understand what the trade-offs are; what are we gonna give up if we want to deepen Cape Fear? And what is that going to look like down the road?” Willis asked speaking with PCD.

USACE is currently analyzing feedback gleaned during public comment, including Willis' statements, to help shape how it analyzes community consequences to be documented in the environmental impact statement. According to USACE spokesperson Jed Cayton, the agency will not respond to comments individually, but another feedback opportunity will be available after USACE delivers a draft statement in fall 2025.

what USACE is looking at other than the proposed plan or no action.

However, Willis told Port City Daily he thinks USACE should analyze moving the port's operations to Southport, or even Morehead City, as alternatives.

"If, for instance, Southport was a reasonable alternative, then you would not have to dredge the 26 miles up the Cape Fear River, and potentially allow that river to start to heal itself," Willis said.

Relocating or building a new container terminal at Southport was actually explored by USACE in the 2000s, citing a 600-acre tract near the Sunny Point Ocean Terminal. According to the 203 report, USACE concluded doing so would not substantially reduce channel improvement costs because existing water depths are shallow.

The overall cost for container terminal development at Southport was estimated to be \$2.5 billion in 2008. In addition, the 2008 report noted the environmental impact of dredging a deepwater access channel to Southport could be substantially larger than the impact of deepening the existing channel to Wilmington.

Southport residents were also resistant to the port. A nonprofit called [No Port Southport](#) banded in 2008 to fight the project. Two years later, the North Carolina State Ports Authority put the project on hold due to waning political support both locally and in the General Assembly. It was also determined the best mode of action would be to improve the state's existing ports rather than construct a new one.

Still, Willis claimed the relocation option was not given adequate consideration. In his letter, he lists 12 benefits of relocation, including:

- Decreased saltwater intrusion and upstream flooding
- Ability to leverage the Sunny Point rail system
- Reduce ship travel time and increase traffic
- Reduce the risk of large container ship accidents in the Cape Fear River
- Use the larger amount of land available in Brunswick County

Cayton said the Wilmington district is currently in the process of developing reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS, though did not confirm whether

scoping may be used to help refine the alternatives evaluated.

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Reach journalist Brenna Flanagan at [brenna@localdailymedia.com](mailto:brenna@localdailymedia.com)

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# Open house on Wilmington Harbor project set for June 13

05/30/2023 by Staff Report (<https://coastalreview.org/author/staffreport/>)



A cargo ship departs the North Carolina Port of Wilmington. Photo: State Ports Authority

A proposed project to widen and deepen the Wilmington Harbor will be presented by the Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District at an open house next month.

During the June 13 open house, the public may speak with Corps staff who will be at different stations to talk about the project.

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The open house will be held at Cape Fear Community College's Union Station Building, 502 N. Front St., Wilmington.

The North Carolina State Ports Authority wants to deepen the main shipping channel in the Cape Fear River from 42 feet to 47 feet and the ocean entrance to the river from 44 feet to 47 feet. It also seeks to widen the channel in multiple areas.

The proposed project is to make room for larger container ships coming to the East Coast from Asia, which would allow the Wilmington port to remain competitive with other East Coast ports, according to the ports authority.

The open house will begin at 4 p.m. with an introduction video following by two, back-to-back 30-minute presentations about the proposed project. The first presentation will be held from 4:30 p.m.-5 p.m. with a repeat representation to follow from 6 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



(<https://www.pbsnc.org/events/>)

### PBS North Carolina | State of Change

PBS North Carolina's **State of Change** initiative examines the impact of climate change on coastal and inland communities across the state and how communities

and individuals have responded with innovative solutions. **Learn more and watch digital shorts and climate portraits (<http://pbsnc.org/stateofchange>).**

The Corps is partnering with the ports authority to develop the Wilmington Harbor Clean Water Act Section 403 (<https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/clean-water-act-section-403-ocean-discharge-criteria>) letter report and environmental impact statement, or EIS, which are estimated to cost \$8.5 million and be completed in four years.

Various groups, including the Brunswick County Branch of the NAACP, have raised concerns about the proposed project's potential impacts to the environment, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, and environmental justice communities.

The Corps is accepting public comments at the open house and through June 30.

For more information about the project and to submit comments visit <https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/> (<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>)

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[./\(https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcoastalreview.org%2F2023%2F05%2Fopen-house-on-wilmington-harbor-project-set-for-june-13%2F&title=Open%20house%20on%20Wilmington%20Harbor%20project%20set%20for%20June%2013\)](https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcoastalreview.org%2F2023%2F05%2Fopen-house-on-wilmington-harbor-project-set-for-june-13%2F&title=Open%20house%20on%20Wilmington%20Harbor%20project%20set%20for%20June%2013)

## About Staff Report

The story was compiled by staff members of Coastal Review.



## **ATTACHMENT D**

Early Scoping Public Meeting Materials & Presentation Power Point



**Wilmington Harbor 403**  
**Letter Report & EIS**

# Welcome to the Public Scoping Meeting

## Meeting Format

4:00-4:30pm Welcome/ Sign in/ Video Introduction

4:30-5:00pm Presentation by USACE

4:30-7:00pm Open House with Themed Stations

6:00-6:30pm Repeated Presentation

### Public Meeting:

Submit a comment card at the public meeting

### E-Mail:

WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil

Please submit emailed comments by June 30, 2023

Scan the QR Code to access the Project Comment Tool



### Online:

Online comments may be made through the Public Comment Tool

The Public Comment Tool can be found on the project website:

<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

### Mail:

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403

Please submit mailed comments by June 30, 2023



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Wilmington District

**Early Scoping Public Comments by June 30, 2023**



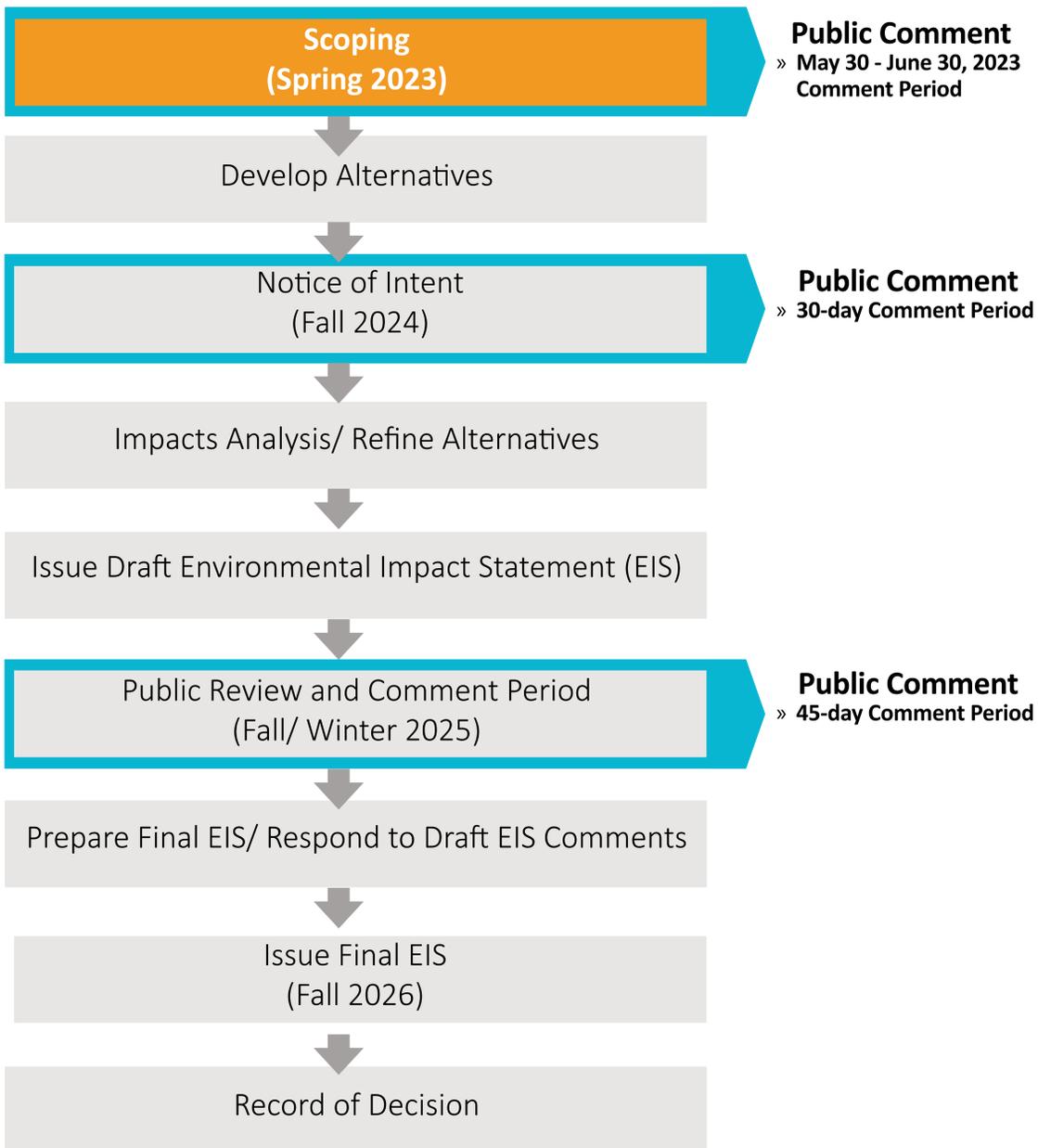
# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## The Corps Values Your Input!

