

Commissioners approve project to start dredging harbor

October 25, 2021



On Tuesday, Oct. 19, the Crescent City Board of Harbor Commissioners unanimously voted to pay \$14,000 to Portland-based GeoEngineers to provide dredge spoils management services to the port - a contract that commissioners said was a step in the right direction, but which drew criticism from others as still being too slow to fix the overall sediment problem in the harbor.

“You need to face realities,” said someone from an audience chair. “You’re not serving the needs of your tenants.”

The comment came after a half dozen other people left the meeting angry, including one individual who also didn’t walk up to the podium, but shouted out from his chair that statements from the commission to dredge the harbor using divers to “buy time” before fixing the sediment-clogged waterway is not going to help his business.

“We are to the point where we are almost virtually out of business,” he said, prior to getting up from his seat and slamming the meeting room door behind him.

Brian Stone, president of the Harbor Commission, responded by saying “Well, we moved something forward today, we actually moved to get the testing done, which is one step...step by step, and that’s the way the government is,” he said.

According to GeoEngineers project proposal, the firm will do the following:

PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

We understand that approximately 60,000 cubic yards of sediment dredged from the Crescent City Harbor have been placed in an upland dredged material disposal site owned and operated by the Crescent City Harbor District. Sediment analytical data collected at the time of dredging indicated that some sediment contained concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) that exceeded Water Board residential and industrial screening levels.

Other hazardous substances were also detected in sediment.

In 2013, the Water Board informed the Crescent City Harbor District that the dredge spoils constituted solid waste and those materials could not be re-used without a permit issued by the Water Board. The Crescent City Harbor District needs additional storage capacity at the upland dredged material disposal site.

Consequently, the Crescent City Harbor District would like to remove dredge spoils from the upland dredged material disposal site and re-use the material elsewhere. Removal and disposal of the dredge spoils at a licensed disposal facility is not considered feasible due to the projected costs for transporting and disposing of soil at an appropriate facility.

The Water Board regulates the re-use and disposal of solid waste in the region. The Water Board has indicated that re-use of the soil from the upland dredged material disposal site would require a permit issued under the Water Board’s waste discharge requirements (WDRs). The WDRs provide for a permit option or a permit waiver option. The Water Board determines which option is appropriate.

Under the WDRs, the dredge spoils may be moved from the current storage area to another location or locations, provided that the soil that is moved provides a “beneficial use” at the new location. Numerous beneficial uses have been defined, but beneficial uses that may be most applicable in the project area include use of the soil as fill to raise a target area elevation above a flood level or to address projected future sea level rise.

The Water Board will not determine specifically what permit or permit waiver is required for soil management prior to reviewing a preliminary proposal for soil re-use.

As the initial step in the permitting process, the Water Board will consider the proposed re-use of the soil, proposed re-use location(s), existing soil and groundwater analytical data, and other information provided. They will use this initial information to identify data gaps and determine what additional information and data are needed to evaluate the proposal.

Following their review, the Water Board may request additional data, information and evaluation, including but not limited to:

- Description of other potential beneficial uses.
- Chemical analytical data for soil/sediment proposed for re-use.
- Maps showing proposed reuse locations and surrounding features (e.g., water courses, wetland, roads, surrounding land uses, etc.).
- Soil chemistry data at the proposed re-use location(s).
- Groundwater data (depth to groundwater and groundwater chemistry) at the proposed re-use location.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The purpose of our services is to initiate the WDR process with the Water Board, with the goal of ultimately obtaining a permit or permit waiver that will authorize the Crescent City Harbor District to transfer soil from the upland dredged material disposal site to off-site location(s).

Our specific scope of services is as follows:

1. Coordinate with the Crescent City Harbor District to develop a preliminary soil management plan.

Coordination topics will include:

- a. The volume of soil targeted for removal;
 - b. Soil analytical data;
 - c. Proposed re-use locations and the associated beneficial uses; and
 - d. Project phasing and timeframe(s).
2. Review historical Water Board correspondence, laboratory analytical data, and sediment sampling reports that characterize the soil targeted for removal.
3. Prepare a Soil Reuse Proposal on behalf of the Crescent City Harbor District. The Soil Reuse Proposal will:
- a. Generally identify the location(s) that the Crescent City Harbor District proposes to reuse the soil.
 - b. Explain how the proposed re-use meets the Water Board's beneficial re-use criteria.
 - c. Estimate the lateral extent of the re-use area, the depth of soil at the re-use location, and total estimated soil volume that will be moved.
 - d. Include a tabulation of existing laboratory analytical data that are representative of the soil proposed for re-use. The tabulation will include current Water Board screening criteria. The proposal will include a

discussion of the comparison of laboratory data to screening criteria. The tabulation and screening will be based on previously collected data. The Water Board may require collection of new data.

e. Request the Water Board's preliminary opinion about the proposed re-use and a detailed description of the process that the Water Board will use to determine whether they will issue a permit or permit waiver.

The proposal also will request that the Water Board identify the additional analytical data and information that the Water Board will need to make a permit or permit waiver decision.

According to the GeoEngineers document, work will begin immediately, but an anticipated end date was not stated.