

Summer meeting updates Port and public

The Grays Harbor Long Term Management Strategy team met with the Port of Grays Harbor Commissioners and the public July 12 to provide an update of the study's progress since February and to give an updated timeline of the projected milestone events. The team also went over the final list of criteria for evaluating alternatives.

The team informed the commission and the audience that the two model studies on Half Moon Bay are under review by a team of experts. The review is scheduled for completion at the end of August. The study team distributed biographies of the Independent Technical Review team during the meeting.

A public meeting is planned for Sept. 14 to discuss the findings of the ITR. A date for the public workshop to discuss project alternatives was also set for Sept. 29.



The study team suggested that there be more interaction between the technical staff of the stakeholders and the Corps so as to have a better understanding of all studies that are being conducted in Grays Harbor and a more timely exchange of information.

Based on a request by the Port of Grays Harbor, the Corps received \$20,000 to start a scoping study to evaluate deepening the navigation channel to its authorized depth. Study scoping will begin in September.

In addition, the study team assured the audience that the sand placement overbuild resulting from the last Interim Action Project at Half Moon Bay would be resolved and that they are planning for removal of the excess sand placement to be completed by the end of July. This action is still pending design finalization and a public comment period.

After their presentation the team had a question and answer forum with the Commissioners and the audience (see back page).

Upcoming Meetings

Sept. 14, 2005, from 6-8 p.m.

Independent Technical Review summary.

The study team and members of the Independent Technical Review team will be at the Port Office to provide a summary of the ITR findings and answer questions.

Sept. 29, 2005, from 3-6:30 p.m.

Collaborative workshop at the Port of Grays Harbor office to discuss long term strategy alternatives for operating and maintaining the federal navigation project features at Grays Harbor.

Criteria for assessing potential strategy alternatives

In the spring, workshop participants looked at potential criteria by which to evaluate any potential strategy alternatives. There are general threshold criteria any strategy must meet to be further considered by the Corps of Engineer. It must:

- Be feasible from an engineering standpoint
- Be economically viable (cost-effective)
- Be environmentally acceptable
- Be within Operation & Maintenance authority for Grays Harbor
- Comply with existing federal and state laws
- Maintain the Corps' obligations for revetment coverage

Many other 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.

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>

Independent Technical Review nearly complete

The Independent Technical Review of two studies undertaken by the Corps' Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, (CHL), to evaluate coastal processes at the South Jetty at Grays Harbor Washington is expected to be completed at the end of August. The Corps has scheduled a public meeting Sept. 14 to share information about the ITR process and findings and next steps.

The first CHL study 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. The 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 have generated interest, and local citizens have asked the District to conduct an "unbiased" review of the study results. Conducting an independent review is Corps policy for projects such as this.

The ITR is intended to answer the following questions:

- Are the selected models appropriate for the study purpose?
- Have the models been appropriately calibrated and verified?
- Are the study conclusions supported by the model results?
- Do the studies accomplish their goals?

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.

Studies to date show 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.

Stomach analysis of fish in Half Moon Bay showed that the juvenile salmon were feeding on *Jassa*, a tube dwelling amphipod that inhabits flotsam and pilings. The salmon were feeding on water column organisms rather than the benthic organisms that are found in the Bay. Only English sole showed evidence of feeding on intertidal benthic organisms. Half Moon Bay doesn't appear to be a significant feeding area for juvenile Chinook salmon during their outmigration.

As recommended by SAIC, reference points for sampling were moved to Half Moon Bay for July 2005 sampling.

Bird surveys will continue in the Half Moon Bay area through April of 2006.

Answers to questions from the July 12 meeting

Q: What is the status of the plans for the beach nourishment, or the interim action, project in Half Moon Bay during the duration of the LTMS?

A: The Corps will continue to monitor the situation at the breach fill area on the west side of Half Moon Bay using annual surveys as they have been until the completion of the LTMS.

Q: Has the annual survey for this year been completed?

A: The aerial photography has been completed and the Corps should be receiving the results of the survey within the next couple of weeks [surveys are being reviewed now].

LTMS Study Timeline

Now - 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 regarding strategy alternatives

Q: Is there a connection between the Port of Grays Harbor's Long Term Plan and the Corps' LTMS Study?

A: In the future these two distinct projects will be coordinated, because the LTMS Study must consider the nature and likelihood of future changes to the navigation channel and other facilities it seeks to protect.

Q: How deep is the water where the dredge material being placed along South Beach, and is this disposal being monitored?

A: The Corps is disposing the dredge material at a depth of 30 to 35 feet, which is the shallowest water in which the loaded hopper dredges can safely operate. The Corps surveys before and after the deposition of dredged material in order to get an idea of the sand transport once it is deposited. Surveys indicate the sand drifts offshore.

Q: Does the Corps know where the sand disposed of in Half Moon Bay drifts to?

A: The Corps does surveys before and after the deposition of dredged material in Half Moon Bay and has found that the sand drifts offshore.

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