

DREDGING IN TIDEWATER VIRGINIA

Providing guidance through a dredging project - from the identification of a dredging need, to identification of sediment disposal site, to applying for a dredging permit, to the dredging of a channel

*Middle Peninsula Planning
District Commission*

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FULL REPORT
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Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

As a coastal region, navigable waterways are critical to the economic fabric of the region. Open waterways invite residents as well as tourists to explore and enjoy the coastal natural resources and wildlife of the Middle Peninsula.

Over the years, the US Army Corps of Engineers has been responsible to “ensuring navigation on our nation’s waterways moves safely, reliably and efficiently with minimal impact to the environment, thus sustaining a vital component of the economy (USACE, 2010).” However in 2010, Senator Witman held a meeting at the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission to inform regional stakeholders that federal funding once available for the dredging of the channels will no longer be available in the near future. Consequently localities will be responsible to fund all future dredging needs.

Therefore the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC), partnered with the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (MPCBPAA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers to develop a Regional Shallow Draft Navigation and Sediment Management Plan that provides a matrix of the channels that will need to be maintained, the approximate cost of the project, as well as a recommended timetable to dredge channels within the Middle Peninsula. To supplement that report the MPCBPAA developed this guidance report for coastal property owners as well as localities to execute a dredging project within their community.

There are a variety of components that factor to executing a dredging project within Tidewater Virginia: (1) identification of a channel with a dredging need, (2) conduct a pre-bathymetric testing to understand the current condition of the channel, (3) identification of a location to dispose of dredging sediment including public beaches, private beaches, private upland containment sites, and/or public upland containment sites, (4) applying for the VMRC Joint Permit, (5) convening a pre-dredging conference with VMRC staff, (6) dredging, (7) Post-Bathymetric Testing, and (8) VMRC’s final review of the dredged channel. As each component influences the overall cost of a dredging project it is important that applicants – whether a public entity, private entity or a public private partnership – weigh the various options as federal funding to maintain navigable waterways will no longer be available.

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