



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Public Notice

Issuing Office: CELRB-PM-EA
Notice No: CONNEAUT-16

Published: 16 DEC 2015
Expires: 15 JAN 2016

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND DREDGED SEDIMENT PLACEMENT

CONNEAUT HARBOR

ASHTABULA COUNTY, OHIO

This Public Notice has been prepared pursuant to Section 404(a) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). It is being administered 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 purpose of this Public Notice is to specify what dredged/fill materials would be discharged into waters of the United States by implementation of the proposed action, and advise all interested parties of the proposed project and to provide an opportunity to submit comments, or request a public hearing.

The USACE anticipates the need to dredge and manage sediments excavated from the authorized Federal navigation channels of Conneaut Harbor, which is located on the southern shore of Lake Erie at the mouth of the Conneaut Creek, in order to maintain sufficient water depths for deep-draft commercial and recreational navigation. Federal navigation channels within the Harbor include the Outer Harbor Channel, Inner Harbor Channel, and Municipal Access Channel. The attached map (Figure 1) shows the authorized limits and depths of the Federal navigation channels. To ensure that the minimum authorized depth in Conneaut Harbor is maintained and to account for dredging tolerance, up to an additional one foot of sediment may be dredged. An estimated total of approximately 180,000 cubic yards of sediment will be dredged from Conneaut Harbor Federal navigation channels during the 2016 dredging operation.

The 2016 dredging operation at Conneaut Harbor is tentatively scheduled to be performed during the period between 1 July and 15 September.

A contractor of the Federal government will accomplish the project. Sediments will be removed from the channel bottom by a mechanical or hydraulic dredge and placed into hoppers aboard ship or scow for transport to the placement areas. The method of excavation will be determined by the contractor performing the maintenance dredging. In previous years, clamshell and hopper

dredges have been used to complete the required work.

The sediment to be dredged from the Conneaut Harbor Federal navigation channels consists primarily of silts and clays, with some sands. The quality of the sediment has been evaluated using 2012 sediment data in accordance with the protocols and guidelines contained in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)/USACE Great Lakes Dredged Material Testing and Evaluation Manual (1998) and Evaluation of Dredged Material Proposed for Discharge in Waters of the U.S.—Testing Manual (1998). This evaluation concluded that sediments in the Conneaut Harbor Federal navigation channels are toxicologically comparable to sediments at the open-lake reference area in Lake Erie, and meet “contaminant determination” CWA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines for open-lake and nearshore placement. Historically, sediment from the Municipal Access Channel of Conneaut Harbor has been primarily coarse-grain in nature and has in the past been determined to be suitable for use as nearshore littoral nourishment. Additional sampling and analysis within this reach will be conducted prior to the 2016 maintenance dredging of Conneaut Harbor to determine if the material that has shoaled within the Municipal Access Channel since the last dredging is suitable for nearshore placement. If determined suitable for nearshore placement, approximately 40,000 cubic yards of coarse-grain sediment dredged from the Municipal Access Channel will be discharged as littoral nourishment at a nearshore area located approximately 1,500 feet east of the Conneaut Harbor East Breakwater Extension. The remaining sediment dredged (approximately 140,000 cubic yards of predominantly fine grain material) will be discharged at an existing open-lake placement area in Lake Erie, located four miles from the West Breakwater light, at an azimuth of 314°00'. The proposed placement areas are depicted in Figure 2.

Placement of the coarse-grain Municipal Access Channel dredged sediment in the nearshore zone may cost significantly more when compared to “deep water” open-lake placement due to shallow water depths. Shallow water depths for the purposes of nearshore placement in this Public Notice are specified as: (1) between -11 feet Low Water Datum (LWD) and the ordinary high water mark; and between -8 feet LWD and the ordinary high water mark. Sediment will be placed at the shallowest depth possible (-8 feet LWD) if there are no increased costs to the Federal government (when compared to the costs for placement at the -11-foot LWD depth). If placement in the nearshore zone at depths of -8 feet LWD cost significantly more than open-lake placement, a partner will need to pay the increased cost of nearshore placement.¹

Pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA, Water Quality Certification (WQC) from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) is required for the discharge of dredged sediment. Therefore, a copy of this Public Notice has been provided to OEPA requesting WQC, or waiver thereof, for the associated placement of dredged sediment.

