

**CESAS Form 19 Support Documentation**  
**US Coast Guard Tybee Island Station Boat Ramp Renovations**  
**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 Introduction**

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is proposing to repair an existing boat ramp at the USCG Tybee Island Station. The project site is located on Cockspur Island, north of US Highway 80, west of Fort Pulaski, approximately three miles west of Tybee Island, Chatham County, Georgia (32.0341, -80.9059).

**2.0 Existing Site Conditions**

The permit area is located on property that is fully developed by the USCG and the National Parks Service (NPS). The property contains office buildings, maintenance sheds, parking & security, recreational facilities, lawn, and docks. The eastern portion of the property consists of a lawn vegetated with Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), vetch (*Vicia spp.*), clover (*Trifolium repens*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), and palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*). The site fronts the Savannah River along its entire northern side. The shoreline is stabilized with heavy rip-rap to protect against the extreme conditions exerted by wind, waves, current, and large commercial vessels and pilot boats entering and leaving the Savannah Harbor. The river bottom drops off rather sharply to the Federal Channel which is located approximately 435 feet from the shoreline. The channel is maintained at a depth of at least -47' (post-SHEP). The river is 2,042 feet wide at the project site.

**3.0 Existing Structures in Jurisdiction**

The permit area is an approximately 50' x 250' area around the existing boat ramp. The upland is vegetated with the species outlined above. The shoreline is stabilized with large rip-rap totaling approximately 50' x 30' (1,500 sq.ft.). The existing boat ramp consists of a single 9' x 113' (1,017 sq.ft.) travel lane with adjacent 9" curbs on each side (169 sq.ft. total). All existing structures within jurisdiction within the permit area including the existing bank stabilization and boat ramp total approximately 2,686 sq.ft.

**4.0 Project Justification**

The Tybee Island Station is the USCG's outpost for the lower South Carolina / upper Georgia coastal area and enables the various missions of the USCG in the region including law enforcement, search and rescue, aids to navigation, and environmental protection. The station includes office buildings, maintenance facilities for USCG equipment, recreational facilities, and docks. The boat ramp is in poor condition and is not adequate to accommodate the vessels used by the USCG as well as police and research vessels which also use the ramp. The travel surface is only nine feet wide and exhibits significant cracking and spalling as well as deterioration of the curbing and heavy barnacle growth. It also does not extend far enough into the river. Currently, the USCG has to use other public ramps in the area due to the deficient sizing of the ramp. Additionally, there is no launch dock to assist with loading and unloading operations. However, even with the deficiencies in size and condition, the ramp is still a serviceable and useable structure.

**5.0 Proposed Activities in Jurisdiction**

The applicant evaluated repairing the boat ramp in-kind with the existing structure, but this alternative is not feasible. The ramp is not wide enough or long enough to accommodate loading and unloading the larger size class vessels that the USCG uses. Instead, the boat ramp will be modified so that

functional improvement is achieved with only a minor amount of change to the overall footprint, and the majority of impacts will occur within the footprint of the existing structures.

The existing 9' x 113' boat ramp with 9" curbs (1,186 sq.ft. total) will be removed and replaced with a new 15' x 149' (2,235 sq.ft.) concrete lane. The lane will extend approximately 36 feet further into the waterway to allow for usage at all tide cycles. A new launch dock will be installed along the downstream side of the ramp consisting of a 6' x 6' (36 sq.ft.) concrete access abutment and 14' x 6' (84 sq. ft.) access walk leading to a 102' x 5' (510 sq.ft.) fixed pile-supported walkway. At the end of the walkway, a 26' x 4' (104 sq. ft.) gangway will extend channelward to a 12' x 40' (480 sq.ft.) floating dock. The float and pile-supported walkway will be supported by concrete piles. Timber piles will also be placed along the upstream side of the walkway (downstream side of the ramp) to aid in launch and recovery and to protect the walkway. An approximately 10-foot wide apron of rip-rap will be placed along the perimeter of the concrete ramp for stabilization purposes totaling 2,507 sq.ft. within jurisdiction; of which only 1,430 sq.ft. is new impact (the remaining 1,077 sq.ft. is considered maintenance and repair to existing rip-rap). During construction, a minor amount of soil/sediment removal via clamshell equipment will be necessary within the footprint of the boat ramp to achieve proper grade, but this is part of the ramp construction method. Based on previous CRD permit decisions for boat ramp and structural improvement/replacement projects, the replacement of the existing boat ramp and rip-rap does not count against the square footage allowance. Therefore, the area of new impact calculated for the project (e.g. change in footprint) is 3,589 sq.ft. (0.082 acre) which qualifies the project as a minor CMPA permit action. Upon project completion, the total structure within CMPA jurisdiction including existing structures and proposed will be 6,275 sq. ft. (0.144 acre). The proposed structures will extend approximately 110 feet into the waterway from MLW where the Savannah River is approximately 2,042 feet wide. No impacts will occur to the federal navigation channel or to navigation in general.

