



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Portland District
Operations Division
PO Box 2946
Portland, OR 97208-2946

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: July 21, 2006

CLOSING DATE: August 21, 2006

REFERENCE NUMBER: NWPOD-CRA-F-06-001
Channel Maintenance at the Mouth of the Columbia River

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District, is seeking renewal of water quality certifications previously issued by the states of Oregon and Washington under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. These certifications are sought in support of maintenance of the navigation channel at the Mouth of the Columbia River (MCR).

PURPOSE: To maintain the Mouth of the Columbia River (MCR) Navigation Channel at its Federally authorized depths of -55 and -48 feet Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) 2,640 feet wide, by removing restricting shoals consisting of naturally occurring sedimentary materials. For this action, up to 5 feet of allowable advanced maintenance dredging may be accomplished in order to ensure authorized project depth is available as long as possible between dredging cycles. The MCR federal navigation project was authorized to provide an entrance channel which would allow the upriver channel to be fully utilized; decrease tide-caused delays for commercial ships crossing the bar; provide improved safety by reducing the possibility of commercial ship grounding, and provide a channel allowing for compatible use by commercial and non-commercial vessels. Material dredged from the channel is placed in a Clean Water Act Site south of the North Jetty and in two Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Sites (ODMDS) designated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

The Federal navigation channel that connects the Pacific Ocean with the Columbia River serves as passageway for a variety of user groups. The Columbia River bar is considered one of the most treacherous in the world. By maintaining the channel to its authorized depth, the work ensures safer passage for commercial and recreational vessels. In addition to the deep-draft cargo ships that require the 55-foot depth of the channel to safely move commodities and consumer goods between domestic and international ports, the channel also provides a safe path for thousands of vessels – both commercial and recreational – each year.

The navigation channel is important to the regional and national economy. The Port of Portland estimates more than 40,000 jobs along the lower Columbia River are dependent upon seaport activity. On average, marine activity in the lower Columbia River creates \$1.8 billion in personal income. Seaport activity in the regions of the lower Columbia generates \$208 million in state and local tax revenue. About 1,000 firms export goods via the lower Columbia River.

LOCATION: Mouth of the Columbia River, Pacific County, Washington, and Clatsop County,

Oregon.

WORK: The proposed work involves the dredging and redistribution of sedimentary material from the MCR Federal navigation project channel. The authorized MCR channel is 2,640 feet wide and extends from deep water in the ocean, at approximately River Mile (RM) -3+00 upstream to RM 3+00. The MCR channel connects with the existing Columbia River channel at RM 3+00. The northern 2,000 feet is maintained to a depth of -55 feet Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) and the southern 640 feet is maintained to -48 feet MLLW. Up to 5 feet of advanced maintenance dredging is performed to ensure project depth is available as long as possible between dredging cycles. To achieve the 5 feet of necessary advanced maintenance material, in some locations 1-2 feet of additional depth may be removed or otherwise disturbed during the dredging process. An average of 4 to 5 million cubic yards per year is dredged at the project. Hydrographic surveys in the spring (normally in May) reveal how much material has accumulated in the channel and what disposal capacity is available in the dredged material disposal sites. An Annual Use Plan is developed each year which establishes each year's operation and day-to-day decision framework and is provided to USEPA for approval. The plan is also coordinated with Washington Department of Ecology, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development and shared with the public.

The MCR must be dredged by hopper dredge due to the wave and current conditions encountered at the project. The Corps of Engineers considers the clean sand dredged at the MCR project an important resource and will utilize beneficial use alternatives to the maximum extent practicable under available authorities and funding. The Corps also recognizes the environmental and other effects (consequences) of dredging and placement of large quantities of dredged material and places great emphasis on balancing all interests in maintaining the project. These interests include providing safe navigation for national and international commerce, keeping sand in the littoral system, minimizing environmental impacts, and minimizing potential wave effects and interference with navigation.

The following dredged material placement areas (Figure 1) will be used to accomplish this work:

North Jetty Site. This beneficial use Clean Water Act site is near the MCR North Jetty and closely matches a historical placement site. The District reoccupied this site starting in 1999 to protect the jetty from potential undermining. Approximately 100,000 to 500,000 cubic yards (cyds) of sand will be placed in this site each year.

Shallow Water Site. This Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) is designated by USEPA under Section 102 of the MRPSA. This site is located off the end of the North Jetty and is highly dispersive. Of the 23 million cyds that has been placed in this site since 1997, less than 10% remains within the site. Most of the material dispersing from this site moves onto the ebb tidal shoal and to the north and northwest into the SW Washington littoral cell. The Corps and USEPA actively manage this site to meet competing objectives. These objectives are to feed material to the Peacock Spit area, feed the littoral drift to the north, shore up the shoal that the

jetty rests upon and minimize adverse wave amplifications.

