



# US Army Corps of Engineers

Norfolk District

## *News Release*

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### **Corps approves emergency dredging of Rudee Inlet**

**NORFOLK, Va.** -- Norfolk District, Army Corps of Engineers, gained approval today to begin emergency dredging operations of the Rudee Inlet navigation channel in Virginia Beach, Va., to dredge approximately 7,000 cubic yards of sand from a rapidly developing shoal in the inlet's entrance channel.

The side-casting dredge MERRITT, based in Wilmington, N.C., will begin operations next week to remove the shoal, which has become a hazard to navigation and threatens to close the inlet. Commercial fishing boats, charter boats, head boats, whale-watching boats, transient vessels traveling up and down the coast, private recreation boats and state and federal government boats use Rudee Inlet.

The Rudee Inlet entrance channel has a maintained depth of 10 feet at low water. The Corps of Engineers dredged the outer portion of the entrance channel last September. A survey conducted Oct. 1 showed the channel had a depth of 12 feet. A subsequent survey on Nov. 14 revealed a controlling depth of 2.4 feet at the center of the channel. This rapid shoaling is believed to be the result of Hurricane Kyle, the third longest active hurricane on record, and a string of nor'easters over the past few months. After attempts to use the City's dredge, RUDEE II, met with limited success due to rough sea conditions, the City then requested Corps of Engineers assistance.

The MERRITT is a side-casting dredge designed to work in rough sea conditions of coastal inlets. The side-casting method removes the shoal by suction and discharges the sand hydraulically through a horizontal boom and deposits it outside the channel.

Norfolk District staff has coordinated this dredging operation with the city of Virginia Beach, and federal and state environmental agencies. All agencies involved recognize the critical need to proceed with dredging. Under the expedited procedures for emergency actions, Norfolk District will also issue a public notice for the dredging operation.

For more information, call Gregg Williams at (757) 441-7616.

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