The environmental effects of the dredging operation are documented in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), Operation and Maintenance, Conneaut Harbor, Ohio (1975)*;

¹ Low Water Datum (LWD) for Lake Erie is 569.2 feet above mean sea level at Rimouski, Quebec, Canada (International Great Lakes Datum 1985).

Supplemental Information Report and Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation, Operation and Maintenance, Conneaut Harbor, Ohio (1982 and 2004); and Environmental Assessment (EA)/Finding of No Significant Impact Statement (FONSI) and Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation for Conneaut Harbor, Ohio (1999). These documents, and supplemental documentation, have been submitted to USEPA. Copies are available for examination at the Buffalo District office.

There are no listed historic properties or properties determined as being eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places that will be affected by this project. By this notice, the National Park Service is advised that currently unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistorical or historical data may be lost or destroyed by the work to be accomplished.

This office has determined that the proposed project will have No Effect upon any species proposed or designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior as threatened or endangered, nor will the proposed work result in an Adverse Modification of designated critical habitat for any such species. Therefore, unless new information indicates otherwise, no further consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 1978 will be undertaken with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

This work will be undertaken in a manner consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the State of Ohio Coastal Resources Management Program. A Coastal Management Program Federal Consistency Determination has been submitted to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) documenting this determination. Due to the project's proximity to the Pennsylvania State border, this activity has also been evaluated with respect to the Pennsylvania Coastal Resources Management Program. This evaluation has determined that the work will be undertaken in a manner consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the Pennsylvania Coastal Resources Management Program. A Coastal Management Program Federal Consistency Determination has been submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) documenting this determination.

The decision whether to perform dredging has been based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision reflects the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal has been balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal have been considered including the cumulative factors thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, 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.

This activity is being coordinated with the following agencies, as well as other appropriate Federal, State and local agencies and organizations:

National Park Service
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Ohio Historic Preservation Office
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Any interested parties and/or agencies desiring to express their views concerning these proposed discharges of dredged material may do so by filing their comments, in writing, no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. Any person who has an interest which may be affected by the discharge of this dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the undersigned within 30 days of the date of this Public Notice. The request must clearly set forth the interest which may be affected, and the manner in which the interest may be affected, by this activity.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact the USACE-Buffalo District with their comments regarding the proposed dredging of Conneaut Harbor. Please review this Public Notice and send your comments in writing within 30 days to the following e-mail address:

ConneautDredging@usace.army.mil

or via mail to:

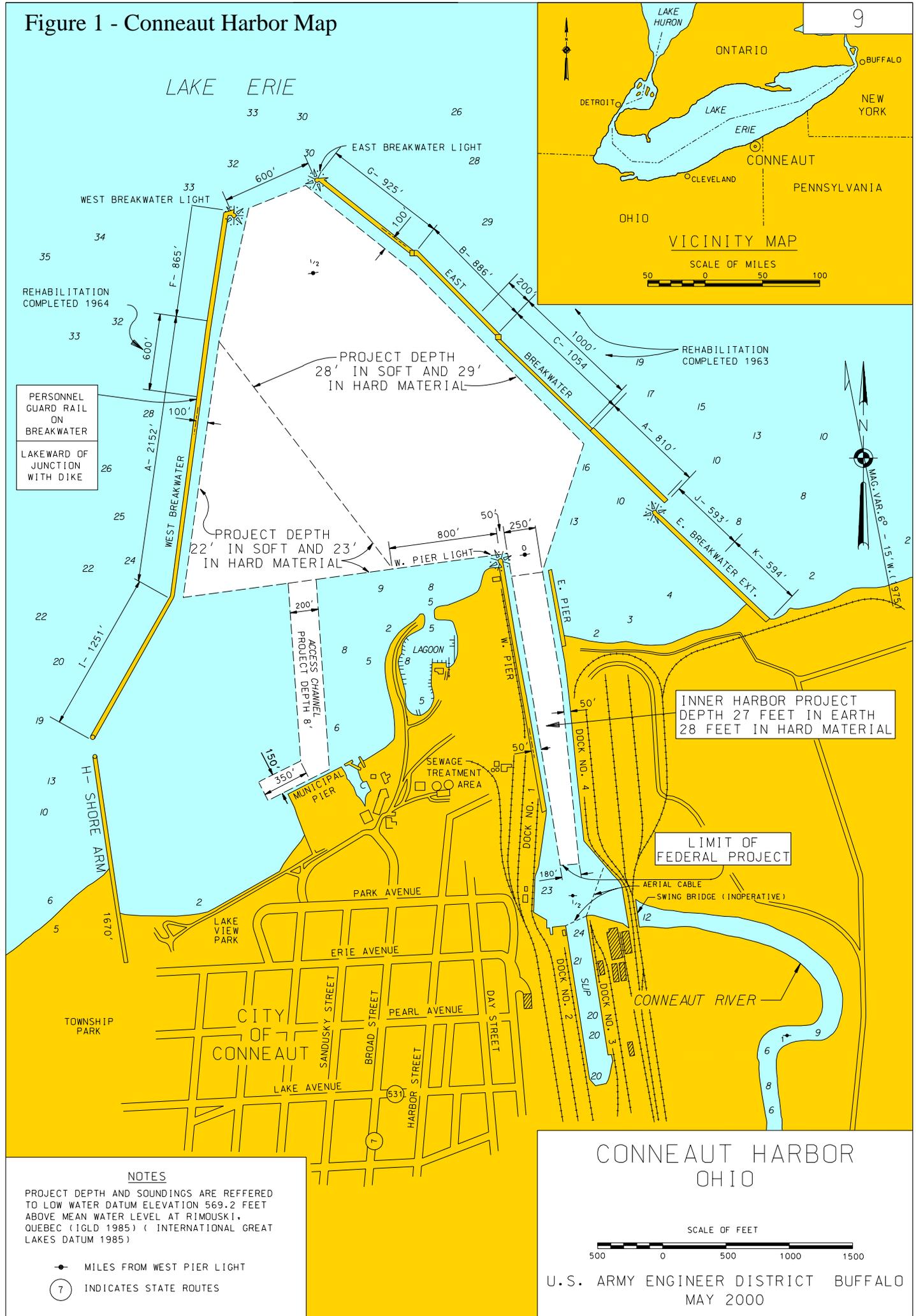
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Buffalo District
Environmental Analysis Team
1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14207-3199
ATTN: Environmental Analysis - Conneaut Dredging

This Public Notice is published in conformance with 33 CFR 337.1. All dredging and dredged material discharge will be performed in conformance with Sections 313 and 404 of the CWA (33 USC 1323 and 1344, respectively).

Attachments

NOTICE TO THE POSTMASTER: It is requested that the above notice be conspicuously displayed for 30 days from the date of issuance.

Figure 1 - Conneaut Harbor Map



NOTES

PROJECT DEPTH AND SOUNDINGS ARE REFERRED TO LOW WATER DATUM ELEVATION 569.2 FEET ABOVE MEAN WATER LEVEL AT RIMOUSKI, QUEBEC (IGLD 1985) (INTERNATIONAL GREAT LAKES DATUM 1985)

- MILES FROM WEST PIER LIGHT
- ⑦ INDICATES STATE ROUTES

CONNEAUT HARBOR OHIO

SCALE OF FEET



U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT BUFFALO
MAY 2000

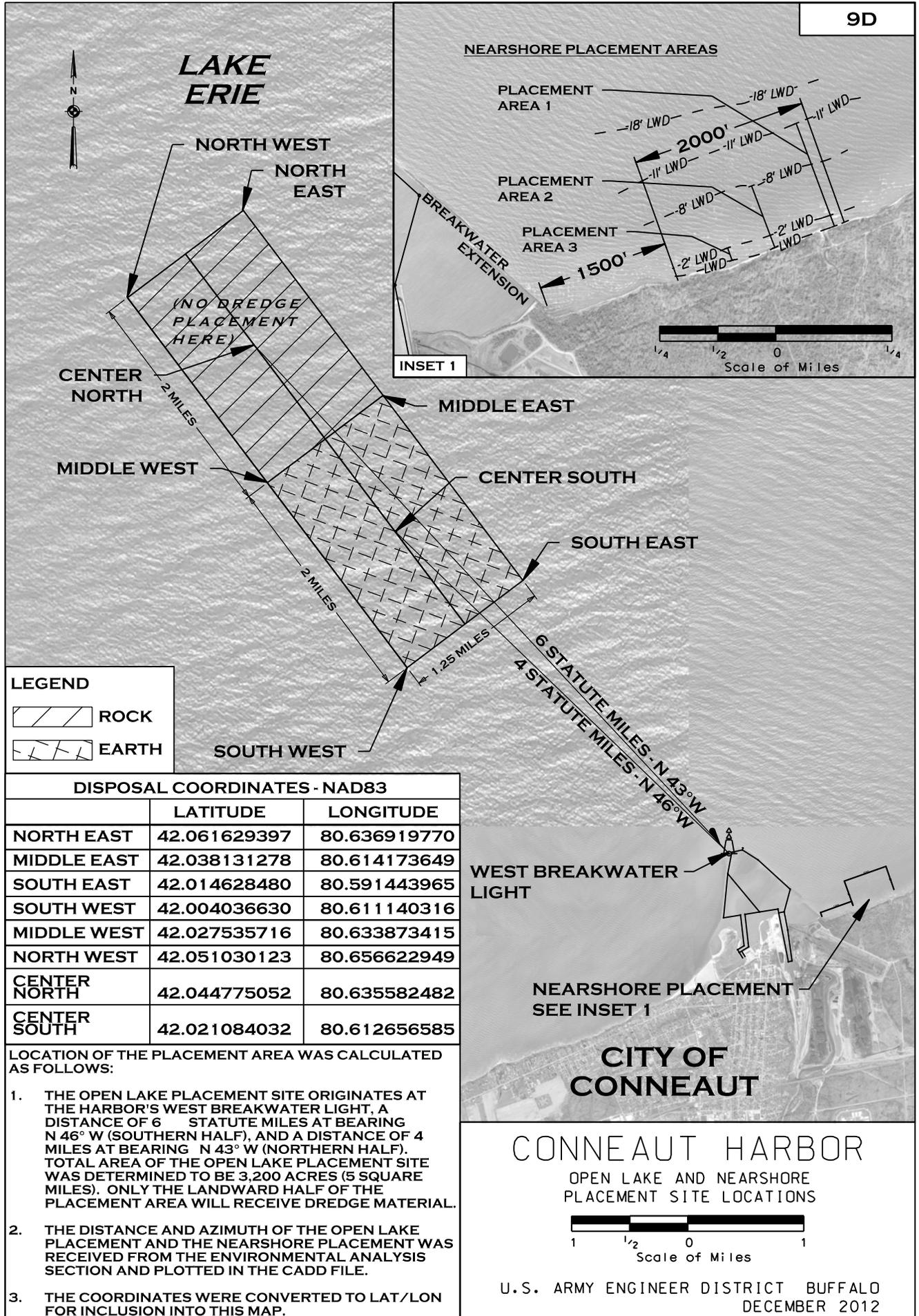


Figure 2 - Conneaut Harbor Placement Locations