

**STATEMENT OF
FINDINGS
AND
FINDING OF NO
SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

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NAVIGATION CHANNEL OPEN WATER
MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND DISPOSAL
TENNESSEE RIVER MILES 642.5 TO 643.5
KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE

1. Under the authority of Rivers and Harbors Act of July 3, 1930, ch. 847, 46 Stat. L. 927 (1930), the Nashville District Corps of Engineers has evaluated alternatives for maintaining the navigation channel in the Tennessee River between Tennessee River Miles 642.5 and 643.5 near Looney Island to a navigable depth of nine feet.
2. In accordance with ER 200-2-2, Policy and Procedures for Implementing NEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared and circulated to other agencies and groups for review. Seven alternatives were evaluated including 1) dredging and open water disposal, 2) dredging and upland disposal, 3) relocating the navigation channel, 4) altering reservoir operations to change the reservoir pool, 5) dredging and open water disposal at a remote site, 6) privatization of channel maintenance, and 7) No Action. The EA determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts would result from dredging and open water disposal. The EA further determined that the No Action alternative would have negative impacts and that all other alternatives were impractical at this time. Dredging and open water disposal was, therefore, the recommended plan.
3. The proposed work would result in some minor and relatively short-term impacts during construction. Although there would be temporary turbid conditions induced by the dredging, long-term water quality conditions and fisheries would not be significantly impacted. Measures

would be incorporated into the plans for this project to reduce and/or offset the negative impacts. Dredging and disposal operations would affect up to one mile of the river and would ensure a safe navigation channel.

4. A cultural resource assessment of the proposed project was conducted in accordance with the District's responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Project documentation has been provided to the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer, and a letter stating that that office has concurred in the determination that the project will have no effect on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is included.

5. No listed threatened or endangered species are known to reside in the area encompassed by this proposed project. Also, the project is in an attainment area as described under the provisions of the Clean Air Act.

6. Sediment samples were collected at both the proposed dredging and disposal sites. The material consisted of fine-grained material (sand) with considerable amounts of organic material (decaying plant matter). Sediment samples were analyzed for a number of semivolatile organic compounds, organic volatile compounds, pesticides, metals (including mercury), and PCBs. For all samples PCB arochlors were below the method detection or lowest quantifiable value limit. Results for all other compounds tested were indicated below the method detection limit. No HTRW concerns were found within the project area.

7. A Public Notice pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, No. 99-32, was circulated for public comment on August 26, 2003, for thirty days. All comments received have been addressed in the Environmental Assessment. A 404(b)(1) evaluation was completed, and Water Quality Certification has been received from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation dated ??? 2003.

8. I have reviewed the EA for maintenance of the Tennessee River navigation channel between Tennessee River Miles 642.5 and 643.5 near Looney Island and the comments and responses to its review. There are no significant adverse impacts or unresolved issues. In addition, I have evaluated the proposed placement of fill material in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the

Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 404(b) (1) of the Clean Water Act. Based on this evaluation, it is my finding that the proposed disposal site for the discharge of fill material complies with the requirements of the 404(b) (1) guidelines.

9. In light of the general public interest, I have determined that the work would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, I have concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement covering the proposed work is not required. Furthermore, having weighed the potential benefits that may be accrued as a result of implementing the recommended plan against the reasonable foreseeable detrimental effects, I conclude that dredging and open water disposal to maintain the Tennessee River navigation channel, as proposed, is in the public interest.

UNSIGNED

Date: _____

Byron G. Jorns
Lieutenant Colonel
Corps or Engineers
District Engineer