



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

MAR 11 2011

Planning and Environmental Branch

Dear Sir or Madam:

The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Jacksonville District, and the US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4 (EPA), are selecting a location for an expanded Port Everglades Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) in the Atlantic Ocean offshore of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The existing Port Everglades ODMDS was designated in 2005 and an EIS was prepared for the designation. Based on modeling results, the existing Port Everglades ODMDS does not have the capacity to accommodate anticipated levels of material from the proposed expansion at Port Everglades Harbor. As a result, USACE and EPA have determined the need for an expansion of the existing ODMDS. Continued use of the ODMDS is needed to meet future requirements for ocean disposal of dredged material from new work and routine maintenance of the Port Everglades Harbor and other users.

Corps and EPA are conducting applicable studies and are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to provide the information necessary to evaluate alternatives and designate the expanded Port Everglades ODMDS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1967 and Section 102 of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA) of 1972, as amended.

At this time, we are inviting agencies, interest groups, and the public to provide input on an array of alternatives and to identify significant resource concerns with the candidate configurations, details of which are included in the enclosed information package. Your comments will be incorporated during the preparation of the EA, used as vital insight into the expanded Port Everglades ODMDS, and retained for assistance in shaping the scope of future studies.

Please provide written comments within 45 days from the date of this letter.

EPA and Corps will hold a scoping meeting to offer further opportunity for input. Please join us at the following meeting time and location:

6:00 – 8:00 PM
Thursday, March 31, 2011
West Lake Park Anne Klob Nature Center
Mangrove Hall
751 Sheridan St.
Hollywood, Florida 33019

If you are unable to attend in person and would like to join the meeting via teleconference, please RSVP to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.


Written comments should be addressed to the Corps or EPA at the following:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
Attention: Ms. April Patterson (CESAJ-PD-EC)
Post Office Box 4970
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019
April.N.Patterson@usace.army.mil

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 4
(ATTN: Mr. Chris McArthur, Ocean Dumping Program Coordinator, Wetlands & Marine
Regulatory Section)
61 Forsyth Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

If you have any questions concerning this meeting, please call Ms. Patterson, with the Corps, at (904) 232-2610.

Sincerely,


for Eric P. Summa
Chief, Planning and Environmental Branch

Enclosure

PORT EVERGLADES OCEAN DREDGED MATERIAL DISPOSAL SITE (ODMDS) INFORMATION PACKAGE

INTRODUCTION: The disposal of dredged sediments from navigation channels and harbors onto the ocean floor can only be authorized at sites designated for that purpose. The US Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (USACE), and the US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4 (USEPA), share the statutory responsibility for selection and management of these sites. The sites must be located and managed to ensure that ocean disposal of dredged material will not unreasonably degrade the marine environment or endanger human health, welfare, amenities, or economic potentialities. This information package summarizes some of the known issues associated with expanding a new site offshore of Port Everglades Harbor in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and provides some insight into the detailed analysis that is used to determine where the expanded site should be located.

EXISTING SITE: The existing Port Everglades Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) is an approximately 1-square nautical mile (nmi²) located approximately 4 nmi east-northeast of the Port Everglades Harbor (figure 1). This site is located on the upper continental slope on the western edge of the Florida Current and consists of primarily soft-bottom habitat in water depths of 195 to 215 meters (640 to 705 feet). The existing ODMDS was formally designated by the EPA in 2005. An Environmental Impact Statement was completed in 2004 in support of this original designation.

NEED FOR INCREASED ODMDS CAPACITY: Capacity modeling of the Port Everglades ODMDS using quantities projected by the current tentatively selected plan for construction at Port Everglades Harbor, area currents; and adjacent site bathymetry show the need for an expanded ODMDS. EPA and USACE are therefore initiating the process for expanding the existing Port Everglades ODMDS offshore Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

SITE AREA ALTERNATIVES:

During the original site designation process, a number of alternatives were considered to help identify a disposal site that will be most economically feasible and least damaging to the environment. The screening technique for selecting the preferred location for the ODMDS involved a step-by-step elimination of unsuitable areas based on economic, operational, aesthetic, recreational, and environmental criteria until only acceptable areas for its location remained. Three acceptable alternative sites were considered for the original Port Everglades ODMDS designation based on the distance from the entrance to the port including the previously used 1.6-mile interim site, a 4-mile site and a 7-mile site. The EPA selected the 4-mile site as the preferred alternative and subsequently designated in 2005.

