

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

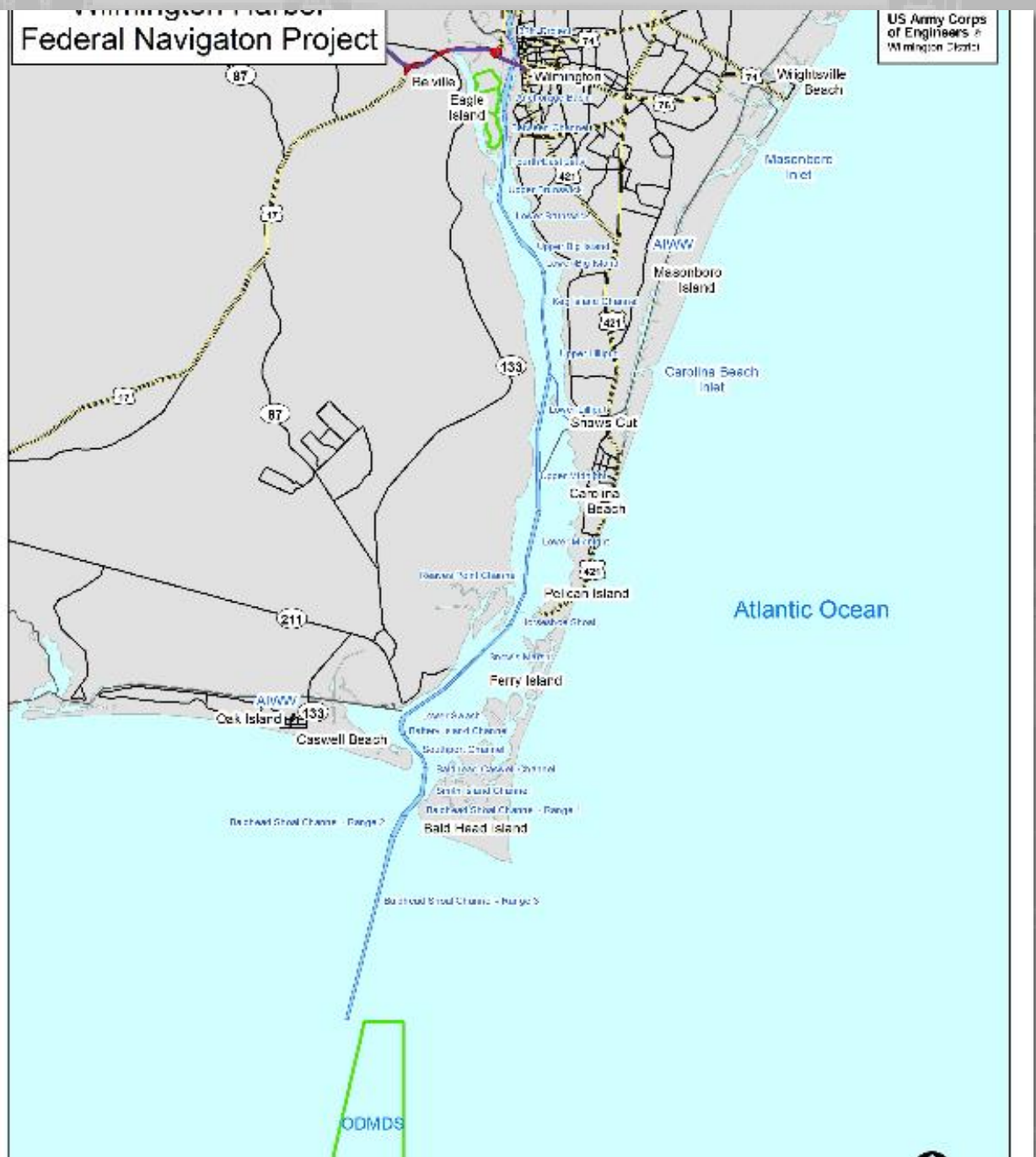
Public Scoping Meeting  
26 September 2019

Presenter: Jenny Owens  
Chief, Environmental Resources Section  
USACE Wilmington District

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US Army Corps  
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# WHNIP 203 PRESENTATION TOPICS

