

## STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

Reference: Department of Army, Corps of Engineers, Portland District, Public Notice NWPCO-CRA-F02-001 titled "Maintenance Dredging at Mouth of the Columbia River"  
Dated: 21 Dec 2002

Also, The Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation prepared by the Portland District to address the impacts of maintenance dredging dated 15 May 2002.

### 1. Proposed Action:

The proposed action is maintenance dredging of the Mouth of the Columbia River Navigation Channel (MCR). Approximately 4 to 5 million cubic yards of material would be dredged annually with disposal placed in nearby designated offshore sites, and potentially at the Benson Beach demonstration site. A complete description of the proposed action is included in the Public Notice and environmental documents for this work. This Statement of Findings is effective for five concurrent dredging years, whereupon the action will be reassessed.

a. Location: Mouth of the Columbia River, Pacific County, Washington and Clatsop County, Oregon.

b. Purpose: The proposed work is required to provide for navigation across the MCR bar from River Mile -3+00 to +3+00. The dredging activity to remove naturally occurring shoals of sediment is necessary to maintain the Federally authorized depths of -55 and -48 feet Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW). For this action, up to 5 feet of allowable over-depth dredging may be performed in order to ensure the authorized project depth is available between dredging cycles.

### 2. Coordination:

This project was coordinated with Federal, State and local agencies, interested groups and individuals with the above Public Notice. All comments received in response to the Corps Public Notice have received full consideration and are addressed in the Environmental Assessment that was prepared for this action.

a. Federal Agencies: No significant comments on the Public Notice were received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Ongoing coordination for permanent ocean disposal is being conducted with the EPA. Upon Corps request, both NMFS and USFWS provided lists of endangered and threatened

species, which could occur in the project area. Biological Assessments were prepared which determined that the proposed work may affect, but not likely to adversely affect any listed species, and coordinated with the appropriate agencies. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service concurred in these determinations.

b. State and Local Agencies:

(1). In a letter dated 22 April 2002, the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) issued a letter in which they conditionally concurred with the District's certification that the project is consistent with the state's Coastal Zone Management Program and issued an annual Water Quality Certification with modifications. The intent of the conditions for both the Water Quality Certification and Coastal Zone Management Program were acceptable; however, further cooperative discussions shall be undertaken prior to dredging activities to ensure fully executable conditions.

(2). Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has issued a conditional Water Quality with clarification.

c. Other Comments: Many letters were received from organizations and members of the public and are summarized in the Environmental Assessment prepared for this proposed action.

3. Environmental Effects and Impacts:

All factors relevant to the proposed work were considered in accordance with applicable state and Federal regulations and Corps policies. These factors include, but are not limited to, activities on wetlands, conservation, 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. The State's comments concerning water quality certification and CZM consistency have been considered and shall be incorporated following final clarification and prior to dredging activities.

4. Determinations:

The following determinations have been made as a result of the above coordination:

a. Temporary turbidity is anticipated during placement; but it is not expected to be of sufficient magnitude or duration to have a significant adverse effect on fish and other aquatic life forms.

b. The project is not expected to usurp any public rights to navigation or recreation, nor is it expected to have a significant adverse effect on the area's scenic value.

c. There are no known archaeological or historic sites in the area to be affected by the project.

d. No wetland areas will be impacted.

e. Comments received from Federal, state, and local governmental resource agencies have been considered and addressed.

f. The conditions in the Water Quality Certifications issued by the states of Washington and Oregon will be followed. Sediments from the channel will be periodically reevaluated according to the Dredged Material Evaluation Framework, Lower Columbia River Management Area, (Draft, April 1998).

5. Findings and Conclusions:

The following findings and conclusions have been made as a result of the above coordination:

a. In balance, adverse effects are acceptable, beneficial effects are specifically identifiable, and the project, as conditioned, is in the general public interest.

b. In accordance with 33 CFR 230, on the discharge of dredged or fill material, an environmental evaluation has been completed. A finding of no significant impacts, an EA, Section 404(b)(1) evaluation, and copy of the Water Quality Certification with conditions are attached to this report.

c. The project will be completed as described in the public notice.

PREPARED BY: \_\_\_\_\_/Signed/\_\_\_\_\_  
DORIS J. McKILLIP  
Chief, Waterways Maintenance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I find that the action described in Department of the Army Public Notice NWPOP-CRA-FY02-001, is necessary to maintain the Federal Project; that the proposed work is deemed to comply with established state and local laws, regulations and codes, national policy, statutes, and administrative directives; and, that on balance, the total public interest would best be served by the performance of the work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_/Signed/\_\_\_\_\_  
RANDALL J. BUTLER  
Colonel, EN  
Commanding