

Written Comments

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME:

Frances Baird

352-596 4407

352-596-2527

COMMENT DIRECTED TO:

4407 Cahenta St Homewood Bch 7h

COMMENT:

I want to be notified when you will meet with us again. So we can form a committee now. I will get a person from Every Club or Organization & non profit Corp please write or call me Frances Baird
352-596-2527 work
" " 4407 Home

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME:

BEN BING 4123 LILY DR. HB, FL 34607

COMMENT DIRECTED TO:

CORPS OF ENGR

COMMENT:

HOW WILL YOU GET INFO ON DAMAGES TO RECREATIONAL VESSELS?

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Gail Buck / Bernard Lextele

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Army Corps

COMMENT: Once construction begins -
How will this affect weekend boating traffic?
Will channellanes be open at all times - Will
commercial boats be able to leave & arrive safely -
Will "blind" curve be eliminated? Many times
head on collisions are near misses -

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Received 5/15/00 PD-PN
TJZ

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: DANIEL O. CARLSON 352-596-2298

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: _____

COMMENT: SUGGEST THE "DREDGE MATERIAL" BE
USED TO CONSTRUCT BREAKWATERS OR SPOIL
ISLANDS ALONG THE SOUTH WEST SIDE OF THE
NEW CHANNEL - TO SLOW SILTING AND PRE-
VENT THE CHANNEL FROM LOADING UP WITH
LARGE BUNDLES OF WEEDS. THIS COASTLINE
PRODUCES WEED BUNDLES 10' LONG AND THREE
FEET IN DIAMETER THAT ROLL WITH THE TIDE
UNTIL TRAPPED IN THE CHANNEL.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME:

John J. Coel

COMMENT DIRECTED TO:

Planning Director

COMMENT:

for approximately 10 years I have been using this existing channel. Designed as Blue line, my feelings are that the turns are hazardous regardless of depth & width. I would prefer the newly dedicated side (Green line) it is straight, good visibility and will be much safer for all boaters.

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME:

Ann Elsbough

COMMENT DIRECTED TO:

We live on Teupon Canal. This is the main channel used by commercial vessels. This is not a wide canal and at times the commercial vessels go out 2 abreast. This is a very dangerous situation. A wider canal is needed. We also need policing of the speed and wake created. It is a race for time between 3-4 AM when the shrimpers return. It creates havoc with our docks, sea walls & agree with the dredge but a speed and no wake need to be enforced. Canal has lg rock in center.

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Safety

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: DONALD P. GAMMEL

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: _____

COMMENT. USE WASTE TO ENHANCE SMALL ISLANDS,
AS PICNIC, RECREATION AREA, HOT RESTAURANT
OR COMMERCIAL AREA / SHIP HARBOR FOR
ALL BOATS.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: RICHARD GARY HARTNER FSO-USCG AUX

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: CORPS OF ENGINEERS

COMMENT. LIKE THE E1 TO E2 FOR STRAIGHT
NAVIGATION. WILL BE MUCH SAFER.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME:

Sandra Hoyt - Hernando Beach Resident

COMMENT DIRECTED TO:

Hernando Beach Channel Dredge

COMMENT:

Army Corps of Engineers

WE NEED A WIDER CANAL TO
MAKE PASSING VESSELS A SAFER ACTION
COMM. VESSELS SEEM TO HOG THE CENTER
& WE RIDE THE SHALLOW'S & ROCKS

Spoils - Hernando Beach has NO BEACH
LEAVE THE SPOILS HERE AND MAKE
A BEACH AREA FOR REC. BOATS
BY THE ISLANDS

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COMMENT CARD

NAME:

Morris W. Hoyt

COMMENT DIRECTED TO:

Hernando Beach Dredge

COMMENT:

I DON'T SUPPORT THE
SUGGESTED DREDGE ALONG CAMPANERO EXTRA
IT NEEDS ALOT OF STUDY -
THEY BOUGHT AT A MUCH LOW PRICE
AND KNEW WHAT THEY WERE BUYING -
NO GULF ACCESS EXCEPT THE LIFT
& BRIDGE - CONSIDER FLOOD OF
CAMPANERO AT HIGH TIDE!

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Delia Jackson
COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Commissioners/ Corps
COMMENT: Use the spoils to create a commercial dock area to alleviate the crush of the seafood industry on the residential areas. Upland close-by - Eagles Nest - Minnow Creek area would be an economically feasible area to pile the spoils and be developed. Direct by Channel to extreme south & one to extreme North Channel.

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COMMENT CARD

NAME: Clark Jones
COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Corps
COMMENT: Outer channels that connect the individual channels, should be cleared. These are the North/South, outer channels

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

Recreational Boats

NAME: JOHN KARPISCAK, (352) 596-7664

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: PROJECT ALIGNMENT

COMMENT. Leave alignment of channel in present form (blue line). The other alternative would create a neautical "dragstrip" with speeding jetskis and cigarette boats - a very dangerous situation.
We need speed limits on a wider, deeper channel.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

Recreational Boats

NAME: JOHN KARPISCAK (352) 596-7664

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

COMMENT. I assume that Aids to Navigation from where the channel ends, will be maintained by the County - to Daybeacon # 110. If this is so, the County needs to be aware that they will have that responsibility and will need to continue Waterways Maintenance function.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Ross Keith

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Corps of ENGINEERS

COMMENT. CHANNEL ROUTING -

AS MOST COMMERCIAL BOATS COME OUT
OF CANAL THAT MEETS WITH CHANNEL,
I THINK THIS ALIGNMENT SHOULD REMAIN.
THE BIG ARC TO THE NORTH WEST
COULD BE STRAIGHTENED OUT AND RUN
TO THE POINT WHERE YOUR PROPOSED
NEW CHANNEL INTERSECTS WITH THE PRESENT
CHANNEL. I DO NOT THINK THE NEW

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LOCATION (DOTTED LINE ON YOUR PICTURE)
IS A GOOD IDEA.

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COMMENT CARD

NAME: JOI KNEISS

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: _____

COMMENT. HERNANDO BEACH HAS A DEFINITE NEED FOR

A WIDER, DEEPER CHANNEL. THE EXISTING CHANNEL

IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS ESPECIALLY WHEN ENCOUNTERING

OTHER BOATERS, WHETHER RECREATIONAL OR COMMERCIAL.