Overnight tie ups will not be allowed at the boat ramp, and no live-aboards will be allowed. No water will be provided on the launch dock, but appropriate lighting may be required. No fuel facilities, vessel pump outs, restrooms, laundry facilities, showers, or restaurants will be associated with either facility. All work will be conducted either from the upland or by waterborne crane and barge in a manner to minimize turbidity in the waterway, and the contractor will ensure that no oils or other pollutants are released into the waterway during construction.

#### **6.0 Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts**

Because the project consists of repair and improvement to existing water-dependent structures, alternative sites were not considered. The project was faced with two main alternatives – either repair the structures in-kind or repair but improve them to provide better functionality.

In making this decision, several factors were considered. First, the old boat ramp has many deficiencies in the design and configuration. It is old and needs repairs to the travel surface and curbs. It is also too small to accommodate the larger vessels that need to use the facility. It is also unusable at lower tide cycles. If no improvements are made to the ramp on-site, the USCG and police will have to use off-site public ramps which hinder the ability to accomplish the various safety, research, and national security missions. Other alternatives for the launch dock included double floats (one along each side of the ramp), but an 8' minimum float width resulted in more impact than the proposed single float. The preferred site plan includes a 5' wide fixed walkway to minimize impacts and only a single 12' wide float off the channelward terminus.

#### **7.0 Threatened and Endangered Species**

The property was assessed for the potential occurrence of threatened and endangered species and habitats suitable to sustain these listed species for Chatham County, Georgia. The habitats found on site include tidal waters that are known to support shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon, west Indian manatee, and sea turtles. The project site is also in close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean which is known to support the north Atlantic right whale during the winter and early spring months, but the

localized nature of the work along the shoreline of the river will not affect right whales, and whales are not present at the project site (over one mile inland from the ocean). The project consists of improvements to existing facilities with minimal new disturbance in the waterway. Pile installation includes impact driving 12 (14") concrete piles to support the elevated walkway and 11 (12") timber fender piles between the ramp and the walkway. The applicant will use a wooden cushion block on top of the concrete piles to reduce noise and will start each pile with a series of low energy taps. Also, the river at this location is over 2,000 feet wide, leaving ample room for fish to avoid ensonified areas during construction. It is expected pile driving will only last 4-5 days. Given the short construction period, small pile diameter, minimal number of piles (12 concrete piles), use of a cushion block and soft start method, and width of the river, it was concluded that the project would have no effect on sturgeon. Also, the pile driving and other construction-related activities will have no effect on sea turtles. To avoid adverse effects on the west Indian manatee, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) standard manatee conditions will be employed during construction.

#### **8.0 Essential Fish Habitat**

The proposed waterside activities are located within the Savannah River which has been identified as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The proposed project, however, will not change the condition of the habitats on-site or adversely affect this section of the river. A very minimal amount of disturbance to vegetated area may be necessary to widen the boat ramp and install the adjacent launch docks, but the ramp has been kept to a single lane, and a design was chosen that installs only one launch dock instead of two (one each side of the ramp) in order to minimize new structures. The majority of jurisdictional area to be disturbed consists of existing rip-rap or existing paved concrete travel surface. It was therefore concluded that the proposed project would not adversely affect EFH.

