

LANG'S EAST DOCK MODIFICATION

2024

CMPA Permit Application

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Langs Seafood Dock Modification CMPA Permit Application

Applicant Information

The applicant for the proposed project is David W. Lang. The applicant is represented by Sam LaBarba of LaBarba Environmental Services for this project.

David W. Lang

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Project Summary

The subject parcel includes an existing building that extends from the upland into the marsh, serving as an office and storage facility for Lang's and the National Park Service. Surrounding the building is a fixed deck, which includes a catwalk on the left side used for refueling. Fuel tanks and associated equipment are stored upland for safety and accessibility.

A bulkhead extends from the left side of the building to beneath it, transitioning into concrete riprap that continues to the right property line. Historically, the dock featured a set of floating docks extending seaward from the fixed deck, but these were destroyed in 2018 by Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. This application seeks to rebuild the floating docks to their original configuration and footprint as they existed before the hurricane damage. The inner floating dock and the inside of the outer floating dock will be leased to individuals, while the outside of the outer floating dock will be kept available for transient vessels.

The existing dock and proposed modifications align with the definition of a "Marina" as outlined in **Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 391-2-3-.03**. **The proposed project does not include any upland components as part of this modification.**

Existing Conditions

The current dock infrastructure features a fixed ramp that connects the upland area to an open fixed deck surrounding the existing building. The open fixed deck spans **2,398.35 square feet (SF)**, with **1,952.65 SF** falling under CMPA jurisdiction.

The building itself is situated within the fixed deck and encompasses a total area of **6,105.67 SF**, of which **3,500.53 SF** is within CMPA jurisdiction.

Additional features include:

- A **7.5 SF sink** extending to the right of the fixed deck.
- A **4.33-foot-wide by 24-foot-long ramp (103.92 SF)** on the left side of the fixed deck, which provides access to a **10-foot-wide by 50.16-foot-long floating dock (501.6 SF)**.
- A **pumpout station located on the left side of the fixed deck near the gangway to the fuel dock.**

The property also includes a **94 SF bulkhead**, beginning on the left side and running beneath the fixed deck and building, terminating underneath the structure. Adjacent to the bulkhead, **2,723 SF of riprap** extends from the building's right side to the property line on the right.

Existing Structures:

Floating Dock: 501.6 SF
Ramp: 103.92 SF
Fixed Deck: 2,398.35 SF
Building: 6,105.67 SF
Sink: 7.5 SF
Bulkhead: 94 SF
Rip Rap: 2,723 SF

Total Ex. Structures: 11,934.04 SF

Existing Impacts in CMPA Jurisdiction:

Floating Dock: 501.6 SF
Ramp: 103.92 SF
Fixed Deck: 1,952.65 SF
Building: 3,500.53 SF
Sink: 7.5 SF
Bulkhead: 94 SF
Rip Rap: 2,723 SF

Total CMPA Impacts: 8,883.2 SF

Proposed Conditions

Under the proposed conditions, an **8-foot-wide by 50-foot-long gangway** will be installed, leading to a newly constructed **5,705-square-foot floating dock**. The floating dock will feature a **10-foot by 18-foot landing section** where the gangway connects, serving as a transition point to the larger floating structure. The main components of the floating dock will consist of two **10-foot-wide by 235-foot-long floating docks** running parallel to the river, connected by an **11-foot-wide by 75-foot-long connector floating dock**. The connector dock will be specifically designed to allow wrack and debris to pass underneath, preventing obstructions and maintaining the natural flow of materials in the river ecosystem. This design enhances functionality, safety, and environmental compatibility, ensuring a sustainable addition to the waterfront infrastructure. **The pumpout and fuel facilities will remain in their existing location and footprint.**

Proposed Structures in CMPA Jurisdiction:

Ramp: 400 SF
Floating Dock: **5,705 SF**

Total Proposed Structures: 6,105 SF (0.134 acres)

Total Existing + Proposed Impacts in CMPA Jurisdiction: 14,988.2 SF

Needs Assessment

St. Marys, Georgia, serves as a significant gateway to the Cumberland Island National Seashore, attracting numerous visitors and boaters annually. The city's downtown waterfront, located along the St. Marys River, is a focal point for maritime activities. However, the current scarcity of mooring spaces has led to vessels anchoring in the river, which can impede navigation and pose safety concerns.

