



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND PLACEMENT OF DREDGED MATERIAL
HORSESHOE COVE NAVIGATION CHANNEL
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed action. Based on information analyzed in the EA, reflecting pertinent information obtained from other agencies and special interest groups having jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise, I conclude that the proposed action will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Reasons for this conclusion are, in summary:

1. There will be no adverse impacts to endangered or threatened species, if the work is conducted in accordance with the standard conditions used to protect manatees based on the concurrence in the No Effect determination issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the District's determination that the project will have no effect on significant historic resources.
3. State water quality standards will be met.
4. The proposed project has been determined to be consistent with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program.
5. Measures to eliminate, reduce, or avoid potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources will be implemented during project construction.
6. Benefits to the public will include increased safety and continued use of the navigation channel.

In consideration of the information summarized, I find that the proposed action will not significantly affect the human environment and does not require an Environmental Impact Statement.

9 Jun 95
Date


TERRY L. RICE
COL, Corps of Engineers
Commanding

MAY 1995

**MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND
DREDGED MATERIAL PLACEMENT
HORSESHOE COVE NAVIGATION CHANNEL
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Jacksonville District
South Atlantic Division

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1.0 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION.

1.1. INTRODUCTION. When a Federal navigation project is authorized, it is generally the responsibility of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain that channel. As part of that responsibility, the channels are monitored for shoaling and if the situation warrants it maintenance dredging is performed. As part of the Federal standard for the project, disposal areas are acquired by the local sponsor. The disposal option with the least cost is designated the baseline for the project. If the local sponsor should desire another option then, that option is cost shared.

1.2. LOCATION. The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is proposing to conduct maintenance dredging of the Horseshoe Cove navigation channel. The navigation channel connects the Town of Horseshoe Beach, Dixie County, Florida, with the Gulf of Mexico (Figure 1.1).

1.3. NEED AND PURPOSE. The tidal flows and the transport of silty sediments associated with the March 1993 "Storm of the Century" caused shoaling in the man-made channel which acts like a sedimentation basin. Periodic dredging is required to maintain adequate navigation depths. Surveys indicate sufficient shoaling to justify maintenance.

1.4. AUTHORITY. The construction and maintenance of the channel was authorized by House Document 106, 81st Congress, 1st Session, dated May 17, 1950.

1.5. DECISION TO BE MADE. The decision to be made is whether to conduct maintenance dredging and where to place the material.

1.6. RELEVANT ISSUES.

- a. Water quality
- b. Drinking water
- c. Seagrasses
- d. Wetlands
- e. Manatees
- f. Forest habitat
- g. Gopher tortoise
- h. Cultural Resources
- i. Aesthetics
- j. Navigation
- k. Economics

1.7. PERMITS REQUIRED.

a. A water quality certification will be required from the State of Florida for the maintenance dredging in accordance with the MOU between the State, the Mobile District and the Jacksonville District.

b. An NPDES permit will be obtained from the Environmental Protection agency for the construction of the Upland Placement Area.

1.8. METHODOLOGY. An interdisciplinary team used a systematic approach to analyze the affected area, to estimate the environmental effects, and to write the environmental assessment. This included literature searches, coordination with agencies and private groups having expertise in particular areas, and field investigations.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES.

2.1. INTRODUCTION. The alternatives section is the heart of this Environmental Assessment. This section describes in detail the no-action alternative, the proposed action, and other reasonable alternatives that were studied in detail. Then based on the information and analysis presented in the sections on the Affected Environment and the Probable Impacts, this section presents the beneficial and adverse environmental effects of all alternatives in comparative form, providing a clear basis for choice among the options for the decisionmaker and the public. A summary of this comparison is located in the alternative comparison chart, Table 2.1, page 5. This section has five parts:

- a. A description of the process used to formulate alternatives.
- b. A description of alternatives that were considered but were eliminated from detailed consideration.
- c. A description of each alternative.
- d. A comparison of the alternatives.
- e. The identification of the preferred alternative.

