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What is the Corps' Beneficial Use Program?

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District contributes to the well-being, economic success and quality of life of local communities by employing environmentally and economically responsible ways to use dredged materials to improve eroded coastlines through beach nourishment and beneficial use programs."

–Navigation Branch Chief Christopher Frabotta, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District

Q. What is beneficial use?

A. Annually, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District dredges approximately 30 to 40 million cubic yards of material as part of its mission of keeping America's waterways navigable. The Corps is able to turn that into an added benefit by employing environmentally and economically responsible methods to use dredged material to benefit local communities and improve eroded coastlines through marsh restoration, beach nourishment and other beneficial uses when possible.

Q: What are the different types of dredge material used for beneficial use?

A: Dredged materials come in different forms, such as sand, clay and silt – each having different beneficial uses. The Corps can use sand for a variety of projects including beach restoration and wetland restoration. Depending on its composition, silt is a valuable resource for marsh restoration. Clay can be used in projects including land creation, berm creation and shoreline protection.

Q. What is the value of beneficial use projects?

A. When considering a placement method for dredged materials, the Corps actively seeks disposal methods with beneficial uses that will have economic and environmental benefits. Beneficial use projects such as the beach renourishment project at South Padre Island allows the Corps to improve eroded coastlines. Additionally, since South Padre Island is a popular tourist destination, beach restoration ultimately pumps money into the Texas economy.

Dredged material is also used to create wetlands. In addition to serving as a habitat for numerous species of birds and animals, wetlands play a vital role protecting the shoreline from flooding and storm surges.

Q. How much dredged material is created annually in the Galveston District?

A. Each year, USACE Galveston District dredges approximately 30 to 40 million cubic yards of material from Texas channels to fulfill its mission of keeping waterways open for navigation and commerce (benefiting 28 ports handling 400 million tons of commerce annually).

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Q. What amount of dredged material in the Galveston District is used for beneficial use?

A. In fiscal year 2012, approximately 3.2 million cubic yards of dredged material was used for beneficial use projects.

Q. What determines how dredged material is used?

A. There are several options for the disposal of dredged material but each project has special requirements or conditions that determine how the Corps uses the material.

Q: How do beneficial use sites help the environment?

A. The Corps uses beneficial use material to improve eroded coastlines through beach nourishment, create marsh, renourish sea grass and provide habitat for bird rookeries in Galveston Bay, Matagorda Bay, Corpus Christi Bay, the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and Laguna Madre.

Q: Where can I learn more about USACE Galveston District's Beneficial Use Program?

A: To learn more about beneficial use of dredge material, visit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District website at <http://www.swg.usace.army.mil/Missions/BeneficialUse.aspx>. Find us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/GalvestonDistrict or follow us on Twitter, www.twitter.com/USACEgalveston.

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