Visitor and Boater Statistics

While specific annual visitor numbers for St. Marys are not readily available, the city's role as the entry point to Cumberland Island suggests a substantial influx of tourists. Cumberland Island is renowned for its pristine beaches and historical sites, drawing visitors year-round. Additionally, events such as the annual St. Marys Seafood Festival and the Cruiser's Thanksgiving gathering highlight the area's appeal to both tourists and the boating community.

Current Mooring Challenges

The limited availability of designated mooring spaces in the downtown waterfront area has led to vessels anchoring in the St. Marys River. This practice can obstruct navigation channels, increase the risk of accidents, and disrupt the aesthetic appeal of the waterfront. Moreover, the absence of proper mooring facilities may deter potential visitors, impacting local businesses and the tourism sector.

Proposed Marina Development

To address these challenges, developing a marina at the downtown waterfront is proposed. The marina would offer:

Increased Mooring Capacity: Providing adequate docking spaces to accommodate the influx of vessels, especially during peak tourist seasons and events.

Enhanced Safety: Organized mooring facilities would reduce the risk of navigation hazards caused by randomly anchored boats.

Economic Benefits: A marina would attract more boaters, leading to increased patronage of local businesses, including restaurants, shops, and tour operators.

Environmental Protection: Proper mooring facilities can minimize environmental degradation caused by improper anchoring practices.

Historic Need

The floating dock that was present at this facility prior to the hurricane destroying them were consistently filled to capacity with a waiting list. This increased space is expected to follow the same pattern, being full within a couple of months.

Alternative Analyses

Alternative Analyses for the Proposed Marina Project

In compliance with regulatory requirements, alternative options for the proposed marina reconstruction and floating dock installation have been evaluated to determine the most environmentally responsible, functional, and cost-effective solution. Below is an analysis of the primary alternatives considered:

1. No-Action Alternative

The "no-action" alternative would leave the site in its current state, with no reconstruction of the floating docks destroyed by Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. While this option would avoid additional environmental disturbances associated with construction, it would fail to address critical issues, including:

- **Safety and Navigation:** The absence of floating docks increases the reliance on mooring buoys in the river, which impedes navigation and poses risks to vessels and public safety.
 - **Economic Impact:** The lack of dock facilities limits the capacity to attract and accommodate boaters, reducing revenue for local businesses, the National Park Service, and the Lang's operations.
 - **Maritime Functionality:** Without the docks, the site cannot fully meet its potential as a marina under current demand, negatively impacting tourism and waterfront activities.
-

2. Alternative Design with Reduced Footprint

This alternative considers constructing smaller floating docks to reduce the project's environmental footprint. A smaller configuration could consist of shorter or fewer floating docks extending seaward, potentially reducing impacts on the riverbed and marsh habitat. However, this alternative is not optimal for several reasons:

- **Limited Capacity:** A reduced footprint would significantly limit the number of vessels that can dock, failing to meet demand during peak seasons or events.
 - **Inefficiency:** The smaller design would result in higher per-vessel costs while still requiring the same upland infrastructure and regulatory processes.
 - **Navigation Safety:** The design would likely fail to provide enough mooring options, continuing to encourage the use of river mooring buoys and exacerbating navigation hazards.
-

3. Alternative Location

Another option would be relocating the dock facilities to a different section of the waterfront. While this might mitigate some localized environmental impacts, several factors make this alternative impractical:

- **Logistical Challenges:** Moving the dock would disconnect it from the existing upland infrastructure, including the storage and refueling facilities currently in place.
- **Environmental Trade-Offs:** Relocating to a different site would still result in environmental impacts and potentially disturb previously undisturbed areas.