2.2. HISTORY OF ALTERNATIVE FORMULATION. Maintenance dredging of the navigation has not occurred since it was constructed. Historically material was placed adjacent to the channel. Generally, material cannot be placed in open water or in a contained disposal island unless suitable, cost effective upland alternatives cannot be found. Mr. Chris Knotts, Crystal River Field Office, conducted upland site investigations to determine if suitable sites were located near the project. Two sites were located near the area. In addition, it was suggested by a local source that Cotton and Bird Islands be used as disposal areas in order to protect cultural resources from the effects of shoreline erosion.

2.3. ELIMINATED ALTERNATIVES. The locally suggested alternative to place the dredged material on Bird and Cotton Islands to protect significant cultural resources was eliminated because the dredged material contains silty material, could not be contained on these islands and would adversely affect the emergent vegetation located adjacent to the islands. The site located near the town's landfill was also eliminated because it was considered too small.

2.4. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES.

2.4.1. No Action Alternative. No maintenance dredging or placement of material would occur. The existing channel depths would remain the same.

2.4.2. Alternative A. This alternative would include the maintenance dredging of the federally authorized channel and the placement of the dredged material in Upland Placement Area A (Figure 2). A dike having a 3-foot top width with 2:1 outside side slope and 5:1 inside side slope would be constructed to top elevation 10.0 foot Mean Low Water.

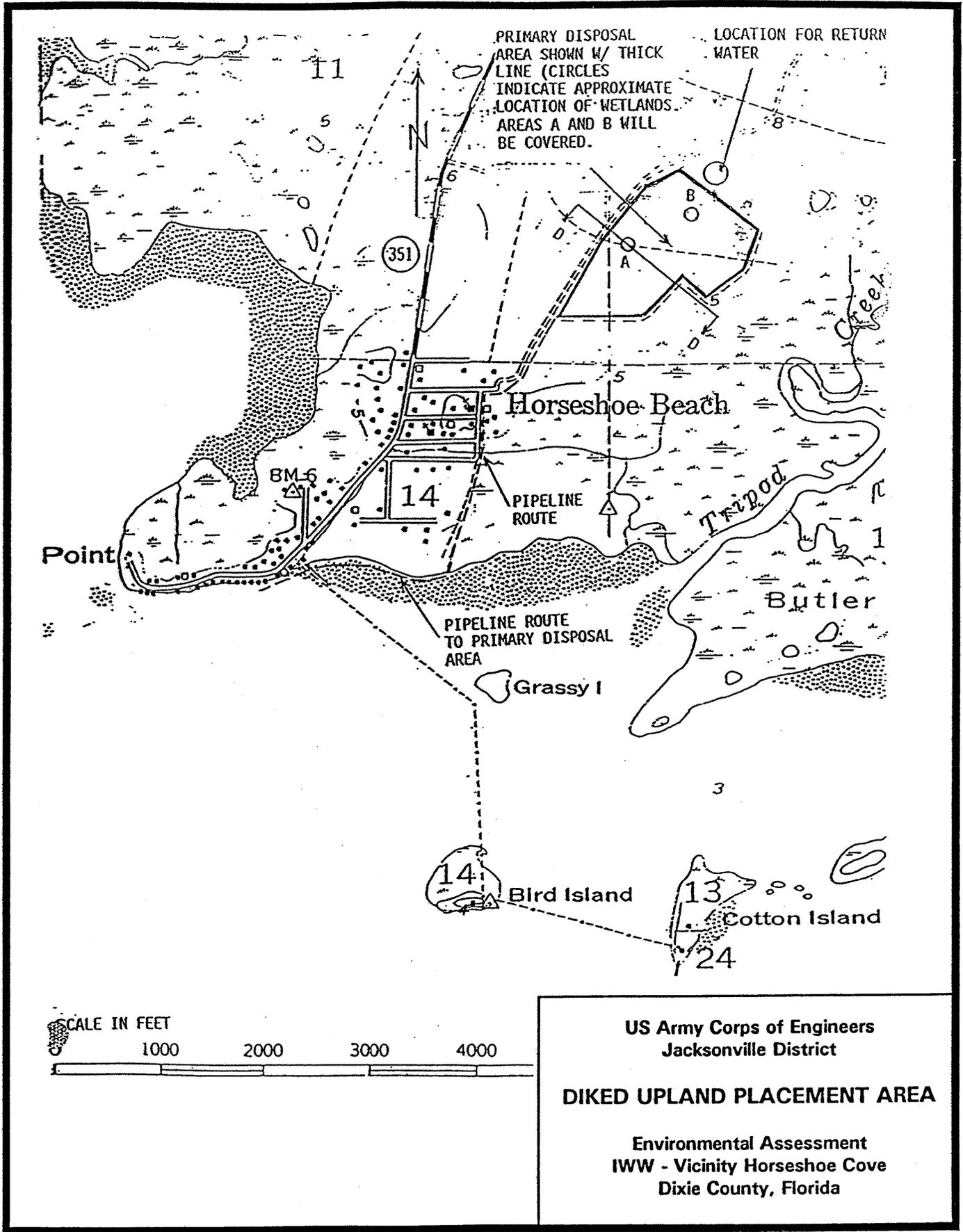


FIGURE 2

2.5. ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON.

Figure 2.2, Alternative Comparison Chart

RESOURCES	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE A
Water quality	No impact	Short-term high localized turbidity levels
Drinking water	No impact	Unknown
Seagrasses	No impact	Unknown
Wetlands	No impact	Minimum loss of non-significant wetlands of less than 1 acre.
Manatees	No impact	No impact
Forest habitat	No impact	There would be a loss of 40 acres pine/scrub forest
Gopher tortoise	No impact	No impact.
Cultural Resources	No adverse effect on significant cultural resources	No adverse effect on significant cultural resources
Aesthetics	No impact	There would be a short-term moderate increase in noise and disruption to visual aesthetics from construction activities. There would be a minor long-term disruption to the visual aesthetics in the pine forest.
Navigation	Reduction in navigable capacity of channel and turning basin	There would be a moderate short-term impact on navigation from presence and operation of dredging equipment. Long-term moderate benefit to navigation from maintaining the channel.
Economics	Minor loss of revenues from reduction in navigation of channel	Short-term moderate benefit from sale of goods and services in support of dredging. Long-term-moderate benefit from commercial navigational use of the maintained channel.

2.6. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE. The preferred alternative would be to conduct maintenance dredging and use the upland disposal area (Alternative A).

3.0. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT.

3.1. INTRODUCTION. The Affected Environment section succinctly describes the existing environmental resources of the areas that would be affected if any of the alternatives were implemented. This section describes only those environmental resources that are relevant to the decision to be made. It does not describe the entire existing environment, but only those environmental resources that would affect or that would be affected by the alternatives if they were implemented. This section, in conjunction with the description of the "no-action" alternative forms the base line conditions for determining the environmental impacts of the proposed action and reasonable alternatives. The environmental issues that are relevant to the decision to be made are the following:

- a. Water quality
- b. Drinking water
- c. Seagrasses
- d. Wetlands
- e. Manatees
- f. Forest habitat
- g. Gopher tortoise
- h. Cultural Resources
- i. Aesthetics
- j. Navigation
- k. Economics

3.2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION. The Horseshoe Cove navigation channel is located in Dixie County on the Gulf coast of Florida and connects the Town of Horseshoe Beach to the Gulf. The 1.75-mile channel is authorized to be 6 feet deep and 75 feet wide. A turning basin is located at the northern end of the project adjacent to the shoreline. Horseshoe Cove is a shallow estuary located along the Gulf of Mexico. In order to have adequate depths a navigation channel was excavated through limestone substrate in some places. The rock was placed adjacent to the channel and is visible at high tide. This area is used mostly by pelican and some other shorebirds for roosting. Fisherman find this area good for fishing because of the habitat formed by the limestone rock. Cotton and Bird Islands are located east of the navigation channel and were considered for disposal. These island contain significant prehistoric archeological resources. Other significant archeological sites have been identified in Dixie County and along the west coast of the state. The area contains numerous shellfish beds which are commercially harvested. Commercial fishing also includes blue crab trapping. Several marinas are located along the turning basin and an adjacent private canal that links to the turning basin.

