

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**MAINTENANCE DREDGING AT THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER**  
**NEW DISPOSAL SITE**  
**OREGON-WASHINGTON**

The proposed action is placement of dredged material from maintenance of the Mouth of the Columbia River Federal navigation entrance channel (MCR) at a new disposal site, located north of the north jetty in Fort Canby State Park on Benson Beach disposal site. This site could be used in conjunction with existing ocean disposal sites A, F, Expanded Site E and the North Jetty disposal site. Although not subject of the Environmental Assessment for this proposed action, use of the existing sites, along with the channel dredging which has undergone previous NEPA review is addressed through reference to encompass whole properties of continued maintenance of the MCR. Additionally, use of Expanded Site E was addressed in the Final Integrated Feasibility Report for Columbia River Channel Improvements and Environmental Impact Statement, August 1999. Use of the Deep Water Site, as described in the Public Notice is not being considered at this time.

Placement of dredged material at Benson Beach is a new action for the purpose of determining feasibility; costs and effectiveness of this alternative site in maintaining the MCR dredged material in the littoral system and thereby reducing shoreline erosion. If effective, placement of dredged material at Benson Beach could help reduce the need for ocean disposal in the future. The State of Washington and local governments have expressed the need for conducting this demonstration project to address beach erosion concerns.

Ocean disposal in the vicinity of the MCR is required both physically and economically to maintain deep-draft navigation of the authorized Federal channel. Existing Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Sites (ODMDS), designated by EPA in 1986, have experienced mounding of dredged material that, unless managed properly, has the potential to amplify waves and limit site capacity. EPA-Region 10 has confirmed the need for a new deep-water site designation.

Other alternatives for placement of dredged material include use of existing ODMDS and the North Jetty Site only, and no action. Disposal only at Expanded Site F and future use of the proposed Deepwater Site would not address state, local and Corps' concerns for maintaining sand within the littoral system. The North Jetty Site, Site A and the Extended Site E, although within the littoral system, may not always have sufficient capacity to meet the disposal needs for MCR navigation channel maintenance. These alternatives have been evaluated in the context of the potential ocean disposal alternatives available within the entire offshore area, along with potential upland and estuarine disposal, in the 1999 EIS prepared for the Columbia River Channel Improvement Study. That evaluation narrowed the range of alternative disposal sites to those under discussion in this assessment. The no action alternative would result in unacceptable channel shoaling and creation of hazardous navigation conditions for commercial shipping traffic.

Potential environmental impacts include: burial of benthic organisms and disturbance to demersal species habitat; potential conflict with commercial fishing activity; and disruption of

recreation activity at Benson Beach.

Future use of the proposed Deepwater Site, along with Expanded Site E and North Jetty Site, would ultimately replace ODMDS A, B and F. With time, the replaced sites would revert to pre-disposal conditions. Maximum use of the North Jetty and Expanded Site E would be exercised to maintain as much material as possible within the littoral system. If the Benson Beach proposal proves effective, the use of the offshore sites would be further reduced.

Selection of the disposal sites is based on avoidance or minimizing impacts to important resources and uses. A Management and Monitoring Plan has been prepared for the MCR disposal sites which outlines procedures for site monitoring and coordination with agencies and mariner groups. A dredged material disposal site annual use plan is being prepared for 2002.

Many public and agency comments were received in response to the public notice issued for this work. Many of the same comments were heard at a joint Corps and State of Oregon and Washington public hearing. This action has also been evaluated under all applicable environmental laws and regulations. The States of Oregon and Washington have outlined conditions for use of the Benson Beach site and other existing sites in their Coastal Zone Management and Clean Water Act reviews. The comments and conditions have been considered in this decision.

I have considered the information summarized above and the information contained in the Environmental Assessment and related documents prepared for this action and have determined that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

/Signed/  
RANDALL J. BUTLER  
Colonel, EN  
Commanding