- **Economic Feasibility:** Significant additional costs would be incurred to develop new infrastructure at a different location, rendering this alternative financially prohibitive.
-

4. Proposed Reconstruction in the Pre-Hurricane Configuration (Preferred Alternative)

The preferred alternative is to reconstruct the floating docks in their original configuration and footprint as they existed before Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. This option offers the following advantages:

- **Minimal New Impact:** By rebuilding in the same footprint, the project minimizes additional environmental disturbances while restoring lost functionality.
 - **Navigation Safety:** The floating docks will provide adequate mooring space, reducing reliance on river mooring buoys and improving navigational safety.
 - **Economic and Community Benefits:** Restoring the floating docks will enhance the marina's capacity to accommodate boaters, supporting local tourism, businesses, and waterfront activities.
 - **Compliance and Design Adaptations:** The project will incorporate design features, such as a connector floating dock that allows wrack to pass underneath, ensuring environmental compatibility and regulatory compliance.
-

Conclusion

After evaluating the alternatives, reconstructing the floating docks in their original footprint emerges as the most practical, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible option. This approach addresses the current deficiencies while balancing environmental considerations and community needs, ensuring the long-term functionality and safety of the marina.

Adjoining Landowners

David W. Lang
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St. Marys, Georgia 31558

City of St. Marys
418 Osborne Street
St. Marys, GA 31558

Landfill/Hazardous Waste Statement

According to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Hazardous Site Inventory, the project site is free of any landfills or hazardous waste locations.

Historic/Cultural Resources

The project area is situated approximately 0.3 miles from Orange Hall (PID 73000613) and 1.06 miles from the St. Marys Historic District (PID 76000609). Additionally, the project site includes an upland structure listed in Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS database. This structure, along with the nearby listed resources, will remain unaffected by the proposed project. Further details about these resources are provided in the appendices.

Water Quality Certification

We are currently coordinating the project modifications with David Hedeem of Georgia DNR EPD. The addition of a floating dock and gangway should not require a 401 WQC, confirmation will be provided when available.

Soil and Erosion Control Statement

The proposed project will adhere to the soil and erosion control responsibilities, if required, for the proposed project.

Turbidity Statement

The proposed project will be performed in a manner to minimize turbidity in the stream. The dock structure will be entirely pile supported with minimal impacts to sediment from driving pilings.

Oil & Pollutant Statement

The proposed project does not include vessel maintenance or fueling and will not result in the release of oils or other pollutants into the river.

Water Use Statement

The proposed project is located seaward of upland owned by the applicant. The project will extend minimally into the waterway to prevent obstructions to navigation. The final structure will provide more opportunities for legitimate water uses.

Public Interest Statement

A. 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 cause unreasonable harmful obstructions to or alteration of the natural flow of navigational water within the affected area to arise. All dock components of the project will be pile supported to allow the natural flow of water to pass under the structures. The project will be limited in extent past the mean low water line to prevent obstructions to navigation.

B. Whether or not unreasonably harmful or increased erosion, shoaling of channels, or stagnant areas of water will be created.

The proposed project will not create unreasonably harmful or increased erosion, shoaling of channels, or stagnant areas of water. The dock will be pile supported which has minimal impacts on the natural waterway.

C. 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, wildlife, or other resources, including but not limited to water and oxygen supply.

The proposed project will not unreasonably interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, clams, or other marine life, wildlife, or other resources, including but not limited to water and oxygen supply. The project will not result in a loss of aquatic habitat required for these species, nor will it impact the quality of the existing habitat. There are no existing oyster beds within the areas where the modifications will occur. The structures will be constructed as to not create negative impacts to aquatic species after construction.

Sam LaBarba
LaBarba Environmental Services
February 16, 2024