This federally designated 4-mile site is now under consideration for expansion. Two alternative expansion configurations were designed based on Automated Dredging and Disposal Alternatives Modeling System (ADDAMS) data, in addition to the required no action alternative.

No Action Alternative:

The No Action Alternative is defined as not designating an expansion of the Port Everglades ODMDS pursuant to Section 102 of the MPRSA. This would lead to continued use of the existing site for the placement of material from operations and maintenance dredging; and/or the emergency one time designation of a site by the Corps of Engineers under Section 102 of MPRSA for the dredged material generated by the proposed port expansion.

East-West Disposal Release Zone Alternative:

This configuration was designed based on an east-west oriented disposal release zone. This expanded configuration encompasses the existing ODMDS. It shares the same southern and eastern borders and extends north and west to the red 1cm contour line (figure 2). This expanded site is approximately 4 square nautical miles.

North-South Disposal Release Zone Alternative:

This configuration was designed based on a north-south oriented disposal release zone. This expanded configuration encompasses the existing ODMDS. It shares the same southern and eastern borders as the existing site and extends north and west to the blue 1 cm contour line (figure 3). This expanded site is approximately 4 square nautical miles.

Both alternate configurations are within the boundaries of previous surveys collected during the original site designation, as well as routine monitoring conducted by the EPA.

PLAN OF ACTION: USACE and EPA are proposing to designate an expanded ODMDS that incorporates the original ODMDS designated by EPA in 2005, in the Atlantic Ocean off Port Everglades Harbor. There are two possible site configurations and one no action option: The goal of the site selection process is to select a location which minimizes the risk of harm to the marine environment and human health and facilitates the necessary dredging and subsequent placement of dredged material. The site must meet selection criteria specified in EPA's Ocean Dumping Regulations. Compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act is an integral part of the site designation process. The NEPA document will present information to evaluate the suitability of potential sites and disposal alternatives. It will be based on available information as well as new information collected and developed specifically for this site expansion and designation and will succinctly document the considerations made in selecting the ODMDS' specific configuration.

We are requesting comments and information from agencies, interest groups, and the public to identify significant resources within the proposed expansion alternatives and issues of concern. After receiving public and agency input through the scoping process, we will complete our information gathering plan, collect the required data, and prepare the NEPA and decision making documents. The public will have the opportunity to review the draft NEPA document, and make additional comments on the proposed expansion and designation.

ISSUES: EPA's Ocean Dumping Regulations contain environmental factors which must be considered in locating a dredged material disposal site in the ocean. As discussed previously, the goal is to position the site away from marine environments that are incompatible with use.

Based upon the analysis of the original site designation EIS and the issues presented in that document, the Corps and EPA believe that based upon the final site designation and subsequent monitoring of the site, the environmental issues of concern raised at the time of site designation have been resolved or addressed and do not rise to the level of significance at this time.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS: The designated ODMDS is required by USACE policies and procedures to be located at an optimal distance from the dredging activity such that the socioeconomic analysis of benefits outweighs the costs. The economic analysis takes into account several different dredging scenarios over a 50-year project life horizon and compares the benefits and the costs of the dredging activities within that scenario. The feasibility analysis was conducted as part of the original site designation and is incorporated into this site expansion analysis.

SITE CONFIGURATION: The size, shape, and location of the site should facilitate the intended use and reduce the risk of user errors. The site configuration should allow management options such as placing materials from specific dredging locations in specific locations of the site. The site should be large enough to accommodate the anticipated quantities and types of dredged materials. Preliminary estimates indicate a site approximately 4 square nautical miles in size would be required for a 50-year analysis period based on proposed port expansion and historic maintenance dredging volumes.

