CESAS Form 19 Support Documentation
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
Fuel Dock Mooring Improvements
Chatham County, Georgia

The following information is submitted as support documentation in association with the attached application requesting authorization to impact waters of the U.S. pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Part 12-5-286 (OCGA).

1.0 Project Description

The Skidaway Institute of Oceanography (applicant) is proposing mooring improvements to the existing fuel dock located at the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography (SKIO) in Chatham County, Georgia. The project area is located at latitude 31° 59' 24.9" N longitude 81° 01' 17.5" W west of McWhorter Drive on the Skidaway River.

1.1 Existing Structures in Jurisdiction

SKIO is a training and research institution of the University of Georgia that conducts all manner of scientific research in the field of oceanography. The institute campus is fully developed with offices, research buildings, and various other facilities needed to carry out the SKIO mission. One of those facilities is the fuel dock located on the northern side of the site on the Skidaway River. The dock is responsible for fueling the Research Vessel (R/V) Savannah for its various research trips. The existing dock consists of an approximately 8' x 92' (736 sq. ft.) timber walkway leading to an irregularly shaped 13' x 32' (416 sq. ft.) pierhead with a 6'x10' (60 sq. ft.) bumpout on the downstream, landward side. A 4' x 25' (100 sq. ft.) gangway is located on the pierhead and is suspended by a hoist system mounted on steel pipe piles. On the upstream side of the pierhead is a 35' x 8' (280 sq. ft.) floating dock connected to the pierhead by a 4' x 30' (120 sq. ft.) gangway. On the channelward side of the pierhead are five single-pile or multi-pile timber mooring dolphins (30 sq. ft. total), and a 1' x 35' (35 sq. ft.) walkway extends upstream of the pierhead to aid in mooring/access. The dock contains fresh water, electrical, and fueling systems. In all, the existing dock structure totals approximately 1,777 square feet. The existing structure extends approximately 75 feet into the waterway from mean low water (MLW) where the waterway is approximately 1,050 feet wide (MLW to MLW). The jurisdiction line landward of the dock is an existing timber bulkhead.

1.2 Proposed Site Development Plans

The proposed project will simply add four new 7-pile timber mooring clusters along the existing fenderline of the dock to better facilitate fueling of the R/V Savannah. The existing 1' wide timber walkway and support piles on the upstream side of the dock will be removed, but all existing mooring piles will remain in place. Other than pile placement, no discharge of dredged or fill material into jurisdictional waters is required for this project. Proposed impacts, including installation on the new dolphins total 40 square feet. All work will occur within open water by waterborne crane and barge or from the existing dock. The proposed structures will extend no further channelward than the existing fenderline of the existing dock.

2.0 Upland Component:

It is the applicant's opinion that the project does not contain an upland component. The project consists of improvements to the existing mooring system at the fuel dock. All proposed structures are water dependent and are necessary for vessel fueling operations.

3.0 Project Justification

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety, access, efficiency, and operations during fueling. The new dolphins will better position vessels during fueling operations and better secure them during dockage making the facility safer for research and support staff.

4.0 Alternatives Analysis
The project is water dependent as it is needed to accommodate fueling of vessels. As such, there are no alternative sites with less jurisdictional impact that would satisfy the project purpose. The proposed project will improve the safety, efficiency, and operations during fueling service.

5.0 Avoidance and Minimization
In order to minimize the effects of the proposed project, all development activities will be performed using best management practices to further avoid and minimize impacts to upstream and downstream waters.

6.0 Threatened and Endangered Species
SECI completed a threatened and endangered species survey within the project area where plant communities and habitats were observed and noted to determine if they match the habitat types where the listed species have potential to occur. The upland area consists of fully developed institutional facilities which do not support any protected species. The Skidaway River is tidal and may support the shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon, and west Indian manatee. The applicant will comply with the USACE Savannah District's standard manatee conditions so that the project does not adversely affect the manatee during construction. The project will not change the current mooring operation so there will be no change in the potential of manatees being impacted during vessel docking procedures.

With respect to sturgeon, the project requires the driving of four 7-pile mooring structures (28 piles total). All piles will be 14" timber piles which are not known to cause injurious effects to sturgeon. In addition, the project is located in a saline environment which may support Atlantic sturgeon but is highly unlikely to support shortnose sturgeon. Nonetheless, because no steel or concrete piles will be driven, it was determined that the installation of such a low quantity of timber piles in a waterway that is 1,050 feet wide will not affect sturgeon.

7.0 Essential Fish Habitat
The proposed waterside activities are located on the Skidaway River which has been identified as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The project does not require any fill or dredge activities, and would not result in the shading, filling, or dredging of vegetated marsh or shallow water habitat. The only proposed activities in EFH consist of installing mooring dolphins. It was therefore concluded that the project would not adversely affect EFH.

