

**Savannah Yacht Club
Proposed Maintenance Dredging
Project Description
October 15, 2024**

Introduction/Background:

The Savannah Yacht Club (SYC) is located at the end of Bradley Point Road on Whitemarsh Island, Chatham County, Georgia. The proposed dredging project includes maintenance dredging within a portion of the existing docks located within the Wilmington River, the mouth and docks within Longfield Creek, and a section of Tom Thumb Creek. The SYC received permit authorizations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Coastal Resources Division (GADNR) (GADNR Permit #506 and #712, and USACE Permit Number SAS-2005-00988) in December 2015 and January 2016 to dredge approximately 56,900 cubic yards of material from the Wilmington River Docks, Longfield Creek, and Tom Thumb Creek to allow for low tide access through the waterway and to the docks. The dredging project depth was -12 feet adjacent to the SYC docks and Longfield Creek, and -8 feet within Tom Thumb Creek. The approved dredging was to remove recently deposited sediments that had accumulated since the previous dredging activity that was completed in 1985. The authorized dredging activities were completed in accordance with the USACE and GADNR Permit Special Conditions.

Since the 2016 dredging operation, sediments have accumulated in three main areas associated with the SYC docks, and in a few areas within Tom Thumb Creek. The proposed project includes the proposed maintenance dredging on the eastern side of the SYC Wilmington River docks, all of Longfield Creek around the SYC docks and including the mouth of Longfield Creek at the Wilmington River, and Tom Thumb Creek which is within the areas previously dredged as referenced above. Total proposed maintenance dredging includes the removal of approximately 39,040 cubic yards of recently deposited sediments. This maintenance dredging activity includes the same project area as previously authorized in the GADNR and USACE Permits as referenced above.

Needs Assessment:

The SYC docks are used for both reserved boat slips and day boat dockage for the 1,000 members of the SYC. The average length of boats in the reserved slips within the area to be dredged is 41 feet, and most draw approximately four to five feet of water. The average length of day use boats is approximately 25 feet, and most draw approximately two to three feet of water.

Since the 2016 dredging event, the proposed dredge area has become naturally silted with low tide depths of only four to five feet in several locations, which is beginning to cause navigation issues for many of the boats that have reserved slips at the SYC. With the membership near full capacity of 1,000 members, and a waiting list for members wishing to reserve wet slips, the SYC is requesting a permit to complete maintenance dredging to allow for continued water access at all tidal ranges and free flow of boat traffic in Longfield and Tom Thumb Creeks.

Proposed Dredging Project:

SYC plans to remove/dredge approximately 39,040 cubic yards of recently deposited sediments from an approximately 12.15-acre area including the eastern portion of the Wilmington River Docks and Long Field Creek docks (see attached drawings). Specifically, 4,765 cubic yards will

be removed from the Wilmington River docks, 28,320 cubic yards from the Longfield Creek docks, and 5,955 cubic yards from Tom Thumb Creek. The current bottom elevations varies between -4.0 feet at mean low water to -10 feet at mean low water (MLW) within the Wilmington River and Longfield Creek docks, and -3 to -8 in Tom Thumb Creek. The alternatives considered for the project included no action, agitation dredging to allow the sediments to flow into the Wilmington River on the outgoing tide (in water disposal), or to dredge, as proposed utilizing the SYC regulatory agency approved spoil area to contain the sediments. The no action alternative was not feasible due to the increased need for navigation to the docking space, the agitation alternative was not feasible due to water quality concerns including turbidity and dissolved oxygen in the Wilmington River.

The proposed dredging will be completed using an 8-inch hydraulic cutter head dredge on a floating barge. The dredge will have an articulated hydraulic dredging arm that will siphon the bottom while minimizing the suspension of solids. The dredged slurry will be pumped into an existing spoil area owned by SYC immediately adjacent to the dredge area. The target bottom elevation is -12 feet MLW throughout the Wilmington River and Longfield Creek, and -8 feet in Tom Thumb Creek (same project depth as allowed in GADNR Permit #485) which will slope at a 2/1 from the existing bulkhead (or edge of creek) down to the proposed -12 MLW contour. There will be no dredging in Longfield Creek or Tom Thumb Creek within 25 feet of vegetated marsh. The 8-inch cutter head is expected to remove 330 cubic yards of material per hour. With a production rate of 80% on 10-hour workdays, approximately 2,640 cubic yards of material can be removed daily. Approximately 3.4% of the disposal site will be used daily with an average disposal depth of 2.3 inches. As indicated on recent survey of the spoil area by Ball Maritime Group, the SYC disposal site can currently accommodate a total of 96,000 cubic yards of dredged material. This proposed maintenance dredging proposes to add approximately 39,040 cubic yards of material to the spoil area site, which leaves approximately 55,960 cubic yards for future maintenance dredging operations.

