

Summary Notes
Great Lakes Dredging Team

2018 Fall Webinar

December 12, 2018

MORNING PROGRAM

USACE Great Lakes Dredging Program

Marie Strum, Chief of Engineering and Technical Services Division, Detroit District LRE

M. Strum discussed the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) budget for FY 19, which, at \$158.6 million, remains at a healthy level, particularly compared to years in the not-too-distant past of leaner budgets contributing to dredging backlogs. She noted that the O&M focus, which last year was primarily on dredging, has shifted this year to more attention to navigation structure repairs, most prominently the Soo Locks.

Recreational harbors have been infrequently included in the Great Lakes navigation dredging program in recent years due to budget constraints, but in 2019 two Michigan recreational harbors will be dredged on Lake Huron: Hammond Bay and Lexington.

In the Construction-General account, \$32.388M has been budgeted for deepening of approach channels at the Soo Locks. After a long process, a positive benefit-to-cost ratio (BCR) has been approved for the Soo Lock expansion project. At the Calumet dredged material disposal facility in Chicago, \$1.1M has been budgeted for design of a new confined disposal facility (CDF).

Funding trends for navigation dredging overall have been positive in recent years, enabling steady reduction since 2014 of the dredging backlogs. The Corps needs to dredge some 3.3 million cubic yards annually to keep up with natural sedimentation, and the FY dredging program is right at the 3.3mcy mark. As legislative efforts to increasingly use Harbor Maintenance Trust Funds for their intended purpose continue, it has been a “good news story” for maintaining “functional” channels in the Great Lakes, even if the fully authorized widths and depths are not all maintained.

This year’s dredging program for deep-draft commercial harbors will include Cleveland where dredged material will be placed in a Port of Cleveland facility as a “contractor furnished site.” Dredging will also occur at Indiana Harbor where a CDF was completed in 2011 to receive highly-toxic dredged material accumulated over 40 years at that site. Although projections are that the CDF could reach capacity by 2021, USACE is now looking at raising the facility’s dikes by 11 feet to continue its use. At Duluth-Superior, USACE is considering placement of dredged material along Minnesota Point where high-water levels and severe storms have combined to cause serious shoreline erosion.

At the Soo Locks, two efforts are identified in the FY 19 O&M budget: the ongoing asset renewal work, and the long-authorized plan to build a new Poe-sized lock. In addition to the recent achievement of a

positive BCR, another favorable trend to support funding the new lock has been a shift in the percent of vessels transiting the Soo that are restricted to the Poe Lock because of their size. That percentage in recent years has grown from 60 percent to 86 percent, thus increasing dependence on the Poe Lock. Some 90 percent of the U.S.-flag fleet is restricted to the Poe. Under the asset renewal program, four items have been initiated: work on Poe Lock bulkheads (\$6.2M), Poe Lock and Davis Lock pump well systems (\$42M), Poe Lock ship arrestors (\$4.2M) and the MacArthur Lock tainter valve (5.2M), for a total of \$57.58M of fully funded work.

Plans are to keep the MacArthur Lock operable over the seven to ten years of construction on a new Poe-sized lock. Once there are two large locks in operation, the MacArthur Lock would be placed in caretaker status. Construction of the new lock would be carried out in three phases: 1) upstream dredging of approach channels this year; 2) work on upstream approach walls; and 3) construction of the new lock chamber and downstream approach walls. USACE is working with the State of Michigan on a plan for the state to allocate \$52M in contributed funds to the project.

Legislative Update

Sarah Helton

Michael Best Strategies

One item of note in the proposed FY19 federal appropriations budget is \$1.2M for a Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study. If approved, this would be conducted by all three USACE Great Lakes Districts (Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit), in partnership with all eight Great Lakes State and other key stakeholders.

In October, the President signed into law the American Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWAI) which included authorization of an estimated \$3.8 billion in new Army Civil Works projects, the FY 2019 appropriations of \$7 billion and the emergency supplemental funds of \$17.4 billion.

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposed a shift in oversight of federal dredging operations from USACE to the Maritime Administration (MARAD) within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) under the rationale that "DOT is underrepresented in commercial maritime issues." Ms. Helton noted that this proposal faces many hurdles, not the least of which is that it would require Congressional approval.

Looking ahead to 2019, Ms. Helton noted that prospects look good for legislative support of infrastructure projects, as both Democrats and Republicans have identified infrastructure renewal as a priority.