Wilmington District is conducting an evaluation of technical and policy concerns noted in the Assistant Secretary of the Army's Civil Work's May 2020 Review Assessment of the North Carolina State Ports Authority's February 2020 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 203 Feasibility Study which resulted in conditional authorization in Section 403 of WRDA 2020 of deepening the main channel to 47 feet from the current depth of 42 feet.

**We Are Here**

### PROCESS TIMELINE



### PUBLIC INPUT

#### Questions to Consider when Providing input to USACE:

- How would the potential actions, including harbor deepening, impact you or resources that are important to you?
- What concerns do you have for you and your community?
- What resources should be evaluated in the Draft EIS?
- What are some potential project opportunities ? (e.g. mitigation opportunities, beneficial use of dredged material)
- Are there data, studies, reports that would support the analysis in the EIS?
- After review of the information provided, is there anything missing?

#### Tips for Comments:

- Detailed specific comments are the most useful:
- Propose detailed solutions/alternatives that can inform alternatives development
- Describe specific examples related to your concern/issue
- Provide details that explain why the issue is important
- Include relevant reports or studies

## WAYS TO COMMENT

### Public Meeting:

Submit a comment card at the public meeting

### E-Mail:

WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil

Please submit emailed comments by June 30, 2023

Scan the QR Code to access the Project Comment Tool



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Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403

Please submit mailed comments by June 30, 2023

**Early Scoping Public Comments by June 30, 2023**



# BACKGROUND

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

North Carolina State Ports Authority NCSPA - Section 203 Feasibility Study (February 2020)	Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) ASA (CW) Review Assessment (May 2020)	Water Resources Development Act WRDA 2020 (December 2020)	Section 403 Letter Report & EIS (2022 - 2026)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted by the North Carolina State Ports Authority (NCSPA)</li> <li>Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986 allows non-Federal interests to conduct their own feasibility study</li> <li>Tentatively Selected Plan recommended deepening to 47 feet</li> <li>Submitted to the ASA(CW) in February 2020 for Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transmitted to Congress with unresolved comments including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reframe assumptions and screening of alternatives</li> <li>- Perform economic analysis using USACE methodology at multiple depths</li> <li>- Conduct National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis including supporting engineering modeling and appropriate sea level rise</li> <li>- Finalize a mitigation plan and a real estate plan</li> <li>- Conduct Independent External Peer Review</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congress authorized the navigation project, at a total cost of \$834,093,000 through Section 403 of Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2020</li> <li>WRDA 2020 included a condition that a final assessment address the concerns, recommendations, and conditions identified by the ASA (CW)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Wilmington District was tasked with addressing issues from the Review Assessment through a cost-share agreement with the NCSPA</li> <li>Products: Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)</li> </ul>

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING COMMENTS:

- » Why are harbor improvements at Wilmington needed?
- » Who would benefit from harbor improvements?
- » What else would need to change if the navigation channels are deepened?
- » How might this project impact you?
- » What should we consider when analyzing this information?

### WAYS TO COMMENT:

#### Mail:

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403

#### Email:

WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil

#### Public Comment Tool:

<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to access the Project Comment Tool



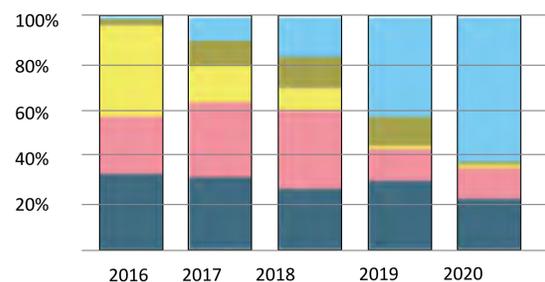
## CHANGING VESSEL FLEET

- The larger, more efficient vessel fleet is driving improvements at harbors worldwide as indicated through the percent of container tonnage by vessel class documented in the chart below.

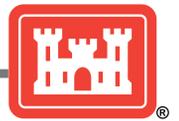
#### LEGEND

- PPX GEN III (2014)
- PPX GEN II (2000)
- PPX GEN I (1988)
- Panamax (1980)
- Sub Panamax (1956)

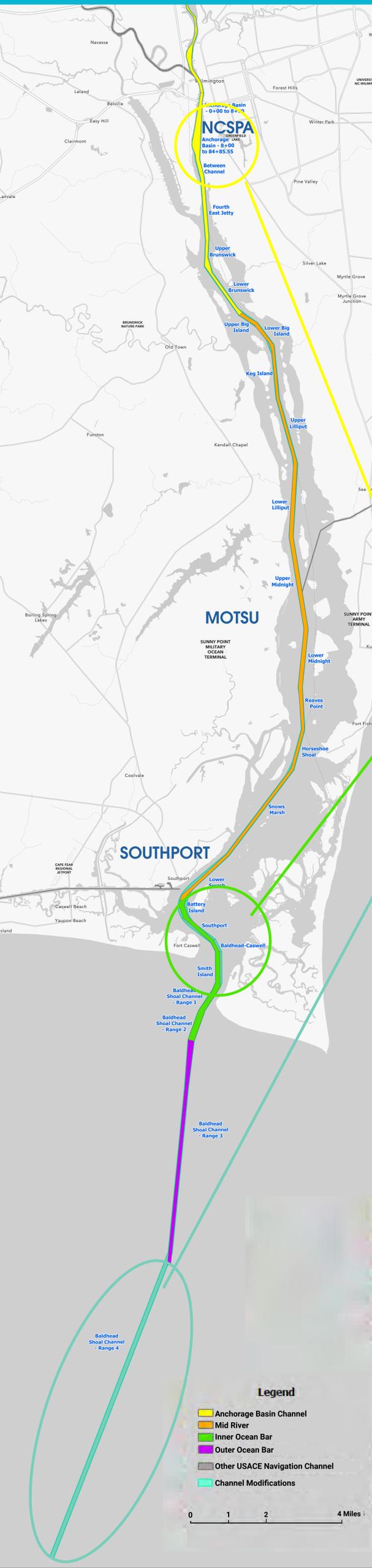
#### PERCENT CONTAINER TONNAGE BY VESSEL CLASS