#### **10.0 Cultural Resources**

In March 2021, the USCG, National Parks Service, and Georgia Historic Preservation Division entered into a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the treatment of historic properties for the proposed project - which also includes the replacement of buildings and other upland improvements on-site not related to the proposed waterside activities.

#### **11.0 Mitigation**

No adverse fill or loss of jurisdictional area is proposed that would require compensatory mitigation.

#### **12.0 Upland Component:**

The upland component for the boat ramp consists of the existing paved boat ramp access which will be widened as part of the project to match the improved travel lane of the ramp. This area consists of the existing boat ramp above the mean high water mark. It totals approximately 15' x 50' (750 sq. ft.). The USCG will use the upland facilities to access the waterside facilities and will widen the concrete lanes to match the design width of the boat ramp. Because the entire shoreline is stabilized with serviceable rock revetment, there is no 25-foot state waters buffer. A state waters determination has been issued for the project by Chatham County.

#### **13.0 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-*

J.D. Berry, P.E.  
Captain, United States Coast Guard  
Commanding Officer  
5505 Robin Hood Road, Suite K  
Norfolk, Virginia 23513

*(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 drawings from Moffatt & Nichol

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

Attached is an ownership map from the Department of Interior showing the boundaries of the Fort Pulaski National Monument.

*(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 part of the Fort Pulaski National Monument owned by the United States of America and controlled by the NPS. The USCG holds a Special Use Permit for the property. Attached is a Memorandum from the Chief of Lands regarding the Fort Pulaski National Monument land status.

*(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-*

Georgia Department of Transportation  
2 Capital Sq SW  
Atlanta Georgia 30334

Savannah Bar Pilots Association  
P.O. Box 9267  
Savannah, Georgia 31412

**(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;**

A letter from Chatham County certifying that the proposed activities are not in violation of the zoning ordinances of the County will be provided at a later date.

**(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.**

An application fee in the amount of \$250 (boat ramp) will be provided.

**(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-**

All proposed structures are water dependent, and there is not a non-water dependent alternative to the proposed project. It is therefore assumed that any other alternative site would require just as much or more impact.

**(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-**

Since this application is for improvements to existing structures, and to the best of the USCG's knowledge, the property is suitable for the uses/structures proposed by this application. According to a review of the EPD Hazardous Site Inventory there are no known Landfill or Hazardous waste materials present.

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

It is anticipated that the project would be authorized by a Nationwide Permit for maintenance and repair of the existing structures from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and a 401 Water Quality Certification would not be required. This will be confirmed once application is made with the USACE.

**(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 state and/or local regulations.

**(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 improvements will conform to the existing land use. The proposed structures will extend no further than 110 feet into the waterway from MLW where the waterway is over 2,040 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. No modification to the existing shoreline is proposed.

*(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.



## CHATHAM COUNTY

### DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING SAFETY AND REGULATORY SERVICES

P.O. Box 8161  
Savannah, GA 31412-8161  
912-201-4300 | Fax 912-201-4301  
<http://buildingsafety.chathamcounty.org>



**Gregori S. Anderson, CBO**  
Director

**Clifford Bascombe, CBO**  
Assistant Director

January 26, 2023

Mr. Daniel T. Sutton, P.E.  
Wiley/Wilson  
127 nationwide Drive  
Lynchburg, Virginia 24502  
[dsutton@wileywilson.com](mailto:dsutton@wileywilson.com)

Re: USCG Tybee – CMPA Permit  
Tybee Island Station Boat Ramp  
Chatham County, Georgia

Dear Mr. Sutton:

The above reference facility is located within the R-A, Residential-Agricultural Zoning District. According to the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance, the proposed improvements do not represent a violation.

If there are any questions, contact this office at (912) 201-4320.

Sincerely,

Gregori S. Anderson, CBO  
Director, Building Safety & Regulatory Services

GSA/mm

Attachments: