

PROPOSED SECTION 203 WILMINGTON HARBOR NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (WHNIP 203)

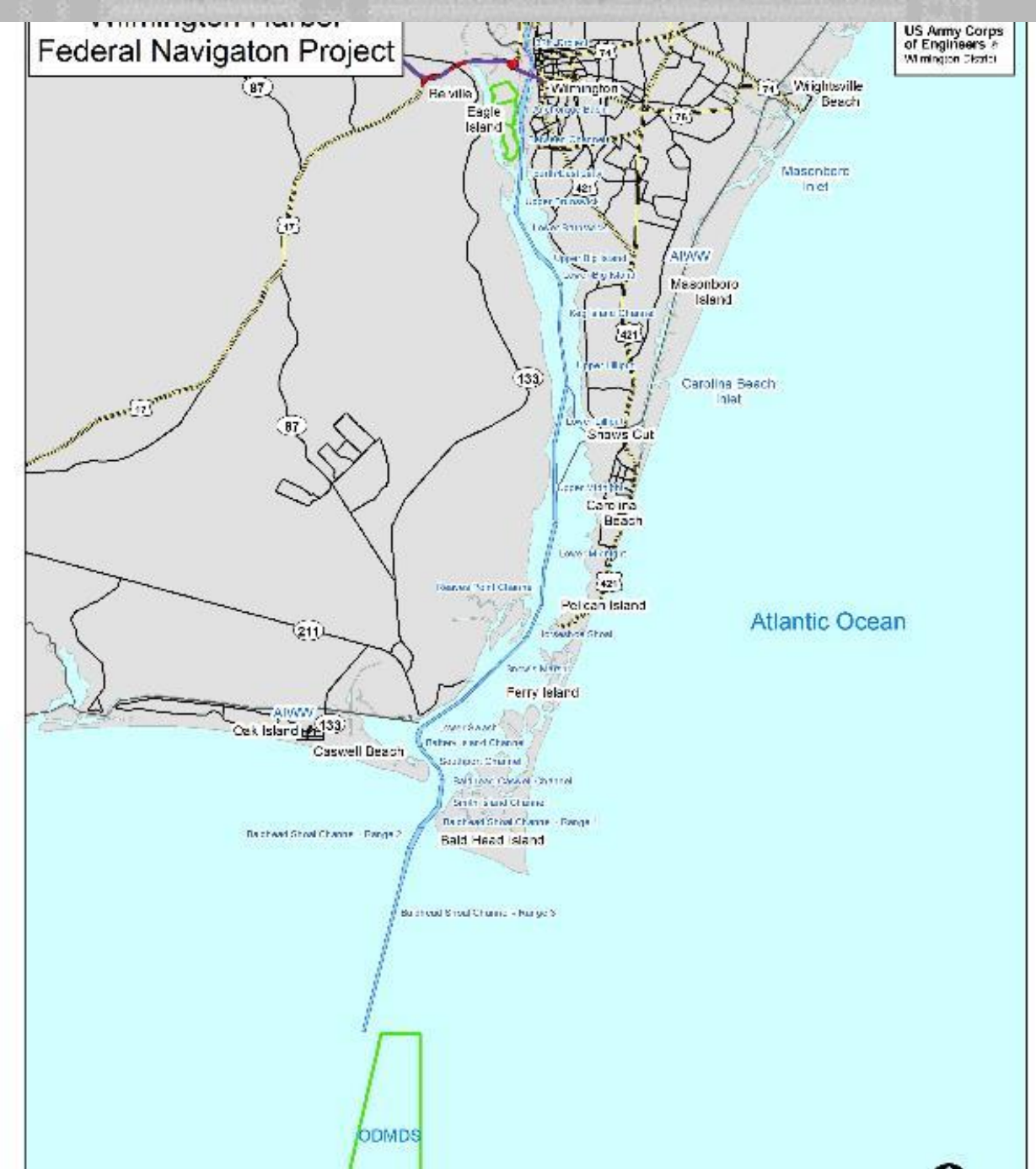
Stakeholder Group Meeting
20 November 2019

Presenters: Emily Hughes
Biologist, Environmental Resources Section
USACE Wilmington District

Working Today to Build a Better Tomorrow



US Army Corps
of Engineers®





WHNIP 203 STAKEHOLDER GROUP



Why? The Corps is responsible for all environmental compliance, including meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and public involvement is critical to successfully completing the NEPA process.