I THINK THE STRAIGHT ALIGNMENT BEGINNING @ THE

BEACH CLUB IS THE BEST, MOST PRACTICAL & ECONOMICAL

ROUTE. MY MAIN CONCERN IS WHAT WOULD BE DONE WITH THE

SPOILS & THIS ISSUE WAS NEVER ADDRESSED.

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PER ^{PUBLIC} COMMENT I DO NOT THINK IT IS A GOOD
OR FAIR IDEA TO HAVE A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF B-B
BUSINESS OWNERS. IT DOES NOT REPRESENT THE RESIDENTIAL
HOMEOWNERS. THIS NEEDS TO BE OPEN TO EVERYONE!!

VERY
IMPORTANT

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

Recreation

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Norma Karpiscek 4137 Oxford Dr, Hernando Beach

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Spots

COMMENT. _____

Put the spoil into an area near Coon Key
and later build a commercial port for the
commercial fishing values.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: ART Kasper

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Tracy or Alberto

COMMENT. _____

1. What alternatives are being considered
for the locations of the dredge materials?
2. Are safety considerations entering into the
Project? e.g. Harbor of Refuge? Breakwaters
3. Will there be dredge considered beyond the turn-a-round
4. \$100/year/Propeller

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: STEVE KNOWLTON

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: County Commission + Coy of Engineers

COMMENT. _____

1) Align Channel From E1 to E2.

2) Need Channel Due to
Continuous Damage to
Boat Engines + Boats
Cost for prop Repairs APPROX \$200-00 YR

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Ken Kneiss

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: _____

COMMENT. I think we need a wider and
deeper channel. Straightening the channel
out is a "must do" to the danger of the
channel we have now.

The idea of pulling people ^{out}
our community to speak ^{for} us, is not
necessarily ~~the~~ our comments. Most of the
community ~~is~~ is in favor of the ~~drudge~~ dredge.

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: BILL LAMPERT

- COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Corp. of Eng.

- COMMENT. Would like to see a straight line
from BEACH Club out. This would eliminate
2 extremely sharp (90°) turns.

Spoil Disposal - Look at
ICW in DADE County.

Spoil Islands turned into
PARKS for PUBLIC USE.

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Paula Kragmick

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Hon. Bob Prudge Army Corp

COMMENT. The dredging needs to go ^{Engineers}
through. With Commercial boats
they take the middle road and you
are stuck in the shallow's trying
to keep from getting damage
to your boat. I don't support
dredging for the boatlift people in
H.B. South. They know the waterway system
they had when they bought in individual areas
they paid a full price for property
because of this bridge + boatlift

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Jean Lentini 3399 Eagle Nest Dr. HB 32807

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: _____

COMMENT. Please consider using dredge material as a breakwater/barr to keep erosion down and help slow down wave action from the SW winds -

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: DEBBIE LEO

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS.

COMMENT. IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE HERMANDO BEACH CHANNEL NEEDS TO BE WIDENED AND DEEPENED FOR SAFER NAVIGATION, BUT NOW WE NEED THE PROJECT TO BE UNDERWAY INSTEAD OF FEASIBILITY STUDIES & RESEARCH. ALSO TO BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY, OUR COON KEY ISLANDS CAN BE RECREATION JUST AS SHELL ISLAND IS TO ST. PETE BEACH (PASS-A-GRIFF). IT WOULD NOT ONLY MAKE OUR COMMUNITY VERY MUCH IMPROVED

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: RITA P. LEO

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

COMMENT. A WIDER AND DEEPER CHANNEL
IS NECESSARY TO THWART ANY
LOSS OF VESSELS, DAMAGE TO
VESSELS AND A SAFER CHANNEL
IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO
BOTH RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL
WATER TRAFFIC.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: A. MAURO

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: TRACY

COMMENT. What has to be done to say "We will
do this job

I feel the channel should take the route
to the beach club. This route is shorter
and straighter - ~~is~~ which should be
safer and cheaper.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: MARIC T. McMULLIN

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: _____

COMMENT. COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY INCLUDES THINGS BESIDES
FISHING FLEETS SUCH AS PLEASURE BOAT MARINAS, REPAIR YARDS,
FUEL DOCKS, DRY STACK STORAGE ETC. ; THIS IS A FACT I SURE
YOU KNOW, BUT HAS OFTEN BEEN OVERLOOKED. AS FAR AS
CHANNEL ROUTE, STRAIGHTER IS ALWAYS BETTER. ONE THING THAT
HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED IS ENLARGING THE CHANNELS
ALONG THE SHORE CONNECTING THE THREE RESIDENTIAL CHANNELS

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: STOLSMAN, JEAN & RICHARD

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: CORP of ENG and COUNTY ED.

COMMENT: WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS PROJECT AND
HAVE A PREFERENCE TO ALIGNMENT # 2. THE
DREDGE MATERIALS (SPOILS) WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE
USED TO CONSTRUCT A PARKING/DOCKING AREA AND
NOT TRANSPORTED ACROSS THE ROAD TO THE SWPMOT
PARK. THIS SHOULD NEVER BE SO ELABORATE THAT IT
BECOMES TOO COST EFFECTIVE AND DESTROYS THE BEAUTY
OF THIS PROJECT. IT WILL BE APPRECIATED IF YOU CAN

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make known to the public. (H. J. ...
Result)

Please DO NOT IMPACT THE EXISTING MARSH OR ANY OTHER ENVIRONMENT WITH THE SPOILS PLACEMENTS

ARE IT OUT OF THE AREA - OR AWAY FROM THE MARSH!

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Tommy Jackie Swing (3266 MANGROVE DR. (352) 596-8218
HERNANDO BEACH, FL 34607)

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: ARE ANY EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC? WE'D LIKE TO SEE THEM!

COMMENT. THE MOST IMPORTANT ENTITY TONIGHT IS NOT ABLE TO SPEAK FOR ITSELF. THE ENVIRONMENT. PLEASE DO NOT DESTROY THE NATURE COAST COUNTY LEADERS USE THAT NAME (THE NATURE COAST) BUT DESTROY IT AS THEY GO ALL TOO OFTEN. THERE SHOULD BE NO IMPACT ON THE SALTWATER MARSH (ESTUARY) JUST NORTH OF YOUR "GHIJKLMN" ETC ON THE AERIAL MAP! THIS IS AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA, already being injured by boats, AIR BOATS, + PERSONAL WATERCRAFT. LARGE AREAS OF SODGRASS HAVE DIED OFF BY GOING OVER THE GRASS. BEGINNING SEALIFE IS BEING ROUTINELY KILLED, MIGRATING WATERFOWL OF ALL KINDS ARE SCARED OFF NIGHT + DAY. WE SEE REAL ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE.

