



Minutes

Dare County Oregon Inlet Task Force Meeting

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

9:30 a.m., January 9, 2024

Attendance: Steve House, Harry Schiffman, Bob Peele, Russ King, Brown Douglas

Staff: Barton Grover

Others in Attendance: Jordan Hennessy, Ken Willson, Patrick Tallant, Erin Weller, Joen Petersen, Michael Flynn

1.0 Welcome guests

- Meeting was called to order at 9:30am by Commissioner House.

2.0 Review Minutes- December 12, 2023

- Bob Peele made the motion to approve the minutes. Harry Schiffman seconded the motion. All in favor.

3.0 Update on buoys placement in & around O.I. by USCG ANT, Wanchese

- Patrick Tallant reported that as a result of the recent weather system, buoys 3,4,6,8, and 9 are all missing. Currently only the Oregon Inlet Lighted Sea Buoy, Lighted Buoy 1, Lighted Buoy 2, Lighted Buoy 10, and Lighted Buoy 11 remain. Friday morning is our earliest weather window to reset some of these buoys. We plan on resetting buoys 4,5, and 9 weather permitting. We are waiting on new buoy hulls and mooring hardware to reset the other missing buoys. When these are received, we will reset them as soon as possible. In the meantime, Virtual AIS will be turned on to mark the positions of these aids. Also, a Broadcast notice to Mariners will be broadcasted shortly, along with updated to the Local Notice to mariners.

4.0 EJE Dredging Update

- Jordan Hennessy reported 51,443 cubic yards were dredged in December inside and at the Bar. They have recently performed some maintenance around the holidays.

5.0 U.S. Army Corps Update

- Erin Weller reported there is no significant update. The Corps has been continuing to perform surveys in the area.
- Jordan Hennessy mentioned that Bob Keistler at last night's Waterways meeting discussed a pipeline project to be performed next year near Oregon Inlet. Could more details be provided. Erin commented that she is currently working on developing that project. The Alternate Channel is the primary section, but also looking at Old House 1 and 2, and other channels in the area including Wanchese Channel. She will pull that information together and pass it along to the Task Force. Any suggestions are welcome to add to the scope.
- Jordan asked where the disposal area for the alternate channel would be. Erin responded Island M, N, Wells, or Purnell. Ken Willson asked if the Environmental Assessment currently being worked on identifies these disposal areas. Previous discussions with the Corps months ago was the pipeline dredging would be done to widen the channel beyond 100ft to 200ft because of safety issues with boats passing each other in the channel. And because a larger dredge would need to be used to dredge that channel, a wider channel would be necessary. The Corps then reported a pipeline project would not be done in the Alternate Channel because the Miss Katie was effectively maintaining the channel. Last night we heard the Corps is considering doing the pipeline project in the Alternate Channel, so it would be good to get more details. Harry Schiffman concurred that there have been contradicting reports on if there will be a widener and if a pipeline project will be done, so an update would be appreciated.
- Erin reported she will touch base with the team on previous discussions and provide an update. Jordan commented that it would be problematic with a pipeline project to have trawlers get through there by the dredger. The trawlers are already having issues getting through there. Erin will look at the options. Ken asked if there is an update on the Alternate Channel EA. Erin said there is a meeting about to occur on that today, but she is not involved in that project. It should be finalized in the next month or so.

6.0 CPE Update

- Ken Willson said we have received the CAMA permits for the Walter Slough and Crack channels, the Manteo to 17 extension channels, and Old House Channel 2. Josh Pelletier provided an update yesterday. The agencies have all commented and the Corps is only waiting for Office of Counsel and the 408 review. This is an internal review of any actions that may affect a federally authorized project. Josh had suggested the final 408 review would be complete by Navigation by the end of the week. Then it would take two more weeks to finalize his EA and permit conditions.
- Ken stated there is a quarterly meeting later today with the agencies and as part of the quarterly meeting, there will be draft work plans of the interior channels including Wanchese to 17 extension, the Crack & Walter Slough, and Old House Channel 2. Ken brought up the Oregon Inlet Bar plans, which followed the waypoints of the most recent Bar survey. However, there is a dogleg which would affect operations. The last two sets of plans had a straight channel. There has not been a response from Todd Horton. Jordan said the box that has been used is straight and the Bar is highly volatile and changes rapidly. Trying to maneuver this vessel to follow the dogleg in these conditions is problematic. Previously waypoints of the surveys haven't changed this straight-line channel and the channel should remain the same. The straight channel still follows deep water. The plans and surveys were shared with the room. Steve House asked if this can be changed back. Ken said we can shift it back and submit a request, but the Corps needs to concur that it is best water. Joen Petersen joined the meeting and said Todd is tied up in meetings currently, but Todd and him will discuss this. He also reported Todd is now Chief of Navigation, and they will be looking for his replacement.
- Ken said it may be a good to have a workshop for the Task Force to prioritize the channels that need to be dredged and anticipate any preliminary items needed to be done such as SAV or shellfish surveys before that dredging occurs. Steve House agreed that was a good idea.
- Michael Flynn commented the Park Service is working on writing FONSI for portions of channels that lie within the Park Service boundary.

7.0 Administrative comments

7.1 Current Budget

7.1.1 Miss Katie DEQ Contract Remaining Funds

7.1.1.1 Oregon Inlet - \$3,188,460.91 (Not including December/January Dredging)

7.1.2 Non- Federal Funds with the Corps - \$46,796

- 7.1.3 Federal Funds
 - 7.1.3.1 Earmark - \$5,706,600
 - 7.1.3.2 IJA – \$4,067,100
 - 7.1.3.3 O&M - \$300,000
- 7.1.4 Dare County OI FY23 Budget- \$3,000,000

- Barton Grover reported that the Oregon Inlet budget does not reflect December billing, so a modification may be needed soon to add funds to that cost share contract for the rest of the fiscal year. Typical modifications take about 30 days to receive. Jordan suggested getting through January and looking again at the numbers. Harry commented that once we get the permits, the Miss Katie may be operating in other channels. Steve said we should discuss next month.
- Barton asked Erin if there had been any updates on the return of the non-federal funds. Erin said the paperwork had been completed as of last week, but she didn't have an update if it had been sent.
- For the Task Force awareness, the Corps is seeking an emergency authorization for Sloop, similar to the Alternate Channel situation up here. The Corps is going to look into if the emergency declaration would allow the Miss Katie to dredge the new channel. Steve House said we have the asset and if the conditions are good up here, then it was always the plan to have the dredge to assist in dredging Oregon and Hatteras Inlets.
- Harry mentioned to Erin that knowing the Corps plans will assist in the Task Force in planning dredging activities, so to keep us up to date.
- Bob Peele asked Jordan how Wanchese channel was looking. Jordan reported conditions are not good.

8.0 Adjourn

- Bob Peele made the motion to adjourn. Harry Schiffman seconded.