

CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT



To: City Council
From: Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner
cc: Planning Commission

Date: Nov. 25, 2024

This report does not indicate all *current planning* activities over the past report period. These are tasks, processing and administration of the Development Code which are a weekly if not daily responsibility. The Planning Commission agenda, available on the City's website, is a good indicator of *current planning* activities. The number of building permits issued is another good indicator as many require Development Code review prior to Building Official review.

ASSOCIATE PLANNER/PROJECT MANAGER—*In addition to routine tasks, the Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager has been working on: See attached.*

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—PREAPPLICATIONS MEETINGS

Conducted a pre-application meeting for a potential multifamily development at the S. 1st Street and Columbia Boulevard intersection.

Had a preliminary Q&A meeting for the city's sanitary sewer upgrades, specifically pump station #7 along Old Portland Road.

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—MISC.

See **attached** public notice regarding dredging in the Columbia River. Figure 9 includes the St. Helens area.

Prepared for the department's semi-annual report to the City Council and Planning Commission.

Attended workshops for the inclusion of the Endangered Species Act onto the National Flood Insurance Policy.

Assisted property owner in Cherrywood Estates II with a wetland/storm water issue resulting from the c. 2001 development and the 2003 wetland rules the shortly followed. We've been communicating with this person off and on for some time, but some extra correspondence this month.

Sanitary sewage management issue for food trucks continue as staff works to get those within city limits in line with city regulations. This effort started about a year ago. Of the four locations we currently have, two are ok and two need to work towards being ok.

We had our last technical advisory committee meeting for the EOA this month. Good committee with valuable input.

PLANNING COMMISSION (& *acting* HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION)

November 12, 2024 meeting (outcome): The Commission held a public hearing for part 2 of the 2024 Development Code amendments. The Commission also discussed Planning Commission term expirations / reappointments and the 2025 public meetings schedule due to a conflict in November for the normal 2nd Tuesday in a month meeting date.

December 10, 2024 meeting (upcoming): The Commission will have three public hearings: (1) for CCMH campus expansion, (2) a Conditional Use Permit + four Variances to rebuild a triplex that burned several years ago, and 3) a pair of Variances for a couple of recently adjusted lots along the 100 block of S. 6th Street.

The Commission will also conduct interviews for three candidates to fill a vacancy starting in January and staff will present the Planning Department's semi-annual report.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

Quarterly data updates this month.

Several hours spent getting new Engineering employee Bashar Al-Daomi established with their ArcGIS Desktop. This was valuable though, as it reminded me that the GIS software we have been using is being retired in early 2026, so it is imperative that time is spent this year getting familiar with its replacement, ArcGIS Pro.

COUNCIL ACTIONS RELATED TO LAND USE

The Council approved "part 1" of the 2024 Development Code Amendments (file CPZA.1.24). Part 2's hearing will be in December. First reading for this Ordinance has occurred.

From: [Jennifer Dimsho](#)
To: [Jacob Graichen](#)
Subject: November Planning Department Report
Date: Friday, November 22, 2024 4:00:13 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Here are my additions to the November Planning Department Report.

GRANTS

1. **Riverwalk Project (OPRD Grants x2)** – Contractor is working on final shoreline bank revetment and remaining utilities. Concrete pours will continue to occur weather permitting. Construction timeline looks on track for an early completion. Contract is approximately 50% expended. Submitted our first LWCF grant disbursement of approximately 750k. Coordinated with Communications on E-newsletter content and timing of drone footage. Reviewing/tracking submittals and RFIs. Attending bi-weekly check-ins with contractor and design team.
2. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Sanitary Sewer Improvement Project** – \$2.5 million grant award to fund design/engineering/permitting for 3 sanitary sewer basins identified as deficient in the adopted Wastewater Master Plan. Reviewed 30% design during workshop with consultant team. At approximately 30% of funds expended and between 30% design and 60% design. On track for our 3rd disbursement request in December for work through November.
3. **DLCD Technical Assistance Program** – 60k will fund a new Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA). TAC meeting #3 held on 11/19 where the comprehensive plan economic goals and policies were reviewed. Preparing for the Joint CC/CC meeting on 12/11 where the final draft will be reviewed.
4. **ODOT Community Paths Program: St. Helens Scappoose Trail Refinement Project** – 405k to study a trail route refinement project (30% design) from St. Helens to Scappoose. ODOT says consultant selection will be soon. Coordinated with County and Scappoose on selection committee. Likely to kickoff early 2025.
5. **2024 Travel Oregon Grant Program: Riverwalk Project** - 100k grant for Riverwalk Project. Anticipated to receive remaining 50k when project is complete by April 2025.
6. **ODOT TGM Program: Transportation Systems Plan** – ODOT says it will likely be early 2025 when we forward with consultant selection. Traffic counts via cameras complete.
7. **2025 Travel Oregon Grant Program:** Attended webinar about the upcoming grant cycle. Awards are up to 150k for accessibility improvements. Considering an application for design and construction of Courthouse Plaza improvements. Letter of Interest available online December 2 when a deadline for December 15. Final grant applications due end of February 27, 2025.