The spoil area is designed to allow the dredged sediments to be contained within the dikes, and for excess water to flow through a 31" HDPE pipe weir structure controlled by adjustable riser boards. The weir design is to facilitate natural detention and settlement of suspended sediments, and to allow natural infiltration where only sediment remains behind the structure. The dredging contractor will be required to monitor the outfall, and adjust the weir structure, if necessary, to ensure any discharge of water from the spoil area does not exceed acceptable turbidity levels set by the GADNR, or alter the existing marsh vegetation at the outfall pipe.

The proposed dredging operation is to be conducted adjacent to, and within, the existing and proposed SYC docks and Tom Thumb Creek. The federally maintained waterway/channel in the Wilmington River is approximately 300 linear feet from the proposed dredging project, so there will be minimal impact to navigation in the Wilmington River. Additionally, appropriate signage will be posted to aware boaters of the on-going dredge operation.

In addition, the SYC would also like to include continued maintenance dredging as part of this application. The maintenance dredging would include no more than the removal of 5,000 cubic yards of material annually. Specifically this maintenance dredging would allow the SYC to remove any high spots/ridges that form primarily near the Longfield and Tom Thumb Creek mouths due to natural currents depositing sediments at these locations. This maintenance dredging would be allowed for five years after the approval of this permit application request.

As part of the GADNR Permit # 485, the SYC completed sediment sampling and report of findings dated January 26, 2006. The report was provided to GADNR in a letter dated February

9, 2006. The results of the sediment testing indicate that the sediments are recently deposited and are within the acceptable limits. In addition, Terracon Consultants, Inc. completed a comprehensive Tier I Sediment Evaluation Report of the project area dated July 30, 2015. The report concludes that no sources of possible contamination or any contaminants of concern were identified. Terracon does not consider the proposed dredge material to be a possible “carrier of contaminants”. No additional sediment testing is proposed with this maintenance dredging proposal. Previous studies associated with previous dredging events at the SYC have shown that the adjacent historical land uses have been residential with no industry, landfill or other source that would potentially contaminate the sediments in the Wilmington River. Additionally, the sediments proposed for dredging are recently deposited silty sands that should not contain any contaminants from adjacent sources or the Wilmington River. The SYC does not allow boat scraping or boat bottom painting on the property.

GADNR Permit # 485 specified that no dredging activity is to occur within 25 feet of vegetated marsh, and SYC agrees with this same condition for this proposed maintenance dredging operation.

Threatened and Endangered Species:

SECI has completed a threatened and endangered species survey within the proposed 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 jurisdictional areas consist of Section 10 waters which have been known to support west Indian manatees (*Trichechus manatus*). All project related construction activities will be conducted in accordance with the Standard Manatee Conditions provided by the USACE Savannah District. These conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- All personnel and contractors will be advised that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees.
- Any silt barriers will be made of material in which manatees cannot become entangled, are properly secured, and are regularly monitored to avoid manatee entrapment. The barriers will not block manatee entry or exit from essential habitat.
- All vessels will operate at “no wake/idle” speeds while in construction areas. All vessels will follow routes of deep water when possible.
- All personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of manatees. All construction activities will cease upon sighting of a manatee within 50 feet of the project area and will not resume until the manatees have left the project area for at least 30 minutes.
- All equipment or materials will be lowered at the lowest possible speed.
- Any collision with a manatee shall be reported immediately to the USACE USFWS, and GADNR. In the event of injury or mortality, all aquatic activity will cease pending Section 7 consultation.
- The contractor shall keep a detailed log of sightings, collisions, or injury to manatees. Upon completion of the project, a report summarizing any incidents or sightings of manatees will be submitted to USFWS.
- All fresh water supplies will be maintained to prevent freshwater leakage.
- The applicant will install and maintain appropriate manatee awareness signage at prominent locations within the construction area prior to construction.

- All temporary construction materials will be removed upon completion of the work, and no trash will be discarded in the water.

It is our opinion that the proposed CMPA maintenance dredging permit would have no adverse effect on threatened or endangered species.

Essential Fish Habitat

Projects proposing impacts to tidal waters must be evaluated with respect to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The proposed project, being located in tidal waters, has the potential to impact the estuarine and marine water column, which is identified as EFH by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The project involves maintenance dredging approximately 39,040 cubic yards of recently deposited sediments using an 8-inch hydraulic cutter head dredge on a floating barge. Dredged material will be placed in an upland confined disposal site owned by the SYC. All activities will occur within open water and no impacts are proposed to vegetated marsh.

Based on the scientific literature and detailed studies completed within the nearby Savannah Harbor, the proposed maintenance dredging using a hydraulic cutterhead should have only a temporary and minimal effect to EFH. Based on much research conducted within the Savannah Harbor over the past 10 years, the ongoing harbor maintenance dredging, boat traffic, extreme tides, and storm events all contribute to the background water quality baseline. These same reports support the fact that the proposed dredging associated with this project will have only a short term minimal effect to a small area, and most likely, the water quality/TSS associated with the proposed dredging operation will not exceed baseline conditions. The spoil disposal site will not contribute to water quality degradation, and the applicant proposes to strictly monitor this activity to ensure there is no degradation. The applicant has utilized all the scientific data with respect to presence of protected fish species utilizing the waterway and designed a specific construction schedule and methodology to minimize impacts to these important species. There is no direct impact to vegetated marsh.

It is the Applicant's opinion that that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect EFH, and therefore no additional mitigation is proposed for impacts to EFH.

Impaired Waters

The subject waterway is not listed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 303(d) list for impaired water bodies.

Upland Component

The upland component for the proposed project is defined as the existing 9.3-acre confined upland disposal area owned by the SYC. The disposal area can accommodate an additional 96,000 cubic yards of dredge material, and the SYC is currently proposing to dredge 39,040 cubic yards with this proposed maintenance dredging operation. The remaining capacity at the completion of this dredging operation will be approximately 56,960 cubic yards. There is no proposed land disturbance or grading activity within the existing upland confined disposal area associated with this maintenance dredging event.

Conclusion:

The SYC is proposing to dredge approximately 39,040 cubic yards of recently deposited sediment from the docks within the Wilmington River, Longfield Creek and Tom Thumb Creek to facilitate navigation through the creeks and to the existing SYC docks. All dredged material will

be pumped to an existing and approved confined upland spoil area where the dredged material will be contained.

The applicant shall utilize all best management practices to minimize turbidity in the adjacent waters, avoid the release of oils and other pollutants to adjacent waters, and prevent interference with legitimate water uses.

Supplemental Information

This additional information is provided for compliance with Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 required information:

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-

The Savannah Yacht Club
Attn: Mr. Michael Ryan, General Manager
730 Bradley Point Road
Savannah, Georgia 31410

(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 produced by Ball Maritime Group.

(3) A plat of the area in which the proposed work will take place- Deed and Plats 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- Deeds for subject properties 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 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- See attached property owner names and addresses.

(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;* Letter 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.* Applicant will submit check once GADNR confirms the administrative/permitting fee.

(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-* Please refer to attached Permit 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 properties do 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-* Water Quality Certification for the proposed project, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, will be reviewed in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Individual Permit process. A copy of this application will be forwarded to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, Water Resources Branch for review.

(11) *Certification by the applicant of adherence to soil and erosion control responsibilities if required for the proposed project-* An approved Erosion Control Plan and Land Disturbing Activity permit for the disposal site will be obtained if one is required by 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 is a maintenance dredging of recently deposited sediments. The proposed maintenance dredging will not alter natural flow of navigable waters nor 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 maintenance dredging project will not increase erosion, shoaling of channels, or create stagnant areas of water. The proposed dredging is being completed to remove recently deposited sediments from the waterway that have accumulated since the 2016 maintenance dredging.

(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 maintenance dredging will be completed in accordance with all standard and special conditions that the regulatory agencies require for the permit approval. The proposed project should 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

1117 EISENHOWER DRIVE, SAVANNAH, GA 31406
P.O. Box 8161, Savannah, GA. 31412-8161
912 201 4300 – Fax 912 201 4301

15- October 2024

Stuart Sligh
Sligh Environmental Consultants
31 Park of Commerce Way Suite 2008
Savannah, Ga. 31405

RE: Savannah Yacht Club Maintenance Dredging

PINs: 10144 01001

Dear Mr. Sligh

The referenced improvements attached to this letter, including maintenance and dredging activities under Wilmington River and Longfield Creek in the vicinity of the Savannah Yacht Club, do not represent a violation of the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance. This letter references the attached drawings dated 10/15/2024.

If there are questions, I can be reached at 912 201 4315.

Sincerely,

Marcus Lotson, Office of Zoning Administration
Assistant Director, Building Safety and Regulatory Services.

