



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT  
415 RICHARD JACKSON BOULEVARD, SUITE 411  
PANAMA CITY BEACH, FLORIDA 32407

January 23, 2025

Regulatory Division  
North Permits Branch  
Panama City Permits Section

## ***PUBLIC NOTICE***

Permit Application No. SAJ-2024-05026 (SP-KAB)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §403) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344) as described below.

If you are interested in receiving additional project drawings associated with this public notice, please contact the project manager by electronic mail at [Kelly.A.Bunting@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kelly.A.Bunting@usace.army.mil).

APPLICANT: City of St. Marks  
Attention: Katherine Gatewood  
Post Office Box 296  
St. Marks, Florida 32355  
[Cityofst.marks@comcast.net](mailto:Cityofst.marks@comcast.net)

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The project would affect waters of the United States associated with the Gulf of Mexico. The project is located in state waters offshore of Wakulla County, Florida.

Directions to the site are as follows: The proposed artificial reef project, called Dog Ballard II Reef, is in the Gulf of Mexico, off Wakulla County, with the center of the site being located approximately 6.56 nautical miles (nm) on a direct bearing of 128° from the #1 red buoy in the St. Marks River Entrance Channel. Additionally, the center of the site is located 13.79 nm on a direct bearing of 102° from the #3 buoy for the Panacea Channel.

### APPROXIMATE CENTRAL COORDINATES:

Decimal Degrees format:

	Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	Centroid	29.95791°	-84.07700°
2	Northeast Corner	29.96000°	-84.07460°
3	Southeast Corner	29.95582°	-84.07460°
4	Southwest Corner	29.95582°	-84.07940°

5	Northwest Corner	29.96000°	-84.07940°
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Degrees/Decimal Minutes format:

	Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	Centroid	29° 57.475' N	84° 04.620' W
2	Northeast Corner	29° 57.600' N	84° 04.476' W
3	Southeast Corner	29° 57.349' N	84° 04.476' W
4	Southwest Corner	29° 57.349' N	84° 04.764' W
5	Northwest Corner	29° 57.600' N	84° 04.764' W

Degrees/Minutes/Seconds Format:

	Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	Centroid	29° 57' 28.502" N	84° 04' 37.208" W
2	Northeast Corner	29° 57' 36.020" N	84° 04' 28.574" W
3	Southeast Corner	29° 57' 20.984" N	84° 04' 28.574" W
4	Southwest Corner	29° 57' 20.984" N	84° 04' 45.842" W
5	Northwest Corner	29° 57' 36.020" N	84° 04' 45.842" W

## PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: Marine habitat enhancement.

Overall: Create a new artificial reef site, known as Dog Ballard II Reef, with multiple deployments of approved materials in order to enhance the marine habitat in the offshore waters of the Gulf of Mexico, off Wakulla County, Florida.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: In 2024, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Artificial Reef Program and the Organization for Artificial Reefs (OAR) assessed the site using dives and drop camera surveys. The surveys found the proposed reef site contained a varied seafloor comprised of primarily sand with areas of scattered patchy hard bottom. There are no known seagrass beds within the proposed reef site.

PROPOSED WORK: The applicant seeks a 5-year authorization to deploy approved materials within a new artificial reef site known as Dog Ballard II Reef. The proposed new site would be adjacent to an existing artificial reef site known as the Dog Ballard Reef. The proposed site would be a square site, measuring 0.25 nm on each side, encompassing 53 acres of sea floor. It is anticipated that 9 separate phases of patch reef deployments of approved reef materials would be made over the course of the permit. All reef materials would be consistent with reef materials referred in the

publication *Guidelines for Marine Artificial Reef Materials*, 2nd Edition, which was produced by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. All reef materials would also meet the expectations of the National Artificial Reef Plan, the state of Florida Artificial Reef Strategic Plan and the OAR Artificial Reef Development Plan. For the life of the permit, a total area of 25.92 acres of Gulf bottom would have new reef materials. This would account for 48.9% of the new permitted site area when completed, if completed fully. There would be a 50' buffer zone area inside the overall site borders on all sides where no materials would be deployed to ensure all reef materials are deployed within the permitted site. There would be a 200-foot separation between patch reefs. Deployed materials would be sited within bare sand areas; areas containing hard bottom resources would be avoided, which would be confirmed by divers prior to any deployment. At least a 200 foot buffer would be maintained between deployed materials and any hard bottom resources.

**DEPTH, PROFILE AND CLEARANCE:** The depth at the proposed site is -24' relative to mean low low water (MLLW). The maximum profile of any reef material would be 7'. The applicant is requesting a navigational clearance of -14' MLLW.

**AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION INFORMATION:** The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment: Materials to be deployed would be similar to those approved by previous recent Corps authorizations. A navigational clearance of -14 feet would be maintained within -24 feet of water depth at MLLW. Materials would only be deployed in areas of bare sand, and a 200 foot buffer would be maintained from any aquatic resources such as hard bottom habitat.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES:** The Corps is evaluating the undertaking for effects to historic properties as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This public notice serves to inform the public of the proposed undertaking and invites comments including those from local, State, and Federal government Agencies with respect to historic resources. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer, those federally recognized tribes with concerns in Florida and the Permit Area, and other interested parties.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** The Corps has determined the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*), Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), and giant manta ray (*Mobula birostris*) or its designated critical habitat. The Corps will request National Marine Fisheries Service concurrence with this determination pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

The Corps has determined, based on the use of *The Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, and the State of Florida Effect Determination Key for the Manatee in Florida*, that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the West Indian

manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) with the inclusion of conditions a, b, c, d, and e of the *Standard Manatee Conditions for In-water Work (2011)*.

**ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH):** This notice initiates consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service on EFH as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996. The proposal would impact approximately 53 acres of unvegetated bottom utilized by various life stages of shrimp, reef fish, stone crab and coastal migratory pelagic species in the Gulf of Mexico. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or Federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

**NAVIGATION:** The proposed activity is not located in the vicinity of a federal navigation channel.

**SECTION 408:** The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

**NOTE:** This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The jurisdictional line has been verified by Corps personnel.

**COMMENTS** regarding the potential authorization of the work proposed should be submitted in writing within 21 days from the date of this notice. Comments should be submitted via the Regulatory Request System (RRS) public notice module at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs/public-notices>. Alternatively, you may submit written comments through the Panama City Permits Section at 415 Richard Jackson Boulevard (Blvd), Suite 411, Panama City Beach, Florida 32407.

The decision whether to issue or deny this permit application will be based on the information received from this public notice and the evaluation of the probable impact to the associated waters of the United States, which can include wetlands. This is based on an analysis of the applicant's avoidance and minimization efforts for the project, as well as any compensatory mitigation proposed.

**QUESTIONS** concerning this application should be directed to the project manager, Mrs. Kelly Bunting, in writing at Panama City Permits Section, 415 Richard Jackson Blvd, Suite 411 Panama City Beach, Florida 32407; by electronic mail at [Kelly.A.Bunting@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kelly.A.Bunting@usace.army.mil); or, by telephone at (850) 763-0717, extension 2.

**IMPACT ON NATURAL RESOURCES:** Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Services, and other Federal, State, and local agencies, environmental groups, and concerned citizens generally yields pertinent environmental information that is

instrumental in determining the impact the proposed action will have on the natural resources of the area.

**EVALUATION:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act or the criteria established under authority of Section 102(a) of the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972.

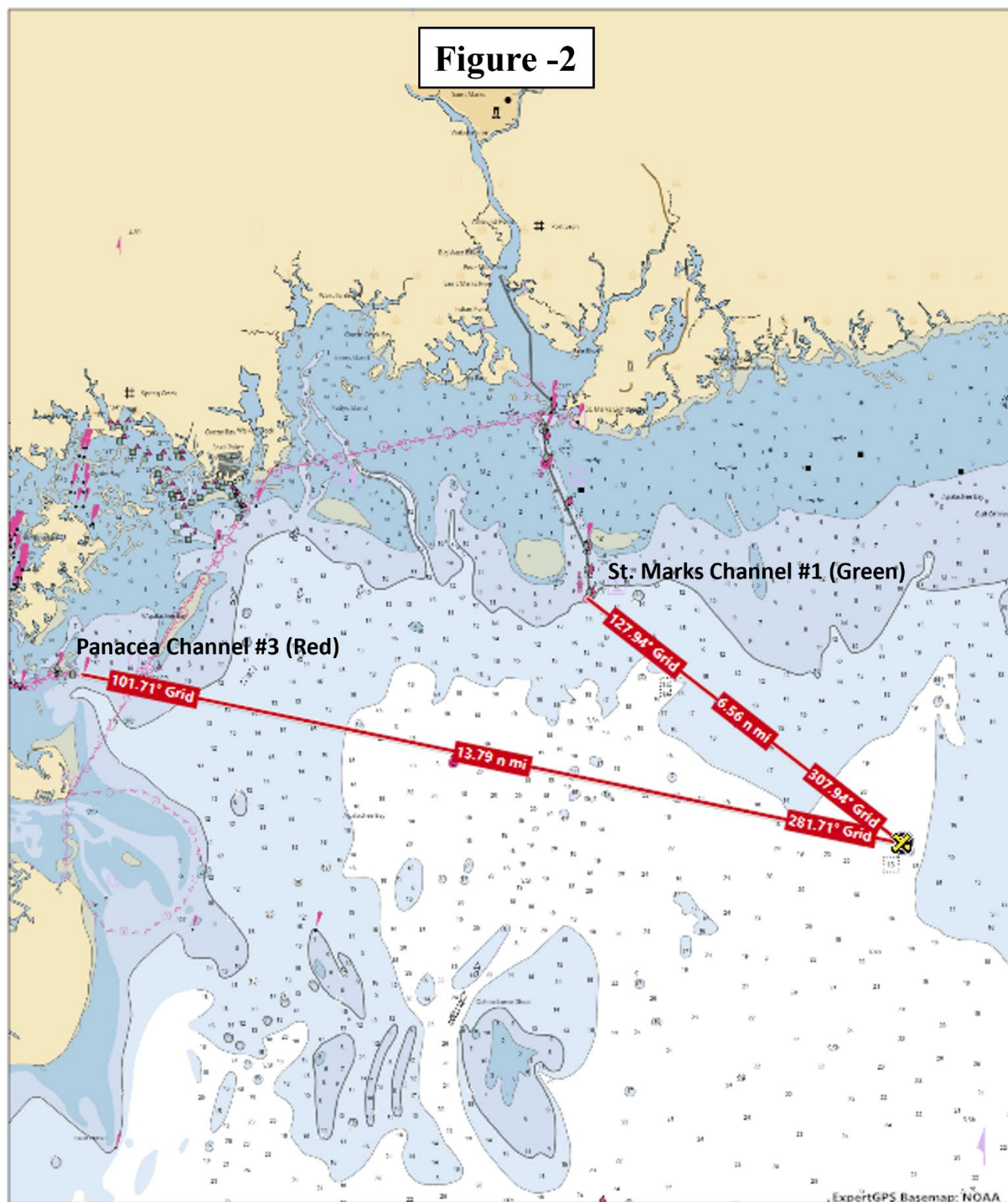
The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION:** Water Quality Certification (WQC) is required from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). WQC was granted with conditions by the FDEP on November 25, 2024.

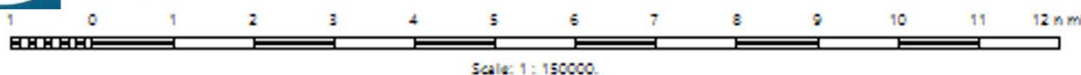
**COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY:** Coastal Zone Management Consistency (CZMA) is required and was granted by the FDEP on November 25, 2024.

**REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING:** Any person may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the designated comment period of the notice and must state the specific reasons for requesting the public hearing.

**Figure -2**

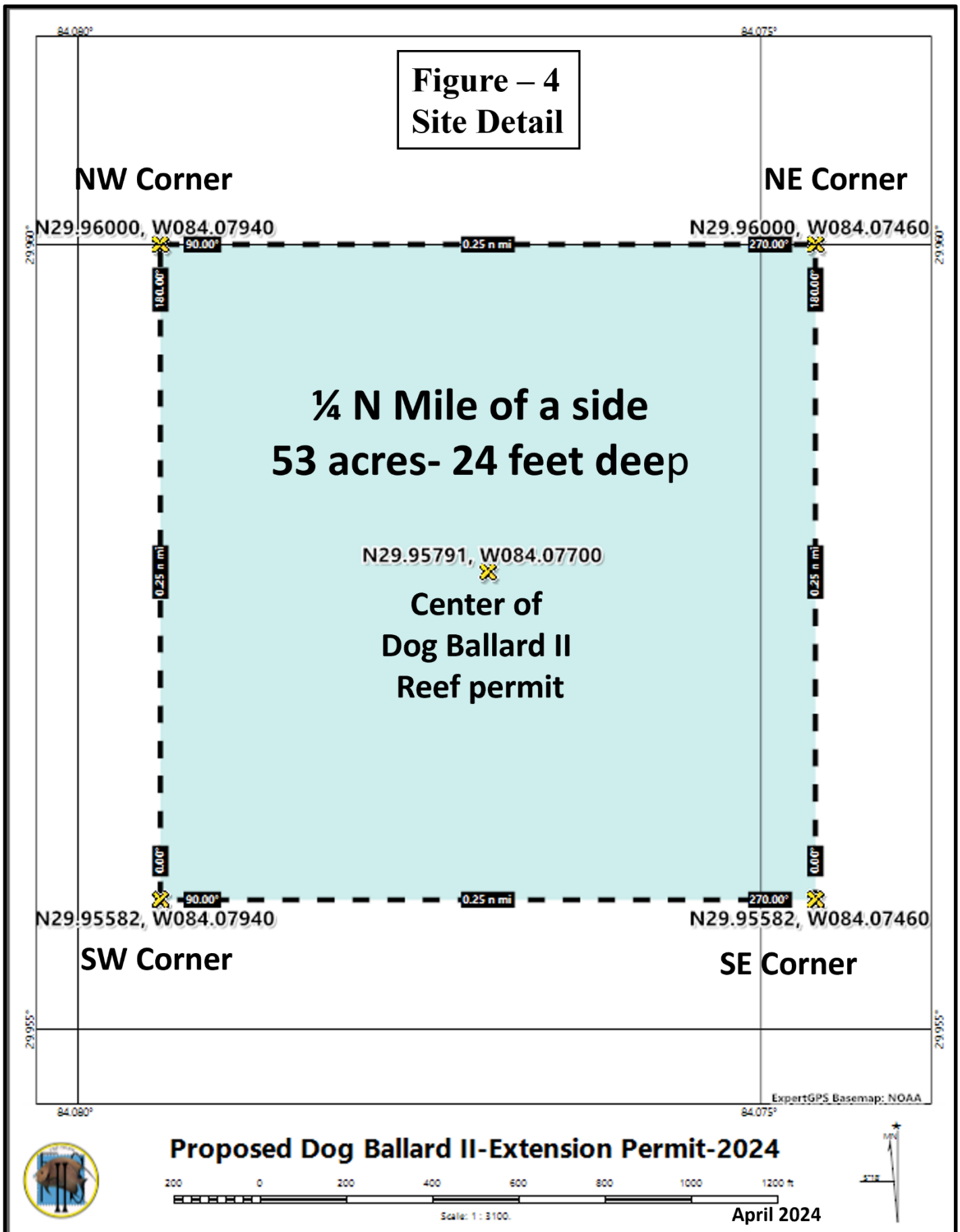


**Proposed Dog Ballard II-Extension Permit-2024**



**May - 2024**

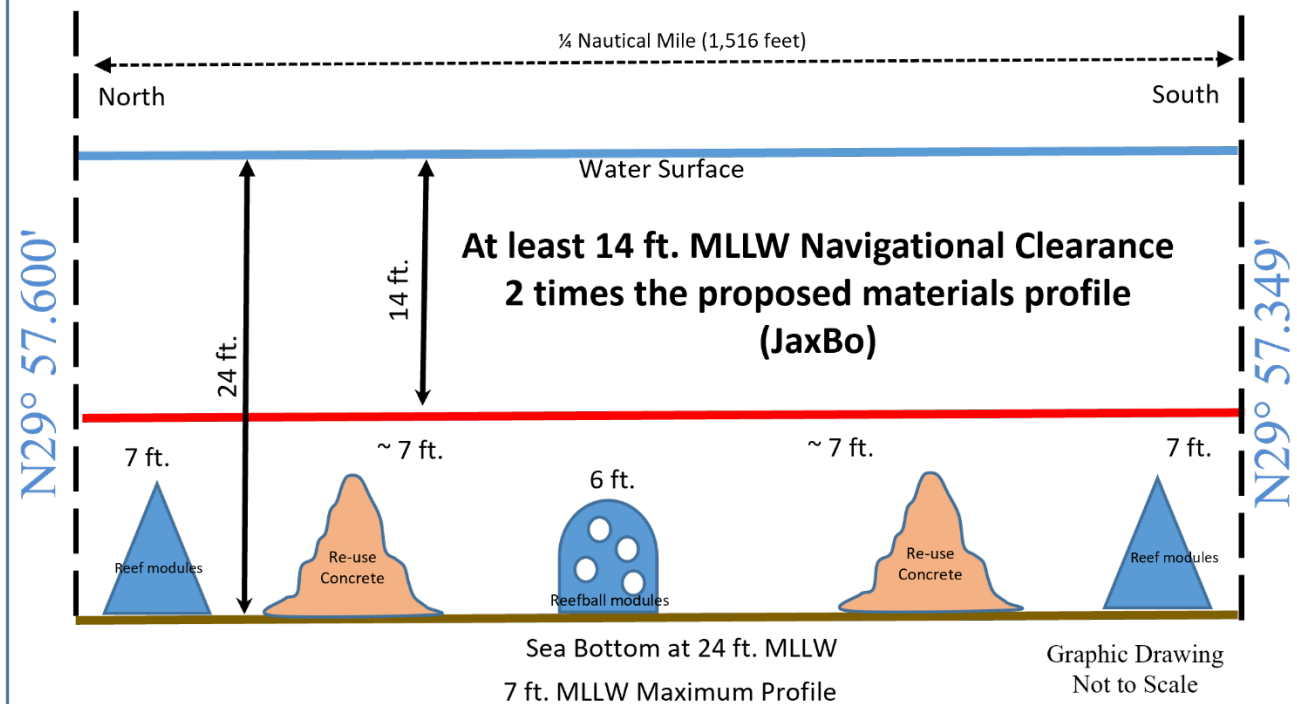
**Figure – 4  
Site Detail**





**Figure - 7**

**Dog Ballard II Artificial Reef**  
**Graphical Cross Section Drawing**  
**At least 14 feet Navigational Clearance**  
(same as nearby Dog Ballard Reef)



**Dog Ballard II Reef Site**  
**Cross Section Drawing**  
**Updated – 1/10/2025**