3.3. RELEVANT PHYSICAL, BIOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC FACTORS OF THE ENVIRONMENT THAT WOULD BE AFFECTED.

3.3.1. Physical

a. Water quality. The Gulf of Mexico in the vicinity of Horseshoe Cove is a Class III State water suitable for recreation and fishing. The water quality is generally good but according to local residence when the wind is coming out of the westerly direction the wave action generates high turbidity levels related to the shallow depths and the silty bottom material.

b. Drinking water. The Town of Horseshoe Beach obtains its drinking water from freshwater wells.

3.3.2. Biological

a. Seagrasses. Seagrass beds are located along the shoreline north of the project area as well as on either side of the channel in deeper waters where estuary tidal flows do not influence the photic zone.

b. Wetlands. Two isolated wetland areas of less than 1 acre are located within the disposal site: (1) a disturbed low pine flatwoods and (2) a salt cordgrass marsh (Appendix V). The pine flatwoods was recently inundated by the severe high tides associated with coastal flooding. The saline water killed the pine trees and understory vegetation within this area.

c. Manatees. No manatees are known frequent the cove area.

d. Forest Habitat. The disposal area was inventoried during the wetlands investigation (Appendix A). The upland area is characterized as a pine forest with oak and holly in the understory. Shiny blueberry, rosemary and chalky bluestem are located in the ground cover.

e. Gopher tortoise. Gopher tortoise were known to inhabit the disposal area. Burrows were found in the sandy scrub ridges within the pine forest. A survey was conducted of the disposal area and it was determined that no individuals were located there (Appendix VI).

3.3.3. Social

a. Cultural Resources. Several significant historic and archeological resources have been identified in Dixie County and in the vicinity of the navigation project. In consultation with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), it was determined that cultural resource field investigations should be conducted for the

proposed disposal area. After the Suwannee River Water Management District cleared the property and constructed dikes, they hired a consultant to conduct an archeological survey of the property. No significant cultural resources were identified during that survey.

b. Aesthetics. This small coastal town is serene with little activity other than fishing as a main attraction. The disposal area is located away from the inhabited portion of the town in a wooded area. The easement for the pipeline right-of-way would be located in a man-made navigation channel from the turning basin inland. Then, it too would go through wooded areas along the existing dirt roads.

3.3.4. Economic

a. Navigation. The navigation channel is used by recreational and commercial fisherman. This navigation is an important facet of the local economy since the Town depends upon the existence of this channel for its commerce.

b. Economics. The Town has several marinas and a commercial fishery which are dependent upon the navigation channel.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES.

4.1. INTRODUCTION. This section describes the probable consequences of implementing each alternative on selected environmental resources. These resources are directly linked to the relevant issues listed in Section 1.4 that have driven and focus the environmental analysis. The following includes anticipated changes to the existing environment including direct and indirect impacts, irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources, unavoidable effects and cumulative impacts.

4.1.1. Cumulative Impacts. Cumulative impact is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (40 CFR 1508.7).

4.1.2. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources.

a. Irreversible. An irreversible commitment of resources is one in which the ability to use and/or enjoy the resource is lost forever. One example of an irreversible commitment might be the mining of a mineral resource.

b. Irretrievable. An irretrievable commitment of resources is one in which, due to decisions to manage the resource for another purpose, opportunities to use or enjoy the resource as they presently exist are lost for a period of time. An example of an irretrievable loss might be where a type of vegetation is lost due to road construction.

4.2. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE.

4.2.1. Physical

- a. Water quality. There would be a minor continual increase in turbidity levels from the propeller wash of the vessels using the shallow water channel depths of the un-maintained channel.
- b. Salinity contamination. There would be no salinity contamination.

4.2.2. Biological

- a. Seagrasses. There would be no direct or indirect impacts to seagrasses.
- b. Wetlands. There would be no losses of wetlands.
- c. Manatees. There would be no impacts on manatees.
- d. Forest habitat. There would be no loss of pine forest/scruboak habitat.
- e. Gopher tortoises. There would be no impact on forest habitat.