PROJECTS & MISC

8. **Business Oregon – Infrastructure Finance Authority** – Low-interest loan for Streets &

Utilities Project and Riverwalk improvements. Loan amendment coordinated and approved by Council on 11/20. Submitted Disbursement Request #4 which put us at about 85% complete with expenditures on the loan. Attending regular check-ins. Reviewed regular Waterfront E-newsletter content regarding construction updates, closures, progress, etc. Follow the [City's Waterfront E-newsletter](#) for timely updates.

9. **St. Helens US 30 Entry Sign** – Attended Columbia County Tourism Program Manager to discuss potential funding source for a St. Helens entry sign on US 30. Worked with Ramsay Signs to update our cost estimates for the existing design in both an illuminated and non-illuminated version.
10. **2024 Certified Local Government Workshop** – Attended the SHPO CLG Workshop on 11/6 in Dallas, Oregon.
11. **Oregon Government Ethics Commission Training** – Attended training on Public Meetings Law on 11/18 hosted by OGEC who newly administers the rules

Jenny Dimsho, AICP | Community Development Project Manager

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**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
Portland District

PUBLIC NOTICE
OF PROPOSED DISCHARGES OF DREDGED AND FILL
MATERIAL FOR THE LOWER COLUMBIA RIVER
CHANNEL MAINTENANCE PLAN, DREDGED
MATERIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
Oregon and Washington State

Issue Date: 10/7/2024

Expiration Date: 11/6/2024

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District (Corps) proposes to discharge dredged and fill material during implementation of a Dredged Material Management Plan and integrated Environmental Impact Statement (DMMP-EIS) for the purpose of maintaining the congressionally authorized channel dimensions of the Lower Columbia River (LCR) Federal Navigation Channel (FNC), part of the Columbia and Lower Willamette Rivers (C&LW) Project. This public notice is required by the provisions of section 103 of the Ocean Dumping Act (ODA) (aka, Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA)) and section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

LCR FNC maintenance dredging would occur annually utilizing a variety of dredge equipment. The intent of maintenance dredging is to reduce impediments to navigation by dredging to authorized dimensions, plus advanced maintenance dredging (AMD). The overall purpose of the DMMP-EIS is to define the dredged material management practices for the LCR FNC to maintain the authorized dimensions for a minimum of 20 years using the dredged material disposal alternative that represents the least-cost consistent with sound engineering practices and meeting the environmental standards established by the CWA 404(b)(1) evaluation process and ocean dumping criteria. Dredged material is placed in a manner that retains sediment within the Columbia River system to the greatest extent practicable without increasing future dredging requirements. The Corps proposes to transport and place dredged material in deep water, in-water shallow sites, confined aquatic facilities (confined aquatic placement with structures), upland placement sites, beach nourishment (shoreline placement) sites, including the use of temporary in-water transfer sites when needed, and the ocean deep-water site (DWS) ocean dredged material disposal site (ODMDS).

Congress has authorized the Corps to construct and improve Federal navigation projects over time to provide safe, reliable, efficient, and environmentally sustainable waterborne transportation systems for the movement of commerce, national security needs, and recreation. The Congressional authorizations relevant to the LCR FNC have not changed since this channel was last deepened.

Project Description

The forecasted average volume of material needed to be dredged to maintain the authorized dimensions for the next 20 years is expected to be 9.2 million cubic yards annually. The channel is

enrockment only depending on location and river flow velocities. Portions of structures could be completely or periodically inundated with water or designed with crest elevations above high water depending on the local hydraulic conditions. New pile structures would be constructed using barge-mounted cranes that drive timber or steel piles into the river bottom using vibratory or impact hammers. Rock placement would occur using land-based or barge-based excavators and cranes, or specialized placement barges. Sites would be filled incrementally over multiple, similar placement events with each event raising a portion of the site to its estimated design fill elevation. Events may occur within the same dredge season or years apart.

Upland placement may occur on islands in the river or locations on the mainland accessible from the river. Upland sites are defined as sites that initially contain areas of land above ordinary high water. Areas below ordinary high water must first be filled using the shoreline method to create land. The upland placement method is used to place dredged material on top of existing land and fill up to the final site elevation. Sites are filled in layers over multiple, similar placement events with each event raising the fill elevation of the site. Events may occur within the same dredge season or years apart. Containment berms are typically created around the perimeter of the upland placement area. Discharge of water from the final settling pond back into the river is controlled by the use of weirs. The return water discharge pipe is typically submerged in the river 20 feet or deeper.

The crest elevations of shoreline placement sites are at or above the ordinary high water mark (OHWM)(or mean higher high water mark in tidally influenced areas) after placement. Shoreline sites are typically shaped as long, narrow fills. Smaller volume sites may be filled in a single event. Larger volume sites would be filled incrementally over multiple, similar placement events with each event creating new land over a portion of the site. Broader shoreline sites may then be subsequently filled to a higher elevation using the upland placement method. Events may occur within the same dredge season or years apart. During shoreline placement, dredged material is pumped through a floating discharge pipe. As the sand exits the shore pipe, the sand settles out on the shoreline while the water returns to the river. After sufficient sand has settled out and begins to increase in height, it is moved by bulldozers to match the elevation of the existing shoreline at approximately the high-water line. During placement, a temporary sand berm is constructed to retain sand.

A transfer site is an in water holding area created for temporary storage of dredged material. The transfer operation is used only when it is more efficient and less expensive than other methods available to move dredged material directly from a shoal to a permanent placement site. Transfer sites are typically operated between depths of 30 to 43 feet, although some shallower locations may require shallower operating depths (20 to 30 feet), and sites adjacent to the LCR FNC are dredged to the typical advanced maintenance depth of 48 feet. Transfer operations at a given location may be used once per year, more than once per year, or less frequently based on shoaling and dredge availability. Dredge placement operations are similar to in-water deep placement.

Ocean placement: Material dredged from the LCR FNC between RM 3 and RM 30 may also be placed in the ocean at the DWS ODMDS. The Corps only uses the site for Columbia River FNC dredge material if capacity was reached at other placement sites. Dredge placement operations are similar to in-water deep placement.

LCR FNC users may perform dredging to maintain their facilities which is a separate action from the DMMP-EIS. Information is available in Appendix L of the DMMP-EIS Plan which may be downloaded from <https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16021coll7/id/26366>.

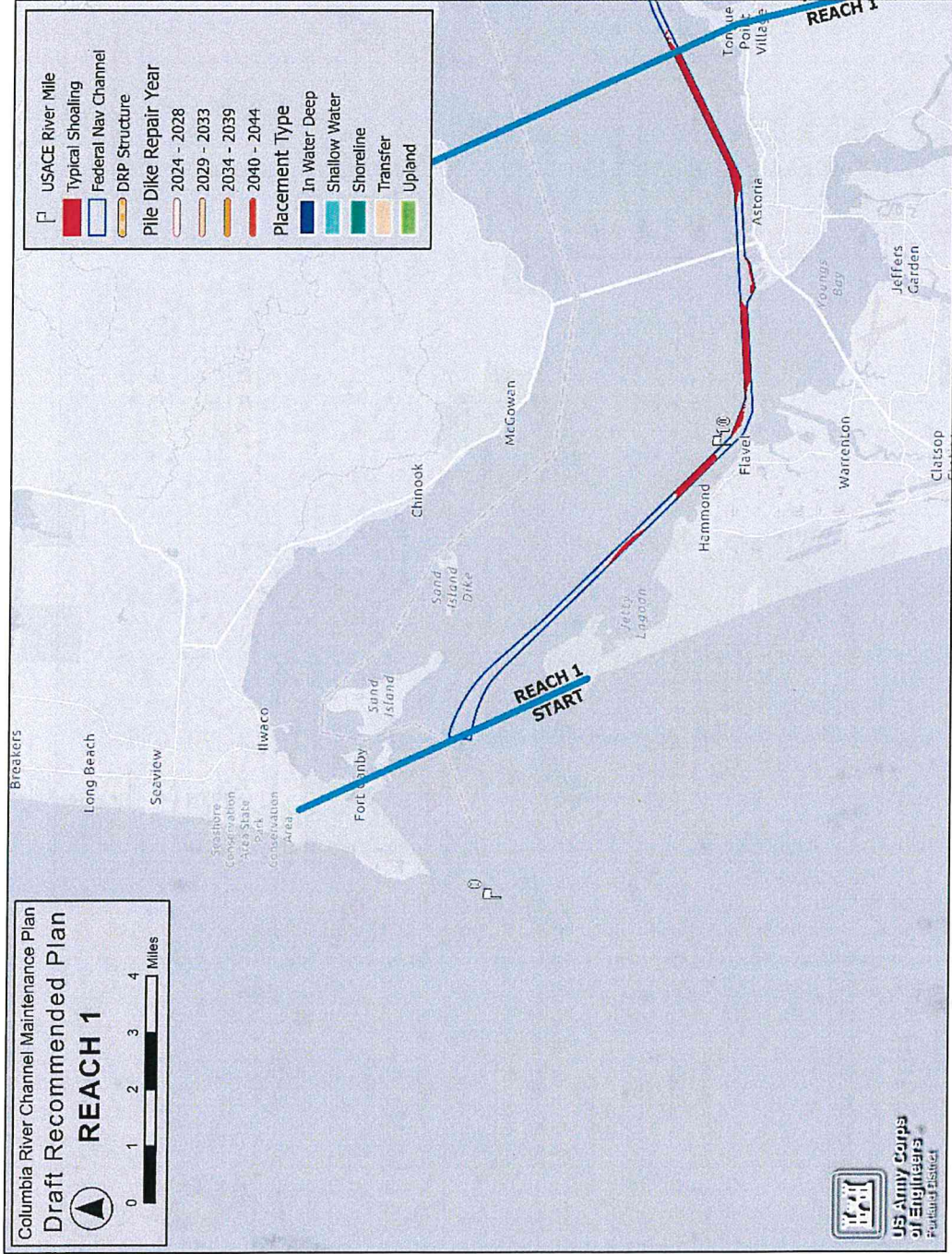


Figure 2. DMMP Recommended Plan Overview Map, Reach 1

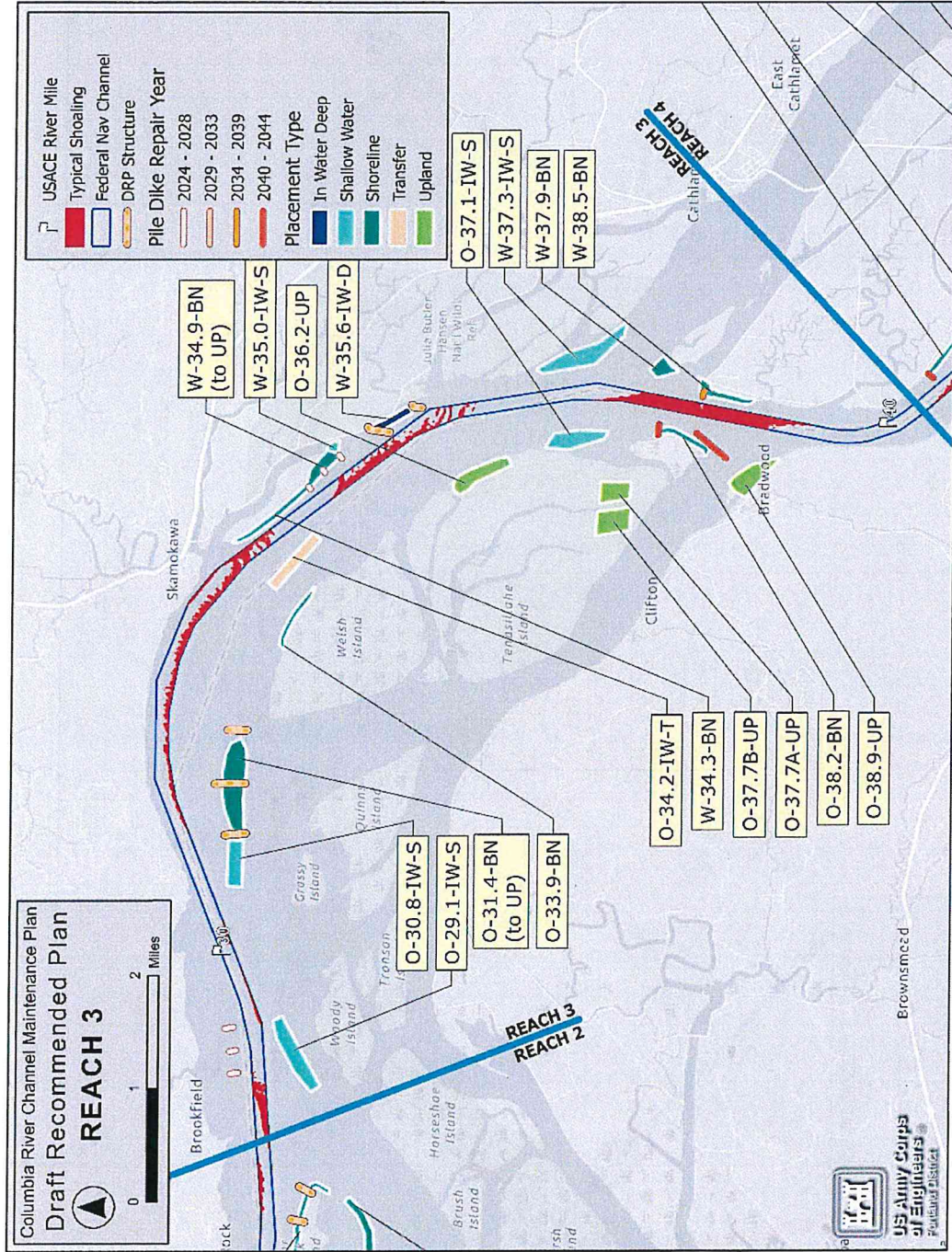


Figure 4. DMMP Recommended Plan Overview Map, Reach 3