How chosen? You requested to be part of the stakeholder group either verbally or in writing and/or you have valuable knowledge/experience needed for input to the Environmental Impact Statement.

Members? Federal/State/Local Government, Non-Profits, Others. One member selected to represent each organization.

Commitment? Once meeting per month for 60-90 minutes until the Port's 203 Report is submitted to Congress.

Presentations: Stakeholder Group will identify technical information/analysis topics to be presented by the Ports' team.



WHNIP 203 STAKEHOLDER GROUP



Resource Agencies:

Environmental Protection Agency
National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Coastal Management
Division of Marine Fisheries
Division of Water Resources
Division of Historic Site and Properties
Wildlife Resources Commission

Non-Profit:

Audubon NC
Cape Fear River Watch
NC Coastal Federation
The Nature Conservancy

Government:

Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point
U.S. Coast Guard
BOEM (declined)
NC State Parks
City of Wilmington
Town of Southport

Other:

Brunswick County
Cape Fear River Pilots
Fort Caswell
Gullah-Geechee Community
National Association for the Advancement of
Colored People
National Gypsum
New Hanover County



PURPOSE AND GUIDELINES



Purpose:

The Stakeholders Group is a periodic (monthly) gathering of agency and resource representatives meant to ensure that the Port's navigation improvements study is informed on compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and all potentially impacted resources and assets.

Guidelines:

- ✓ The Stakeholders Group is not a decision-making body.
- ✓ This is the Port's study, not the Corps'.
- ✓ The Corps will, however, facilitate the Stakeholder meetings, and is responsible for NEPA compliance on this study.
- ✓ The Group will maintain a professional and courteous dialog.
- ✓ The Group is encouraged to foster discussion on process, technical and environmental analyses the Group feels are needed to ensure compliance with Federal, State and local laws, regulations, and guidelines.
- ✓ Following the initial meeting, future meetings will focus on topics and areas of interest the attendees believe need consideration in the study.
- ✓ Information provided is not a guarantee that needs will be met.
- ✓ The Group is not a reviewing body, or formally advisory in nature.
- ✓ Meetings will be held to 60 minutes, or 90 minutes if a technical presentation is made.
- ✓ Stakeholders should provide updates on P.O.C. and contact/e-mail information.
- ✓ Meetings will occur until WHNIP report is submitted to Congress.