4.2.3. Social

- a. Cultural Resources. The No Action alternative would have no adverse effect on significant cultural resources.
- b. Aesthetics. There would be a minor long-term affect on aesthetics from the continual view of the muddy waters generated during propeller wash within the un-maintained channel.

4.2.4. Economic

- a. Navigation. There would be a reduction in use from the decreased use of the reduced channel depths of the un-maintained channel.
- b. Economics. There would be a reduction in revenues from the decreased use of the reduced channel depths of the un-maintained channel.

4.2.5. Cumulative effects. There would be no cumulative effects from this action.

4.2.6. Unavoidable effects. There would be no unavoidable affects from this action.

4.2.7. Irreversible and Irretrievable Resource Commitments. There would be no

irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments as a result of this action.

4.3. ALTERNATIVE A

4.3.1. Physical

- a. Water quality. There would be a high-level, localized increase in turbidity at the dredging site.
- b. Salinity contamination. There would be no potential for contamination of the freshwater drinking wells in the area from the transport of sediments to the upland placement area using salt water and the sedimentation and storage of that dredged material in the UDA.

4.3.2. Biological

- a. Seagrasses. There would be no direct impacts to seagrasses in the project area. The turbidity generated by dredging would temporarily impact seagrasses adjacent to the channel. In those areas, the dredged material is chiefly composed of sand and would therefore only create a minor, localized amount of turbidity.
- b. Wetlands. There would be a minor loss of non-significant wetlands of less than 1 acre would occur as a result of the construction of the disposal area.
- c. Manatees. There would be no impacts on manatees in the project area.
- d. Forest habitat. There would be a permanent loss of approximately 40 acres of pine forest/oak scrub habitat.
- e. Gopher tortoises. There would be no impact on gopher tortoises.

4.3.3. Social

a. Cultural Resources. The Suwanee River Water Management District (SRWMD) has already cleared and grubbed the proposed disposal area and has pushed up material from the middle of the property to construct containment dikes. After dike construction, the SRWMD hired a consultant to conduct cultural resource investigations for the disposal area. A copy of the April 8, 1994 report which resulted from those investigations was coordinated with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). No significant archeological resources were identified in the contractor's study area. In a May 2, 1995 letter, the SHPO concurred with the District's no effect determination.

- b. Aesthetics. There would be a short-term increase in noise and visual aesthetic impacts from the construction of the upland placement area and the maintenance of

the navigation channel from the presence and operation of heavy equipment. There would be a minor long-term disruption to the visual aesthetics in the pine forest from the presence of the diked UDA.

4.3.4. Economic

a. Navigation. There would be a moderate short-term impact on navigation from the presence and operation of the dredging equipment. There would be long-term moderate benefit to navigation from maintaining the channel.

b. Economics. There would be a moderate short-term benefit to the local economy from the sale of goods and services in support of the dredging and construction of the UDA. There would be a long-term moderate benefit from the increased revenues generated from the commercial use of the navigation channel.

4.3.5. Cumulative effects. There would be no cumulative effects from this action.

4.3.6. Unavoidable effects. There would be increased turbidity levels from the dredging, loss of minor wetlands of less than 1 acre, construction effects on aesthetics, and increased benefits to navigation and the local economy.

4.3.7. Irreversible and Irretrievable Resource Commitments. There would be no Irreversible and Irretrievable Resource Commitments except for the use of fuels to power the heavy equipment.

5.0. LIST OF PREPARERS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>EXPERIENCE</u>	<u>ROLE IN PREPARING EA</u>
William J. Fonferek	Biologist	14 years environmental impacts assessment	O&M NEPA Coordinator, Environmental Impact Assessment, Endangered Species Coordination
Janice E. Adams	Archeologist	10 years experience NEPA documentation,	Cultural Resources Analysis
Paul C. Stevenson	Landscape Architect	7 years landscape architect, field and design work	Aesthetic and Recreational Resource Analysis
Glen Schuster	Environmental Engineer	15 years professional engineer	Water Quality Impacts

APPENDIX I

COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS.