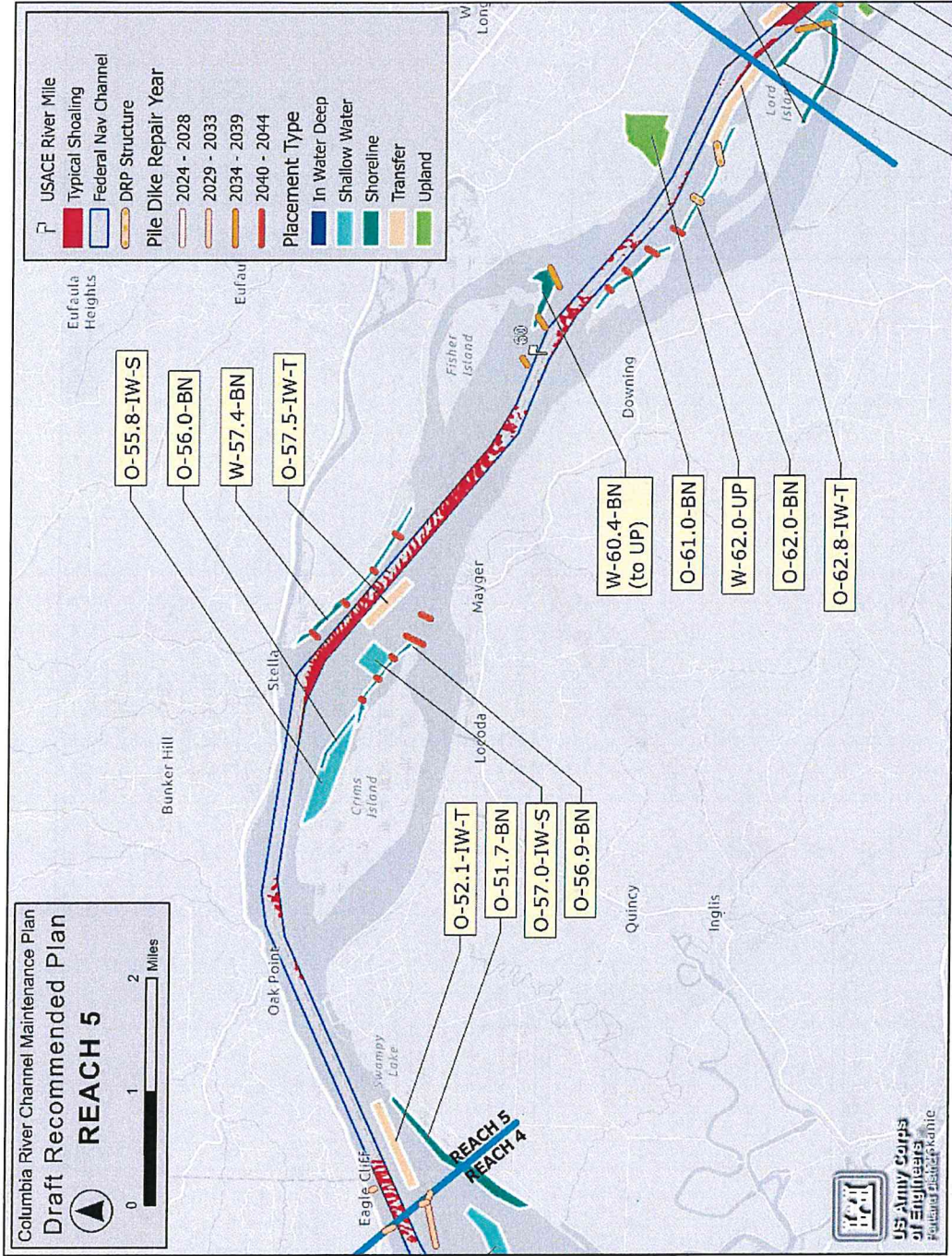


Figure 6. DMMP Recommended Plan Overview Map, Reach 5

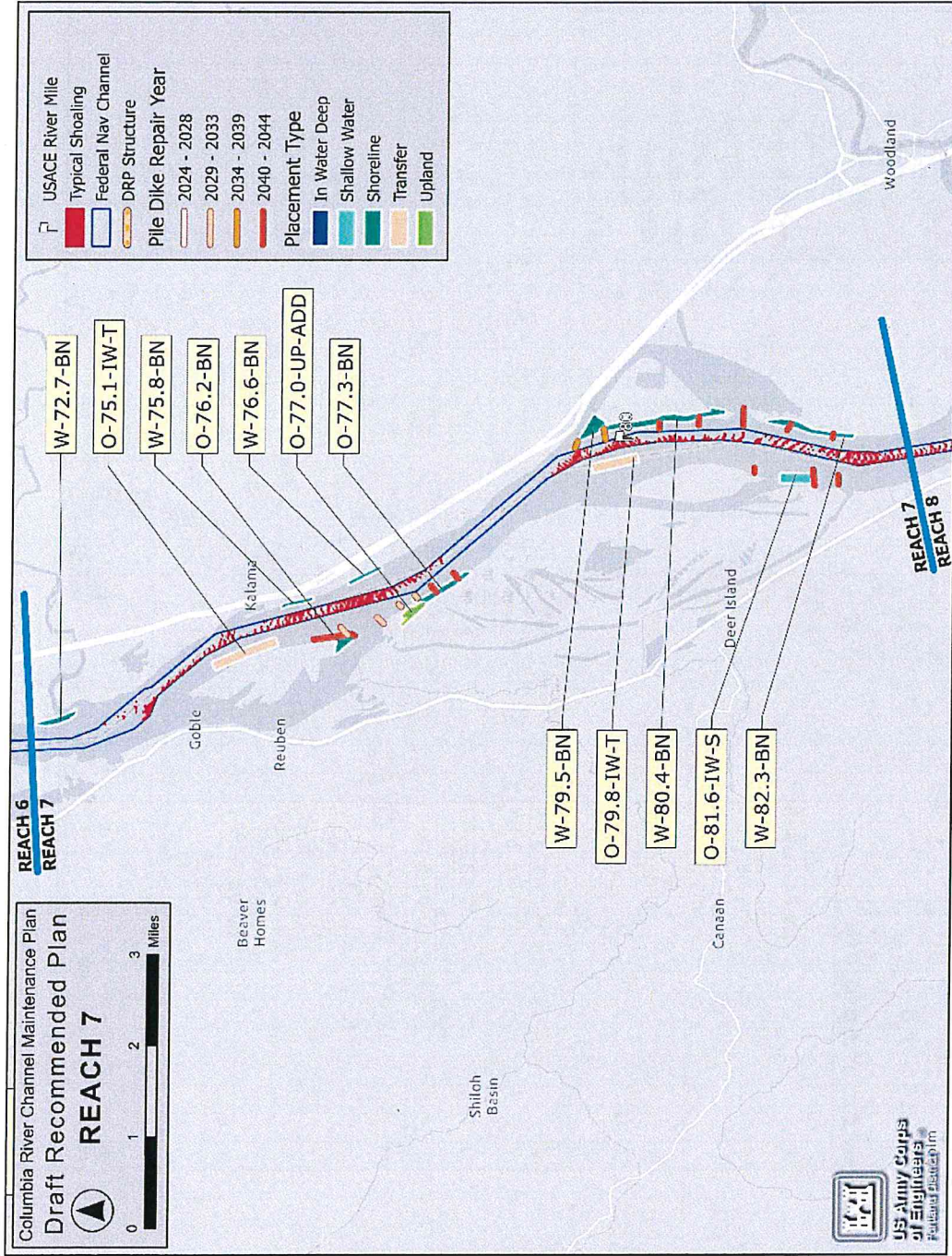


Figure 8. DMMP Recommended Plan Overview Map, Reach 7

