



Elizabeth River Environmental Restoration Feasibility Study Quarterly Newsletter



A partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach, and the Elizabeth River Project.

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Historic Agreement Signed

On July 27, 1998, a Feasibility Study Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) was signed by the Norfolk District, Corps of Engineers, and five local sponsors to conduct the Elizabeth River Environmental Restoration (ERER) feasibility study.

The \$2.4 million study will be cost shared 50/50 between the Federal government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach. The study will examine the feasibility of wetland restoration at fourteen sites and sediment clean up at four sites located throughout the Elizabeth River Basin.



(L to R): Ray E. Moses, Stanley Walker, John L. Pazour, William E. Ward, Meyera E. Oberndorf, James W. Holley III, Thomas W. Moss, Paul D. Fraim. Signers not pictured: Dennis H. Tracey, Louise Lucas, Mark Earley, John Paul Woodley, Jr., Frederick M. Quayle, Yvonne B. Miller, Donald L. Williams, Colonel Robert H. Reardon, Jr.

This is the first cost shared GI feasibility study negotiated by the Norfolk District, and it is one of the

first nationwide studies of this type with multiple sponsors looking at sediment clean up to provide environmental restoration.

The three-year study is roughly divided into the following: 1) one year of intensive field investigations, 2) one year of report preparation and public involvement, and 3) one year for public coordination of the report and review and approval by Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (HQUSACE).

Pending Congressional authorization and local sponsor support, the study would be followed by advanced design and construction of specific sediment



The Wetlands Subcommittee investigates the Portsmouth City Park shoreline along Baines Creek. (Photo courtesy: Sheri Kattan)

Wetland Restoration Field Evaluation

On October 28, 1998, a group of fifteen people representing local, state, and Federal agencies and institutions on the Wetlands Subcommittee participated in a field evaluation of candidate wetland sites as part of the ERER feasibility study.

The sites visited represent the spectrum of technical wetland design issues and potential restoration benefits.

These benefits include wetland restoration to provide fish and wildlife habitat, shoreline erosion control, water quality improvement, stormwater treatment, natural areas, aesthetic improvements, etc.

Participants shared their ideas and concerns at the field visit, and they followed up with a meeting to help them develop specific strategies for moving ahead with restoration at the candidate sites.



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Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army.

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Steering Committee Notes

The ERER Steering Committee meets monthly at the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and is chaired by John Carlock of the HRPDC. Representatives of all the sponsors and the Corps are voting members.

Various state and Federal agencies including the USFWS, Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department, DEQ, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, VIMS, ODU's Applied Marine Research Laboratory, and the Elizabeth River Project provide valuable technical advice. The Steering Committee is responsible for addressing daily issues related to

timely and successful completion of the feasibility study investigations.

Steering Committee members include: Mr. John Carlock, Chair, HRPDC; Mr. Lee Dydiw, Chesapeake; Mr. Clay Bernick, Virginia Beach; Mr. Jim Daman, Norfolk; Mr. James Gildea, Portsmouth; Mr. Bert Parolari, DEQ; Mr. Mark Richard, DEQ; Mr. Robert Simmonds, DGIF; Mr. Robert Grabb, VMRC; Mr. David Kovacs, CBLAD; Mr. Joe Winfield, ODU-AMRL; Dr. Morris H. Roberts, Jr., VIMS; Mr. Walter I. Priest, VIMS; Ms. Marjorie Mayfield, ERP; Dr. Carl Fisher, ERP; Mr. John Gill, USFWS; and Mr. Craig L. Seltzer, Mr. Robert N. Pretlow, Jr., Mr. Greg Steele, and Mr. Tom McCarthy, USACE.

Sediment Contract Awarded

A sediment evaluation contract was awarded to EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. in January 1999. EA is a 25-year old international firm specializing in site characterization and remediation.

The six-month effort will involve characterizing sediment contamination at four sites in the Elizabeth River Basin. Two sites are located in the Southern Branch, and one each in the Eastern Branch, and Scotts Creek. The most intensive area of evaluation is located in the Southern Branch near Scuffletown Creek. This site was chosen because of its proximity to known sources of contamination, its public visibility adjacent to a city park, and other restoration efforts currently in progress near the site.

A Sediment Subcommittee comprised of representatives from Old Dominion University (ODU), Virginia



Elizabeth River Watershed

Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Corps of Engineers developed a scope of work to conduct the investigations. Information derived from these investigations will be used to develop a remediation strategy to clean up contaminated bottom sediments.

Upcoming ERER Events

- January 15, 1999: Steering Committee and Sediment Subcommittee Meeting at HRPDC
- February 5, 1999: Steering Committee and Wetlands Subcommittee Meeting at HRPDC
- February 20, 1999: Corps presentation of ERER at Hampton University
- March (date TBA): Feasibility Coordination Meeting with Local Sponsors and Corps Headquarters, Division, and District Staffs
- Spring 1999: Public Involvement Meetings

Wetlands Subcommittee

- Lee Dydiw, Chesapeake
- Stacey Porter, Portsmouth
- H. Clayton Bernick, III, Virginia Beach
- James E. Daman, Norfolk
- Keith Cannady, Norfolk
- Robert Grabb, VMRC
- Walter I. Priest, VIMS
- Robert Simmonds, DGIF
- Sheri Kattan, DEQ
- Emma Ramsey, ERP
- David J. Kovacs, CBLAD
- John Gill, USFWS
- Craig Seltzer, Tom McCarthy, and David Byrd, USACE

Sediment Subcommittee

- Carl Fisher, ERP
- Beth McGee, USFWS
- Bert Parolari, DEQ
- Morris H. Roberts, Jr., VIMS
- Mark Richards, DEQ
- Joseph Winfield, ODU-AMRL
- Greg Steele, USACE
- Craig Seltzer, USACE