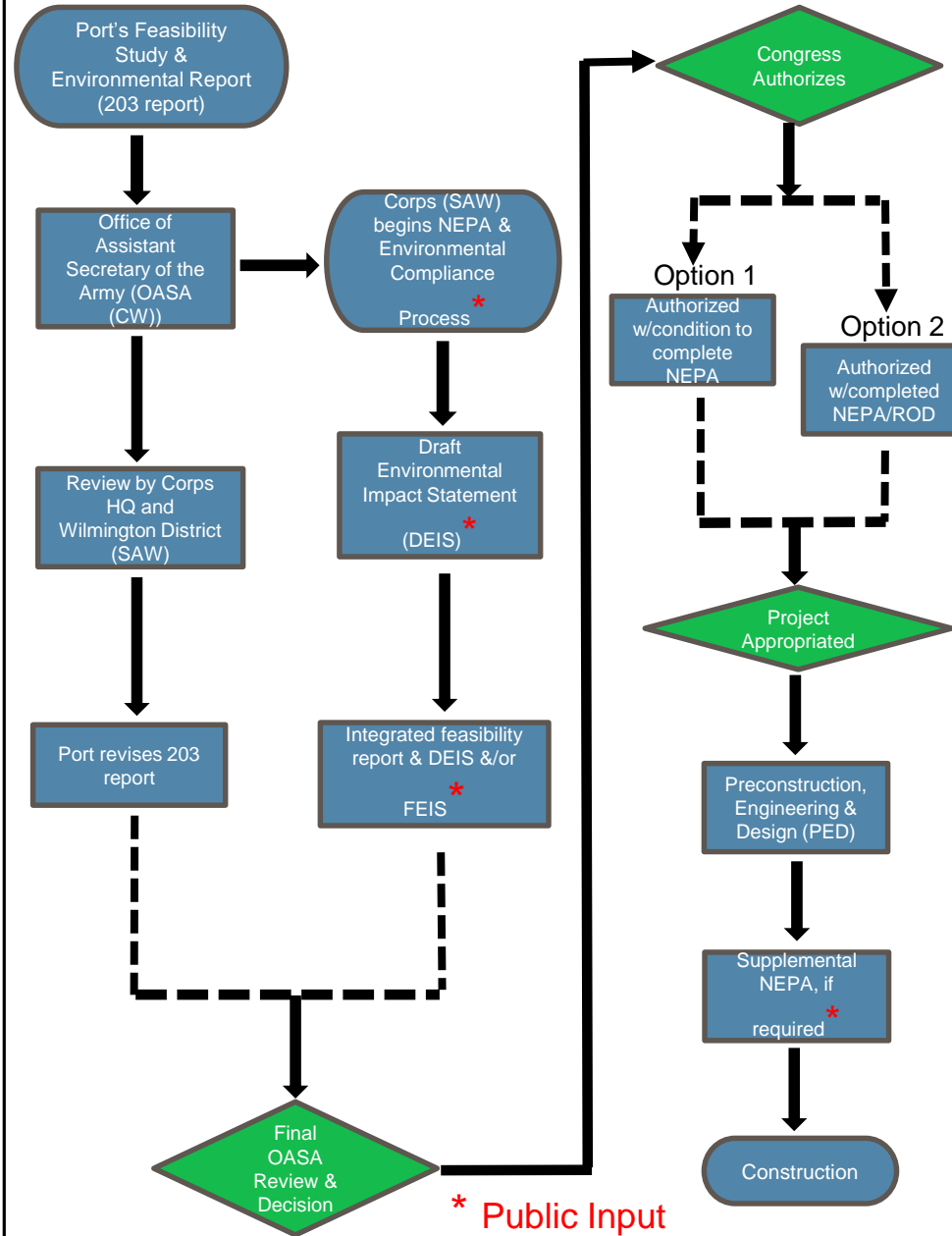


SECTION 203 OF THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT 1986 (WRDA)

- “A non-federal interest may on its own undertake a feasibility study of a proposed harbor or inland harbor project and submit it to the Secretary of the Army.”
- The proposed project has to be feasible and must meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.
- The feasibility study is being performed with **100% non-federal funds.**
- Non-federal interest (State Ports) is funding the inherently federal government functions, including NEPA and other environmental compliance-related efforts.
- The acceptance of non-federal funds **will not impact impartial decision** making at any level of the government.



