

Public meeting yields list of alternative strategies

The objective of the Long Term Management Study is to identify the most cost-effective and environmentally sound strategy to operate and maintain the federal project in Grays Harbor. The Corps will continue to operate and maintain a safe navigation channel. The Corps' goal is to make the best use of federal navigation funds in maintaining and protecting the federal navigation project features.

At the Sept. 29 public meeting, nearly 50 folks came together to discuss ideas for addressing the potential threat to the federal navigation features at Half Moon Bay and South Beach.



The study team presented background on ideas that had already been evaluated and in some cases implemented by the Corps of Engineers. Others in the audience then added their ideas to the list, arriving at more than two dozen ideas in all, including variations on some initial ideas.

The audience split into smaller work groups to write down the work group's ideas of benefits and drawbacks of each alternative. These were posted on the wall and included in the meeting report, which is available on the study website.

Following the workshop, the study team began evaluating the alternatives using previously determined criteria. The team is currently narrowing the list of alternatives for more in-depth evaluation. They plan to share the narrowed list at a public meeting Feb. 16.

Alternatives aired at workshop

The study team is evaluating various alternatives in order to recommend the most cost-effective and environmentally sound strategy to maintain and protect the federal project. The study team must follow the Corps' planning and evaluation process to arrive at the best strategy for the tax payers' money. The recommended strategy is expected to incorporate a package of interrelated initiatives. Any recommended strategy must be complete, effective, efficient, in compliance with existing state and federal laws, and be approved by the resources agencies.

The alternatives shared at the Sept. 29 workshop or following the meeting were as follows:

1. Nearshore berms (on-going)
2. Revetment & jetty extension (partially implemented - revetment only)

Upcoming Meeting

Feb. 16, 2006, 4-6 p.m.

Port of Grays Harbor Commission Chamber

Public meeting to share alternatives that have passed initial screening.

3. South Jetty reinforcement (implemented)
4. Direct beach nourishment (on-going)
5. Relocation of bar channel
6. Continue breach maintenance (current action)
7. Beach nourishment
8. Jetty extension without beach nourishment
9. Jetty spur groin
10. South Beach revetment
11. South Jetty reconstruction
12. Straighten segment parallel to jetty (eliminate dog-leg)
13. Jetty extension & beach nourishment
14. Implemented Plan from 1997
15. Buried revetment between South Beach and the Bay
16. Gravel - cobble transition beach
17. Point Chehalis control point
18. Modification of the east end of the South Jetty
 - 18-1. Raise the submerged portion of South Jetty east of the mound
 - 18-2. Increase the size of the diffraction mound and reduce its slope
 - 18-3. Addition of a diffraction spur
19. Weir Jetty
20. Construction of submerged berm or breakwater
 - 20-1. Segmented submerged breakwater
 - 20-2. Continuous nearshore berm
21. Allow the breach to form
 - 21-1. Close breach with emergency intervention.
 - 21-2. No intervention.
22. Terraced Revetment. In addition to rock revetments, two sub-alternatives using geo-tubes are considered:
 - 22-1. Geo-terraced revetment
 - 22-2. Geo-tube perched beach

In addition to those above, the Corps generated additional ideas—13a and 13b, which are variations of jetty extension and beach nourishment; and a dune modification alternative.

Information meeting Feb. 16

The study team is evaluating the initial list of more than 20 ideas and will present a list of alternatives that remain, following initial screening using threshold criteria, at the Feb. 16 meeting. The meeting is in the Port of Grays Harbor Commission chambers from 4-6 p.m.

Once the narrowed list is presented, interested parties will be asked to submit any data or information they have regarding the narrowed list to study manager Patricia Robinson via e-mail or mail.

Additional opportunities are planned for interested parties to participate in discussions of alternative costs and environmental considerations.

Environmental studies

The Corps has contracted with SAIC, which has conducted sampling in Half Moon Bay and on South Beach to determine potential impacts to benthic invertebrates from material placement in the bay area. They took samples prior to sand placement in 2004, and again in winter and summer of 2004 and in summer of 2005.

The third and final benthic invertebrate sampling and evaluation has reported that previous conclusions continue to hold true—that there are no significant differences between pre-disposal and post disposal at Half Moon Bay. This evaluation also supports conclusions that changes in the existing benthic community are indicative of natural variations.

Previous studies showed that while sand placement disrupted benthic communities in Half Moon Bay, the disruption was short-lived and recovery of the benthic community is proceeding as expected.

Additionally, stomach sampling studies show that Half Moon Bay doesn't appear to be a significant feeding area for juvenile Chinook salmon during their outmigration.

Bird surveys will continue through April 2006, and so far no significant detections have been noted.

The study team is moving forward with plans for a crab survey associated with a test dredge (anticipated in the spring of 2007) to assess the merits of realigning the channel.

Criteria for assessing potential strategy alternatives

The study team has been evaluating alternatives using the criteria discussed previously in public workshops and meetings. There are general threshold criteria any strategy must meet to be further considered by the Corps. It must:

- Be feasible from an engineering standpoint
- Be economically viable (cost-effective)
- Be environmentally acceptable (approval and concurrence of resource agencies)

LTMS Study Timeline

2005 - April 2006	Bird studies
June - August 2005	Independent Technical Review
June 2005	Final round of benthic studies
July 12, 2005	Port Commission Meeting
August 2005	ITR completed
Sept. 14, 2005	Meeting regarding ITR findings
Sept. 29, 2005	Public Workshop on alternatives
December 2005	Alternatives narrowed
Feb. 16, 2006	Information meeting

- Be within Operation & Maintenance authority for Grays Harbor
- Comply with existing federal and state laws
- Maintain the Corps' obligations for revetment coverage
- Accomplish the project purpose
- Anticipate decreasing availability of dredged material

Many other evaluation criteria were presented and added at the workshop. The revised set of criteria was distributed at the Port Commission meeting July 12. The main categories include biological/environmental, engineering, economic and other. A full listing can be found on the LTMS website through the website below.

Existing conditions studies

In 2005 the Corps' Coastal Hydraulics Laboratory used numerical models to assess the threat to the federal navigation project posed by a breach of the landmass adjacent to the Grays Harbor South Jetty. A second study used a physical model study to establish a baseline condition that can represent the equilibrium response of the adjacent (Half Moon Bay) shoreline, assuming a breach does not reform.

These studies generated interest, and local citizens asked the District to conduct an "unbiased" review of the study results. It is standard for the Corps to provide for an independent review for projects such as this. That review has been conducted and reviewer comments provided to the lab.

The lab is currently responding to comments from the independent review and finalizing the reports on numerical modeling. The estimated completion date is April 2006.

The lab is also completing a hydraulic evaluation that is needed for drafting NEPA documentation and other environmental compliance for conducting a test dredge to assess the merits of realigning the channel.

Grays Harbor Navigation Maintenance Long Term Management Strategy Points of Contact

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Access our website through:
<http://www.nws.usace.army.mil>