POST PAN GEN III	POST PAN GEN II	POST PAN GEN I	PANAMAX	SUB PANAMAX																																																												
<table border="1"> <tr><td>Beam</td><td>144</td><td>168</td></tr> <tr><td>Draft</td><td></td><td>51.2</td></tr> <tr><td>LOA</td><td>Up to</td><td>1220</td></tr> <tr><td>TEUs</td><td>9,901</td><td>15,000</td></tr> </table> <p><b>New-Panamax (2014-)</b> 12,500 TEU</p> <p>366x49x15.2</p> <p>22 Bays</p> <p>10 6</p> <p>19-20 (New Panamax, or Ultra Post Panamax)</p>	Beam	144	168	Draft		51.2	LOA	Up to	1220	TEUs	9,901	15,000	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Beam</td><td>138</td><td>144</td></tr> <tr><td>Draft</td><td>39.4</td><td>49.2</td></tr> <tr><td>LOA</td><td>911</td><td>1,205</td></tr> <tr><td>TEUs</td><td>6,801</td><td>9,900</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Post-Panamax (2000-)</b> 6,000- 8,500 TEU</p> <p>340x43x14.5</p> <p>20 Bays</p> <p>9 6</p> <p>17 (Super Post-Panamax)</p>	Beam	138	144	Draft	39.4	49.2	LOA	911	1,205	TEUs	6,801	9,900	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Beam</td><td>106</td><td>138</td></tr> <tr><td>Draft</td><td>35.4</td><td>47.6</td></tr> <tr><td>LOA</td><td>661</td><td>1045</td></tr> <tr><td>TEUs</td><td>4,801</td><td>6,800</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Post-Panamax (1988-)</b> 4,000- 6,000 TEU</p> <p>300x40x13</p> <p>17 Bays</p> <p>9 5</p> <p>15 17 (Post-Panamax)</p>	Beam	106	138	Draft	35.4	47.6	LOA	661	1045	TEUs	4,801	6,800	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Beam</td><td>98</td><td>106</td></tr> <tr><td>Draft</td><td>30.8</td><td>44.8</td></tr> <tr><td>LOA</td><td>572</td><td>970</td></tr> <tr><td>TEUs</td><td>2,801</td><td>4,800</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Panamax (1980-)</b> 3,000- 3,400 TEU</p> <p>250x32x12.5</p> <p>6 5</p> <p>13</p> <p><b>Panamax Max (1985-)</b> 3,400- 4,500 TEU</p> <p>290x32x12.5</p> <p>17 Bays</p> <p>8 6</p>	Beam	98	106	Draft	30.8	44.8	LOA	572	970	TEUs	2,801	4,800	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Beam</td><td></td><td>98</td></tr> <tr><td>Draft</td><td>8.2</td><td>38.1</td></tr> <tr><td>LOA</td><td>222</td><td>813.3</td></tr> <tr><td>TEUs</td><td></td><td>2,800</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Early Containerships (1956-)</b> 500- 800 TEU</p> <p>137x17x9 meters (LOA - Beam - Draft)</p> <p>Containers across → 4</p> <p>6</p> <p><b>Fully Cellular (1970-)</b> 1,000- 2,500 TEU</p> <p>200x20x9</p> <p>Containers high on deck → 5</p> <p>10</p> <p>Containers high below deck → 4</p> <p>4</p>	Beam		98	Draft	8.2	38.1	LOA	222	813.3	TEUs		2,800
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# PLAN FORMULATION



## PURPOSE AND NEED

**PURPOSE:** Contribute to national economic development (NED) by addressing transportation inefficiencies for the forecasted vessel fleet, consistent with protecting the Nation's environment.

**NEED:** The proposed action is needed to address the constraints that contribute to inefficiencies in the existing navigation system's ability to safely serve forecasted vessel fleet and forecasted cargo types and volumes.

## OBJECTIVES

Contribute to national economic development to:

1. Reduce total costs to transport import and export cargo through Wilmington Harbor
2. To address physical constraints that induce navigation safety-related operating practices that contribute to delays, including limited passing and one-way traffic in some reaches



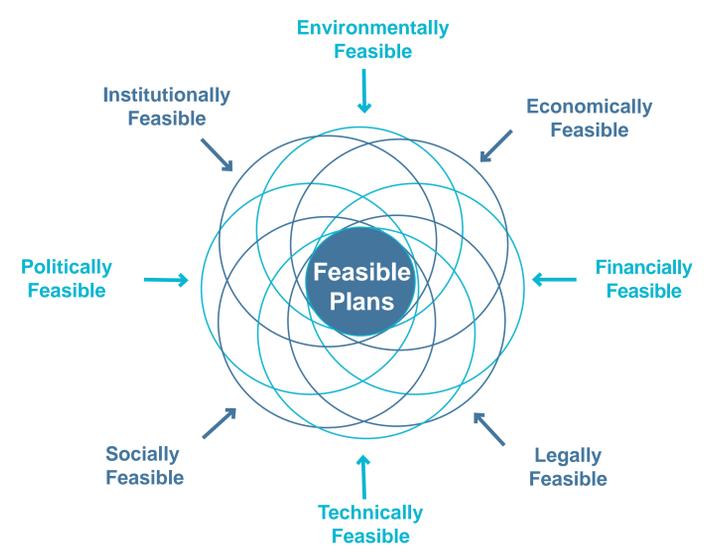
## MEASURES FROM THE SECTION 203 FEASIBILITY STUDY

Section 403 of WRDA 2020 authorized the deepening the main channel to 47 feet from the current depth of 42 feet. Additionally, wideners were proposed for the following reaches:

REACH	Existing Channel Width (FT)	203 TSP Channel Width (ft)
Anchorage Basin- 0+00 to 8+00	448-548	625- 1509
Anchorage Basin- 8+00 to 84+85	547- 1200	625- 1509
Between Channel	500-545	625
Battery Island	500-820	800-1300
Southport	500	800
Baldhead- Caswell	5000-646	800
Smith Island Channell	650-895	900
Baldhead Shoal- Reach 3	500	600- 900
Offshore Extension (New Reach 4)	NA	600

## SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES

- A range of action alternatives will be developed and compared to and contrasted with each other and with the "no action alternative"
- They will be screened terms of their relative:
  - » Effectiveness
  - » Efficiency
  - » Completeness
  - » Acceptability

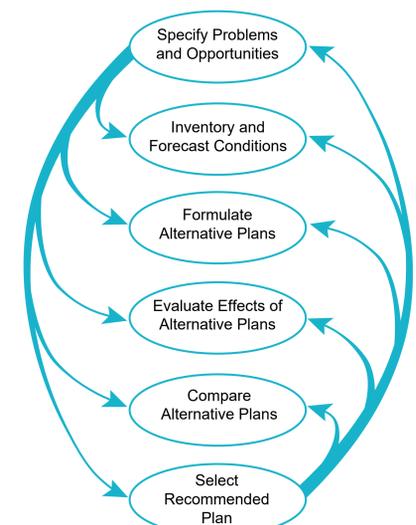


## HOW WILL THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVES BE IDENTIFIED?

- This analysis will examine a broad range of considerations:
  - » Construction, Operations and Maintenance costs
  - » Cost savings associated with navigation improvements
  - » Environmental impacts and mitigation
  - » Social impacts
  - » Cultural and historical resource impacts

## WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION?

- USACE will submit the final Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement to the ASA(CW).





# ECONOMICS

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING COMMENTS:

- » From an economics standpoint, what are concerns / impacts to your community?
- » What data or information should be evaluated?
- » What concerns do you have related to potential transportation impacts?
- » Do you have additional data or information?