SECTION 203 & NEPA PROCESS



* Public Input



CORPS ROLE IN THE 203 PROCESS

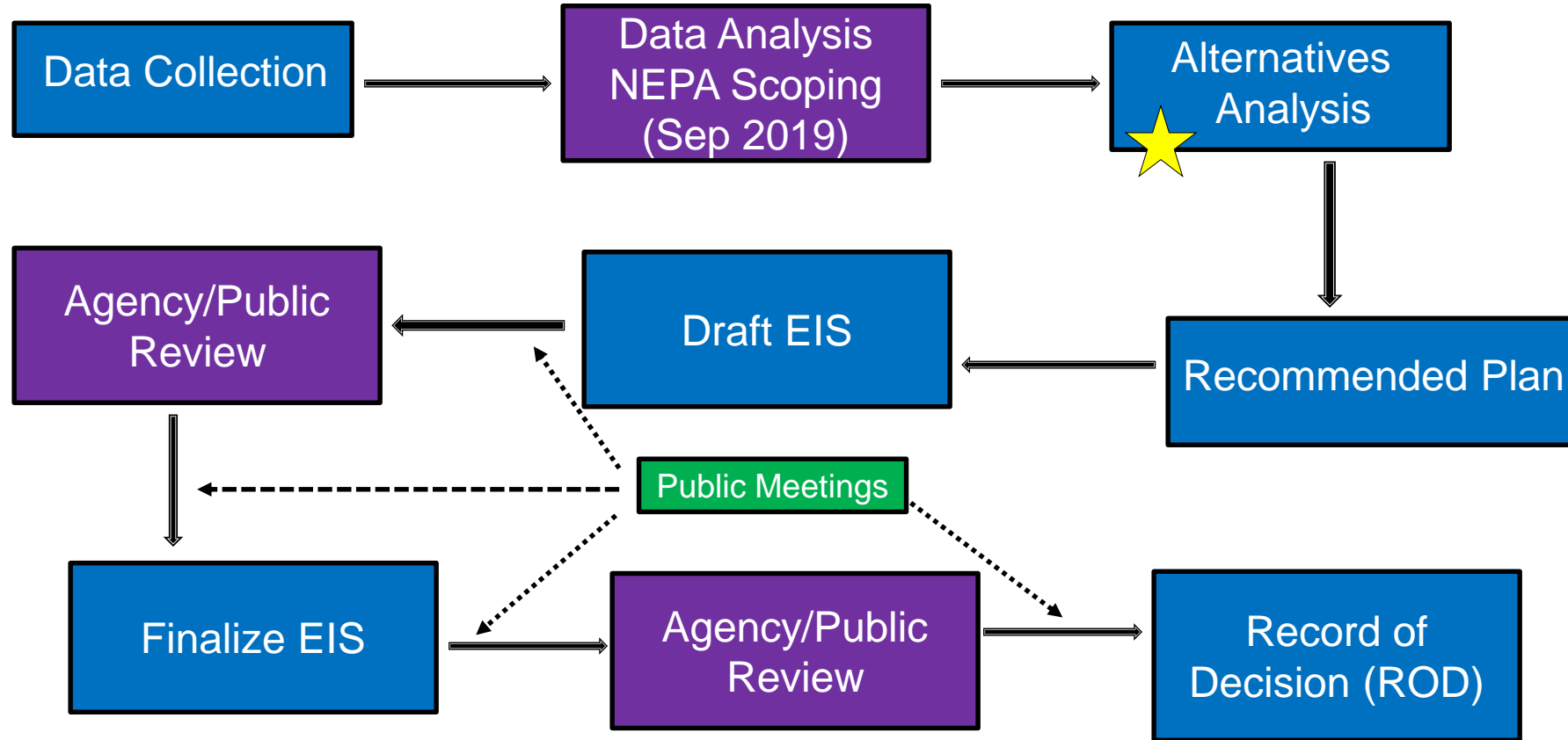
Inherently Federal Government Functions

Wilmington District is responsible for the following:

- The NEPA process (Notice of Intent to Record of Decision)
- Public and Agency Involvement throughout NEPA
- Meeting specific resource agency coordination and formal consultation requirements (Endangered Species Act)
- Developing the mitigation plan



