



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Corps of Engineers dredges Texas City Channel

GALVESTON, Texas – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, is currently performing routine maintenance dredging of the Texas City deep-draft navigation channel in order to maintain a depth of 40 feet.

Beginning October 2010, the Corps will start new dredge work in order to deepen the channel from 40 to 45 feet as part of a deepening and incidental widening project that will allow larger and fully loaded ships to navigate to the Port of Texas City.

A design-build contract was awarded in October 2009 to Weeks Marine Inc. of Cranford, N.J., in the amount of \$61,810,000 and is primarily funded with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds.

“The Corps of Engineers plays a key role in America’s well-being by keeping our waterways open for navigation,” said Sharon Tirpak, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District project manager for the Texas City Project.

“Approximately 4 million cubic yards of material will be dredged using a hydraulic cutterhead dredge.”

The maintenance dredge material from the eastern portion of the channel will be pumped to the north side of the Texas City Dike and placed there for beach nourishment, an added benefit to users of the dike, according to Tirpak. Maintenance material from the western portion of the channel will be placed in upland placement areas 5 and 6 on Shoal Point.

“Once new work material dredging begins, open water placement areas will be created to the southeast of Shoal Point and on the western side of Pelican Island,” she said. “The new open water placement areas will over time be converted to emergent marsh, another benefit of the project.”

“Corps projects are approved based on their benefit to cost ratio - meaning what are the benefits of the project compared to the costs,” said Tirpak. “The Texas City Channel's benefit to cost ratio is 8.5 to 1 - one of the highest in the Corps.”

The Texas City channel, which intersects with the Houston/Galveston navigation channel to the east, serves the Port of Texas City, which in 2008 ranked 13th in the US in tonnage volume, with 52.6 million short tons, according to the Corps’ Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center. The primary commodities that come through the port include crude oil, gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, intermediate chemicals and petroleum coke, according to the Statistics Center.

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“Currently, some of the ships are arriving at the Port of Texas City with a less than full load and offshore larger ships are lightening their load to smaller ships so that they can navigate the current channel,” said Tirpak. “The deeper channel will allow larger and fully loaded ships to call on the port which enables more efficient operations.”

The estimated total project cost is about \$70 million and includes both the study and construction processes. These costs are shared with the non-federal sponsor, the City of Texas City, who in turn partners with the Port of Texas City and industry channel users. The cost-sharing is 75% federal and 25% non-federal.

New dredge work is expected to be completed within 6 to 8 months after its commencement in October 2010 pending weather conditions.

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