Deep Water Site. This ODMDS is designated by USEPA under Section 102 of the MPRSA and is located approximately six miles from RM 0 off the coast of Oregon. Use of the site will be managed to allow maximum use of the other disposal sites to the maximum extent practicable or when weather or sea conditions preclude the safe use of the other disposal sites.

The proposed dredged material placement sites will be used to achieve the maximum benefit possible, within the limits of available funding and authorities, while maintaining the MCR project to authorized depth, minimizing potential impacts and minimizing conflicts with other uses of the ocean.

Samples of sediments collected from the MCR project in 2000 were found to be clean marine sand suitable for unconfined in-water placement under criteria promulgated pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act.

RELATED WORK: The Corps also maintains the Columbia and Lower Willamette River Federal navigation channel upstream of the MCR, the authorized channels in to Baker Bay, Chinook, Hammond and Skipanon as well as other authorized channels in the vicinity of the MCR.

Washington Littoral Drift Restoration (Benson Beach), WA. The Corps is continuing to work with Pacific County and the Southwest Washington Coastal Communities to facilitate placement of material at Benson Beach to restore material to the SW Washington Littoral Drift. Public Notice CENWP-PM-E-06-02 for this demonstration project was issued on June 5, 2006.

Nearshore Placement, South of the South Jetty, OR. A Nearshore Placement, South of the South Jetty, Collaborative Group convened under the auspices of the Lower Columbia Solutions Group, is working to develop a potential nearshore beneficial use site on the ocean side of the South Jetty to assist long-term stability of that jetty. The beneficial purpose of this placement would be to restore sand in an area that would protect the South Jetty from adverse wave conditions. During September 2005, a research disposal of 34,254 cubic yards of material was placed in this location by the Federal Dredge Essayons under an MPRSA Section 102 research permit issued by USEPA to the Port of Astoria/Lower Columbia River Solutions Group. A report on this effort is located at <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/n/projects/mcr/pps2006.asp>. In FY 2006, the Corps received funding under Regional Sediment Management to continue this work. Currently plans are proceeding to study wave amplification of potential placement scenarios, modeling of sediment fate for material placed in this area, and potential disposal impacts to razor clam populations.

LONG TERM PLANNING: The Corps of Engineers, the States of Oregon and Washington, and stakeholder groups including the Southwest Washington Coastal Communities and the Lower Columbia Solutions Group are working collaboratively to develop beneficial use sites in

the MCR Littoral Cell area and the Lower Columbia River. Under Regional Sediment Management, the Corps is currently working with these organizations as well as others to find cost-effective and beneficial uses for MCR dredged material.

CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA) COMPLIANCE: Maintenance of the MCR project has been ongoing for many years and the States of Washington and Oregon have issued numerous Water Quality Certifications for this activity. Water Quality certification under Section 401 of the CWA were last issued by the State of Oregon in 2002 and the State of Washington in 2003. These certifications are due to expire in 2007. The Shallow Water Site, previously known as “Expanded Site E” when it was used under Section 103 of the MPRSA is within the territorial sea. Federal regulations at 33 CFR 336.2 provide that the Corps will apply for Section 401 water quality certification as a matter of comity for ODMDS located within the territorial sea. The North Jetty Site is a Section 404 site; accordingly, a Section 401 certification is required for this site. The Section 404(b)(1) evaluation prepared for the North Jetty Site is available for review at the Portland District. The Deep Water Site is located beyond the territorial seas and is outside the Clean Water Act jurisdiction of the states; no Clean Water Act certification is required for this site. Attached to this Public Notice are the States of Oregon and Washington’s Notice of Application for Water Quality Certification.

MARINE PROTECTION, RESEARCH, AND SANCTUARIES ACT: The USEPA concluded final site designation for the MCR Deep Water Site and Shallow Water Site on April 1, 2005. As part of the designation requirements, a Site Management and Monitoring Plan (SMMP) for these sites was completed. USEPA has approved the use of these sites for material dredged from the MCR project in accordance with the designation documents, SMMP, and current MCR Annual Use Plans.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: A preliminary investigation has indicated that the proposed action will not affect any cultural resources. This finding has been coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officers in Oregon and Washington.

