

# GIWW Dredging at West Bay Response to Public Concerns

Colonel Chris Sallese  
Commander, Galveston District  
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# Overview

- Project Purpose & History
- Sequence of Events
- Concerns Raised
- USACE Response
- USACE Commitments

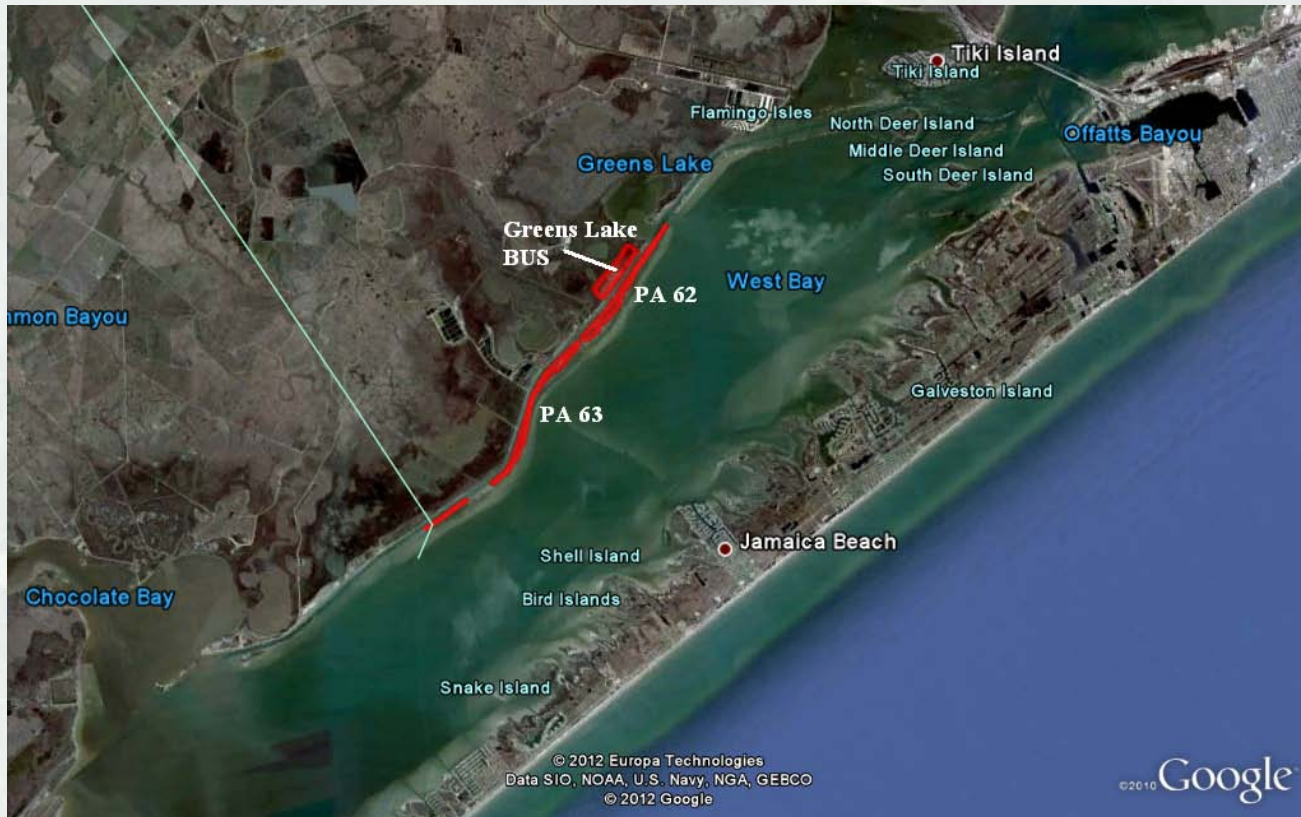


# Project Purpose and History

- 1826 Congress authorized survey of a canal system connecting the Atlantic & Gulf of Mexico as a critical national infrastructure initiative.
- 1893 first canal segment dredged in Texas was West Galveston Bay to Christmas Bay; extended to the Brazos River in 1902 linking agricultural commodities on the Brazos to the Port of Galveston.
- 1949 GIWW dredged to current dimensions of 12ft x 125ft & modern disposal plan established. Shipment of priority industrial products became primary purpose of the system.
- 1975 EIS completed for GIWW system in response to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Numerous more recent NEPA documents have been prepared for portions of the system including 2 EISs and over 20 EAs.
- 2007 EA coordinated a new beneficial use site north of the GIWW, that also addressed seagrasses at PA62.



# Project Location



# Sequence of Events

- A \$12M contract for construction, levee repair, and maintenance dredging of the GIWW, Causeway to Bastrop in West Galveston Bay, was awarded September 2010.
- Use of PA 62 was coordinated with state and Federal resource agencies in the 2007 EA and is in NEPA compliance. Because of the known seagrass beds, disposal was delayed a year waiting for winter dormancy of the seagrass to minimize impacts. Minimizing seagrass impacts was a contractual requirement.
- Because of the year's delay waiting for dormancy, dredging quantities increased. Work executed:
  - ▶ PA63: 260,000 CY at 4 locations, 28 Nov-23 Dec
  - ▶ PA62 West End: 91,000 CY at 3 locations, 23-30 Dec
  - ▶ PA62 East End: 70,000 CY at 12+ locations, 15-24 Jan
  - ▶ Greens Lake BU: 172,000 CY at 5 locations, 30 Dec-15 Jan



# The Intent

- Minimize seagrass impacts utilizing thin layer deposition and winter placement.
- Nourish emergent land to protect the GIWW and marshes north of the GIWW from the strong fetch across West Bay.
- Without periodic renourishment, the existing seagrass beds would erode to a depth where seagrass growth could not be sustained.
- Recently placed sediment will be re-worked by tides and storms. Current sediment depth will significantly decrease by the summer growing season. It has been demonstrated that seagrass can recover from 6 to 8 inches of consolidated deposition during dormancy.



# Concerns Raised

- Shortly before Christmas 2011, concerned citizens believed the disposal operation at PAs 62 and 63 to be a violation.
- Agencies and organizations unaware of the coordination of the project and measures taken to minimize impacts to seagrasses raised alarm.



# USACE Response

- A field trip with agencies and other concerned parties was held January 4.
- We agreed to establish an Upper Coast GIWW Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) to keep agencies better informed of maintenance dredging and solicit their input.
- A seagrass survey of PA62 was performed prior to dredged material disposal.
- Dredging plans were revised in early January to reduce the amount of material to be disposed of on PA62.



