

Winter workshop lays out strategy's purpose and scope

A group of community members interested in Grays Harbor navigation came together Feb. 24 to launch a collaborative effort to find a long term strategy for operation and maintenance of the federal navigation project.

The meeting began with a review of the Long Term Management Strategy study's purpose and authorities.

The impetus of the LTMS study is the persistent loss of sediment from the Grays Harbor entrance. The purpose of the study is to assess the risk that shoreline erosion would cause a breach in the land mass adjacent to the south jetty and determine if there were to be a breach whether there would be any material risk to the federal navigation project features.

The study is funded under the Corps' authority to operate and maintain the Grays Harbor federal navigation project, including the channel, jetties and other features.

Those attending the meeting discussed the benefits of finding a long-term strategy for operation & maintenance. Identified benefits included: a viable channel, improved safety, improved goodwill between the Corps and community, common ground, predictability, cost savings, addressing unintended consequences.

Workshop attendees reviewed findings from conversations with a number of interested parties who had previously been involved in Grays Harbor navigation issues. Their overall areas of concern included: the process of the study, technical solutions, federal authority, benefits, economics, environment, and relationships.

Studies undergoing Independent Technical Review

The Corps initiated a contract in May for 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. It is estimated the ITR will take several months to complete. Once complete, the Corps will hold a special briefing to inform interested parties of the findings.

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 a

Upcoming Meeting

July 12, 2005

Port Commission meeting 9 a.m. The study team will be at the Port Office to provide the updated list of criteria incorporating public comments, study schedule and the ITR process.

considerable amount of 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?



Grays Harbor Navigation Maintenance

Long Term Management Strategy Points of Contact

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<http://www.nws.usace.army.mil>

Mapping the Situation

Workshop participants created a comprehensive “situation map”—a visual depiction of the complexity of the system within which the Grays Harbor navigation operation and maintenance project exists. The major elements identified for consideration in strategy development included:

- Politics
- Authorities
- Project economics
- Navigational safety
- Channel maintenance
- Dredge material
- Water quality
- Environmental protection (ESA and NEPA)
- Mitigation crab shell plots
- Groin and revetment system in Westport
- Impacts to the community (NEPA)
- Science
- Engineering
- Dredge disposal sites
- Mitigation stock pile over the buried revetment in Half Moon Bay
- Dredging of the Westport Marina
- Tribal relations
- Jetties and other navigational features
- Channel alignment
- Compliance with Federal and State standards

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	Meeting regarding ITR findings
September 2005	Public Workshop regarding strategy alternatives

Criteria for assessing potential strategy alternatives

Workshop participants looked at potential criteria by which to evaluate any potential strategy alternatives. There are several criteria any strategy must meet to be recommended by the Corps of Engineers. 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 will be discussed at the Port Commission meeting July 12. The main categories include biological/environmental, engineering, economic and other.

Answers to questions from the Feb. 24 meeting

What is the baseline for the project?

The existing condition is being established through engineering studies currently under independent technical review.

What is success?

The Corps’ goal is to most effectively and efficiently operate and maintain the federal navigation features at Grays Harbor, considering navigation safety, environmental sustainability, economic viability, engineering feasibility and other issues of concern to the community. If this study can identify improved methods for operation and maintenance, it will be a success.

What is the “no action” alternative for the LTMS?

Currently the Corps dredges to maintain the existing channel. Although the Corps is presently maintaining the status quo by averting the undue risk of a breach through the placement of sand at the breach fill on the spit connecting Westport to the South Jetty, the LTMS Study will evaluate whether there is continuing Federal interest in doing so.

What is the time frame for the study?

Once the existing situation is verified through independent technical review, the team will work with the community to identify a list of potential strategy alternatives. Alternatives will be analyzed using the list of criteria that the community added to and commented on at the Feb. 24 workshop. The Corps will study the highly promising alternatives and recommend a long-term strategy. The process to get to a strategy recommendation is expected to be completed in 2006.

Does this study look beyond Half Moon Bay?

The Corps is concentrating this study on the federal navigation channel, south jetty and Half Moon Bay area. Any potential strategy would evaluate any potential impacts to other resources within Grays Harbor. The study will consider data from previously completed studies, such as the north jetty study among others, as the maintenance study proceeds.

How will scientific disagreements be handled?

The existing condition studies and alternatives analysis will be subject to independent technical review.

How are crab impacts from dredging being addressed?

Following the Feb. 24 meeting, the Corps hosted a representative of the crab fishermen on the Corps dredge vessel, and met in April with the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and crab fishermen to provide current information regarding crab sampling and mitigation activities.