I had noted that Tom Crane gave an update to the GLDT prior to the member roundtable. Perhaps this could be elaborated on in these notes?

Tom Crane's update

Provided an overview of the GLDT: Committee chairs, membership, and efforts since the May 2018 annual meeting.

Regional Updates/Member Roundtable

Illinois

Jim Casey

Sediment dredged from the Waukegan harbor has historically been disposed upland but there is now strong interest in nearshore placement as sand-starved coastal communities in southern Lake Michigan look for new beach replenishment strategies.

Ohio

Scudder Mackey

The Ohio legislature has appropriated \$20M for beneficial use of dredged material to help meet the July 1, 2020 deadline for ending placement of dredged material in Lake Erie. Most recently, \$9.9M was released to fund three beneficial use projects: processing and re-use facilities at Conneaut and Lorrain, and a CDF in Toledo.

USACE

Buffalo District – Quarterly meetings are being held among the 3 Great Lakes Districts (Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo) to discuss regional dredged material management issues. These also include the Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) and representatives from the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division office. Monthly meetings on beneficial use are also being held with the State of Ohio.

Chicago District – Looking more at littoral zone placement, specifically on beaches, though this can be an expensive alternative. The district is getting many requests from coastal communities because of the loss of beach sand due to high water levels on Lake Michigan.

U.S. Geological Survey

Jeff Steevens

Reported that the USACE Beneficial Use Testing Manual is being reviewed. USGS is also involved in AOCs and remediation projects in and around the Grand Calumet River area.

Illinois DNR Coastal Management Program

Diane Tecic

Reported on release by National Sea Grant Law Center of draft document: “Lake Michigan Shoreline Project: A regional view of state shoreline policies and permitting.”

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Implementation of Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Projects in the Great Lakes a.k.a. “Engineering with Nature”: Lessons Learned, Remaining Challenges, and Further Opportunities

See PowerPoint slides from:

Burton Suedel

[USACE - Engineering Research and Development Center \(ERDC\)](#)

[‘Engineering with Nature’](#)

Dan Breneman

[Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#)

[‘Beneficial Use Opportunities in the St. Louis River Estuary’](#)

Amanda Meyer

[USACE- LRE](#)

[‘Beneficial Use of Dredged Material in Detroit District: Successes, Strategies, and Challenges’](#)

Scudder Mackey

[Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources](#)

[‘Ohio Beneficial Use Projects – An Update: Lessons Learned, Remaining Challenges, and Future Opportunities’](#)

John Hull introduced the EWN/BU topic: Noting that

- 1) Traditionally there have been conflicting federal and state regulations/guidance, but have made progress towards eliminating conflicts/developing consistent regional approaches.
- 2) Real life cycle approaches for CDF management
- 3) benefits – costs: cross programmatic approaches for dredged material management

Question from participant from Duluth (HTAC): How do you deal with aquatic placements for beneficial use when there are on-going sources of contamination in the neighboring upland sites? Answer from John Hull: plantings/wetlands to treat continuing discharges from adjacent areas. This will treat both metals and PAHs/PCBs. Superfund sediment sites are using in situ treatment instead of dredging.

USACE Beneficial Use Testing Manual
Karen Keil, USACE Buffalo District

Reported that last review of comments is finishing up, primarily on Sections 4 and 5; process is expected to be complete by January 31, 2019.

Committee Reports

Technical Committee
Jennifer Miller, USACE Chicago District

Recently, the Committee has looked at the practice of enabling contractor-chosen sites for beneficial use of dredged material where the material can be taken right from the dredging project to a beneficial-use site. J. Miller reported that USACE is trying to get more guidance from the USACE Office of Counsel on such issues as to whether USACE is still liable for dredged material given away. K. Keil also noted that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements also need to be considered.

T. Crane and D. Knight reported on favorable response from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT) to a GLDT proposal for a two-day symposium: "Exploring development of a regional policy for regulating environmental dredging windows in Lake Michigan." GLFT grant managers have requested some revisions of the proposal which will be submitted in January.

Outreach Committee
Reilly Manz, GLC Staff

Reported on GLDT newsletter, and GLDT website re-development which is underway.

New Business

T. Crane announced plans for the 2019 GLDT annual meeting to be held in Buffalo, most likely in May or June, with dates and other details to be determined.