



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

BUFFALO DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
1776 NIAGARA STREET  
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14207-3199

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

December 16, 2015

Environmental Analysis Section

**SUBJECT: Conneaut Harbor, Ashtabula County, Ohio - Request for Section 401 Water Quality Certification for Discharges of Dredged Sediments Associated with the Scheduled 2016 Maintenance Dredging Project**

Mr. Craig W. Butler  
Director  
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
Division of Surface Water  
P.O. Box 1049  
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049  
ATTN: Mr. Ric Queen

Dear Mr. Butler:

This letter transmits the Clean Water Act Section 404(a) Public Notice and Section 401 State water quality certification (WQC) application for the proposed discharges of dredged sediment associated with our scheduled 2016 maintenance dredging project at Conneaut Harbor, Ohio (Enclosure 1). This project entails the maintenance dredging of authorized Federal navigation channels, and placement of the associated dredged sediment in the existing authorized open-lake and nearshore placement areas. The Public Notice has been prepared in conformance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulation, "Practice and Procedure: Final Rule for Operation and Maintenance of Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Projects involving the Discharge of Dredged Materials into Waters of the United States or Ocean Waters," 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 337.1.

The USACE - Buffalo District, is requesting Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) WQC for the discharges of dredged sediments associated with the scheduled 2016 maintenance dredging project at Conneaut Harbor, or waiver thereof, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

Historically, sediment from the Municipal Access Channel of Conneaut Harbor has been primarily coarse-grain in nature and thus has been determined to be suitable for use as littoral nourishment. In 2004, 25,000 cubic yards were removed from the Municipal Access Channel and placed in the existing authorized nearshore placement area which is located approximately 1,500 feet east of the Conneaut Harbor East Breakwater Extension. The most recent grain-size characterization of the Municipal Access Channel was conducted in April of 2013. The results of this sampling indicated that at that time material present within this reach was primarily fine-grain in nature. Significant shoaling has occurred within this reach since the last dredging. Given that past shoaling within this reach has consisted of coarse-grain sediment, it is a possibility that this most recently deposited material

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within Municipal Access Channel could consist of predominantly coarse-grain sediment, and would therefore be suitable for placement in the authorized nearshore placement area.

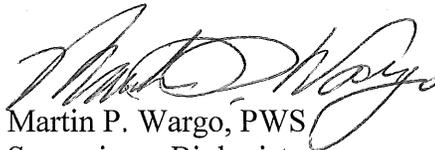
In order to ensure that the dredging and dredged sediment placement at Conneaut Harbor is consistent with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Coastal Management Program policies, the USACE-Buffalo District will conduct additional sampling and analysis within this reach prior to the FY16 dredging of Conneaut Harbor. Subsequent evaluation of this material will determine if the material that has shoaled within the Municipal Access Channel since the last maintenance dredging is suitable for nearshore placement. These results will be submitted to OEPA, ODNR, and PADEP with an estimate of the amount of dredged sediment proposed for nearshore placement.

Please note that all associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents (Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments) and Section 404(b)(1) Evaluations have been completed for this maintenance dredging project, and were previously furnished to your office. The majority of the information requested in Item 5 of the WQC application is contained in these documents in further detail.

As you know, we require WQC in order to accept contract bids on this project. The bid opening date has been scheduled for May 1, 2016 and our goal is to secure the WQC by this date. As has been standard practice with our lower profile dredging projects recently, we respectfully request that no public hearing be scheduled for this application unless significant comments are received specifically requesting one. Please advise us regarding the status of the WQC by January, 8 2016. We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

If you have any questions pertaining to this matter please contact Mr. Eric E. Hannes at (716) 879-4311, by writing to the following address: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1776 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York, 14207-3199, or by e-mail at: [Eric.E.Hannes@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eric.E.Hannes@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,



Martin P. Wargo, PWS  
Supervisory Biologist  
Environmental Analysis Section

Enclosures