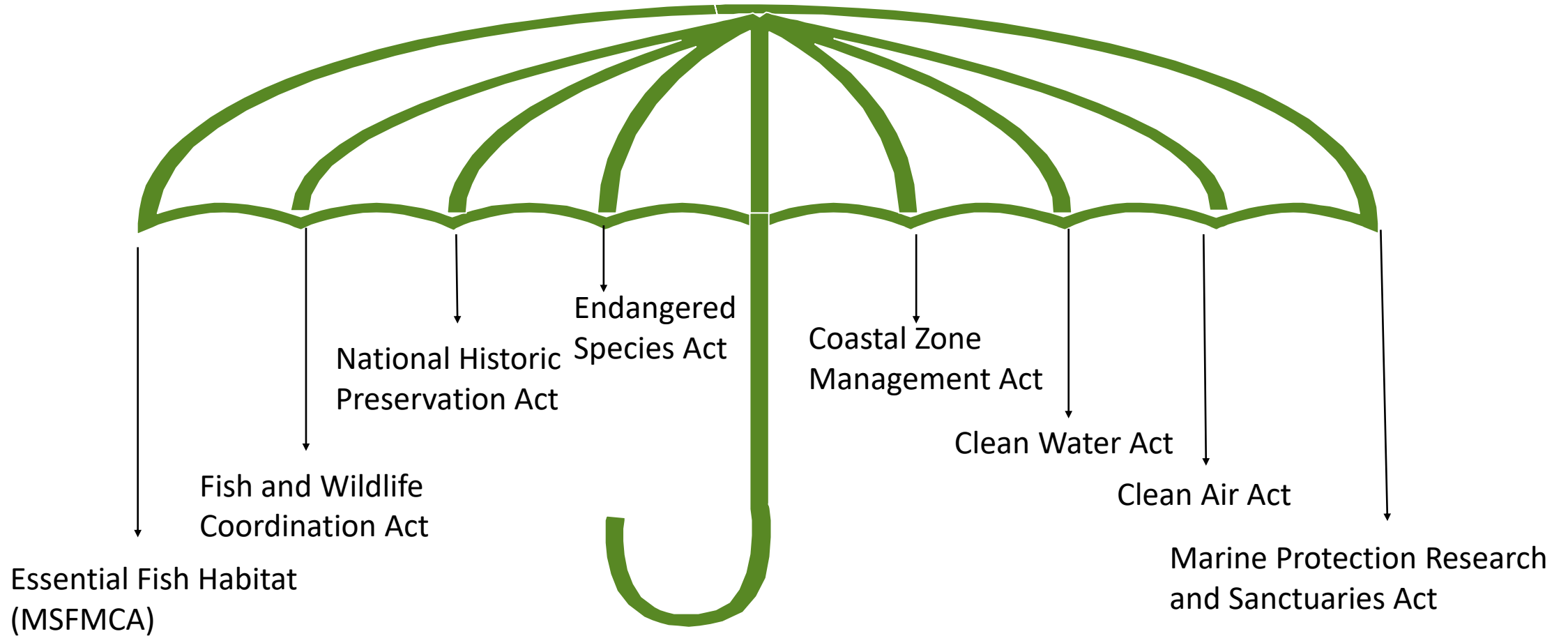
THE NEPA PROCESS



Where we are today

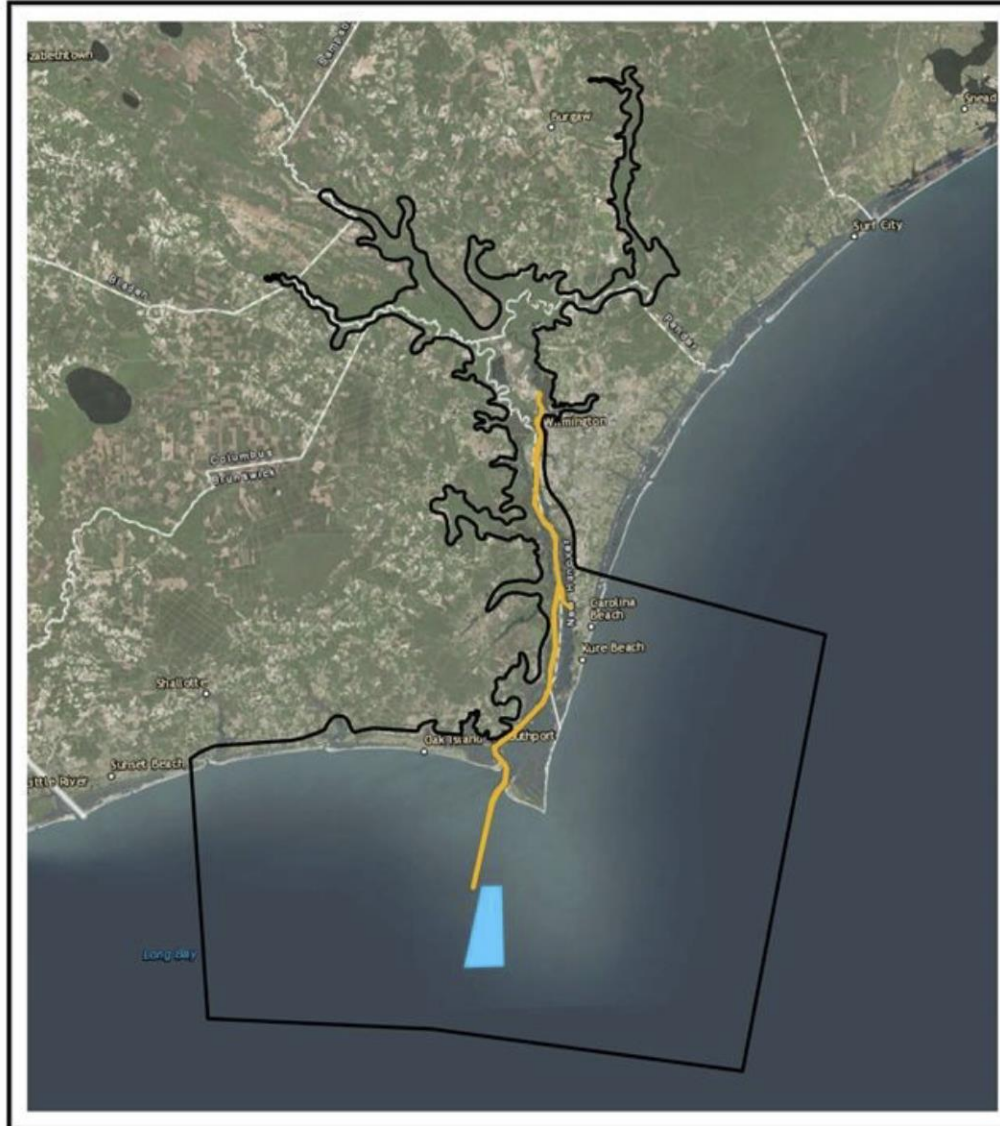


ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE & NEPA (NEPA UMBRELLA)






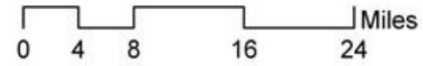


WILMINGTON HARBOR STUDY AREA & AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT



Legend

-  ODMS
-  Federal Navigation Channel
-  Approximate Study Boundary





DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

- Corps will evaluate a large array of alternatives.
- Scoping will provide input that helps identify alternatives and issues of concern.
- Structural & Non-Structural Alternatives will be considered.

Examples:

Structural – Modifications to the Federal Channel

Non-structural – Modify operations at the Port (non-Federal)





ECONOMIC ANALYSIS



- Projections of future commodities and future fleet
- Projections regarding future vessel loading and operations
- Assessing Wilmington Harbor logistics with consideration of alternative ports
- Identifying most likely commodity volume and vessel operations at Port of Wilmington under various alternative plans
- Identifying the most efficient plan
- Recommending a plan that is feasible (benefit/cost ratio greater than 1) and is environmentally acceptable



ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES TO BE ASSESSED

- Salinity
- Shoreline Erosion (vessel wakes)
- Coastal and Marine Processes (impacts on local beaches)
- Sea-Level Changes
- Surface and groundwater
- Wetlands
- Fish and Wildlife
- Marine Biological Resources
- Essential Fish Habitat
- Protected Species
- Noise and Air Quality
- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Socio-economics
- Sediment Quality





ENGINEERING AND NUMERICAL MODELING COMPLETED BY PORTS



- Data Collection
- Numerical Modeling
 - Hydrodynamic, Wave Transformation and Shoreline Evolution
 - Salinity, Cohesive Sediment and Inlet Morphology
 - Groundwater and Water Quality
- Vessel Maneuvering Simulations
- Channel Alignment and Width
- Vessel Wakes
- Dredging Quantities and Costs



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UPCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL TASKS

- Identify and describe the Affected Environment
- Determine Impacts to Resources
- Coordinate with Environmental Agencies

Specific coordination includes:

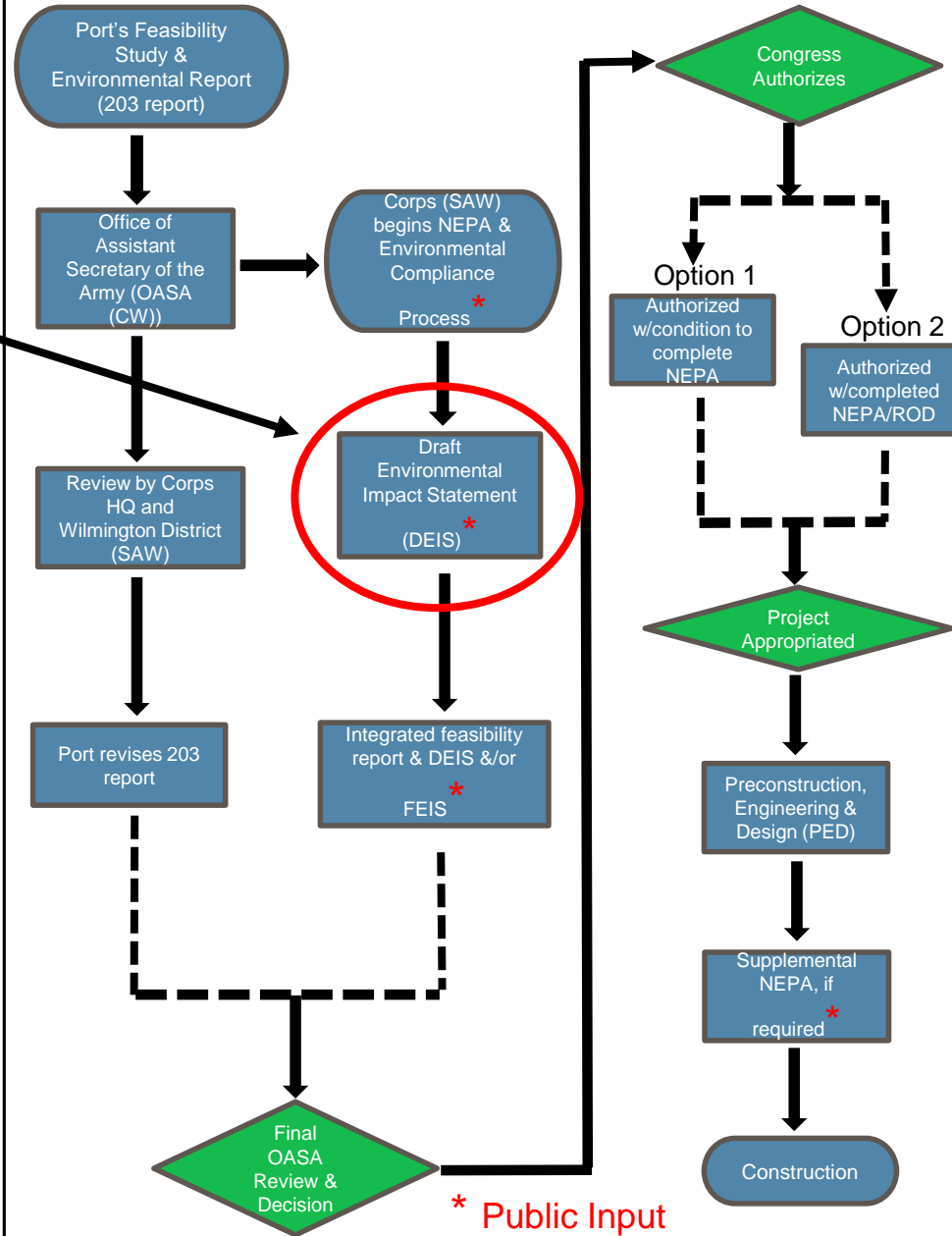
- Section 7 Formal Consultation with USFWS and NMFS
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act coordination
- Development of a Mitigation Plan in coordination w/agencies





Next Milestone

SECTION 203 & NEPA PROCESS




* Public Input





QUESTIONS?



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