1.0. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. Environmental information on the project has been compiled and the Environmental Assessment is available for review by the public in compliance with Regulation 33 CFR Parts 335-338 (Appendix IV). These regulations govern the Operations and Maintenance of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Projects involving the Discharge of Dredged or Fill Material into Waters of the US or Ocean Waters. This public coordination and environmental assessment complies with the intent of NEPA. The process will fully comply with the Act once the Finding of No Significant Impact has been signed by the District Commander.

2.0. Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service was initiated by letter dated 16 August 1993 requesting concurrence in a No Effects determination (Appendix II). It was determined that there would be No Effect on any threatened or endangered species, including the West Indian manatee. It was determined that impacts to the manatee would be avoided by the inclusion in the Plans and Specifications of the latest State and federal conditions used to protect manatees (Appendix II). By letter dated 31 August 1993 the National Marine Fisheries Service responded concurring in that determination. The USFWS responded to the public notice by letter dated 2 August 1993 requested to review the environmental assessment prior to issue final comments. By letter dated 31 May 1995, the USFWS responded after having reviewed the draft EA by concurring in the "No Effects" determination provided the work is conducted in accordance with the manatee protection conditions.

3.0. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended (FWCA). The project was coordinated with the USFWS during the public notice period. No adverse comments were received. A request was received to review the preliminary environmental assessment. A copy of the draft EA was hand given to Mr. Don Palmer of the Jacksonville Office. They responded by letter dated 31 May 1995, with no additional comments in accordance with the FWCA.

4.0. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (PL 89-665). Cultural resource study and coordination with the SHPO was prepared in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act, and 36 CFR Part 800. The report resulting from the cultural resource field investigations has been coordinated with the SHPO. In a May 2, 1995 letter, the SHPO concurred with the District's no effect determination for this maintenance dredging project.

5.0. Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended. Section 401. A water quality certification (# 152332769) was issued by the State of Florida for the project dated 10 November 1993.

6.0. Clean Air Act of 1972, as amended. No air quality permits will be required for this project. Therefore, this Act would not be applicable.

7.0. Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended. The project has been evaluated in accordance with Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act. It has been determined that the project would have no unacceptable impacts and would be consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Plan (Appendix III). In accordance with the 1979 Memorandum of Understanding and the 1983 Addendum to the Memorandum concerning acquisition of water quality certifications and other State of Florida authorizations, all available information will be submitted to the State in lieu of an environmental impact assessment to show consistency with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Plan.

8.0. Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981. No prime or unique farmland will be impacted by implementation of this project. This act is not applicable.

9.0. Wild and Scenic River Act of 1968, as amended. No designated Wild and Scenic river reaches will be affected by project related activities. This act is not applicable.

10.0. Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended. The work was coordinated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service during the public notice period and during Section 7 Consultation pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. The West Indian manatee could be located in the project area. Standard manatee protection conditions, developed by the State of Florida, will be required during construction. If these conditions are implemented there would be no impact on these species.

11.0. Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended. There is no recreational development proposed for this project. Therefore, this Act does not apply.

12.0. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, (PL 94-580; 7 U.S.C. 100, et seq). This law has been determined not to apply as there are no items regulated under this act being disposed of or affected by this project.

13.0. Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, (PL 94-469; U.S.C. 2601, et seq. This law has been determined not to apply as there are no items regulated under this act being disposed of or affected by this project.

14.0. E.O. 11990, Protection of Wetlands. No wetlands would be impacted by the proposed maintenance dredging and disposal area construction. Therefore, this project would be in compliance with the executive order.

15.0. E.O. 11988, Floodplain Management. No riverine floodplains would be affected by this proposal. Therefore, this project would be in compliance with the executive order.

APPENDIX II

ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

6620 Southpoint Drive, South
Suite 310
Jacksonville, Florida 32216-0912

MAY 31 1995

Mr. A.J. Salem
Chief, Planning Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

FWS Log No: 4-1-93-455D

Dear Mr. Salem:

The Corps proposes to maintenance dredge the Horseshoe Cove navigation channel, Dixie County. The Corps evaluated the impact this project would have on the manatee, in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and determined no effect.

