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Savannah Yacht Center

Prepared For:

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RESOURCE+LAND
CONSULTANTS

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RLC Project No. 16-144.3

1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND:

SHM SYC, LLC is requesting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD) authorization for activities associated with expansion and improvement to the existing Savannah Yacht Center. The project area is located adjacent to and south of the Savannah River and north of North Lathrop Avenue within Chatham County, Georgia (32.098079°, -81.111928°).

The Savannah Yacht Center is a premier superyacht refit, repair, and maintenance facility located on the Savannah River. It is recognized as one of the largest and most advanced shipyards on the U.S. East Coast, catering to some of the world's most luxurious and expansive yachts. The existing facility generally contains:

- Graving Dock: A 140-meter graving dock capable of accommodating yachts up to 140 meters in length.
- Syncrolift System: A 3,240-ton (gross) Syncrolift platform, the only one of its kind in the U.S., capable of lifting yachts up to 85 meters.
- Floating Docks: Floating docks that can simultaneously service up to eight 80-meter yachts.
- Dry Storage: Facilities for yachts up to 137 meters in length.

The facility provides a comprehensive range of services, including but not limited to:

- Hull and Structural Work: Fiberglass and composite repairs, metalworks, welding, and paint refinishing.
- Mechanical and Electrical Systems: Engine and propulsion maintenance, electrical systems installation and diagnostics, hydraulics, and plumbing.
- Interior Services: Carpentry, joinery, upholstery, and refrigeration, heating, and air conditioning systems.
- Specialized Services: Mast and rigging services, detailing, and vessel condition inspections.
- Crew & Guest Services: The existing facility provides amenities for the crew and guests of the vessels being serviced.
- Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ): The facility is designated as an FTZ, offering potential customs benefits for yacht owners.

The existing facility was permitted by both the USACE and CRD in several permit authorizations/modifications from 2012-2018. A copy of the permit documents are provided in Appendix J.

2.0 PROJECT PURPOSE:

Since construction of the facility, yacht maintenance and service operations have continued to grow and due to this growth and demand on the facility, the applicant has determined that expansion and improvements to the facility are required to meet the expanding needs of the operations.

3.0 PROPOSED PROJECT:

The proposed improvements and expansion includes installation of several new structures that are needed for continued operation of the facility and required to accommodate the growing demands of the facility. The expansions include:

- Extension of the floating dock on eastern portion of the facility within the Savannah River
- Extension of the existing floating dock within the wet slip
- Extension of the existing floating dock at the mouth of the wet slip within the Savannah River
- Installation of three pipe piles
- Expansion of the ship lift
- Installation of a covered timber pier adjacent to the ship lift

Table 1. Proposed Structure Summary

Structure	Square Footage	Count	Total Square Footage
18" Guide Pile	1.77	3	5.31
14" Guide Pile	1.07	3	3.21
48" Pipe Pile	12.57	3	37.71
9'x 50' float	450	2	900
10'x 50' float	500	1	500
36'x 97' Lift Extension	3,492	1	3,492
Covered Timber Pier with 158 12" Piles	12,100	1	12,100
		Total	17,038.23

3.1 Marshlands Component:

The marshlands component of the project is defined as the part of the project in an estuarine area or any structure on or over an estuarine area, including but not limited to marinas, community docks, bridges, piers and bulkheads requiring a permit under the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act. All structures proposed as part of this application would be considered the marshlands component of the project including the floating docks, piles, ship lift and timber pier.

3.2 Upland Component:

The upland component of the project is defined as all those service areas, amenities and recreational areas located inland of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act jurisdiction line, that serve or augment the functioning of the marshlands component of the project such as, but not limited to, dry stack boat storage, dock master shop, fuel storage and delivery facilities to serve the marshlands component of the project. The entire upland area is currently and will continue to be used for operation of the yacht center. No changes in or modification to the upland component are proposed.

3.3 Stormwater Management:

The proposed project has been designed by the consulting engineer to comply with all municipal stormwater management ordinances. The project will implement standard BMP's during the construction phase for sedimentation and erosion control purposes and to protect adjacent tidal waters and marsh.

3.4 GADNR-EPD 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC): The proposed project does not include any activities during construction or facilities post construction (i.e. fill within Section 10 Waters) that require a WQC.

4.0 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS AND MINIMIZATION:

The proposed project includes expansion of an existing facility and improvements to existing operations within the facility. For this reason, off-site alternatives were not applicable. However, the applicant has minimized impacts to jurisdictional waters by limiting the improvements to the minimal necessary to satisfy the operational needs of the yacht maintenance facility. Through these avoidance and minimization measures, the applicant was able to reduce the total square footage of structure within Section 10 waters and Coastal Marshlands.

