



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

Wilmington District

2 October 2023

CESAW-ECP-PE

**PUBLIC NOTICE
AND
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**

**Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA)
Manteo Shallowbag Bay (Oregon Inlet) Navigation Corridor
Dare County, North Carolina
Navigation Project**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Wilmington District, Wilmington, North Carolina has prepared the Manteo Shallowbag Bay (Oregon Inlet) Navigation Corridor Dare County, North Carolina, Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), October 2023. This Draft EA was completed in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS). An electronic version of the Draft EA is available on the Corps website at:

<https://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Dredging/>

This Draft EA addresses the emergency dredging of the western alternate route as well as long-term maintenance of the Manteo Shallowbag Bay (Oregon Inlet) Federal navigation project, following natural deep water. The project, located in Dare County, North Carolina, is shown on Figure 1. The proposed long-term plan includes a large navigation corridor that encompasses areas both east and west of the Marc Basnight Bridge. The corridor would extend west to include Old House Ranges 1 and 2, north near Island C and east through the official bridge navigation span and would include the ocean bar (Figure 1). This proposed navigation corridor encompasses approximately 5,053 acres and would provide the greatest flexibility to maintain a safe, navigable channel in the very dynamic area of Oregon Inlet.

In July 2022, the historic channel route shoaled in substantially, resulting in the need for the emergency dredging authorization for an alternate route, called the western alternate route. The western alternate route, which encompasses approximately 20 acres, follows the current deepest available water and has been the route maintained since the emergency dredging authorization in July 2022 (Figure 2). At Oregon Inlet, heavy southwest winds in summer are common, as are strong and frequent Nor'easters in the winter months and tropical systems in the summer and fall, resulting in shifting sands and narrowing channels any time of year. For this reason, Oregon Inlet has always been maintained on an as-needed basis any time of year unless dredged material was being placed on beaches or bird islands. In those instances, the timing of dredging was done to coincide with the beach placement windows in order to avoid the bird and sea turtle nesting seasons.

The methods of dredging proposed for accomplishing the work include: hydraulic pipeline dredge, mechanical (clamshell) dredge, sidecast dredge, a special purpose hopper dredge, commercial hopper and a cutter suction (pipeline) dredge. The proposed placement areas for dredged material include sidecasting, placement on Bird Islands, nearshore placement off the north end of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), beach placement on the north end of Pea Island NWR, and in deep water scour holes beneath the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge Pier.

The Draft EA has been prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality and Corps and NPS requirements for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (33 CFR 230), as amended, and addresses the relationship of the proposed action to other applicable Federal and State Laws and Executive Orders. The Draft EA addresses the proposed action's impacts on environmental resources, including, but not limited to, Federally listed threatened and endangered species, essential fish habitat, cultural resources, benthic resources, water quality, air quality, and noise. This Public Notice is being distributed to notify all known interested persons of the availability of the Draft EA for review. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to NEPA will be completed if comments received during the review period indicate that a FONSI is appropriate. Comments on the Draft EA should include sufficient detail to support statements in favor of or opposed to the proposed action. All correspondence should refer to the title and date of this Public Notice. We would appreciate receiving comments no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. If we have not received your comments by then, we will assume you have none.

Written comments or questions may be submitted to Ms. Teresa Young, Environmental Resources Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington, at: Teresa.r.young@usace.army.mil.

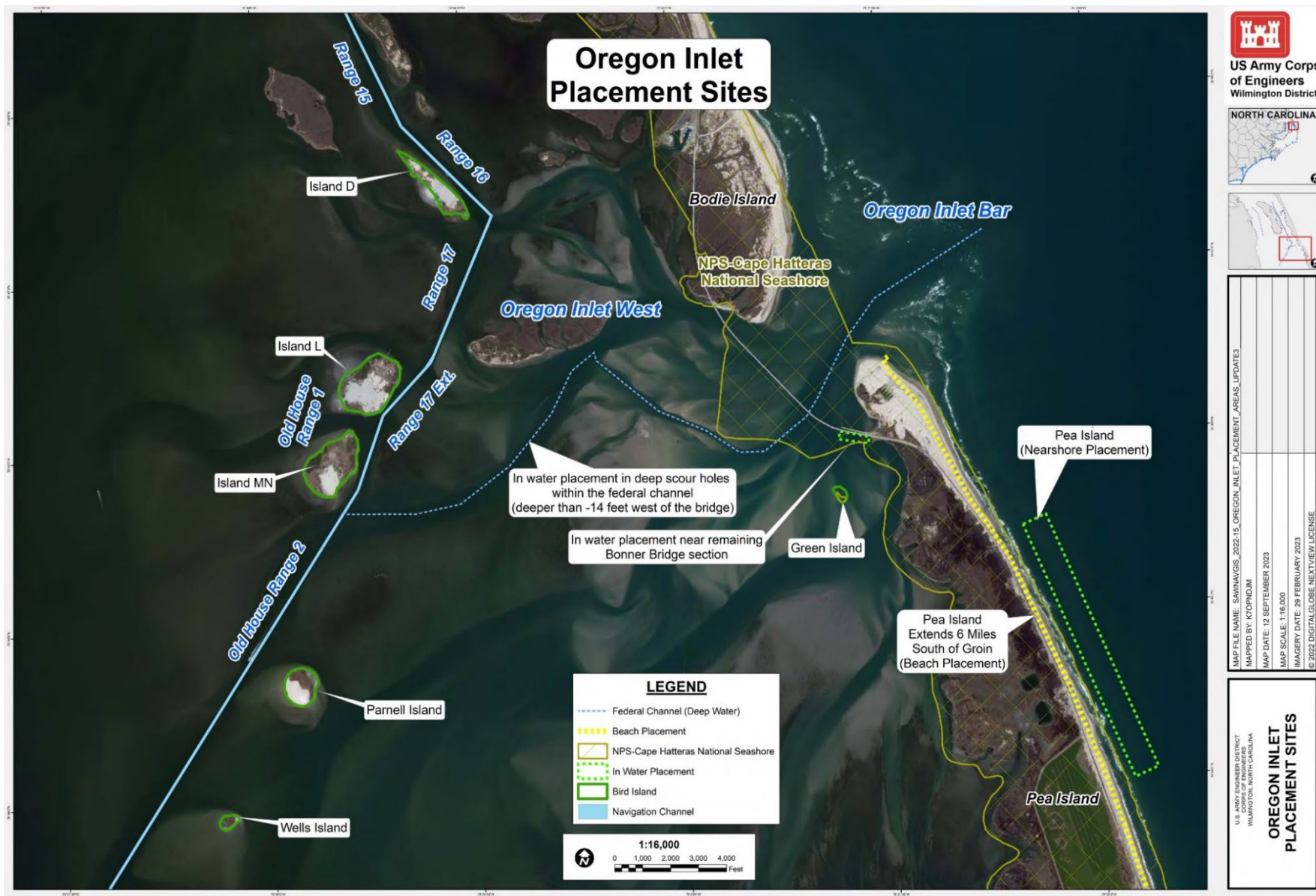


Figure 2. Proposed Dredged Material Placement Areas