FEDERAL CONSISTENCY REQUIREMENTS WITH STATES’ COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: The MCR project is the maintenance of an existing navigation channel, which requires placement of dredged material at three dredged material disposal areas. Operations will be conducted in a manner that is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the approved state coastal zone management programs of Oregon and Washington. Consistency determinations that have addressed applicable enforceable policies of the approved programs have previously been submitted to both states in accordance with Section 307 of the CZMA and conditional concurrences from both states have been received.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Since the Endangered Species Act was established in 1973, ESA compliance has been obtained for maintenance of the MCR channel and the ocean disposal actions through continuing consultations with NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The MCR channel maintenance activities were most recently addressed in a Biological Opinion issued by National Marine Fisheries Service in 2005

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION: The proposed work is being or will be coordinated with the following Federal, State, or local agencies:

Federal

US Environmental Protection Agency
US Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service

State of Washington

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Ecology
Washington Department of Natural Resources
Washington State Historic Preservation Office

State of Oregon

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Division of State Lands
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

STATEMENT OF POLICY FOR OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE DREDGING:

The Corps of Engineers undertakes operations and maintenance activities where appropriate and environmentally acceptable. All practicable and reasonable alternatives are fully considered on an equal basis. This includes the discharge of dredged or fill materials into waters of the US or ocean waters in the least costly manner, at the least costly and most practicable location, and consistent with engineering and environmental requirements (33 CFR Part 335.4). The least costly alternative, consistent with sound engineering practices and selected through the 404(b) (1) guidelines or ocean disposal criteria, will be designated the Federal standard for the proposed project (33 CFR Part 336.1(c) (1)). Public Notices for Corps operations and maintenance activities are normally issued for an indefinite period of time and are not reissued unless changes warrant re-evaluation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act or Section 103 of the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 CFR Part 337.1 (a))

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW: The decision whether to perform the work will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit that 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; among these are conservation, commerce, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, historic values, fish and wildlife values, flood damage prevention, land use, navigation, recreation, water supply, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person who has an interest which may be affected by the dredging and disposal at the MCR project may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity.

EIS DETERMINATION: An EIS was prepared for the Navigation Channel Improvement of the MCR project in 1983. The Deep Water and Shallow Water Sites were addressed in the EIS prepared for the Columbia River Channel Improvement project in 1999. The North Jetty site was addressed in an Environmental Assessment prepared in 1999.

Comments on the described work, with the reference number, should reach this office no later than the closing date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: For additional information on this public notice, please contact Doris McKillip at (503) 808-4348 or via e-mail at: doris.j.mckillip@usace.army.mil.

SEND COMMENTS: Send comments to Marci E. Cook at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn: CENWP-PM-E, P.O. Box 2946, Portland, Oregon 97208, or via e-mail at: Marci.e.cook@usace.army.mil or via telephone at: (503) 808-4765.