5.0 ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT:

The project includes the expansion of an existing industrial facility on the Savannah River. The project area contains tidal open water habitat and because of the tidal influence, the site does contain essential fish habitat; however, because the project is located within a section of the Savannah River that is fully developed with industrial sites and other

commercial operations, the proposed project will have no impact on the management or long-term sustainability of essential fish habitat within Georgia.

6.0 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES:

Coordination with US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) was conducted to assess potential impacts to federally protected species on the project site. The results of this consultation are attached to this document. In addition to the database query, a pedestrian survey was conducted on-site, and no federally listed species were observed. The following provides a brief description of each species listed as threatened or endangered.

West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*): The West Indian manatee is a large aquatic mammal whose habitat consists of warm coastal and spring fed waters. It is listed as endangered under both its state and federal status. They are large, gray aquatic mammals with bodies that taper to a flat, paddle-shaped tail. They have two forelimbs, called flippers, with three to four nails on each flipper. Their head and face are wrinkled with whiskers on the snout. During winter months these mammals are primarily confined to the coastal waters of the southern half of Florida and the spring fed rivers of Florida and Georgia. During the summer months as the water temperature rises, the manatees' range expands as far north as Virginia and it is during these months that the "manatees" may occasionally utilize the estuaries of coastal Georgia. Critical habitat for this species has been identified as large portions of coastal Florida including the St. Mary's River.

While the project site contains habitat known to support the manatee, the proposed project will comply with the Savannah District Manatee Special Conditions; therefore, the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect this species.

Eastern Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. Jamaicensis*): The Eastern black rail is a small bird living in salt and freshwater marshes in portions of the United States, Central America, and South America. Males and females are similar in size and adults are generally pale to blackish-gray, with a small blackish bill and bright red eyes. Eastern black rail habitat can be tidally or non-tidally influenced, and range in salinity from salt to brackish to fresh. Tidal height and volume vary greatly between the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and therefore contribute to differences in salt marsh cover plants in the bird's habitat. Diet includes Insects, snails, seeds, etc. Loss of habitat is the main threat to this species however where habitat is protected numbers are likely stable.

The project area consists of an industrial facility on the Savannah River with open water habitat only. Neither this species nor habitat required to support this species is present within the project site. Because habitat required to support this species is not present within the project area, the proposed project will have no effect on the eastern black rail.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*): The wood stork was listed endangered by the USFWS on 28 February 1984 (Federal Register 49 (4):7332-7335). It is listed as endangered under both its state and federal status. Wood storks use freshwater and estuarine wetlands as feeding, nesting, and roosting sites, and annual population fluctuations are closely related to the year-to-year differences in the quality and quantity of suitable habitat. The overall decline in wood stork numbers is attributed to the loss or degradation of essential wetland habitat primarily in southern Florida. The adult is a large bird 33-45 inches tall and 58-71 inches in wingspan. Males typically weigh 5.5-7.3 lbs; females weigh 4.4-6.2 lbs. They appear all white on the ground, with blackish-gray legs and pink feet. In flight, the trailing edge of the wings is black. The head is dark brown with a bald, black face, and the thick down curved bill is dusky yellow. Juvenile birds are a duller version of the adult, generally browner on the neck, and with a paler bill. They nest colonially with up to twenty-five nests in one tree. Breeding once a year, a female lays 3-5 eggs in the typical clutch. The eggs are incubated 27-32 days by both sexes.

No forested or non-forested area suitable for wood stork nesting, feeding or roosting was observed within the project area; therefore, the project will have no effect on the wood stork.

Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*): The Eastern indigo snake is a large nonpoisonous, stout bodied snake averaging six to seven feet in length. Its federal status is listed as Not Applicable and its state status is listed as threatened. The snake is smooth scaled and uniform glossy blue-black throughout its body except for some reddish orange or cream color suffusion on its throat, cheeks and chin. This coloration varies with some individuals having distinct coloration and others with no coloration. In the extreme southern reaches of its range (South Florida), the snake is less restricted and inhabits flatwoods, tropical hammocks, dry glades and moist bogs. In this region of its range, overwintering sites include tree stumps and other underground dens. In the northern portion of its range, including south Alabama, the indigo snake requires deep sand ridges and is often associated with the gopher tortoise. The indigo snake is dependent upon the deep burrows dug by the gopher tortoise and uses them as a refuge from the extreme hot and cold temperatures. This restricted habitat is even more isolated by the snakes' preference for the interspersed of wet lowlands and cypress ponds.

