River near St. Louis, Missouri, draining one sixth of the United States. The Mainstem Reservoir System consists of six dams and reservoirs located in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The System has the capacity to store 73.4 million acre-feet of water, which makes it the largest system of reservoirs in North America. Water flowing down the Missouri River is stored in the six lakes and released as needed for project purposes. The planes of conflict surrounding the revision of the Master Manual are numerous, complex, and contentious. While the basin has made historic progress during the last decade, significant controversy still remains. Much controversy centers on proposed changes in spring and summer releases from Gavins Point Dam for three species provided protection under the Endangered Species Act.

There are 30 federally recognized Native American Tribes in the Missouri River Basin. Thirteen reservations are located on the mainstem of the Missouri River. The Tribes are dependent sovereign nations and also hava a Trust relationship with the Corps. The Corps is currently in government-to-government consultation with five Tribes, and urges all of the basin Tribes to enter into consultation with Corps. The RDEIS specifically identifies impacts to Tribes resulting from changes in the operation of the Mainstem Reservoir System. Tribal participation during the public comment period will be developed in partnership with the Tribes.

A 6-month public comment period will follow release of the RDEIS. Oral, written, and electronic comments will be accepted until February 28, 2002. Prior to this date, the Corps will hold Tribal and public informational workshops and hearings throughout the Missouri River basin and at some Mississippi River locations. Dates and locations of these workshops will be provided in a September newsletter and on the Corps' Northwestern Division web page at *http://www.nwd.usace.army.mil*.

Luz D. Ortiz,

Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.

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BILLING CODE 3710–62–M

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Las Americas Transshipment Port Complex Being Proposed by the Puerto Rico Infrastructure Financing Authority (AFI, Acronym in Spanish)

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: AFI is proposing the development of the Las Americas Transshipment Port Complex in Puerto Rico. The proposal includes the development of hubs at one or more sites on the south coast of Puerto Rico, in the Municipalities of Ponce, Peñuelas, and Guayanilla. At the proposed site(s), the proposed terminals would need Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act permits. There is a possibility that permits pursuant to Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act may be required for at one or more sites.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Edwin E. Muñiz, (787) 729–6905/6944, Chief, Antilles Regulatory Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 400 Fernandez Juncos Avenue, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In September 1999, the Corps of Engineers published a report titled Preliminary Transshipment Port Assessment for Puerto Rico. This study was performed at the request of the Puerto Rico Ports Authority (PRPA). This report includes a preliminary assessment of alternative sites for a potential new transshipment port to be located in Puerto Rico. The sites considered were locations that have the potential to support deep-draft navigation and associated facilities. A total of thirteen sites were considered. The assessment was based on available information combined with the professional knowledge of the Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District staff, in the planning of waterway systems and associated port development. The assessment was considered preliminary in nature, and it was not prepared to be used as the sole source of information from which to make a final site selection. Nevertheless, the assessment made a recommendation on the most suitable sites. The assessment also recommended further studies that will help provide the additional detailed information required for making a more informed decision concerning the most appropriate location for a future transshipment site.

AFI is proposing the development of the Las Americas Transshipment Port Complex in Puerto Rico. The proposal includes the development of hubs at one or more sites on the south coast of Puerto Rico, in the Municipalities of Ponce, Peñuelas and Guayanilla. AFI stated that a transshipment port complex would represent a major infrastructure development for all Puerto Rico, especially in the south coast of the island.

In the development of a transshipment port complex, there would be considerable dredge and fill activities in the proposed project area, impacting significant wetlands and other special aquatic sites, and other resources. The proposed action may significantly affect the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) and/or growth and distribution of population, may have significant adverse effects on wetlands, including indirect and cumulative effects, or any major part of a structure or facility constructed or operated under the proposed action may be located in wetlands. Also, the proposed action may significantly affect threatened and endangered species or their habitats identified in the Department of the Interior's list.

Pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act structures the Corps of Engineers has regulatory authority over structures and/or work in or affecting navigable waters of the United States. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Corps of Engineers has regulatory authority to permit the discharge of dredged or fill material into wetlands and other waters of the United States. Also, under Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, the Corps of Engineers has regulatory authority over the transportation of dredged material for the purpose of dumping it in ocean waters at dumping sites designated under 40 CFR part 228. The guidelines pursuant to section 404(b) of the act require that impacts to the aquatic environment be avoided and minimized to the extent practicable. Permit applications for the transportation of dredged material for the purpose of dumping it in ocean waters will be evaluated to determine whether the proposed dumping will unreasonably degrade or endanger human health, welfare, amenities, or the marine environment, ecological systems or economic potentialities.

In determining whether to issue a permit, the Corps must also comply with other requirements including, but not limited to, the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Magnunson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and other applicable Federal laws. Modifying land for new uses also involves zoning, land use planning, water management, and other regulatory/planning requirements at the local, Commonwealth, and Federal level.