SCHEDULE:

Mail Scoping Letter	March 2011
Hold Scoping Meeting	March 31, 2011
Collect Site Specific Data	May 2011
Publish Draft EA	October 2011
Publish Final EA	April 2012
Designate Site (Rulemaking)	September 2012

MAILING LIST

Federal Agencies

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Wetlands & Marine Regulatory Section
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – National Marine Fisheries Service
 Protected Resources Division
 Habitat Conservation Division
NOAA-National Ocean Service-Office of Coast Survey
Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) - Nancy Allen & Doug Garabini
US Coast Guard – Fort Lauderdale Station
Department of the Interior
 Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Vero Beach Field Office
US Army Corps of Engineers – Regulatory Division - West Palm Beach Field Office

State Agencies and Officials

Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Intergovernmental Programs
Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems
Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Coral Reef Program
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Honorable Bill Nelson, US Senate
Honorable Marco Rubio, US Senate
Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz, US Congress

Mayor, City of Ft. Lauderdale
Mayor, City of Hollywood
Mayor, City of Hallandale

Local Agencies, Businesses, and Organizations

Broward County Development and Environmental Regulation Division – Eric Myers
Broward County Chairman of County Commissioners
Port Everglades Pilot Association
Nova Southeastern University - Institute of Marine & Coastal Studies
Port Everglades Port Authority
Crowley American Transport, Inc.
Eller & Company
Florida Sport Fishing Association
Rinker Material Corporation
Port Everglades Association, Inc.



Expansion configuration based on the East-West disposal release zone.

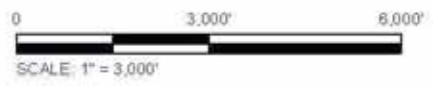


Figure 2:
East-West Disposal Zone
Configuration

1 cm CONTOURS SIMULATIONS
 PORT EVERGLADES ODMDS
 BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DATE
 NOVEMBER 2010

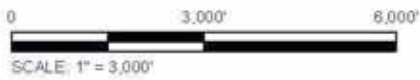
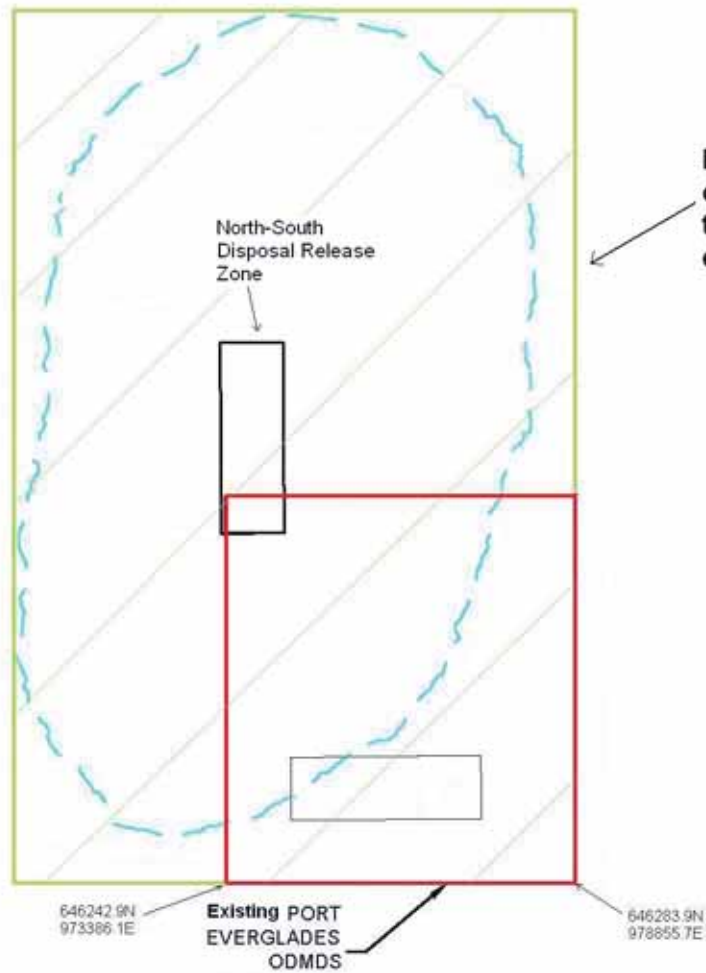


Figure 3:
North-South Disposal Zone
Configuration

1 cm CONTOURS SIMULATIONS
 PORT EVERGLADES ODMDS
 BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DATE
 NOVEMBER 2010