Sheryl Carrubba, P.E.
Operations Manager
Channels and Harbors Project

**Mouth of the Columbia River
Dredged Material Placement Sites
Public Notice NWPOD-CRA-F-06-001**

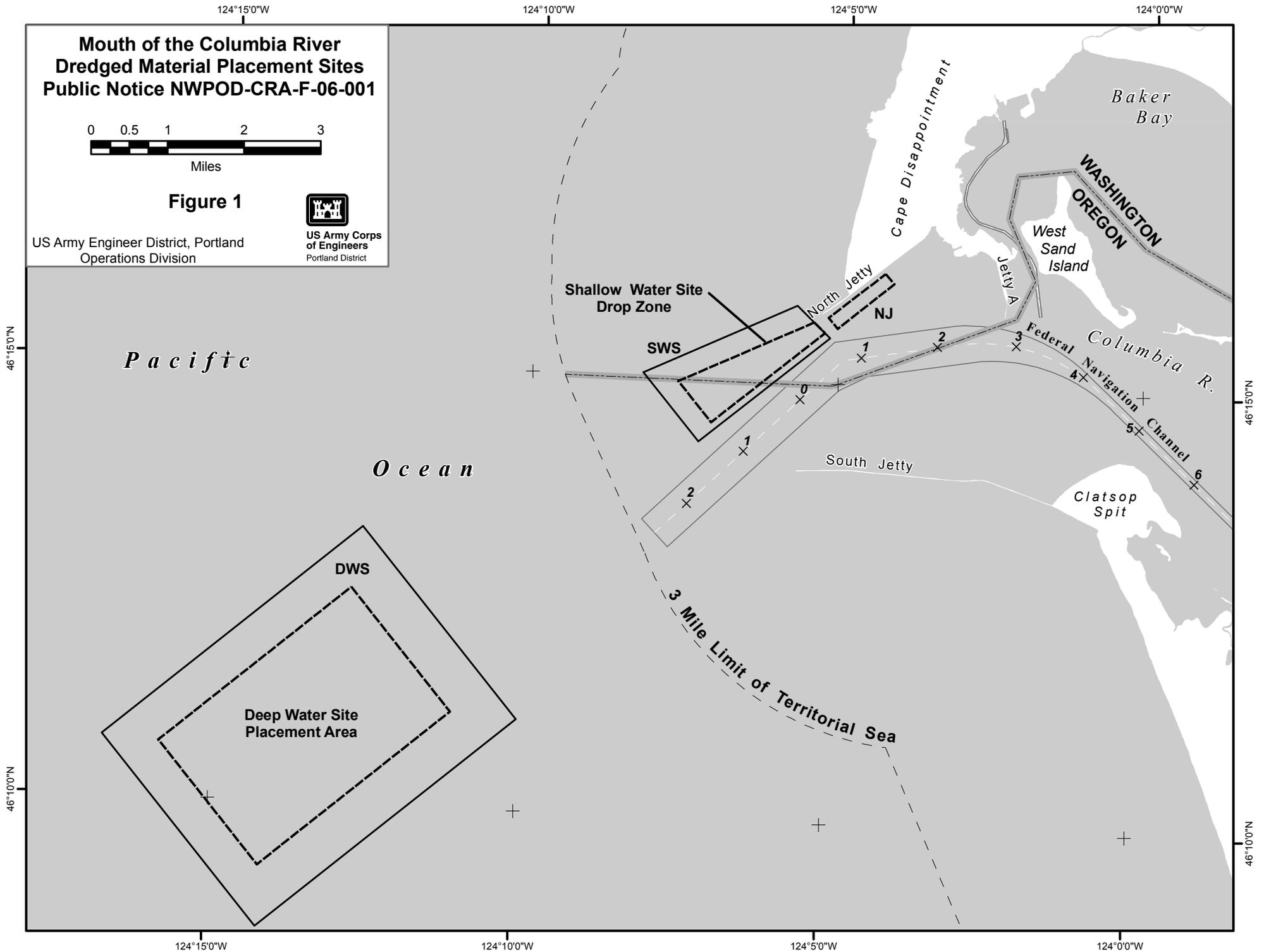


Figure 1



US Army Engineer District, Portland
Operations Division

US Army Corps
of Engineers
Portland District





STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

*P.O. Box 47600 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7600
(360) 407-6000 • TDD Only (Hearing Impaired) (360) 407-6006*

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

Notice of Application for
Water Quality Certification

Date: July 21, 2006

Notice is hereby given that a request has been filed with the Department of Ecology, pursuant to the requirements of Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL 95-217), to certify that the project described in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Notice No. NWPOD-CRA-F-06-001 will comply with the Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Act, and with applicable provisions of State and Federal water pollution control laws.

Any person desiring to present views on the project pertaining to the project on compliance with water pollution control laws may do so by providing written comments within 30 days of the above publication date to:

Federal Permit Coordinator
Department of Ecology
SEA Program
Post Office Box 47600
Olympia, Washington 98504-7600

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Water Quality 401 Certification

Corps of Engineers Action ID Number: **NWPOD-CRA-F-06-001**

Notice Issued: July 21, 2006

Oregon Division of State Lands Number: N/A

Written Comments Due: August 21, 2006

WHO IS THE APPLICANT:

LOCATION OF CERTIFICATION ACTIVITY: See attached U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public notice

WHAT IS PROPOSED: See attached U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public notice on the proposed project

NEED FOR CERTIFICATION: Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act requires applicants for Federal permits or licenses to provide the Federal agency a water quality certification from the State of Oregon if the proposed activity may result in a discharge to surface waters.

DESCRIPTION OF DISCHARGES: See attached U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public notice on the proposed project

WHERE TO FIND DOCUMENTS: Documents and related material are available for examination and copying at Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division, 811 S.W. 6th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204

While not required, scheduling an appointment will ensure documents are readily accessible during your visit. To schedule an appointment please call Alice Kavajecz at (503) 229-6962.

Any questions on the proposed certification may be addressed to the 401 Program Coordinator at (503) 229-6030.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Public Hearing: Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 340-48-0020 (6) states that "The Director shall provide an opportunity for the applicant, any affected state, or any interested agency, person, or group of persons to request or petition for a public hearing with respect to certification applications. If the Director determines that new information may be produced thereby, a public hearing will be held prior to the Director's final determination. Instances of doubt shall be resolved in favor of holding the hearing. There shall be public notice of such a hearing."

Written comments:

Written comments on the proposed certification must be received at the Oregon

Department of Environmental Quality by 5 p.m. on (full date). Written comments should be mailed to Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Attn: 401 Program Coordinator, 811 S.W. 6th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204, or emailed to 401publiccomments@deq.state.or.us. *People wishing to send written comments via e-mail should be aware that if there is a delay between servers or if a server is not functioning properly, e-mails may not be received prior to the close of the public comment period.*

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT: DEQ will review and consider all comments received during the public comment period. Following this review, the permit may be issued as proposed, modified, or denied. You will be notified of DEQ's final decision if you present either oral or written comments during the comment period. Otherwise, if you wish to receive notification, please call or write DEQ at the above address.

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION: This publication is available in alternate format (e.g. large print, Braille) upon request. Please contact DEQ Office of Communications and Outreach at (503) 229-5317 or toll free within Oregon at 1-800-452-4011 to request an alternate format. People with a hearing impairment can receive help by calling DEQ's TTY at (503) 229-6993.