Alternatives: AFI has presented three alternatives for the development of a transshipment port in Puerto Rico. These alternatives are as follows:

Alternative 1: Immediate development of a deep draft navigation harbor at the Guayanilla and Ponce Bays to accommodate Post-Panamax vessels at both ports. In the Guayanilla Bay this alternative would entail the construction of a 6,000 feet long pier with support facilities capable of handling as many as four Post-Panamax vessels at Punta Guayanilla Peninsula; the discharge of fill material in approximately 110 acres of navigable waters in the Punta Gotay area, Punta Guayanilla Peninsula, for the development of loading-unloading storage area and other support facilities; the development of a 480 acre parcel owned by Union Carbide in Peñuelas adjoining Punta Guayanilla (where a petrochemical complex previously operated and recently selected by the Environmental Protection Agency for inclusion in the Brownfield RCRA Program) for added value activities (approximately 10 acres of wetlands would be filled for the development of value-added activities); and the development and/or improvement of other infrastructure within the Guayanilla Harbor needed to operate the Port efficiently. In Ponce this alternative would consist in the expansion of the existing piers to a length of about 3,000 feet to allow simultaneous handling of as many as two Post-Panamax vessels; the immediate dredging of the navigation channel and berthing areas to a minimum depth of 45 feet to allow the navigation of Post-Panamax vessels and the disposal of the dredged material at either the EPA designated ocean disposal site and/or uplands; and the development of a 90 acres of land adjacent to the port for value-added activities.

Alternative 2: Immediate development of a deep draft navigation harbor at the Guayanilla to handle Post-Panamax vessels and immediate improvements to the Port of Ponce to handle Panamax-class vessels and eventual dredging (5 to 10 years) of the navigation channel and berthing areas to further allow the Port of Ponce to handle Post-Panamax vessels. In the Guayanilla Bay this alternative would entail the construction of a 6,000 feet long pier with support facilities capable of handling as many as four Post-Panamax vessels at Punta Guayanilla Peninsula; the discharge of fill material in approximately 110 acres of navigable waters in the Punta Gotay area, Punta Guayanilla Peninsula, for the development of loading-unloading storage area and other support facilities; the development of a 480 acre parcel owned by Union Carbide in Peñuelas adjoining Punta Guayanilla (where a petrochemical complex previously operated and recently selected by the Environmental Protection Agency for inclusion in the Brownfield RCRA program) for added value activities (approximately 10 acres of wetlands would be filled for the development of value-added activities); and the development and/or improvement of other infrastructure within the Guayanilla Harbor needed to operate the Port efficiently. In Ponce, this alternative would consist of the expansion of the existing piers to a length of about 3,000 feet to initially allow Panamax-type vessels and eventually Post-Panamax vessels; the development of a 90 acres of land adjacent to the port for value-added activities; and the eventual or long-term dredging (5 to 10 years) of the navigation channel and berthing areas to a minimum depth of 45 feet to allow the navigation of Post-Panamax vessels and the disposal of the dredged material at either the EPA designated ocean disposal site and/or uplands.

Alternative 3: Immediate development of a deep draft navigation harbor at the Guayanilla to handle Post-Panamax vessels and immediate rehabilitation of the Port of Ponce to handle Panamax-class vessels. In the Guayanilla Bay this alternative would entail the construction of a 6,000 feet long pier with support facilities capable of handling as many as four Post-Panamax vessels at Punta Guayanilla Peninsula; the discharge of fill material in approximately 110 acres of navigable waters in the Punta Gotay area, Punta Guayanilla Peninsula, for the development of loading-unloading storage area and other support facilities; the development of a 480 acre parcel owned by Union Carbide in Peñuelas adjoining Punta Guayanilla (where a petrochemical complex previously operated and recently selected by the Environmental Protection Agency for inclusion in the Brownfield RCRA Program) for added value activities (approximately 10 acres of wetlands would be filled for the development of value-added activities); and the development and/or improvement of other infrastructure within the Guayanilla Harbor needed to operate the Port efficiently. In Ponce, this alternative would consist of the expansion of the existing piers to a length of about 3,000 feet to allow of Panamax-type vessels; and the development of a 90 acres of land adjacent to the port for value-added activities.

In addition to the above alternatives, the no action alternative and alternatives identified in the Corps of Engineers Preliminary Transshipment Port Assessment For Puerto Rico would also be considered, as well as any other alternative identified during scoping process.

Issues: The EIS will consider impacts on protected species, health, conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands (and other aquatic resources), historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people, and other issues identified through scoping, public involvement, and interagency coordination.

Scoping: On April 4, 2001, AFI conducted a transshipment port complex scoping technical meeting with Federal and state Agencies. Additional scoping meeting(s) will be held by the Corps of Engineers with Federal and State Agencies. At this time, there are no plans for a public scoping meeting. If a public scoping meeting is held by the Corps of Engineers, it will be announced. In addition Federal, state and local agencies, as well as interested private organizations and individuals are strongly encouraged to suggest additional alternatives for consideration and otherwise submit comments on the scope of the DEIS.