### WAYS TO COMMENT:

#### Mail:

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403

#### Email:

WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil

#### Public Comment Tool:

<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

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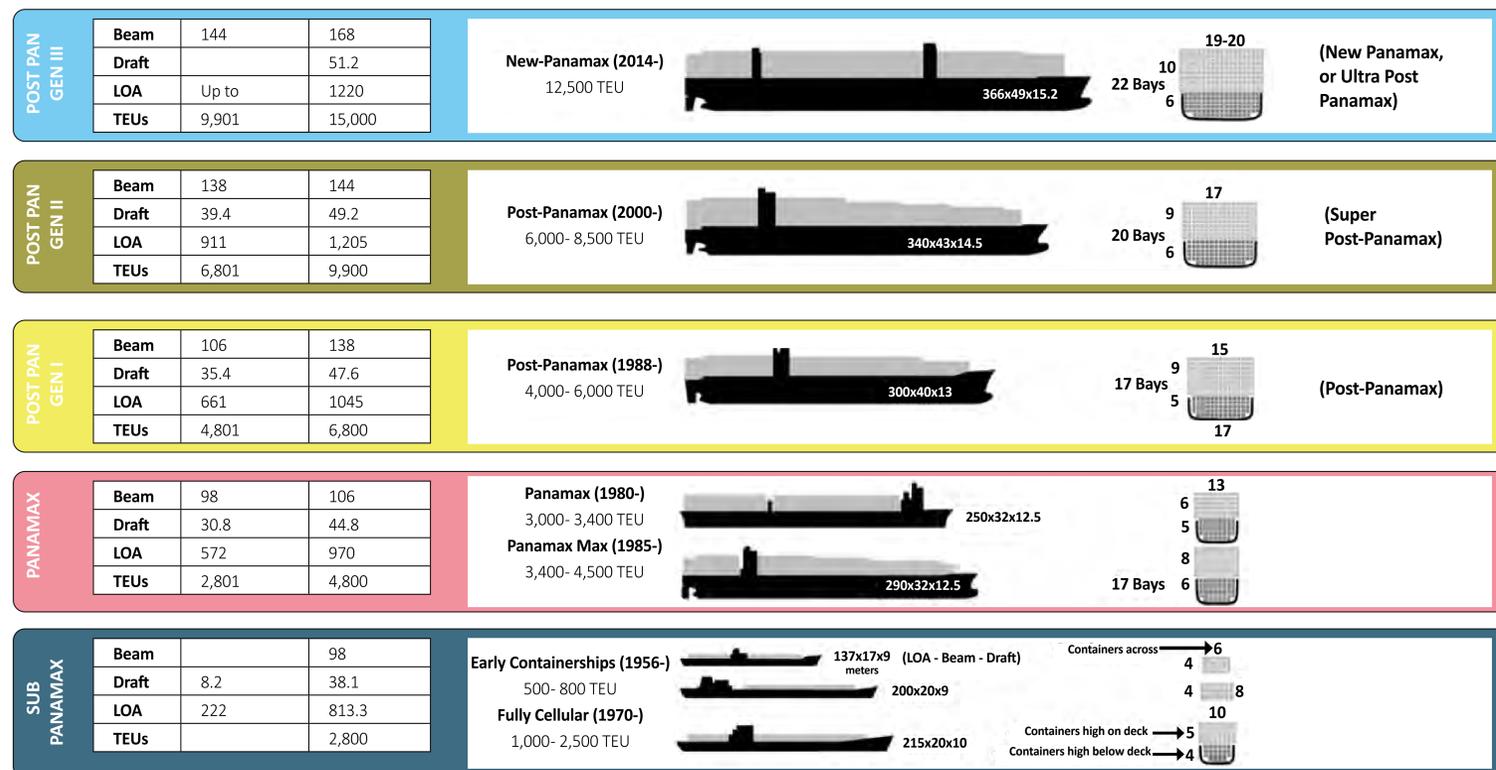


### PURPOSE



The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) serves as a steward of taxpayer dollars and conducts an objective analysis to ensure the benefits from constructing a water resource project outweigh the costs.

### VESSEL FLEET



### PROCESS

#### Determining USACE Project Participation

USACE participation in projects "...if the benefits to whomsoever they may accrue are in excess of the estimated costs..."

#### A Benefit-cost analysis is performed:

- Comparing benefits (cargo transportation savings) to the costs of Navigation Improvements
- Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) in monetary terms, must be 1.0 or greater
- Benefits and costs are annualized and estimated over 50-year period of analysis



#### Basis for Economic Benefits in USACE Navigation Studies

- The reduction in the cost to transport cargo/commodities
- Employment of larger vessels or the more efficient use of vessels



#### Comparing Alternatives (Benefits)

- Use HarborSym Model to determine future cargo movement costs
  - Captures transportation cost difference due to variation in loading patterns (same cargo – fewer trips, etc.)
  - Calculates vessel time/cost in harbor (nodal network example)
  - Also calculates overseas distance and costs
- Model each depth alternative (including No Action Alternative)



#### Comparing and Calculating (Costs)

- Costs for:
- All Federal and Non-Federal Costs to implement
  - Construction and Placement costs
  - Real Estate and Environmental Mitigation Costs
  - Operations & Maintenance Cost
  - Associated costs (USCG Aids to Navigation, etc.)



# THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING COMMENTS:

- » How would the potential actions, including harbor deepening, impact you or resources that are important to you?
- » What concerns do you have for you and your community?
- » What resources should be evaluated in the Draft EIS?
- » What are some potential project opportunities ?
- » Are there data, studies, reports that would support the analysis in the EIS?
- » After review of the information provided, is there anything missing?

### WAYS TO COMMENT:

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### What is NEPA?

- **REQUIRES** all federal agencies to analyze potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of proposed actions and to identify and consider reasonable alternatives to those actions.
- **ENCOURAGES** public involvement throughout the project to help inform decision makers on how the impacts of proposed actions might affect communities.
- **IMPROVES** federal decision making through meaningful public engagement.

*Describes the what and why for the proposed action & informs the development of alternatives*

### Purpose and Need

- **PURPOSE:** Contribute to national economic development (NED) by addressing transportation inefficiencies for the forecasted vessel fleet, consistent with protecting the Nation's environment.
- **NEED:** Address the constraints that contribute to inefficiencies in the existing navigation system's ability to safely serve forecasted vessel fleet and cargo types and volumes.

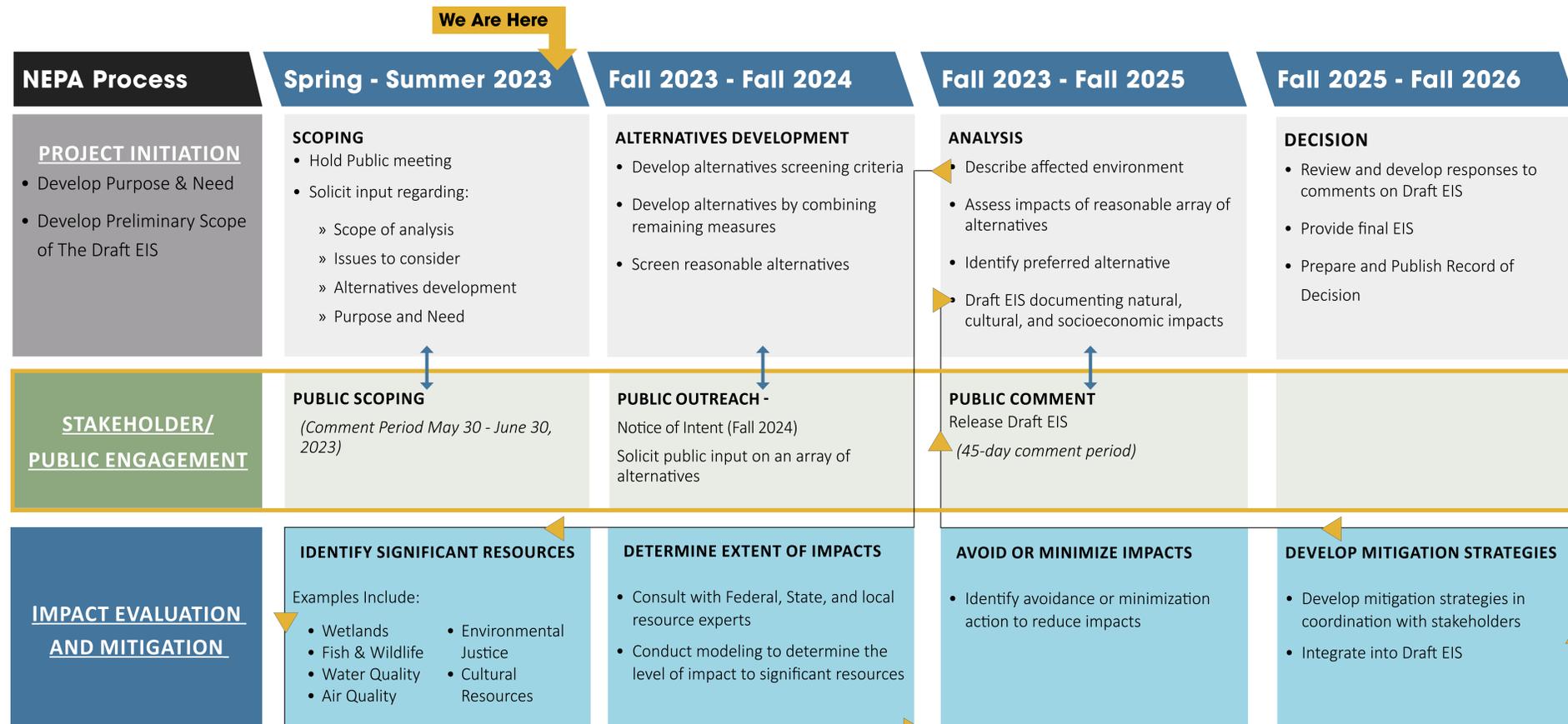
### Where Are We In This Process?

