

to the HWRP site. The goal of the HWRP as a whole is to create a diverse array of wetland and wildlife habitats at the combined Hamilton sites (HWRP & BMK-V) that benefit endangered species while facilitating the beneficial re-use of dredged material.

1. *Background.* The HWRP is one of several significantly sized projects to restore lost wetlands around San Francisco Bay. The ground elevation of the HWRP site has subsided since the site was diked off from the Bay, and fill material will be used as part of the restoration process to construct project features and to speed formation of tidal marsh. The Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) for the placement of dredged material in the San Francisco Bay and Estuary was established cooperatively by federal, state and local agencies starting in 1990 to maintain navigation channels in an economic and environmentally sound manner, to maximize the use of dredged materials as a beneficial resource, and to establish a cooperative regulatory permitting framework. The HWRP implements the LTMS through beneficial re-use and a reduction of in-Bay disposal. The alternative transfer facilities proposed are an attempt to more efficiently meet the goals of the LTMS.

2. *Proposed Action.* The original plan for transfer of dredged material to the project, as described in the original EIS/EIR, uses an in-bay hydraulic off-loader. Based on independent review, workshops with national experts, and a value engineering study that considered environmental, economic and operational impacts, it is determined that a more efficient and flexible method to transfer dredged material should be evaluated.

3. *Project Alternatives.* The SEIS/EIR will include at a minimum the following alternatives:

a. *No Action:* The original hydraulic off-loader. A hydraulic off-loader facility moored approximately 5 miles from HWRP in San Pablo Bay would pump dredged material as slurry through a submerged pipeline to the HWRP site. The facility would operate for 6 to 9 months of the year. Traditional aquatic disposal of dredged material at in-bay or offshore disposal sites would be performed during periods when an off-loader is not operational, the wetland construction site is not available for material placement, or for dredging projects with incompatible equipment or scheduling requirements. An off-loader facility will require an

operational footprint of between 12 and 16 acres within San Pablo Bay.

b. *Confined in-bay aquatic transfer facility.* An enclosed temporary dredged material storage basin near or coincident with the authorized disposal area SF-10, approximately 5 miles offshore of the Hamilton site in San Pablo Bay, would allow a greater number of dredging projects to contribute to wetland restoration efforts. An aquatic transfer facility would likely be used in lieu of open water sites SF-10 and SF-9 and other in-bay disposal areas during the 13-19 year construction of the HWRP. A confined transfer facility would require between 30 to 40 acres in San Pablo Bay, as opposed to the 149 acres that SF-9 and SF-10 now occupy.

c. *Semi-confined in-bay aquatic transfer facility.* A semi-confined temporary in-bay aquatic transfer facility would function similarly to the confined basin, but would not be entirely enclosed within a structural confinement. The general size of the facility is anticipated to be the same as the completely confined alternative.

d. *Unconfined in-bay aquatic transfer facility.* An unconfined temporary dredged material storage basin would function as the confined basin but would have no containment structure. An unconfined basin would likely require a footprint of 40 to 50 acres.

e. *Combination of off-loader and aquatic transfer basin methods.*

4. *Environmental Considerations.* In all cases, environmental considerations will include patterns of currents; suspended sediment transport; turbidity; impacts to bathymetry and the benthos; fish entrainment; water quality; air, noise and aesthetic impacts; potential benefits and impacts on either commercial or recreational fishing; and the temporary suspension or ongoing use of in-bay dredged material disposal sites SF-10 and possibly SF-9 as well as other potential environmental issues of concern.

5. *Scoping Process.* The Corps and SCC are seeking input from interested federal, state, and local agencies, Native American representatives, and other interested private organizations and parties through provision of this notice and holding of a scoping meeting (see DATES). The purpose of this meeting is to solicit input regarding the environmental issues of concern and the alternatives that should be discussed in the SEIS/EIR. The public comment period closes February 25, 2005.

6. *Availability of SEIS/EIR.* The public will have an additional opportunity to

comment on the proposed alternatives after the draft SEIS/EIR is released to the public in 2005.

Philip T. Feir,

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board; Meeting

AGENCY: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463), announcement is made of the forthcoming meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

Name of Committee: Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board (EAB).

Date: February 2, 2005.

Location: Embassy Suites Hotel Alexandria-Old Town, 1900 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, (703) 684-5900.

Time: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Norman Edwards, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, DC 20314-1000; phone: 202-761-1934.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Board advises the Chief of Engineers on environmental policy, identification and resolution of environmental issues and missions, and addressing challenges, problems and opportunities in an environmentally sustainable manner. The EAB will be meeting with the current Chief of Engineers for the first time. The public meeting will focus on general issues of national significance rather than on individual project or region related topics. Time will be provided for public comment. Each speaker will be limited to no more than three minutes in order to accommodate as many people as possible within the limited time available.

Brenda S. Bowen,

Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.

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