Public Involvement: We invite the participation of affected Federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested private organizations and individuals by submitting written comments to the information contact provided in this notice.

Coordination: The proposed action is being coordinated with a number of

Federal, Commonwealth, and local agencies including but not limited to the following: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board, Puerto Rico Planning Board, Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Officer, and other agencies as identified in scoping, public involvement, and agency coordination.

Other Environmental Review and Consultation: The proposed action would involve evaluation for compliance with guidelines pursuant to Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act, public interest review, application for Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and determination of Coastal Zone Management Act consistency.

DEIS Preparation: We estimate that the DEIS will be available to the public on or about November 15, 2001.

Dated: August 20, 2001.

John R. Hall,

Chief, Regulatory Division.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a General Reevaluation Study of Navigation Improvements at Miami Harbor, Dade County, FL

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers intends to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Navigation Improvements at Miami Harbor, Dade County, Florida. The study is a cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Miami-Dade County Seaport Department of the Port of Miami.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rea Boothby, 904–232–3453, Environmental Branch, Planning Division, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, Florida 32232–0019.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Project Background and Authorization

The initial authorization for a Federal channel providing navigation access to the City of Miami occurred in 1902. Later reports and documents recommended further improvement of the harbor's channels, turning basins, and jetties. A Resolution provided by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives dated October 29, 1997 provided the authorization for the current study.

2. Need or Purpose

Improvements, including channel deepening and widening, are required to accommodate future commercial fleet and to more effectively transit the existing fleet. Those improvements would allow commercial ships to call at the harbor with increased draft and cargo tonnage, resulting in transportation cost savings.

3. Proposed Solution and Forecast Completion Date

Widen and deepen the harbor's container ship channels and turning basins. Extend the Federal channel to the west end of Dodge Island. Construction is forecast to begin around October 2003.

4. Prior EAs or EISs

An EIS was prepared in 1985 to accommodate dredging in the Port of Miami.

5. Alternatives

Alternatives currently under consideration include no action, one nonstructural, and five structural alternatives. Six alternatives identified by the Biscayne Bay Pilots and the Miami-Dade County Seaport Department include:

- The first involves flaring the existing 500-foot wide entrance channel to provide an 800-foot wide entrance at buoy 1. Deepening of the entrance channel along Cut–1 and Cut-2 from an existing depth of 44 feet in one-foot increments to a depth of 52 feet will receive consideration.
- The second alternative will consider adding a turn widener between buoys 13 and 15 and deepening to depths of 50 feet.
- Alternative three involves extending the existing Fisher Island turning basin to the north. A turning notch (1600 feet by 1450 feet) extending approximately 500 feet to the north of the existing channel edge along the West End of Cut-3 would require evaluation. Depths from 43 to 50 feet at one-foot increments below the existing depth of 42 feet will receive consideration in the area of the turning notch.
- Alternative four consists of relocating the main channel (cruise ship channel or Cut-4) about 175 feet to the south between channel miles 2 and 3 over a two or three degree transition to the existing cruise ship turning basin. No dredging is expected for alternative four since existing depths allow for continuation of the authorized depth of 36 feet.
- Alternative five proposes to increase the width of the Lummus Island Cut (Fisherman's Channel) about 100 feet to the south of the existing channel. Deepening would include examination of depths below the existing 42-foot depth at one-foot increments from 43 to 50 feet along the proposed widened channel from Cut-3, Station 0+00 to Cut-3, Station 42+00.
- Alternate six includes deepening of Dodge Island Cut and the proposed 1200-foot turning basin from 32 and 34 feet to 36 feet. It also involves relocating the western end of the Dodge Island Cut to accommodate proposed port expansion.

6. Issues

The EIS will consider impacts on seagrasses (including Johnson Seagrass, a threatened species), mangrove, and hardbottom communities, other protected species, Essential Fish Habitat, shore protection, health and safety, water quality, aesthetics and recreation, fish and wildlife resources, cultural resources, energy conservation, socio-economic resources, and other impacts identified through scoping, public involvement, and interagency coordination.

7. Scoping Process

a. A scoping letter was sent to interested parties on January 6, 2000. In addition, all parties were invited to participate in the scoping process by identifying any additional concerns on issues, studies needed, alternatives, procedures, and other matters related to the scoping process.

b. A local, state, and Federal resource agency scoping meeting occurred on March 13, 2000, to determine the areas of coverage for an environmental baseline resource survey. A meeting followed on November 1, 2000, with those resource agencies to review preliminary results.

c. No public scoping meeting is planned at this time.

8. Public Involvement

We invite the participation of affected Federal, state and local agencies, affected Indian tribes, and other interested private organizations and parties.