✓ *Scoping Period- Scoping is the earliest opportunity for the public to shape the analysis.*



### The Public Can Participate in the NEPA Process by:

- **Commenting** on the proposed actions
- Helping **identify** the issues to be considered
- Helping **formulate** alternatives based on purpose and need
- Providing **information** data/ studies





# ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING COMMENTS:

- » How would harbor deepening impact you or resources that are important to you?
- » What resources should be evaluated in the EIS?
- » What are some opportunities that may become available if the project takes place?
- » What concerns do you have related to potential impacts to resources?

### WAYS TO COMMENT:

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 US Army Corps of Engineers  
 Wilmington District  
 ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
 69 Darlington Avenue  
 Wilmington, NC 28403

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### Physical Resources

- Water Quality
  - Dissolved Oxygen
  - Salinity
  - Temperature
- Air Quality
  - Emissions Inventory
  - Greenhouse gases
- Noise
- Visual/Viewshed
- Hydrology/Flooding
  - Shoreline/Vessel Wake Analysis



Erosion control at Brunswick Town and Fort Anderson Historic Site  
Credit: Scenic Consulting Group



Coastal Wetlands. Credit: UNCW

### Socioeconomics Resources

- Environmental Justice
- Historic/ Cultural Resources
- Traffic/ Transportation
- Recreation



Kayaking Cape Fear River. Credit: USACE



Battleship North Carolina. Credit: Wilmington, N.C. River District & Island Beaches



Striped Bass. Credit: NOAA Fisheries

### Ecological Resources

- Wetlands
  - Provide ecological services
- Shallow Soft Bottom
  - Provides unique habitat for algae, fish, and invertebrates
- Threatened and Endangered Species
  - Species protected under the Endangered Species Act
- Essential Fish Habitat
  - Provides key fish habitat for spawning, feeding, and growth
- Bird Habitat
  - Project area is in Atlantic flyway and provides resting and nesting habitat for various bird species
- Primary Nursery Areas
  - Provide forage and shelter for juvenile fish and other species, sustaining healthy fisheries
- Invasive Species



Atlantic Sturgeon swimming. Credit: NOAA Fisheries



Rufa Red Knot. Credit: Cornell University

### Climate Change

- Climate change effects on future conditions in the project area with and without the project, including:
  - Sea level rise
  - Precipitation and coastal storm frequency and intensity
  - Increasing atmospheric and sea surface temperatures



Hurricane Irene. Credit: NASA



# ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING COMMENTS:

- » How would harbor deepening impact you or resources that are important to you?
- » What data or information should be evaluated in the EIS?
- » What are some potential beneficial use opportunities that may be possible if the project takes place?
- » What concerns do you have related to potential impacts to resources?

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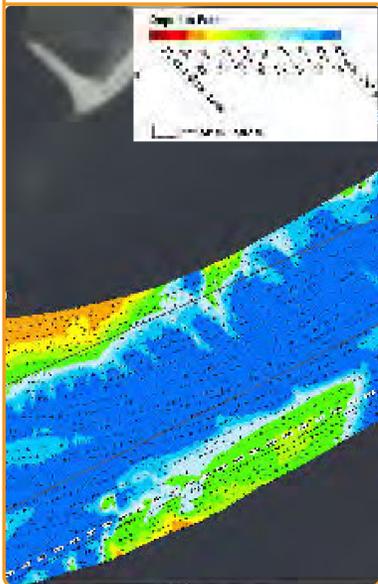
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### DATA COLLECTION

#### Hydrographic Surveys

- Provides information about the depth of the channel bottom and allows for a volumetric computation of the material to be removed.



#### Geotechnical Considerations

- Subsurface Information beneath the channel bottom define the sediment and rock types which is used to determine if dredged material can be used for beach placement, bird island or wetland restoration, or reef construction.

### DREDGING METHODS

- Various dredging methodologies can be employed to remove material based on its characteristics.

- Equipment used to deepen or widen a channel is determined by site characteristics, such as the type and location of sediments along a channel bottom.

#### Hydraulic Dredges



##### Hopper Dredge

Hopper dredges are self-propelled and pump material into onboard hoppers for transportation to the disposal site; similar to a vacuum cleaner.

Hopper Dredges are used primarily for sandy and silty material.



##### Cutterhead Dredge

The hydraulic cutterhead dredges use a mechanical arm equipped with rotating blades to cut and dislodge materials and pump to the disposal/ placement site through a pipeline.

Cutterhead Dredges are used in areas where dredged material contains clay, sand, rock, or other hard consolidated materials.

#### Mechanical Dredges - enable more precise dredging



##### Clamshell Dredge

Clamshell dredges lift material from the sea floor or river bottom using a bucket attached to a boom. Material is then placed on a barge for transport to the disposal site, similar to a crane and a dump truck.

For Limited Use – This system may be used around sensitive cultural sites.



##### Excavator Dredge

Backhoe dredges are basically land excavators that have been modified for use on water. The loaded bucket is hoisted to the surface and usually side dumped into a barge.

For Limited Use – This system may be used in shallow areas and around sensitive cultural sites that contain clay, sand, rock or other hard consolidated materials.

### PLACEMENT OF DREDGED MATERIALS

- Dredged material, depending on its grain size, may be placed on beneficial use placement areas or offshore in an existing placement area known as the Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Sites (ODMDS).

- Beneficial Use Placement sites include bird islands, wetlands, areas for reef construction, and local beaches. These sites are selected for placement by understanding the sediment and rock types beneath the channel bottom.



Battery Island which is home to one of the largest rookeries in the area for the White Ibis. Some of the dredged sediments could be used to expand this nesting area that is populated with hundreds of nests each year.



Example Beneficial Use Placement - Wilmington Inner Ocean Bar Project dredges the shoaled sand material from within the Wilmington Harbor shipping channel and places it on adjacent beaches.



# ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS - COASTAL PROCESS

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING COMMENTS:

- » How would harbor deepening impact you or resources that are important to you?
- » What data or information should be evaluated in the EIS?
- » What are some potential beneficial use opportunities that may be possible if the project takes place?
- » What concerns do you have related to potential impacts to resources?
- » Do you have additional data or information?

### WAYS TO COMMENT:

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US Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403

**Email:**  
WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil

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### HYDRODYNAMIC MODELING

- Comprehensive representation of coastal water dynamics

#### Delft 3D - Hydrodynamic Modeling

Delft3D is a “state of the art” numerical model that will be used to **evaluate current conditions, future without project conditions, and future with project alternatives**. This model will use the historical and future climate information to simulate water movement through the Cape Fear River to evaluate:

##### • Water Level Impact

- The tidal range at the Wilmington tidal gauge is currently ~5ft. Tidal range impacts from the project will be evaluated for the areas of interest.
- Water levels will be modeled to identify potential flooding impacts.

##### • Channel Velocities

- Channel velocities can impact fish migration, shipping traffic, and recreation. Velocities in the Cape Fear River will be analyzed for each alternative to ensure no adverse impacts. A full range of flow patterns (“dry”, “normal”, and “wet” conditions) will be simulated.

##### • Sediment Transport

- Suspended and bedload sediment transport will be modeled. This can show changes to the shape of the channel that may occur due to channel modifications. This can also show how often the channel will need to be dredged to maintain the project.

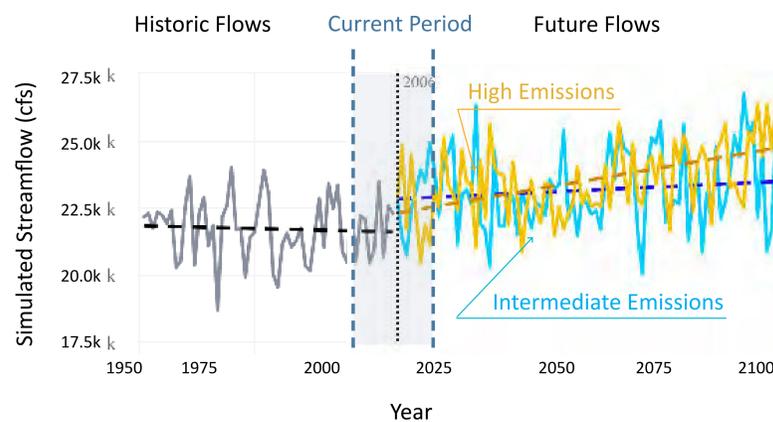
#### Shoreline Impact

- A Vessel Wake Model will be run to test the alternatives to evaluate ship wake impacts to shorelines or bird island on the Cape Fear River.
- A Wave Transformation Model will be run to look at the changes to waves near the entrance to the Cape Fear River and how they impact the shoreline.

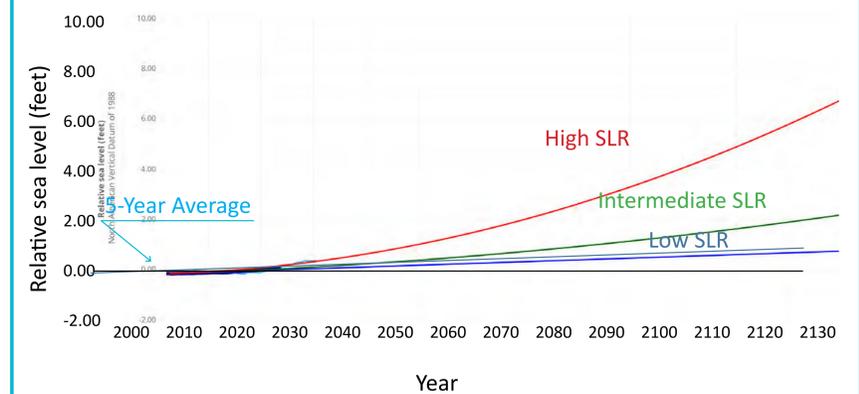
### HISTORICAL AND PREDICTED TRENDS: CLIMATE VARIABLES

- Historical and predicted trend in rainfall, river flow, and other climate variables will be evaluated. These variables will be included in the modeling efforts.

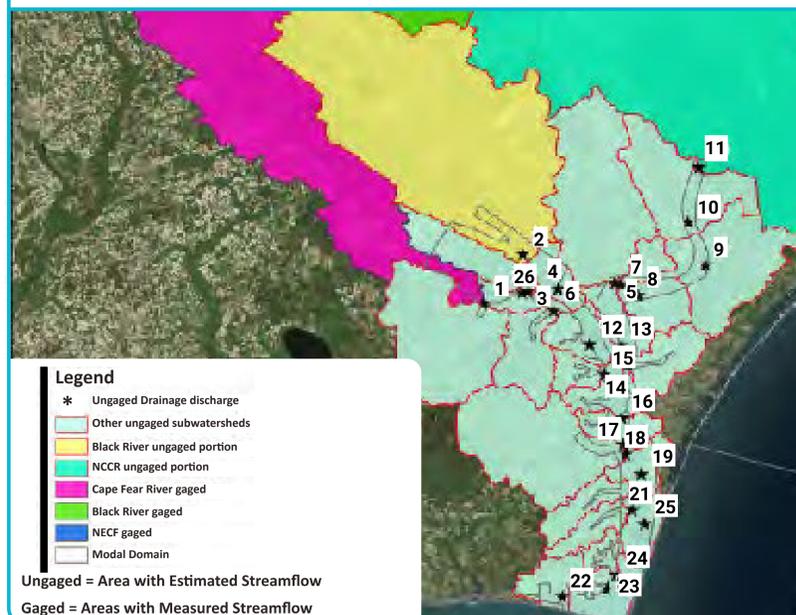
#### Mean Historic & Future Streamflow Outputs