The project area consists of an industrial facility on the Savannah River with open water habitat only. Neither this species nor habitat required to support this species is present within the project site. Because habitat required to support this species is not present within the project area, the proposed project will have no effect on the eastern indigo snake.

Pondberry (*Lindera melissifolia*): Pondberry or pond spicebush, is a stoloniferous, deciduous, aromatic shrub in the laurel family. This federally listed endangered species is native to the southeastern United States, and its demise is associated with habitat loss from extensive drainage of wetlands for agriculture and forestry. Pondberry occurs in dense thickets with erect or ascending shoots up to 2 m tall and few branches; stems are connected underground by stolons. Pondberry occurs in shallow depression ponds in wetland habitats with hydric soils, along margins of cypress ponds, and in seasonally wet, low areas among bottomland hardwoods. At present there are some 36 populations in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Many of the existing colonies of pondberry are small, and occupy only a portion of the apparently suitable habitat. Habitat required to support this species is not present within the project area and the proposed project will have no effect on this species.

Atlantic Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*): Atlantic sturgeon live in rivers and coastal waters from Maine to Florida. Hatched in the freshwater of rivers, Atlantic sturgeon head out to sea as juveniles, and return to their birthplace to spawn, or lay eggs, when they reach adulthood. The Atlantic sturgeon has five rows of bony plates known as scutes that run along its body and a snout with four slender, soft tissue projections, called barbels, in front of its mouth. The tail is like a shark's where one side, or lobe, is larger than the other. Atlantic sturgeon are slow growing and late-maturing, and have been recorded to reach up to 14 feet in length and up to 60 years of age. Threats to this species are identified as entanglement in fishing gear, habitat impediments, habitat degradation, and vessel strikes.

While the project site contains habitat known to support this species, the proposed project will limit construction activities to October 1-December 31; therefore, the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect this species.

Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*): Shortnose sturgeon live in rivers and coastal waters from Canada to Florida. They hatch in the freshwater of rivers and spend most of their time in the estuaries of these rivers. Shortnose sturgeon can grow to approximately 4.5 feet long and weigh up to 60 pounds. They are yellowish-brown and generally have a black head, back, and sides. Their bellies are white to yellow. They have five major rows of scutes and a protruding snout with four barbels (fleshy, whisker-like projections). Spawning adults generally migrate upriver in spring, from January to April in the South. The most significant threats to the species are dams that block access to spawning areas or lower parts of rivers, poor water quality, dredging, water withdrawals from rivers, and unintended catch in some commercial fisheries.



While the project site contains habitat known to support this species, the proposed project will limit construction activities to October 1-December 31; therefore, the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect this species.

7.0 COMMERCIAL BAIT SHRIMP, OYSTER, AND CRABBING AREAS

The proposed project is not located in a designated bait shrimp zone according to Georgia Department of Natural Resources *Commercial and Recreational Bait Shrimp Zones, Coastal Georgia* map. The project area is not listed on the *Georgia Harvester Reported Crabbing Areas* list, and the project area is not located in designated commercial or recreational oyster harvest areas.

8.0 IMPAIRED WATERS

The project site is located within the Savannah Harbor which is "Category 5 - Data indicate that at least one designated use is not being supported and TMDL(s) need to be completed for one or more pollutants". However, due to the location and proposed activities associated with the facility expansion project, the proposed project will not result in further degradation of the Savannah River.

9.0 SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This additional information is provided for compliance with 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-***
See attached application form
- (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-*** Please refer to attached permit drawings.
- (3) *A plat of the area in which the proposed work will take place-*** See attached.
- (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-*** See attached.
- (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 for 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-*** See attached.
- (6) *A letter from the local governing authority of the political subdivision in which the property***

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is located, stating that the applicant's proposal is not in violation of any zoning law; A request has been submitted to the Chatham County and a copy of that request is included in this package. The response from Chatham County will be provided upon receipt.

- (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 application fee is attached.
- (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-* Addressed above.
- (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. A copy is attached.
- (10) A copy of the water quality certification issued by the department if required for the proposed project-* Not applicable.
- (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 building, land disturbing, and stormwater management requirements of Chatham County.
- (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 or obstruct public navigation.
 - (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.
 - (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, wildlife, or other resources, nor affect water and oxygen supply.