DISPOSAL OF DREDGED MATERIAL

Disposal of dredged material can adversely affect wetlands and water quality if disposal sites are not properly sited and managed. Recognizing that most navigation channels and access canals require periodic maintenance dredging, it is important that long-range maintenance plans be developed and that they provide adequate storage capacity for the life of the channel or marina. Implementing the following guidelines should minimize adverse impacts associated with most dredged material disposal activities.

a. Uncontaminated dredged material should be viewed as a potentially reusable resource and beneficial uses of these materials are encouraged. Materials that are suitable for beach nourishment, marsh construction or other beneficial purposes should be utilized for these purposes.

b. If disposal sites must be located near wetlands, they should be confined with levees and stabilized using vegetation, native hay mulch or other means to eliminate possible wind or water erosion or encroachment onto those wetlands.

c. If no beneficial uses are identified, dredged material should be placed in contained upland sites. The capacity of these disposal areas should be used to the fullest extent possible. This may necessitate dewatering of the material or increasing the elevation of embankments to augment the holding capacity of the site. Techniques could be applied that render dredged material suitable for export or for use in re-establishing wetland vegetation.

d. Where possible, disposal area outfalls should be positioned so that they discharge into the dredged area or other sites that lack biological/ecological significance and are not near public water supply intakes. When evaluating potential upland disposal sites, the possibility of saltwater intrusion into ground water and surrounding freshwater habitats will be assessed by the State water quality agency. Groundwater contamination could necessitate redesign of disposal practices.

e. Toxic and highly organic materials should be placed in impervious containment basins on uplands. Effluent should be monitored to ensure compliance with State and Federal water quality criteria and measures should be incorporated to ensure that surface runoff and leachate from dredged material disposal sites do not enter aquatic ecosystems.

f. In general, public disposal areas should not be used for disposal of dredged material generated from private projects.

g. Potential disposal sites should not contain trees and brush. The clearing of woody or native vegetation should be avoided when possible.

h. Pipes used in the hydraulic dredging process should be placed and moved so as not to damage or destroy sensitive habitats such as emergent marshes, bird rookery areas, endangered species habitats, etc. Where temporary impacts are unavoidable, the impact site should be restored to pre-project conditions as soon as possible.

NOTE: Minor discharges that do not exceed 25 cubic yards and will not cause the loss of more than 0.1 acre of a special aquatic site, including wetlands, may qualify

for Nationwide Permit 18. Notification to the Corps of Engineers is required for discharges that exceed 10 cubic yards or if the discharge would be placed in a special aquatic site, including wetlands. Contact Galveston District for more information.