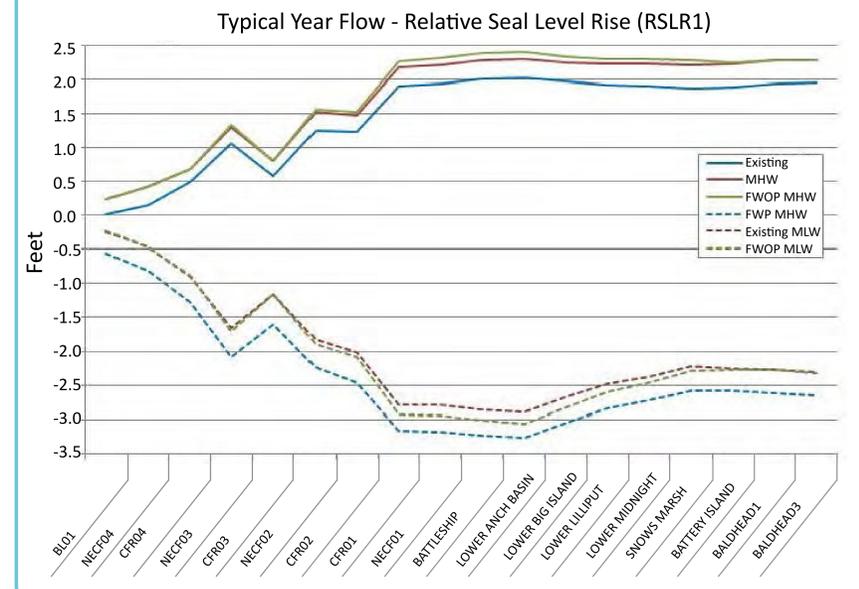
#### Sea Level Rise (SLR) Prediction



#### Cape Fear River Watershed



#### Water Level Comparison Between Without & With Project Conditions





# WILMINGTON HARBOR 403

LETTER REPORT & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



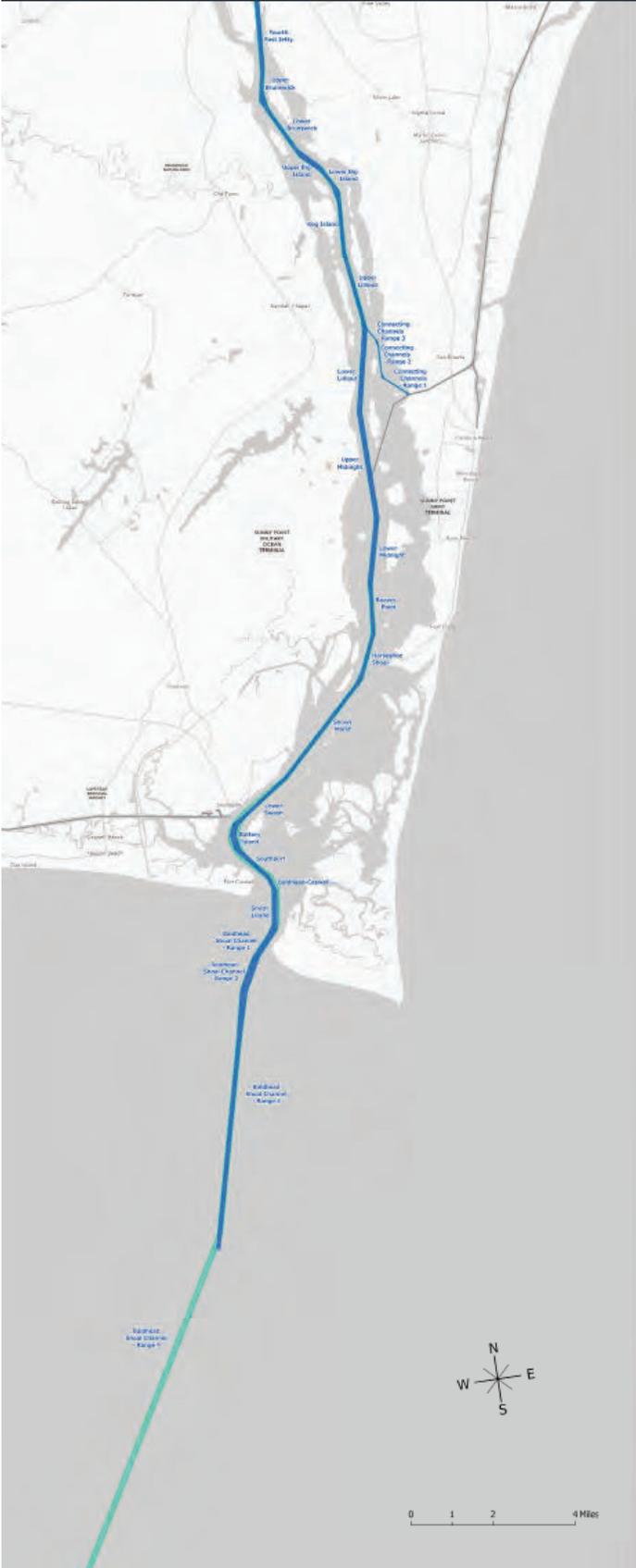
## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Corps Values Your Input!





### Overview



#### LEGEND

- Channel Modifications Proposed in the Section 203
- Existing Channel
- Other USACE Navigation Channel

Wilmington District is conducting an evaluation of technical and policy concerns noted in the Assistant Secretary of the Army’s Civil Work’s May 2020 Review Assessment of the North Carolina State Ports Authority’s February 2020 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 203 Feasibility Study which resulted in conditional authorization in Section 403 of WRDA 2020 of deepening the main channel to 47 feet from the current depth of 42 feet.

**PURPOSE:** Contribute to national economic development (NED) by addressing transportation inefficiencies for the forecasted vessel fleet, consistent with protecting the Nation’s environment.

**NEED:** The proposed action is needed to address the constraints that contribute to inefficiencies in the existing navigation system’s ability to safely serve forecasted vessel fleet and forecasted cargo types and volumes.



### Process Timeline

**We Are Here**



**Scoping  
(Spring 2023)**

**Public Comment**  
» May 30 - June 30, 2023  
Comment Period

Develop Alternatives

**Notice of Intent  
(Fall 2024)**

**Public Comment**  
» 30-day Comment Period

Impacts Analysis/ Refine Alternatives

Issue Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

**Public Review and Comment Period  
(Fall/ Winter 2025)**

**Public Comment**  
» 45-day Comment Period

Prepare Final EIS/ Respond to Draft EIS Comments

Issue Final EIS  
(Fall 2026)

Record of Decision



### Questions to Consider when Providing input to USACE:

- How would the potential actions, including harbor deepening, impact you or resources that are important to you?
- What concerns do you have for you and your community?
- What resources should be evaluated in the Draft EIS?
- What are some potential project opportunities? (e.g. mitigation opportunities, beneficial use of dredged material)
- Are there data, studies, reports that would support the analysis in the EIS?
- After review of the information provided, is there anything missing?

### Tips for Comments:

- Detailed specific comments are the most useful
- Propose detailed solutions/alternatives that can inform alternatives development
- Describe specific examples related to your concern/issue
- Provide details that explain why the issue is important
- Include relevant reports or studies

### Please visit our technical stations today at the Open House:

Project Background, Plan Formulation, & Economics  
National Environmental Policy Act & Environmental Resources  
Engineering Considerations & Coastal Processes  
Public Engagement Discussions  
Public Comments



### Ways to Comment

#### Public Meeting:

Submit a comment card at the public meeting

#### E-Mail:

WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil

Please submit emailed comments by June 30, 2023

#### Online:

Online comments may be made through the Public Comment Tool on the project website: <https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>



Scan the QR Code to access the Project Comment Tool

#### Mail:

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District  
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403  
69 Darlington Avenue  
Wilmington, NC 28403  
Please submit mailed comments by June 30, 2023

***Early Scoping Public Comments by June 30, 2023***



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. When will there be an opportunity for the public to comment on this project?

The public will be given several opportunities to comment throughout the project. We will inform the public of these comment periods through social media, press releases, and notifications. The Corps, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will be providing the following public comment periods:

- **Early Scoping – 30-day comment period (late May 2023– late June 2023).**
  - » Scoping is an important early engagement with the public that helps the Corps focus our analysis on important issues and resources.
- **Notice of Intent (NOI) – 30-day comment period (Fall 2024).**
  - » The Corps will publish the NOI in the Federal Register, in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementation regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). The Corps will request comments regarding the range of alternatives considered in the Wilmington Harbor Environmental Impact Statement.
- **Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – 45-day comment period (Fall 2025).**
  - » The Draft EIS will be released for public comment. The Draft EIS will include evaluation of impacts from the range of alternatives. The public will be invited to review and comment on the Draft EIS.

### 2. How can I submit comments for this project?

Your comments are valuable to the Corps. We are providing a number of ways to submit comments during the comment periods listed above. Please submit comments using any of the ways listed below:

- **Email:** [WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil](mailto:WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil)
- **Online comment tool:** <https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **Mail:** Wilmington Harbor 403, 69 Darlington Avenue, Wilmington, NC 28403

### 3. What will you do with the comments after you receive them?

All comments received during public comment periods are part of the Wilmington Harbor 403 administrative record. Should comments require further discussion with the commentor to resolve, the Corps will hold those discussions as necessary.

- **Early scoping:** The Corps will use scoping comments to formulate and refine alternatives. Scoping comments will also be used to help determine the scope of the analysis in the Draft EIS. They help the Corps to focus efforts on those issues that are important to stakeholders and the public. While comments received during scoping will not be responded to individually, the Corps will consider each comment during the development of the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will be prepared in accordance with CEQ's regulations (noted above).
- **Notice of Intent:** The Corps will evaluate and use comments to help refine the alternatives studied in the Draft EIS. Comments will also be used in the development of Draft EIS. Similar to scoping comments, comments received during this comment period will not be addressed individually. They will be very helpful in refining the analysis for the Draft EIS.
- **Draft EIS:** The Corps will use these comments to determine what revisions may be required for the Draft EIS. The Corps will develop a response to each comment and include them in the Final EIS.

### 4. Why are we considering improvements to Wilmington Harbor?

Since the last major channel improvements completed by the Corps of Engineers through the Wilmington Harbor '96 Act Deepening (entrance channel from 40' to 44', and the main channel from 38' to 42') took place over the period 2000-2013, the Port of Wilmington has experienced growth in cargo volume and in the size of vessels calling at the port.