PLEASE DO NOT IMPACT THIS SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL MARSH!

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Please give equal weight to environmental input. It is critical!

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

NAME: Polly Bennett

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Mr. Gonzalez

COMMENT. I'm very opposed to the proposed new, straight short cut channel to the center of Hernando Beach. The present channel should be deepened and widened. Enlarge the spoil islands with all of the spoil

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Jacksonville District

COMMENT CARD

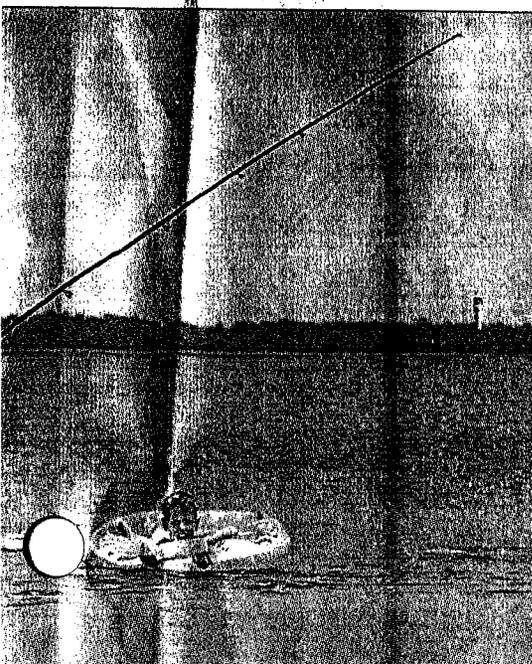
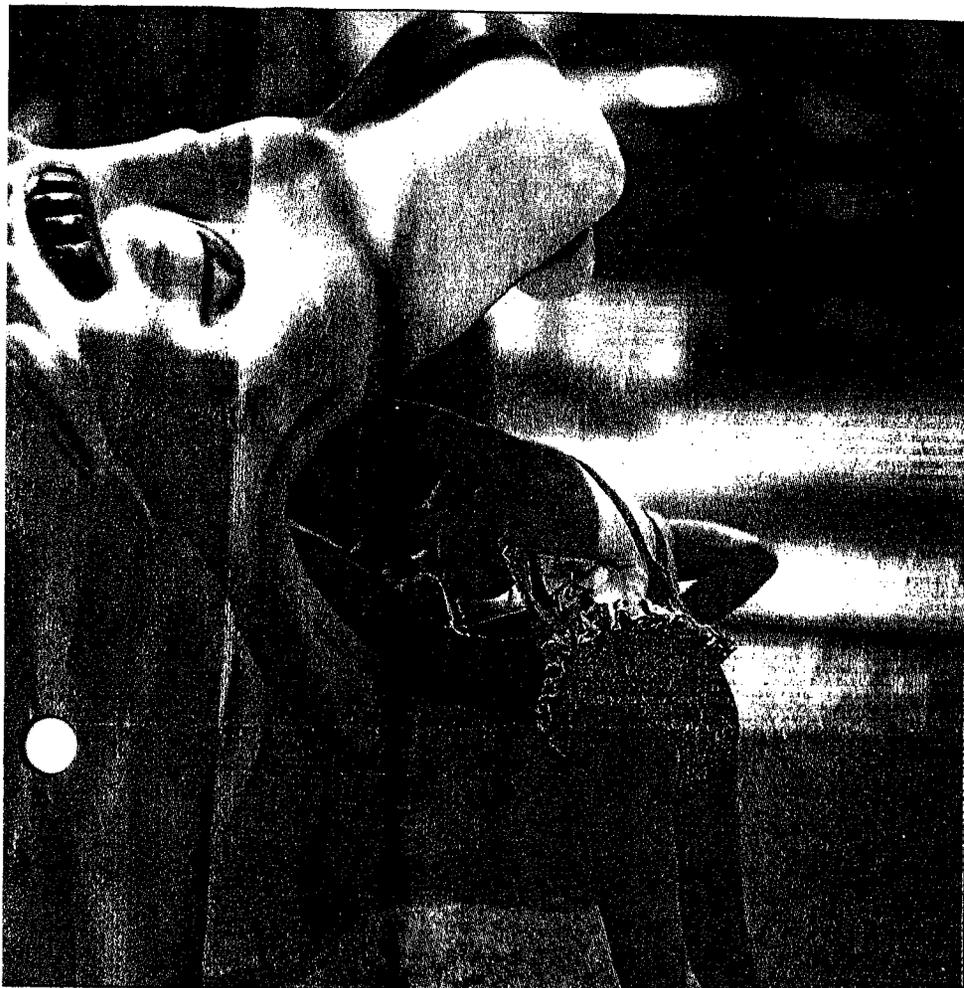
NAME: Joe Bennett

COMMENT DIRECTED TO: Alberto Gonzalez

COMMENT. Make the current channel wider and deeper. No new short cut channel. Use all of the spoil on the present spoil islands. Let's use some common sense in Hernando Beach!

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Newspaper Clippings



Weekend beach idylls

Above, Melissa Smith, 8, seems indifferent to the jaws of a playground lion at the Pine Island kids' play area. She was getting a drink Sunday from the unusual wild animal drinking fountain. Left, Peter Adamse who planned his two-week vacation to Florida from the Netherlands on the Internet, casts a fishing line as his son, Kasper, 9, watches from a floating tube.

Staff photos by Dave Casey

Mistake made on dredging?

□ Some believe the Hernando Beach channel needed dredging more than Bayport.

By LARA BRADBURN
Hernando Today Staff

HERNANDO BEACH — In 1995, professional dredgers spent three months carving a few inches of rock and silt from the bottom of Bayport Channel.

Fishermen say the county project barely scraped the surface of their navigation problems.

Federal permittees say the project didn't warrant the priority it received and that it lacked community-wide support.

County engineers and port officials admit that boats excluded from the channel due to bottom scraping were not able to use the waterway after the project's completion.

All seemed to agree that the \$600,000 in local tax money would have been better spent in Hernando Beach where a deeper channel could have enhanced the community's economic vitality.

Now, two years later, the tides have turned as the county faces yet another financial and ethical debate over dredging.

On Tuesday, the Hernando County Commission will be asked to take a critical look at deepening the Hernando Beach channel before it commits another \$830,000 that may not bring the benefits everyone is looking for.

"We haven't said this project needs to be done or doesn't need to be done," said Public Works Deputy

See DREDGE, Page A-2

agricultural, they will lose their agricultural classification — pushing them into a far higher tax bracket.

Of those people contacted, field inspector for the property appraiser's office, Kevin Johnston, estimates that he will take more than a 100 off the greenbelt rolls. Fourteen have been removed already.

Categories include citrus production, hay or vegetable, cattle grazing, timber and poultry, swine or bee production.

"I didn't know there was a difference until Alvin (Mazourek) called and told me," Mills said, adding she had not raised cattle for several years.

The difference in taxes she failed to pay is uncertain.

additional stalling. Until then, the agency may have to rely on informants.

"We get calls all the time saying he doesn't have cows on his property," Johnston said. "Most people just want others to pay their fair share."

"And that's all we (the property appraiser's office) want."

cluding a baby girl, were

BUDGET

From page A-1

tions during the fiscal year, there was a primary, off and general election included the presidential ing.

During the 1997/98 year, there will be only a p ry.

"You judge it the best

FIGHT

From page A-1

noon to repair Shaw's hand

Hatton apparently hit kicked Shaw's hands, shat his right pinky finger ar left middle finger, even Shaw passed out, the re said.

When the bartender t

BRIEFS

Exotic dancer escap police in bath

BROOKSVILLE — Police a 20-year-old Brooksville w in handcuffs at the city polic tion Monday morning whe asked to have them taken of to the bathroom.

When she got inside the room, she bolted out the back

Angela Louise Deter, Candlelight Boulevard, works at Lollipops dance cl Hudson, was charged with e and uttering a forged instr after Det. Ron Woods chase through a creek and caught

DREDGE

From page A-1

Director Steve Whitaker. "On the face of it, it looks good.

"But the last time, with the Bayport Project, the train left the station and everyone got left standing and waving goodbye," he said. "We don't want this train to leave the station until everyone's on board."

Talk of digging the Hernando Beach Channel deeper has been around for decades.

More than 60 commercial vessels are believed to use the channel; thousands more recreational boats also use it.

The more use the channel gets, the more dangerous it becomes.

County officials describe the channel as "narrow, shallow and difficult to navigate."

"Small pleasure craft are often imperiled by larger pleasure and commercial boats," a county report states. "Hulls and props are frequently damaged when operating at low tide."

The county wants to dredge the channel about six inches or so to ease navigational problems. So far, the federal government supports the effort.

The Army Corps of Engineers agreed in January to perform a

feasibility study. Rep. Karen Thurman, D. Dunnellon, got the corps to pitch in \$100,000 toward the study's cost.

In order to meet the corps' criteria, however, the project must provide some commercial benefits. The full economic benefits are uncertain; the recreational merits are more sure.

That leaves county officials struggling with a do-or-die financial struggle because this project comes with a no-quit clause.

In order to satisfy the corps' requirements, the county must provide a financial plan that demonstrates its ability to implement the full project.

That means if the county fails to carry the project through, it could be forced to reimburse the federal government for its expenses.

Although the concept of dredging seems to have support at the courthouse — Commissioners Ray Lossing and Paul Sullivan have previously voiced their support — finding an extra \$830,000 over the next three years may not be

possible.

"I don't know that we have that kind of money sitting around," said Commissioner Nancy Robinson. "There are a lot of groups asking for money right now. So obviously, every penny spent needs to be in the best interest of the entire community."

At the same time, Robinson said she recognized the economic impact such a project could have by enhancing the area's commercial fortitude.

She also recognizes that "any project you do for a unique purpose obviously has positive run off." In this case, the run-off would be safer recreational boating, she said.

There has been some mention of using recreational fees to supplement the project since large boaters would benefit greatly from a deeper channel.

To do that, however, would be to admit that the merits of the project do not solely rest on commercial use, but recreational use as well.

It is not known whether the Army Corps would accept the use of recreational boating fees to supplement the project since the federal focus is to enhance commercial use. Robinson said she would ask the corps that at an upcoming meeting.



Robinson

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by IVAN MENCHELL



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HERNANDO TODAY
7-19-97

Editorial

\$830,000 too much to spend on dredge

Should we spend \$830,000 to dredge the Hernando Beach channel?

Direct benefit of the dredging would accrue to 63 commercial boat owners in west Hernando. For most taxpayers in the county, a deeper channel at Hernando Beach is meaningless.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS don't want to slight the commercial fishing business but neither do they want to spend money recklessly in the face of a tight budget year.

The commissioners are buying some time in putting off a decision until after an August 4 public hearing. Holding the hearing at Hernando Beach will almost assure that a pro-dredging crowd will show up. It will likely tout the fact that the federal government is kicking in \$2.2 million in the form of a grant.

"All the county has to do is pay \$830,000 and we'll have a deeper channel," the proponents will say.

THE HEARING, as they say in Chicago, will be "packed." That means the "no" votes will not be heard over the din of "give us a deeper channel."

We're not against deeper gulf channels; they are needed especially by larger fishing vessels. But for most recreational boaters, the crisis of dragging bottom is not too serious.

We doubt if it's worth strapping the county with an \$830,000 bill despite the Army Corps of Engineers assessment that "this is a good project."

Commission's has 'out there' attitude toward coastal area

When Commissioner Robinson referred to spending dollars "out there," she aptly described the prevailing attitude towards us Martians "out there." If a \$2.2 million federal grant was earmarked for Brooksville, the commission would figure out a way to get that free money.

Like it or not, when the media makes reference to our "nature coast," it means just that. Unfortunately, the typical visitor's reaction to our county is formed by what they confront on the western end — the "coast" — same as any other waterfront county in Florida.

Unfortunately, our elected officials made the same mistake in underestimating the potential of the Weekiwachee Preserve "out there" in the beach area. They were shocked to see so many people at the opening ceremonies. (This place is such a well-kept secret that some showed up at our new beautifully-designed county dump next to the Preserve thinking "this must be the place.")

Any vision we have of attracting high-tech business, along with its taxpaying employees, depends upon an integrated vision of our coastal area. Whatever, the plan must be in keeping with the overall strategy of low environmental impact coupled with capitalizing on the natural beauty of this entire area.

We don't want to be just another honky-tonk place in Florida fully endowed with bars and T-shirt shops. (Ironically, many of the old-timers on the coast have mixed feelings about making the channel navigable. They are concerned that it would precipitate an economic renaissance.)

Hernando County is luckier than most, since very little attention has been paid to the coastal area. It isn't really a question of costly rebuilding of a run-down waterfront area, since there never was any major public or private construction of consequence in the first place. The centerpiece of any meaningful future development along this nature coast would be the dredging of the channel.

John B. Reiniers
Hernando Beach

August 2, 1997
Saturday, August

Letters to the editor

14-year old supports curfew, says parents need to tell teens 'no'

It's amazing how many adults realize the problem with teens today.

What's even more amazing is the amount of parents that see the problem in every other child but their own. This is an article about how another teen

Dredge from Page 1

McClary said. She had hoped to hear about financial burdens created for fishermen by the channel, which many think is dangerously narrow and shallow.

"We cannot recommend federal involvement unless the benefits are at least 50 percent commercial," she said. "We like to have two-thirds."

But the half-dozen fishermen who did make the meeting presented a long list of financial setbacks and safety hazards they say are routinely caused by the channel.

In addition to getting stranded at low tide, the channel's meandering route and rocky bottom were issues that came up repeatedly during the two-hour meeting. The fishermen said propellers often break on rocks hidden below the water's surface, leading to high repair bills.

Several mentioned navigational dangers associated with fog and storms.

"You can get through there if you know what you're doing," said Tom Kelley, a shrimp who has been working Hernando Beach for three years. "But you've got to be a really experienced captain."

And gauging the channel's water level is vital, he said.

"Whenever the tide's high, you've got to come in," Kelley said. "When it's low, you've got to stay out or just keep working."

For fishermen, returning late translates to lost business, not to mention increased expenses, especially in light of the recent rise in fuel costs, Saittis said.

Fuel bills skyrocket when boats are forced to drop anchor and idle their engines because of extreme low tides. Trucks wait at the docks to carry their live catch to bait shops across the state.

Meanwhile, captains have to spend extra time on the water, leaving them too tired to start again the next afternoon, said Steve Geise, who owns several fishing boats.

"The channel is just really restrictive and has created some unique problems for people in this area," he said.

Dan Carlson, who fishes for grouper and snapper, said he had to buy a smaller boat because the channel often is too shallow to accommodate his 31-foot boat at low tide.

"Many days I had to cancel," he said.

One cost that is hard to measure, Saittis said, is the toll taken on the fishing industry by a county

ordinance set to go into effect in August prohibiting commercial fishing boats longer than 26 feet from docking in residential zones.

So far, six operators have either moved or sold their boats in anticipation of the new law, Saittis said.

"That means they're no longer part of the industry and won't be counted by the Army Corps," he said. "Come August there's going to be even less."

Meanwhile, the marine council is battling hard feelings caused by the ordinance in an effort to get fishermen to cooperate with the feasibility study, Saittis said.

"Naturally a lot of these guys have a chip on their shoulder," he said.

But the dredge, if approved, would ease many of the fishermen's concerns, Saittis added.

"You'd be able to go in and out at any time," he said. "You could run half-day trips without planning around the tides."

McClary said she would meet with the fishermen again next month before a public meeting scheduled for May 8 in Hernando Beach to discuss the project.

"The more data I have, the better my estimate of benefits is," she said. "We want to be able to save them time and money."

Meeting probes channel depth

■ Officials wanted to hear from fishermen about the Hernando Beach Channel. But low water stranded many.

By JENNIFER FARRELL
Times Staff Writer

HERNANDO BEACH — It was supposed to have been their chance to be heard. In the end, their absence may have strengthened their case.

Set for 11 a.m. Thursday, the meeting with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives was arranged so commercial fishing operators could help the cause for the proposed dredge of the Hernando Beach Channel.

By noon, only a handful of the 45 fishermen planning to attend had showed up.

The problem, said Gov. John Saittis, head of the Hernando County Marine Industry Council, was that a line of boats had been stranded for nearly four hours that morning after running into shallow water in the channel.

"They've stuck in the Gulf," he said. "They got stuck at low tide."

For Betty McClary, a regional economist with the Corps of Engineers, the point was well-taken.

She had gone to Hernando Beach seeking comment from fishermen as part of a study to determine the feasibility of the \$44-million project.

For the dredging to move forward, at least half its impact must benefit commercial in-

Please see DREDGE Page 2

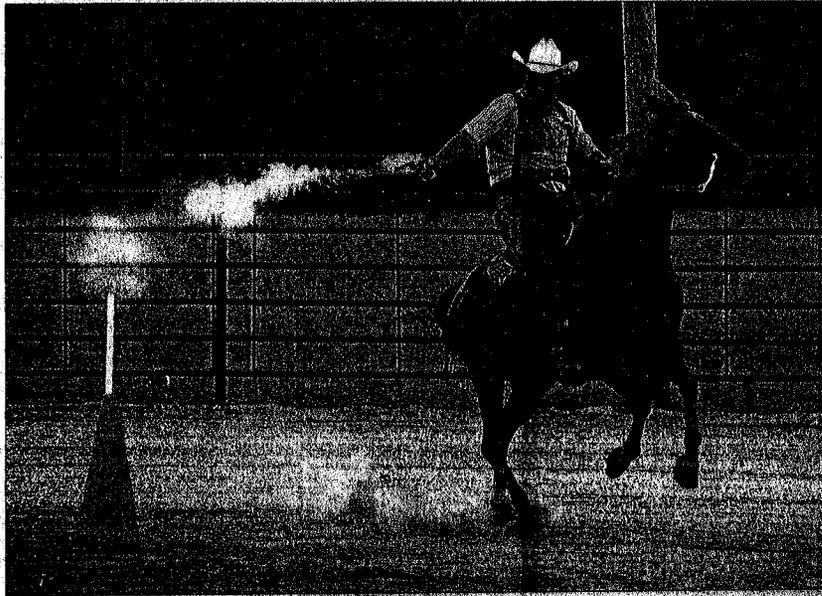
HERNANDO TODAY

NEWSPAPER

♦ <http://www.hernandotoday.com>

HERNANDO COUNTY'S OWN DAILY NEWSPAPER 50 CENTS

SUNDAY, MAY 14, 2000



ABOVE: Dennis Cisek, 42, of Brooksville rides a six-year-old quarterhorse as they run the course that consists of balloons supported by pylons. Because they use blank ammunition, the riders must get close to their targets. It's the burning gun powder that pops the balloons. BELOW: Mike Nickerson, the founder of the Brooksville chapter of the mounted cowboy action shooting group, loads one of his pistols with blank ammunition prior to running the course.

'Real quick and action-packed'

□ Cowboys say this new sport is one of the fastest growing equine activities in the nation right now. There are currently two clubs in Florida.

By PAUL CATALA
Hernando Today staff

BROOKSVILLE — Wearing cowboy hats, boots and spurs, they each pack a .45 caliber six gun. They're out on the range and looking for the enemy, tied to sticks and blowing in the

Hernando County, helium gas, that is.

Called mounted cowboy action shooting, the sport has taken a hoof-hold in Brooksville. An equestrian sport, action shooting combines elements of old-time wild west



Corps moving ahead with its dredge project

□ Instead of rancor and disruption, ideas emerge at a meeting Monday night in Hernando Beach.

By LARA BRADBURN
Hernando Today staff

HERNANDO BEACH — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers launched an investigation last week to document financial damage caused by the shallowness and poor condition of the Hernando Beach access channel.

The agency needs the information before it can support a plan to make the channel deeper and wider.

Corps officials have for three years supported the project they contend has the highest potential for economic benefit of any coastal project in Florida. And at a public meeting Monday night, project managers reaffirmed their commitment as long as the project continues to meet certain financial criteria.

To date, Corps officials have presumed that the Hernando Beach Channel qualifies for federal aid based on a preliminary review of the community's seafood-related activity.

However, Corps Economist Becky McClary said damage estimates must be documented to verify the project's potential benefit to boaters.

If the channel is reconfigured, damage levels should decrease, she said, saving boaters millions of dollars over the life of the dredge.

"The benefits of doing the channel improvement is to eliminate the extra costs you guys are incurring," McClary told members of the Marine Council last week. "When you hit bottom, that costs you money. When you can't get out and do your job because the water is too low, that's extra money this lousy channel costs you."

"That's why the (elimination of those) additional costs are considered benefits," McClary said.

Benefits are measured by calculating the amount of financial loss attributed to the channel's poor condition. That includes bent props, cracked hulls or lost wages resulting from a fishing boat that has run aground.

The Corps is interested in gathering damage information from both the recreational and

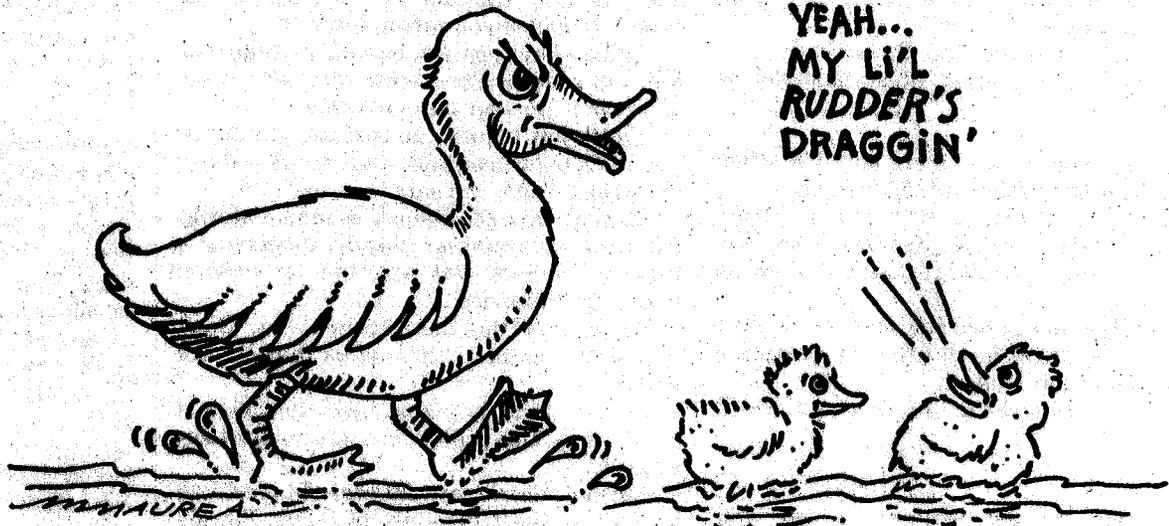
See DREDGING, Page A-2

Oak Hill Hospital visionary, Vincent

VIEW POINT

TODAY

I CERTAINLY HOPE THEY DREDGE
THE HERNANDO BEACH CANALS! IT'S
WAY TOO *SHALLOW* AROUND HERE!!



HERNANDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA
JANUARY 16, 2001

1:30 P.M. History of Hernando Beach Dredge Project

Corps proposes uses for dredged material

■ Among the ideas: using big rocks to shore up artificial fishing reefs and piling sandy material to create a new beach.

By JENNIFER FARRELL
Times Staff Writer

After years of study, officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have come up with a four-pronged plan to use spoils from the proposed Hernando Beach Channel dredging.

Under consideration since 1997, the \$4-million project hinges on the corps' long-term feasibility study, the first draft of which is scheduled to be released by the end of July. According to civil engineer Tracy Leeser, in town today to brief county commissioners on the project's status, the report will include four recommendations for disposing of material dug out of the narrow and winding channel.

First, the large rocks that have long plagued commercial fishermen and recreational boaters would be excavated and taken to the Gulf of Mexico, where they would be dropped to the bottom to augment Hernando County's artificial reef program.

Meanwhile, the sandy material would be scattered in three areas.

Some would go to fill in a 500-foot section of the existing

channel near the mouth of Minnow Creek, not far from the public boat ramp in Hernando Beach, that Leeser said will be straightened for safety reasons.

The rest of the sand would be used to create a beach on the spoil islands around Coon Key and to raise the bottom of a former mining pit at the Weekiwachee Preserve.

"People have been asking for a beach," Leeser said. "If we can find a place to put it that won't damage the environment, we could do that."

Environmentalists have questioned the impact of adding to the existing spoil islands, and Leeser said the state Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies would have a chance to review and comment on the draft report before a final version is finished by the end of the year.

As for the mining pit, Leeser said the plan to raise the bottom by 32 feet would promote plant and fish life. At 38 feet, the lake is too deep for light to penetrate to the bottom, and few fish live there.

All in all, Leeser said, the recommendations were drafted with an eye toward being both environmentally sound and economical.

"All of those things are essentially good for the environment," she said. "We're actually trying to do something with it that's good."

Please see **CORPS** Page 3

channel, bringing it to a depth of 6 to 6½ feet.

"There seems to be a lot of rock in the channel," he said. "They're going to find the easiest way of getting it out. . . . A lot still depends on where they're going to locate the spoils."

If approved, dredging could begin by next year and would last three to six months.

The federal government would pay 80 percent of the cost of the dredging, and the county would pick up the rest.

Leeser predicted corps officials would hold a public hearing on the project sometime in July.

— Staff writer Jennifer Farrell covers Spring Hill and can be reached at 848-1432.

Corps from Page 1

. . . We're looking for that win, win, win, situation."

Pat Fagan, county director of parks and recreation, said the project's cost could swell to \$6-million, depending on how much rock is found to be in the channel.

A crew from the Corps of Engineers took additional boring samples during the past few weeks to determine how much rock would need to be removed. Meanwhile, a sea grass survey under way this month represents the final piece of the feasibility study.

Fagan said the dredge will likely widen and deepen the existing

6/19/01
Julia Jackson
(352) 596-4271
Middle Beach
"deep canals"
38-50'

Editorial

Hernando Beach's options to handle its growing pains

Harmony on Hernando Beach is difficult to find these days especially when it comes to issues such as property values, homeowners' rights and where the fishing industry will be allowed to work. Rightfully, those who live in residential areas want to protect the value of their homes and not experience intrusion by fishermen.

HOWEVER, THOSE WHO PLY their living from the sea want to continue working on Hernando Beach and their claim should also be considered.

We believe there is a way to satisfy the demands of both parties.

The community is growing and with that comes some pain but there are some options we believe all concerned should study closely.

ONE OF THEM WOULD BE the expansion of the Caliente commercial strip to the other side of the canal where few homes exist. A zoning change would be necessary but if business and residential interests agreed, that wouldn't be difficult to obtain. A buffer to separate the fishing area from homes might also be a good idea to muffle noise in the early morning hours.

A better alternative would be the construction of an all-new wharf area far away from residential zones that would not only include plenty of dock space for fishermen but also restaurants and shops that would anchor around the commercial marina.

Agencies concerned about the environment probably would not block such an enterprise. A manager with the Department of Environment Protection said he would need more details but commented that the current plan being discussed is a good one.

THIS FISHERMEN'S WHARF idea has been successful in many locations and could be a lucrative tourist attraction. The site being discussed would also be ideal — near the coastline between Coon Key and the mainland.

One thing is for sure, the dredging at Hernando Beach must not be lost by running off the Army Corps of Engineers which finances part of the operation. The Corps also does the work but only if at least 50 percent of the nautical activity involves commercial use.

Without a navigable channel the fishing and recreational activity would dry up and Hernando Beach would suffer. Any plans of building a fishing village commercial area would be ludicrous as shrimpers and other fishing interests would be forced out. Sadly,

there are some people in Hernando Beach that would favor such an outcome.

WE DON'T SUPPORT THAT gloomy outlook but believe a plan can be found that would be attractive to all concerned. It might even expand the tax base, improve economic conditions and transform Hernando Beach into a prime tourist destination. You couldn't ask for a cleaner industry.

We will protect our homes

Ms. Bradburn's articles were very disappointing Sunday in that they, once again, stray from and twist the facts. The Homeowners Alliance of Hernando Beach purposely sent her a letter to state the facts, and still she cannot get them accurate in her reporting. Ms. Bradburn's style of journalism has actually misled the voters of Hernando County regarding the issue on Hernando Beach.

The new Homeowners Alliance of Hernando Beach was formed to unite the resident homeowners for the purpose of enhancing property values and quality of life. Specifically, by supporting strong code enforcement, adherence to zoning regulations and opposing any type of commercial intrusion into the residentially zoned areas (Right now, it just happens to be the illegal seafood industry operators).

We are not a political organization; but as individuals, we certainly are smart enough to endorse a candidate who shares our concerns. Paul Sullivan has proven to be an advocate of homeowners countywide.

Residents are the core of Hernando Beach. We intend to stand up and be counted in an effort to protect the value of the largest single investment most of us have — our homes.

Julia Jacks
Hernando Beach

Two options for dredging channel floated for crowd

■ The Army Corps of Engineers says more studies are needed before the long-awaited dredging can begin.

by JENNIFER FARRELL
Times Staff Writer

HERNANDO BEACH — Arthur Mauro doesn't mind sharing the water with commercial fishing boats on his way to and from the Gulf of Mexico.

But he's tired of recreational tips turning sour when low tide shrinks the already narrow and shallow channel, forcing him to edge larger vessels and risk a wreck.

"Anybody that has used a boat out here has damaged their prop," he said. "If the channel was wider, wouldn't have any problem with it at all. We could just wave very icily at each other going by."

Mauro was one of nearly 200 people who packed the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary building on Calnita Street on Monday evening for a public hearing on the proposed dredging of the Hernando Beach channel. Representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers traveled from Jacksonville seeking comment on the \$4-million project as part of a detailed feasibility study.

At issue is how best to move forward with the project, begun in 1977. But there were more questions than answers during the two-hour meeting as corps officials explained that the project is still in a study phase, with a report expected by the end of the year.

"Uncle Sam is looking to see whether he can use his money wisely on this project," Tracy Leeser, a civil engineer with the corps, told the crowd.

For the dredging to move forward, Leeser said, at least half its financial impact must benefit commercial interests. Ongoing maintenance of the channel paid for by the federal government would likewise be tied to commercial interests, she said.

So far, there are two options for the proposed dredge. The first would deepen and widen the existing channel, while the second would change its route by extending the section from Coon Key in a straight line into a residential access channel.

If the dredge is approved, Leeser said, corps engineers will make a final decision on its alignment based on environmental and cost considerations, which are still to be determined.

The feasibility study will include collecting samples to determine what materials are in the channel; a hydrographic survey that will explore the depth of the channel; aerial photos; environmental studies to make sure no archaeological or historical features will be disturbed or any endangered species harmed; assessment of hazardous, toxic and radioactive waste; engineering and design work; a benefits analysis; and cost estimates for various alternatives.

The \$665,000 cost of the study will be split evenly between the federal and county governments.

Dredging could begin by June 2002 and would last three to six months. The federal government would pay 80 percent of the cost of the dredging, and the county will pick up the rest.

Leeser said the study will also determine how much sediment must be moved and where it would be deposited.

"There are a lot of things that we're considering, but we don't have any definitive answers," Leeser said after the meeting. "It's sort of hard to go to people when you don't have anything to say."

Citing environmental concerns, officials on Tuesday all but ruled out a plan to use dredge materials to raise the bottom of a former mining pit at the Weekiwachee Preserve, said Jim Tomlinson, vice chairman of the Hernando County Port Authority.

At the meeting on Monday, Joseph Milne, a recreational boater and 15-year Hernando Beach resident, cautioned the county to proceed slowly and criticized a proposal to enhance the spoil islands around Coon Key with dredge materials.

"It's been catch-up for anybody who ever thought there was another way to do this," he said. "We ask that the county take a little bit more time. . . . Let's not touch our islands where we sit for our sunsets."

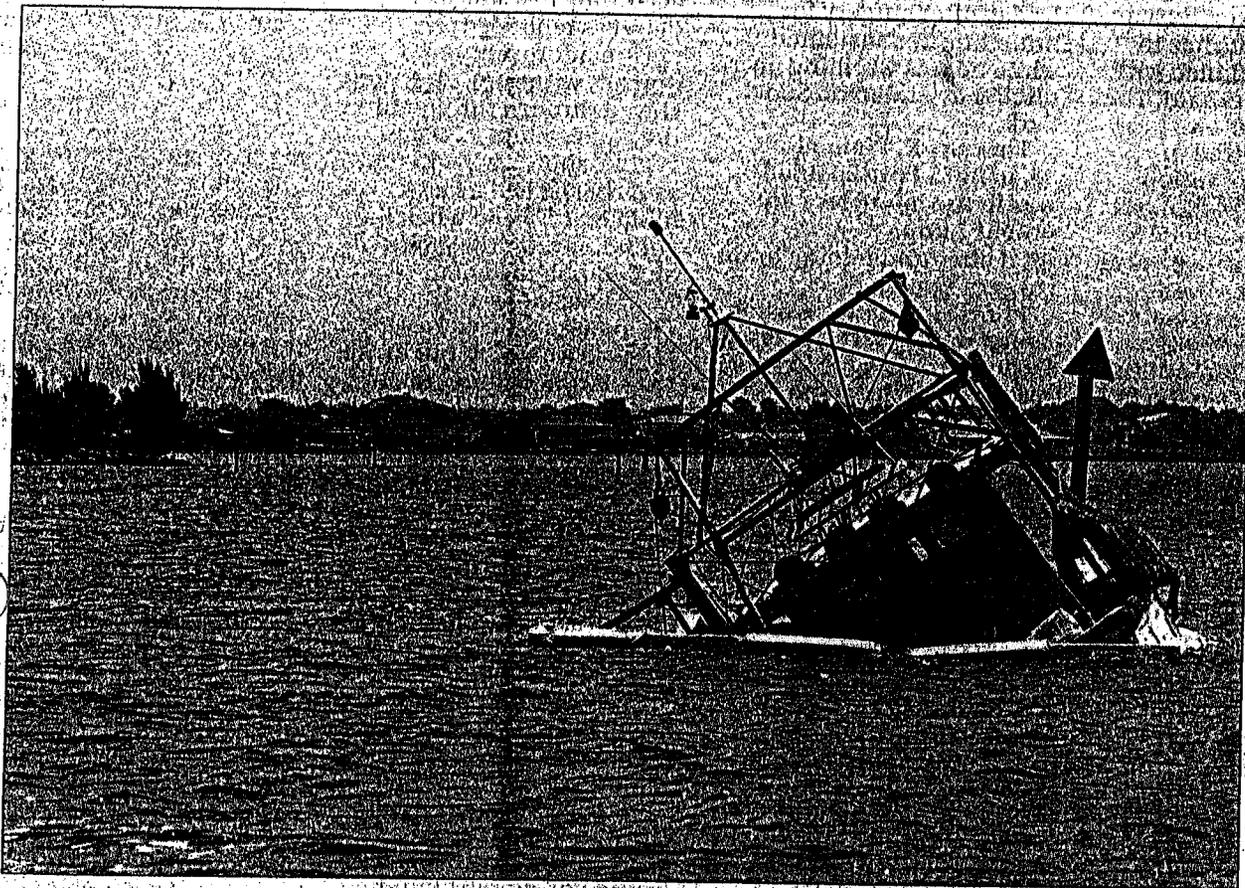
County Commission Chairman Paul Sullivan, meanwhile, lamented the slow movement on the project to date.

"Commissioners decided three years ago to fund the study," he said. "Here it is three years later. We have maps. That's just about it. Most of these boats will be sunk before they ever get to go down the channel."

To Mauro, the solution is obvious.

"Straighter has to be safer," he said. "And if it's shorter it has to be cheaper. . . . What does it take to say, 'Yes, we are doing it?'"

Coast Guard issues warning after boat runs aground



The commercial fishing boat, "Dragnet" sits on the south side of the Hernando Beach main channel with oil floats placed to limit pollution. A boom from the boat's fishing gear on its left side (center of the photo) extends into the channel, further endangering boats that use the already narrow channel. Staff photo by DAVE CASEY.

By DAVE SHELTON
dshelton@hernandotoday.com

HERNANDO BEACH — About a half-mile from shore, in the main channel leading to the Gulf of Mexico, a commercial fishing boat sways in the tide.

The Dragnet's keel is lying on the sandy bottom as waves wash over its deck full of fishing net booms. One boom points 20 feet into the channel, underwater. It was part of the commercial fishing fleet that sails from Hernando Beach.

Since Monday, the U.S. Coast Guard has been broadcasting a warning to boaters about the hazard at channel marker 26.

The boat ran aground Monday by its owner as he returned with a load of shrimp.

A Coast Guard spokesman, Petty Officer Robert Suddarth, said that while the mishap is under investigation, patrols have been in touch with the boat's captain every day. He said the captain hadn't filed a report of what happened to the boat that was due within

five days of an incident such as a sinking.

"The unit responsible for this said that the master (captain) is apparently trying to refloat it," Suddarth said.

Many boaters have contacted *Hernando Today* saying this boat is another example of why dredging and widening the channel is necessary.

County commissioners have provided funding for the project, which is in the design phase by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.