Attachments

ID	PIN	OWNER	MAILING ADDRESS	MAILING CITY	MAILING STATE	MAILING ZIP	PROPERTY ADDRESS	PROPERTY CITY	PROPERTY STATE	PROPERTY ZIP
1	10136 02011	GUSSLER JOSEPH R & CATHERINE M*	10 ANCHOR CT	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	10 ANCHOR CT	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
2	10136 02010	HOWARD JOHN C JR & CYNTHIA M	8 ANCHOR CT	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	12 ANCHOR CT	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
3	10136 02004	HOWARD JR JOHN C	5 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31403	5 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
4	10136 02005	NEELY CAROLYN TURNER	7 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	7 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
5	10136 02006	DEMERE ROBERT H III	9 COUNTRY CLUB RD	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	9 COUNTRY CLUB RD	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
6	10136 02007	PETERS CHRISTOPHER J & KRISTIN C*	11 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	11 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
7	10136 02008	BERGEN FREDERICK S	15 COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	15 COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
8	10143 02014	BERGEN FREDERICK S	123 E CHARLTON ST	SAVANNAH	GA	31401	COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE	SAVANNAH	GA	31401
9	10143 02001	BAZEMORE BRENT G	101 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31401	101 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
10	10143 02002	SANDERS LUCINDA C	PO BOX 30575	SAVANNAH	GA	31401	105 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
11	10143 02003	MERRITT W DIXON V & LAUREN M DIXON	109 COUNTRY CLUB DR.	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	109 COUNTRY CLUB DR.	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
12	10143 02004	ROWLAND JOHN M & AMY G AS TRUSTEES	111 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	111 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
13	10143 02005	MARIE FERDINANDSEN URSPRUNG REVOCABLE TRUST	113 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	113 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
14	10143 02006	HARRIS JEFFREY	116 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	116 COUNTRY CLUB DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
15	10142 01020	BUCHMAN MARITA T & MARI T	223 COMMODORE DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	223 COMMODORE DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
16	10142 01019	KEHOE ELIZABETH S	225 COMMODORE DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	225 COMMODORE DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
17	10142 01018	SKIPPER HENRY T III	227 COMMODORE DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	227 COMMODORE DR	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
18	10142 01017	HOBBY REBECCA G	229 COMMODORE DR.	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	229 COMMODORE DR.	SAVANNAH	GA	31410
19	10142 01016	RAUERS JOHN J, III / RAUERS DEBORAH S	231 COMMODORE DRIVE	SAVANNAH	GA	31410	231 COMMODORE DRIVE	SAVANNAH	GA	31410

sligh environmental consultants, inc

October 29, 2024

Mr. Bill Rutlin
USACE Savannah District
100 W. Oglethorpe Avenue
Savannah, GA 31401

Mr. Josh Noble
Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Coastal Resources Division
One Conservation Way
Brunswick, GA 31520

**Subject: Permit Application
Savannah Yacht Club Maintenance Dredging
Wilmington River and Longfield Creek, Chatham County, Georgia**

Dear Mr. Rutlin and Mr. Noble:

Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc. is pleased to submit, on behalf of the Savannah Yacht Club, a completed permit application requesting authorization to complete maintenance dredging operations in the Wilmington River and Longfield Creek adjacent to the existing Savannah Yacht Club docks. The proposed dredging is to restore contours adjacent to the existing docks that have naturally silted since the completion of the 2006 and 2016 maintenance dredging operations. All dredged material will be pumped to an upland on-site disposal facility owned by the Savannah Yacht Club, and all material will be appropriately stored and maintained in the disposal area.

The attached application includes the following:

- USACE Permit Application
- Coastal Zone Consistency Form
- Signed Revocable License Form
- Project description
- Permit drawings depicting the proposed dredging project
- Other necessary permit supporting documentation

Upon your review of the attached application, if you have any questions or if you require additional information, please contact us at (912) 232-0451.

Sincerely,


Stuart F. Sligh
President
Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc.

cc: Mr. Dewey Richardson – GADNR-EPD
Ms. Kelie Moore – GADNR - CRD
Mr. Michael Ryan - General Manager - Savannah Yacht Club

sligh environmental consultants, inc

October 14, 2024

Mr. Marcus Lotson
Chatham County Planning & Zoning
1117 Eisenhower Drive
Savannah, Georgia 31406


**RE: Request for Zoning Letter
Savannah Yacht Club Maintenance Dredging**

Dear Mr. Lotson:

The Savannah Yacht Club is applying for a Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee permit for authorization to complete maintenance dredging activities under the Wilmington River and Longfield Creek Docks at the Savannah Yacht Club in Chatham County, Georgia. The subject property is located at the end of Bradley Point Road on Whitmarsh Island.

At your earliest convenience, please certify (by letter and stamping or signing the attached drawings) that the activities proposed are allowable under the provisions of the zoning and building ordinances for Chatham County. Please return the certification letter and stamped/signed drawing to my attention at the address on the bottom of this letterhead. If you should have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Stuart F. Sligh
President
Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc.

cc: Mr. Michael Ryan - Savannah Yacht Club - General Manager