The Federal navigation channel is 75 feet wide and approximately 1.75 miles long. The authorized depth is minus six feet. As a result of the March 1993 "Storm of the Century", the channel silted in and requires dredging. The dredged material will be deposited in a 40-acre upland disposal site northeast of Horseshoe Beach.

Based on the information provided by the Corps, the disposal site is an upland area characterized as a pine forest with oak and holly and an understory of shiny blueberry, rosemary and chalky bluestem. While the habitat may be suitable for the federally threatened Florida scrub jay, we do not have any record of this species in Dixie County.

There is no submerged aquatic vegetation in the channel. Grassbeds are found outside of the channel. We have little information on manatee distribution within this general area. It is possible that manatees use this channel to access grassbeds, but we have no record of boat-related manatee mortality.

Based on our review of this project, the Service believes the project is not likely to adversely affect the manatee. We recommend that the standard manatee construction precautions be

included as conditions in the contract, and that the contractor be required to submit to our office a copy of the manatee sighting report.

Although this does not represent a Biological Opinion as described in Section 7 of the Act, it does fulfill the requirements of the Act and no further action is required. If modifications are made in the project or additional information becomes available on listed species, reinitiation of consultation may be required.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael M. Bentzien".

Michael M. Bentzien
Assistant Field Supervisor



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

6620 Southpoint Drive, South
Suite 310
Jacksonville, Florida 32216-0912

Handwritten: MCD / PD
CO-0

AUG 02 1993

Colonel Terrence C. Salt
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

Attn: Construction-Operations Division

FWS Log No: 4-1-93-455C
Public Notice No: PN-HC-178
Dated: July 4, 1993
Applicant: COE
County: Dixie

Dear Colonel Salt:

The Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the information in the referenced public notice. Our comments are submitted in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended.

The Army Corps of Engineers has proposed work which consists of removing shoal material from the Federal Channel to obtain a depth of 7 feet, project depth plus one foot for advanced maintenance. Approximately 120,000 cubic yards of silt and silty sand will be excavated. Material will be pumped/placed at a diked upland disposal site.

The Corps has initiated consultation with the Service and National Marine Fisheries Service for the West Indian Manatee and five species of sea turtles. We would like to point out that the Service provided a Jeopardy Biological Opinion (4-1-85-129) for proposed dredging by the Corps for Alligator Pass in Dixie County in 1985. However, it appears from a preliminary review that this project does not have the same potential for impacts to the manatee, since Horseshoe Cove is located in a less sensitive area further north on the coast of Dixie County.

Since a preliminary environmental assessment is being prepared for this project, the Service will look forward to reviewing this document prior to providing the final report. If you have any further questions, please contact Candace Martino at 904-232-2580.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature: Michael M. Bentzien

Michael M. Bentzien
Assistant Field Supervisor

August 16, 1993

Planning Division
Environmental Branch

Mr. Charles A. Oravetz
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
9450 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

Dear Mr. Oravetz:

This is in reference to the proposed maintenance dredging of the federal navigation channel at Horseshoe Cove and upland placement of dredged material (Figure 1). It is likely that only clamshell or pipeline dredges will be used.

We have conducted several field investigations of the project area, one in conjunction with the Florida Marine Patrol (FMP) and the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission. Horseshoe Cove is a relatively shallow area on the Gulf coast. The navigation channel was originally constructed through limestone bedrock and bottom sediments. No maintenance dredging has occurred in the last 20 years. A commercial fishing industry including crab and shell fishing supports the Town of Horseshoe Beach. No sea turtles are thought to frequent the area.

In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and based on the field investigations, we have determined that the proposed work would have No Effect on species listed by your office as threatened or endangered. Therefore, we are requesting concurrence in this matter.

If you have any questions, contact Mr. Bill Fonferek at telephone 904-232-2803.

Sincerely,

A. J. Salem
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosure