



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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October 7, 2024

Department of the Army
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Seattle District
ATTN: Heather Fourie
4735 East Marginal Way South
Building 1202
Seattle, WA 98134-2388

Re: Coastal Zone Management Federal Consistency Decision for Willapa Bay Navigation Channel Maintenance Dredging and Open-water Disposal, Willapa Bay, Pacific County, Washington

Dear Heather Fourie:

On August 14, 2024, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) submitted a Consistency Determination with the Washington State Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP). The Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued a 21-day public notice on August 26, 2024, and received no comments. At Ecology's request, the Corps supplied additional information regarding potential impacts to shellfish beds on August 30, 2024.

The Corps proposes to dredge three navigation features in Willapa Bay, Washington, and dispose the dredged material at the Cape Shoalwater and/or South Channel open-water disposal locations. Sedimentation and bed load transport naturally fill features of the Willapa Bay Federal Navigation Project; dredging will return the shoaled channels to their authorized depths and function along the full width and length of each channel. The amount of material to be dredged and disposed for this maintenance project would be approximately 300,000 cubic yards (cy) per dredging event with up to four events expected to occur once every 5 years until 2038.

In the past, the Corps maintained the Willapa Bay Federal Navigation Project, but due to lack of federal funding, the Corps has deferred all maintenance dredging for over two decades. The Port of Willapa Harbor has been dredging, primarily at Bay Center and Tokeland, with its own dredge and at its own expense for the past decade. Since the Port was only able to remove

approximately 30,000 cy once every 3 years (the Corps is proposing to remove about 330,000 cy per event to maintain the authorized depths), it has been unable to maintain the project's features to their authorized depths. The Port has requested that the Corps resume maintenance dredging for the Willapa Bay Federal Navigation Project.

The Corps proposes to dredge the following three features:

1. Bay Center
 - a. Entrance Channel and Mooring Basin Access Lane: An entrance channel 40 feet wide and 3,600 feet long, and an access lane into the boat basin to the authorized depth of -10 feet Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) plus an additional 2 feet of allowable overdepth and 2 feet of advanced maintenance. An estimated 67,000 cy of accumulated sediment will be dredged per event.
 - b. Palix River Access Lane: A channel 40 feet wide and about 3,600 feet long, to the authorized depth of - 10 feet MLLW. An estimated 55,000 cy of accumulated sediment will be dredged from shoals shallower than -10 feet MLLW per event. However, this amount has the potential to change between dredge events due to the dynamic nature of the Palix River at its confluence with Willapa Bay. The Palix River thalweg can change position resulting in shifting shoals along the river and at the river's entrance. An access lane will follow the Palix River thalweg between the bay and to the Bay Center Federal navigation channel. Only shoals within that thalweg will need to be dredged to allow for safe transit of dredge, scows, and tugboats from Bay Center to the disposal sites. For this reason, a specific alignment of the access lane will be based on conditions and shoals greater than -10 feet MLLW prior to the time of dredging for any given dredging event.
2. Tokeland Entrance Channel: An entrance channel 100 feet wide and 600 feet long, to an authorized depth of -15 feet MLLW plus an additional 2 feet of allowable overdepth and 2 feet of advanced maintenance. An estimated 53,000 cy of accumulated sediment will be dredged per event.
3. Nahcotta Entrance Channel and Mooring Basin Access Lane: An entrance channel 200 feet wide and 350 feet long, and a wider mooring basin access lane approximately 1,210 feet long and 275 feet wide, to an authorized depth of -10 feet MLLW plus 2 feet of advance maintenance and 2 feet of allowable overdepth. An estimated 155,000 cy of accumulated sediment will be dredged per event.

The authorized depths will be maintained to the above-listed dimensions using mechanical/ clamshell dredging. Quantities are estimated for environmental impacts analysis and include the amount dredged for 2 feet of advance maintenance and 2 feet of allowable overdepth in any dredging episode. The work consists of clamshell dredging with a bucket holding 5-25 cy. Buckets place dredged material on a bottom-dump barge, which holds up to 4,000 cy. The dredged material will be disposed at the Cape Shoalwater and/or South Channel disposal locations. Both sites are dispersive, elliptical, subtidal/estuarine sites within Willapa

Bay flow lanes. The Cape Shoalwater site encompasses 275.5 acres. Its dimensions are 2,000 by 6,000 feet, with water depths ranging from 21 to 59 feet. The South Channel site is 3,000 by 6,000 feet (413.2 acres) with a similar depth range as the Cape Shoalwater site. Transport distance between dredge areas and the two disposal sites is approximately 3 miles for Tokeland to Cape Shoalwater and Bay Center to South Channel, and 14 miles, or 12 nautical miles for Nahcotta to South Channel. The Corps may shift the precise location of the disposal sites as the dynamic nature of Willapa Bay may alter the alignment of deep flow-lanes. A Suitability Determination for unconfined open-water disposal as determined by the Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) was recorded in February 2021. The DMMP found all material suitable for unconfined open-water/flow-lane disposal.

Pursuant to Section 307(c)(3) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 as amended, Ecology concurs with the Corps' determination that the proposed work is consistent with Washington's CZMP.

If you have any questions regarding Ecology's decision, please contact Teresa Pucylowski at teressa.pucylowski@ecy.wa.gov.

Your right to appeal

You have a right to appeal this decision to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB) within 30 days of the date of receipt. The appeal process is governed by Chapter 43.21B RCW and Chapter 371-08 WAC. "Date of receipt" is defined in RCW 43.21B.001(2).

To appeal, you must do all of the following within 30 days of the date of receipt of this decision:

- File your notice of appeal and a copy of this decision with the PCHB (see filing information below). "Filing" means actual receipt by the PCHB during regular business hours as defined in WAC 371-08-305 and -335. "Notice of appeal" is defined in WAC 371-08-340.
- Serve a copy of your notice of appeal and this decision on the Department of Ecology mail, in person, or by email (see addresses below).

You must also comply with other applicable requirements in Chapter 43.21B RCW and Chapter 371-08 WAC.

Filing an appeal

Filing with the PCHB

For the most current information regarding filing with the PCHB, visit: <https://elaho.wa.gov/> or call: 360-664-9160.

Service on Ecology

Street Addresses:

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Sincerely,



Loree' Randall, Section Manager
Aquatic Permitting & Protection Section
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program

Sent via e-mail: heather.w.fourie@usace.army.mil

E-cc: Gabija Karosas, Army Corps of Engineers
Zachary Wilson, Army Corps of Engineers
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