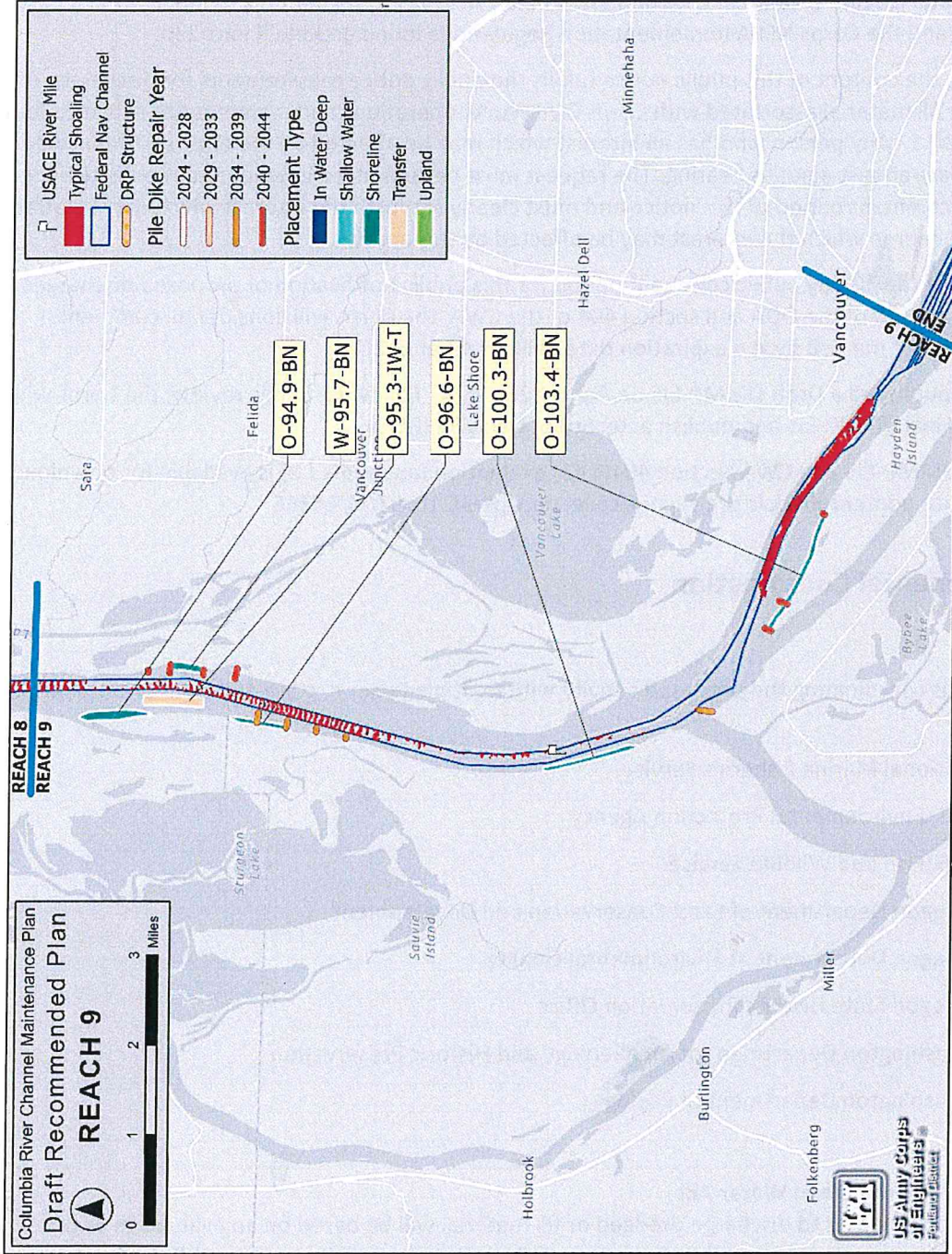


Figure 10. DMMP Recommended Plan Overview Map, Reach 9

including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps completed an analysis of the proposed discharge of dredged and fill material pursuant to the guidelines of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230). This analysis is available at the preceding link under DMMP-EIS Appendix J.2.

The proposed DMMP includes use of the DWS ODMDS. Additional criteria pursuant to the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 appear in description of environmental compliance under "Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act" below.

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act

Following public review of the Draft DMMP-EIS, the Corps will submit certification requests to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Washington Department of Ecology for those discharges associated with the Draft Recommended Plan (DRP) that lack existing certification. Certification, certification with conditions, or denial would occur prior to the agency official signing the Record of Decision for the DMMP-EIS.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

The Corps submitted area of potential effects (APE) consultation letters to Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (Oregon SHPO), Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and Tribes on March 23, 2020, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4[a][1]. Oregon SHPO and DAHP concurred with the APE on July 16, 2020, and June 30, 2020, respectively. Section 106 consultation for DMMP is ongoing. On May 1, 2024, the *Programmatic Agreement Among the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Regarding the USACE Portland District Lower Columbia River Navigation Program, Oregon and Washington* (Nav Program PA), was executed with Signatories being Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Oregon SHPO, DAHP, and the Corps. The Nav Program PA allows the Section 106 review for the DMMP implementation to be completed in a phased approach. Prior to any DMMP project location being prepared, work on, or used, the Corps will follow the NHPA Section 106 review process identified in the Nav Program PA to determine effects to historic properties and mitigation, if adverse effects will occur.

Endangered Species Act

The Corps has determined that the DMMP-EIS proposed action would affect listed species under the jurisdiction of USFWS. The Corps initiated formal ESA Section 7 consultation with USFWS for the Continued Operations and Maintenance Dredging Program, which is being substantively modified by the DMMP-EIS proposed action, in a letter emailed on January 26, 2024. The Corps has obtained a Biological Opinion from the USFWS for the proposed action.

The Corps has also determined that the DMMP-EIS proposed action would affect listed species under the jurisdiction of NMFS. As a result, the Corps reinitiated formal ESA Section 7 consultation with NMFS for the Continued Operations and Maintenance Dredging Program, which is being substantively modified by the DMMP-EIS proposed action, on March 11, 2024. Formal consultation will result in a Biological Opinion from NMFS.

Dredged material from the LCR FNC is predominantly composed of clean sand. In the Corps' May 2016 sediment characterization, the average sand content was greater than 97% sand and gravel, and less than 2.6% silt and clay. The total organic carbon content was also low at <0.3% (Corps 2017). Similar results were observed in the 1997 and 2008 characterizations of the LCR FNC sediments. In accordance with the SEF and the MPRSA sediment testing regulations found at 40 CFR § 227.13, chemical analysis was not required, because sand in the LCR FNC is part of the Columbia River bedload and is subject to strong currents. In these types of environments, sand is washed of the fine-grained material and is unable to bind contaminants, because the sand grains are inert. Based on repeated rounds of sediment characterization, the Corps and EPA have jointly determined that dredged material from the LCR FNC is suitable for unconfined, aquatic placement at both beneficial use sites and at ocean dredged material disposal sites. In accordance with the SEF, the Corps would continue to characterize sediments in the LCR FNC every 8 to 10 years to ensure they are suitable for unconfined, aquatic placement.

The MPRSA requires periodic dredged material disposal site monitoring and evaluation of the impact of dredged material disposal (40 CFR §§ 228.9-228.10). At the DWS, baseline surveys of sediment physical and chemical parameters and benthic infauna and epibenthic fauna were performed jointly by the EPA and Corps in 2001 and 2005. Monitoring surveys (led by the EPA with Corps assistance) were performed in 2013, 2014, and 2023. No adverse impacts from past dredged material disposal were observed. The EPA and Corps will continue to monitor the DWS every 8 to 10 years per the MPRSA's monitoring and impact evaluation requirements.

Additional Information and Comments

Additional information and links to download the draft DMMP-EIS can be found at the Lower Columbia River Channel Maintenance website: <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/lcrchannelmaintenance/>.

Questions and comments regarding this public notice can be emailed to LCR-CMP-DMMP@usace.army.mil or by calling 503-808-4708. Please add "DMMP Clean Water Act" to the subject line.

Mailed comments on this notice must be postmarked by the above expiration date and sent to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CENWP-PME-E / DMMP-EIS
P.O. Box 2946
Portland, OR 97208-2946

In your response, please refer to the above public notice title and date. Should no response be received by the above closing date, a "no comment" response will be assumed.



Amy Gibbons
Chief, Environmental Resources Branch
US Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District