### 5. Why does the 403 effort take so long?

This effort requires comprehensive engineering, economic and environmental studies to include navigational surveys, determining dredging quantities, construction schedules, cost engineering, geotechnical material composition analysis, modeling of water resources and potential impacts, biological assessments, economic analysis, and habitat suitability index, among other critical tasks.



### Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

#### 6. How will you determine if a project is feasible?

This 403 effort will analyze the feasibility, benefits, costs and environmental impacts of a range of alternatives, including the “no action” alternative. For an improvement project to be feasible, the benefits must exceed the costs and the project must be acceptable.

#### 7. How will you mitigate any environmental impacts?

Mitigation associated with the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and EIS may be required based on anticipated environmental impacts identified in the study report and would be coordinated with State and Federal resource agencies. The Corps will develop a mitigation plan to outline required mitigation type(s) and extent(s) and associated conditions. The development of the mitigation plan is a collaborative process with Federal and State resource agencies, and other stakeholders.

#### 8. What is the difference between the North Carolina State Ports Authority 203 study and the current US Army Corps of Engineers 403 evaluation?

- **Previous North Carolina State Ports Authority (NCSPA) Section 203 Study.** The NCSPA conducted a Section 203 study to determine the feasibility of improvements to the Federal navigation system at Wilmington Harbor to allow the accommodation of larger cargo vessel that are already in use or are projected to use the port in the near future. The improvements included deepening and widening of the main channel, extending the entrance channel offshore, and expansion of the Anchorage Turning Basin.
- **NCSPA’s February 2020 report was reviewed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) resulting in their May 2020 Review Assessment.** The 47’ deepening project was conditionally authorized in Section 403 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020. Authorization of projects based on feasibility studies prepared by non-Federal interests:  
*“The project for navigation, Wilmington Harbor, North Carolina, as described in the review assessment of the Secretary, titled “Review Assessment of Wilmington Harbor, North Carolina Navigation Improvement Project Integrated Section 203 Study & Environmental Report (February 2020)” and dated May 2020, at a total cost of \$834,093,000.”*
- **US Army Corps of Engineers Section 403 Letter Report.** The purpose of this 403 effort is to conduct the analysis needed to produce a Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addressing the unresolved ASA(CW) comments as required by the conditional authorization of a 47’ deepening of Wilmington Harbor in Section 403 of WRDA 2020. The comments to be addressed were conveyed in the May 2020 ASA(CW) Review Assessment of the NC State Port Authority’s (NCSPA) Section 203 feasibility study of improvements to the Federal navigation project at Wilmington Harbor.

#### 9. What is a cost share agreement?

In October 2022, the US Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District and the State of North Carolina acting through the NC State Ports Authority (NCSPA) executed a 50%, 50% cost share agreement to address the unresolved comments in the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)’s Review Assessment of the NCSPA’s Section 203 Feasibility Study.

#### 10. What is the roadmap for the 403 effort?

- **2023:** Early Scoping, Economic Analysis, Water Resource Modeling, Geotechnical Vibracore Sampling and Analysis, Initial Cost Engineering
- **2024 through 2025:** Preliminary Geotechnical Design and Analysis, Notice of Intent, Economic Analysis, Water Resource Modeling, Cost Engineering, Biological Assessments, Environmental Justice Analysis, Habitat Suitability Index Modeling, Mitigation Planning, Hydrodynamic, Water Quality and Sediment Model runs, Wave Transformation, Shoreline Impacts, Tidal Range, Vessel Wake Modeling, Channel Morphology, Real Estate Assessments, Draft Report, Public Review, Alternative Development and Screening, Independent External Peer Review (IEPR)
- **2026:** Incorporate & respond to comments, select final plan, submit final Letter Report and EIS to the ASA(CW).

**Thank you for your input and  
participation!**





## **ATTACHMENT E**

Early Scoping Public Meeting Sign-In Sheets



# WILMINGTON HARBOR 403

## LETTER REPORT & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



### PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Date: June 13, 2023

Location: Cape Fear Community College – Union Station

Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
Alex Gruber	N.A.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Shari Atkins	NCCF		<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Hannah Nelson	Southern Environmental Law Center	hnelson@selcnc.org	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Melissa Edmonds	SELC	medmonds@selcnc.org	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Will Fuller	HDR	William.Fuller@hdrinc.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Deborah Liva			<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website



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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
JAS KIM	VILLAGE OF BALD HEAD ISLAND	JKIM@VILLAGEBH1.ORG <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Charles Baldwin	11 / Brooks Pierce	cbaldwin@brooks-pierce.COM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
DAVID KAWAH	CFCC	dkawah@cfcc.edu <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Graa Vitagliano	WHAQR	gvitagliano@wqr.org <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Frank Yelventau	CITIZEN	[REDACTED] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
JULIAN DUNN	CITIZEN	[REDACTED] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other



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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
Larry Cahoon	UNCW CFRW	Cahoon@uncw.edu	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.
Elise Snively		[REDACTED]	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.
Dana Sargent	Cape Fear RiverWatch	dana@cfwrw.us	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.
CURTIS SMITH	Audubon NC	curtis.smith@audubon.us	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.
JOHN JEWELL	CITIZEN		<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.
Lindsay Addison	Audubon NC	laddison@audubon.us	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.



# WILMINGTON HARBOR 403

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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
Tara MacPherson	NCDEM	tara.macpherson@deq.nc.gov <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Roger Shew	Self	[Redacted] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
SUSAN STAHLHOLD	Self	[Redacted] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Thomas Cancienne	STANTEC	Thomas.Cancienne@stantec.com <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Jeff Taber	Stantec	Jeff.Taber@stantec.com <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Bill Raney	CFRW	[Redacted] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other



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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
Don HARRIS	NHC POETS, WATERWAY BEACH COMMISSION	don.harris@intracoastalreality.com	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
TODD BOWERS	USEPA Region 4	bowers.todd@epa.gov	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website
TOM CASSELL	Citizen	[REDACTED]	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
LA FORD SCORBE	NHC		<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Bill Cary	Brooks Law	bcary@brookspierce.com	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Allen OLIVER	TOWN OF KURE BEACH	a.oliver@townofkurebeach.org	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website



# WILMINGTON HARBOR 403

## LETTER REPORT & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting	
JASON ROGERS	Cape Fear Community College Marine Tech	jrogers@cfc.edu <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Brinna Flanagan	Port City Daily	brinna@localdailymedia.com <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
BRAYTON WILLIS	PRIVATE CITIZEN	[REDACTED] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Travis Gilbert	Historic Wilmington Foundation	gilbert@historicwilmington.org <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Website
LISA MALONE	RESIDENT	[REDACTED] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website



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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
Heather Coats	NCDOM	heather.coats@deq.nc.gov	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Craig Blossinsky	KURE BEACH	[REDACTED]	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Wayne Reed	WDCG	wayne.e.reed@wdcg.com	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Beth Darrow	Bald Head Island Conservancy	darrow@bhic.org	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Hannah Sprinkle	NCDWR	hannah.sprinkle@deq.nc.gov	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Holley Snider	NC DWR	holley.snider@deq.nc.gov	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Other





# WILMINGTON HARBOR 403

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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting	
Bill Wilson	Cape Fear Ocean Labs	<del>Bill</del> Bill Wilson Cape Fear Ocean Labs +ORS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
Jeff Robbins	CLEANWATER NC	jeff@cleanwaternc.org	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
			<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
			<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
			<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
			<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website
			<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website



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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
Kerri Allen	NC Coastal Federation	[Redacted]	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
ERIN CAREY	NC SIERRA CLUB	erin.carey@sierraclub.org	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
DANN YORK	Moffatt + Nichol Cape Fear River Partnership	dyork@moffattnichol.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Brenda Coltrane	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
			<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
			<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other



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Name	Organization	E-Mail	How you heard about the meeting
Ramona McGee	Southern Environmental Law Center	rmcgee@selcnc.org	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Julia Berger		[REDACTED]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
			<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
			<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
			<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other
			<input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you would like to receive email notifications. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ad <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Public Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Project Website <input type="checkbox"/> Other