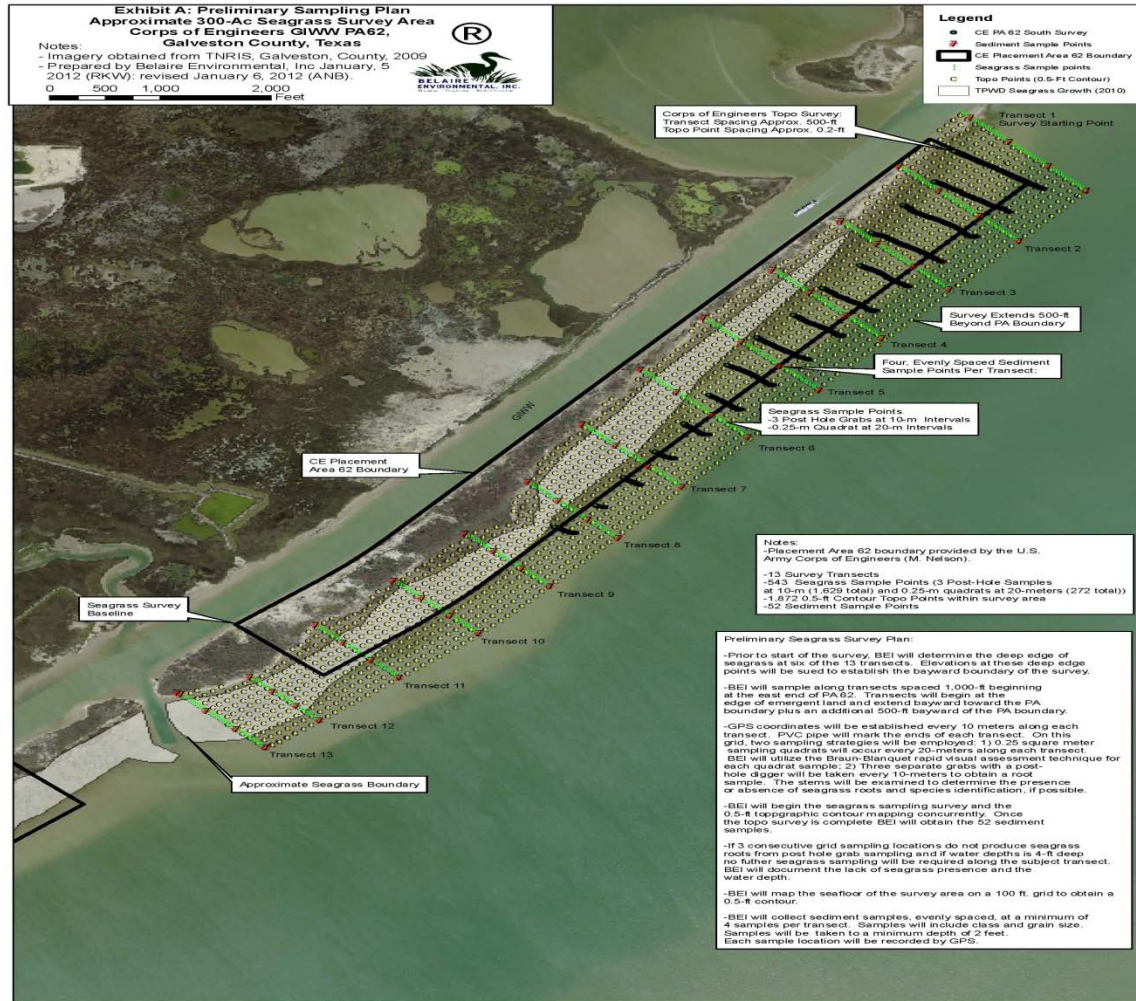


# USACE Commitment

- A long-term monitoring plan for the seagrass beds at PAs 62 and 63 will be developed by the ICT.
- Maintenance dredging plans will be coordinated with the ICT so that they can have direct, current input to our work.



# Belaire Environmental Seagrass Survey Plan





PA 63 west corridor



**PA 63 west corridor**



**McInnis Pits**



**PA 63 east corridor**





**PA 63 east corridor**

**PA 63 west corridor**



**PA 62 west end discharge corridor**

An aerial photograph of a large, shallow water body, likely a bay or estuary, with numerous islands and peninsulas. The water is a deep blue, and the land is a mix of brown and green. In the distance, a city skyline is visible under a clear blue sky. Two white arrows point to specific areas in the water. The first arrow points to a narrow channel on the left side of the image. The second arrow points to a channel on the right side of the image.

**Greens Lake BUS  
Discharge Corridor  
#6**

**PA 62 east end discharge corridor  
(Picture taken 1/18/12)**





**PA 62 multiple discharge  
locations along east end**

# Concluding Comments

- Our projects are in NEPA compliance.
- We work to minimize impacts and promote beneficial use of dredged material.
- We look forward to engaging the new ICT in the management of dredging of the upper coast, as existing ICTs have accomplished in our coordination of GIWW-Aransas and GIWW–Laguna Madre.