8.0 Impaired Waters
The only proposed activities in tidal waters consist of installing mooring dolphins to aid in fueling operations. No change in the fuel system is proposed, and no fill, dredging, or other waterway disturbance is necessary. It was therefore concluded that the project would not adversely affect water quality.

9.0 Supplemental Information
This additional information is provided for compliance with the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 information requirements:

OCGA 12-5-286. Permits to fill, drain, etc., marshlands.

(b) Each application for such permit shall be, properly executed, filed with the department on forms as prescribed by the department, and shall include:

(1) The name and address of the applicant-

Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
Mr. Chuck Hartman
10 Ocean Science Circle
Savannah, Georgia 31411

(2) A plan or drawing showing the applicant's proposal and the manner or method by which such proposal shall be accomplished. Such plan shall identify the coastal marshlands affected-

See attached permit exhibits

(3) A plat of the area in which the proposed work will take place-

N/A – see below.

(4) A copy of the deed or other instrument under which the applicant claims title to the property or, if the applicant is not the owner, then a copy of the deed or other instrument under which the owner claims title together with written permission from the owner to carry out the project on his land. In lieu of a deed or other instrument referred to in this paragraph, the committee may accept some other reasonable evidence of ownership of the property in question or other lawful authority to make use of the property; The committee will not adjudicate title disputes concerning the property which is the subject of the application; provided, however, the committee may decline to process an application when submitted documents show conflicting deeds-

The property is owned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. For CMPA Permit #602, the applicant provided a deed from 1934 as requested by DNR. Attached is that deed and an email from DNR legal staff approving the project. A title search was also conducted about that same time. Due to the size of the title search document, only the cover page is attached showing that the owner is the Board of Regents. Based on this information, is the applicant's opinion that the legal review and ownership issues have been adequately addressed.

(5) A list of all adjoining landowners together with such owners' addresses, provided that if the names or addresses of adjoining landowners cannot be determined, the applicant shall file in lieu thereof a sworn affidavit that a diligent search, including, without limitation, a search of the records of the county tax assessor's office, has been made but that the applicant was not able to ascertain the names or addresses, as the case may be, of adjoining landowners-

Michel J. Kistler
P.O. Box 15607
Savannah, GA 31416

(6) A letter from the local governing authority of the political subdivision in which the property is located, stating that the applicant's proposal is not violate of any zoning law;

See attached

(7) A non-refundable application fee to be set by the board in an amount necessary to defray the administrative cost of issuing such permit. Renewal fees shall be equal to application fees, which shall not exceed $1,000.00 for any one proposal and shall be paid to the department.

The appropriate application fee as determined by CRD will be provided upon request.

(8) A description from the applicant of alternative sites and why they are not feasible and a discussion of why the permit should be granted-

See above project description

(9) A statement from the applicant that he has made inquiry to the appropriate authorities that the proposed project is not over a landfill or hazardous waste site and that the site is otherwise suitable for the proposed project-

A review of the Hazardous Site Index for Chatham County, Georgia indicates that the subject property does not contain hazardous waste sites or landfills.

(10) A copy of the water quality certification issued by the department if required for the proposed project-

The project will be authorized by a Letter of Permission from the Army Corps of Engineers, and no 401 Certification will be required.

(11) Certification by the applicant of adherence to soil and erosion control responsibilities if required for the proposed project-

The project will conform to all required land disturbing and stormwater management permits as required by Chatham County, Georgia.

(12) Such additional information as is required by the committee to properly evaluate the application.

This application has been prepared with consideration for the interests of the general public of the State of Georgia as defined in OCGA 12-5-286(g).

OCGA 12-5-286. Permits to fill, drain, etc., marshlands.

(g) In passing upon the application for permit, the committee shall consider the public interest, which, for purposes of this part, shall be deemed to be the following considerations:

(1) Whether or not unreasonably harmful obstruction to or alteration of the natural flow of navigational water within the affected area will arise as a result of the proposal-

The proposed project will not alter natural flow of navigable waters nor will it obstruct public navigation. The proposed structures will extend no further than the fender line of the existing dock. The fender line is located approximately 75 feet into the river from MLW where the waterway is 1,050 feet wide.

(2) Whether or not unreasonably harmful or increased erosion, shoaling of channels, or stagnant areas of water will be created-

The proposed project will not increase erosion, shoaling of channels, or create stagnant areas of water. All work will occur within open water subtidal areas.

(3) Whether or not the granting of a permit and the completion of the applicant's proposal will unreasonably interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, clams, or other marine life, or wildlife, or other resources, including but not limited to water and oxygen supply-

The proposed project will not interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, clams, or other marine life, or wildlife, or other resources, nor affect water and oxygen supply.