- Section 203 Authority
- Section 203 & National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
- Corps' Role in the 203 Process
- NEPA and Environmental Compliance Tasks
- Wilmington Harbor Project Area
- Why is the Port pursuing this?
- Development of Alternatives
- Economic Analysis
- Environmental and Cultural Resources
- Engineering and Numerical Modeling
- Next Steps
- How You Can Participate



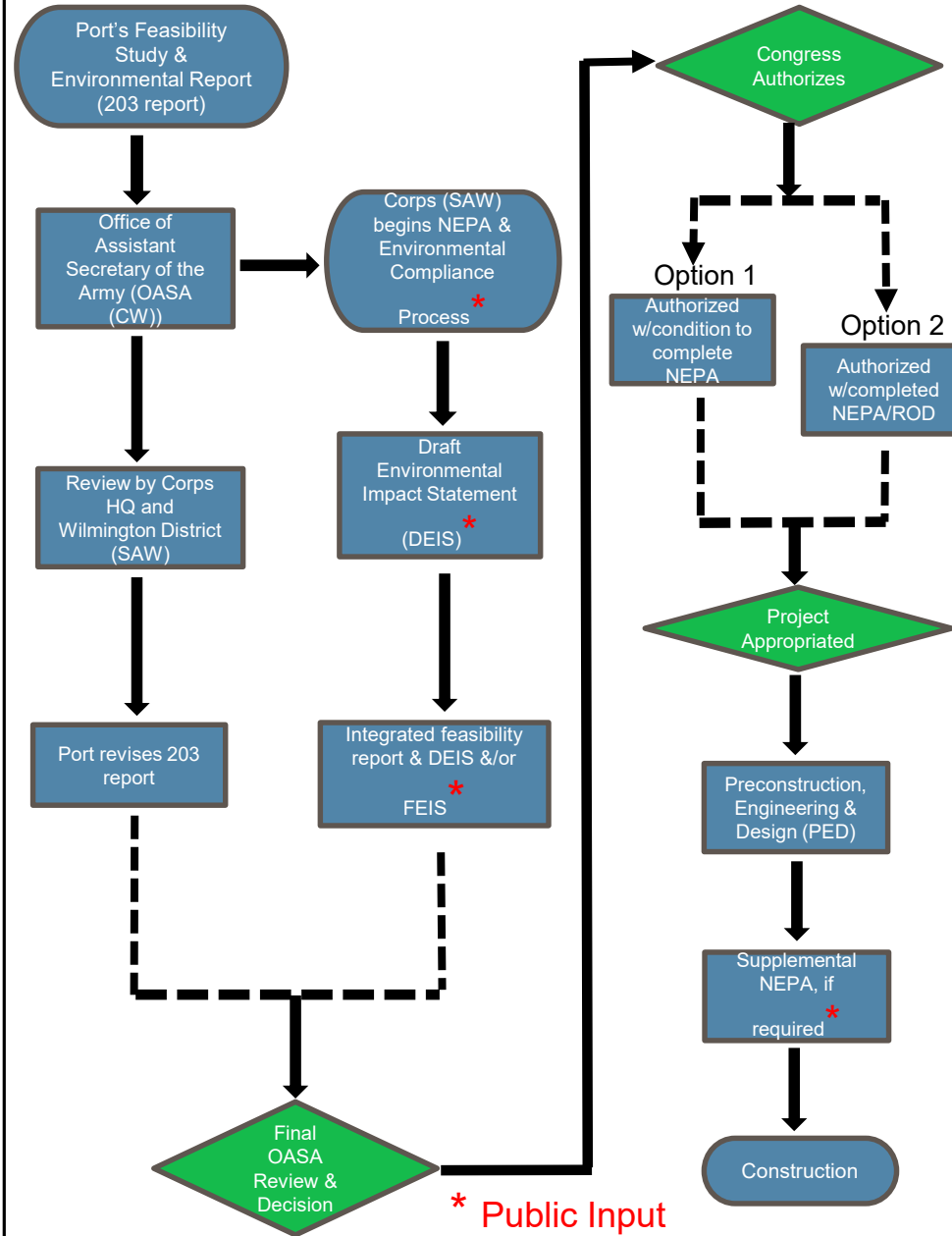


# SECTION 203 OF THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT 1986 (WRDA)

- “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 feasibility study will be fully compliant with Corps of Engineers guidelines and 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

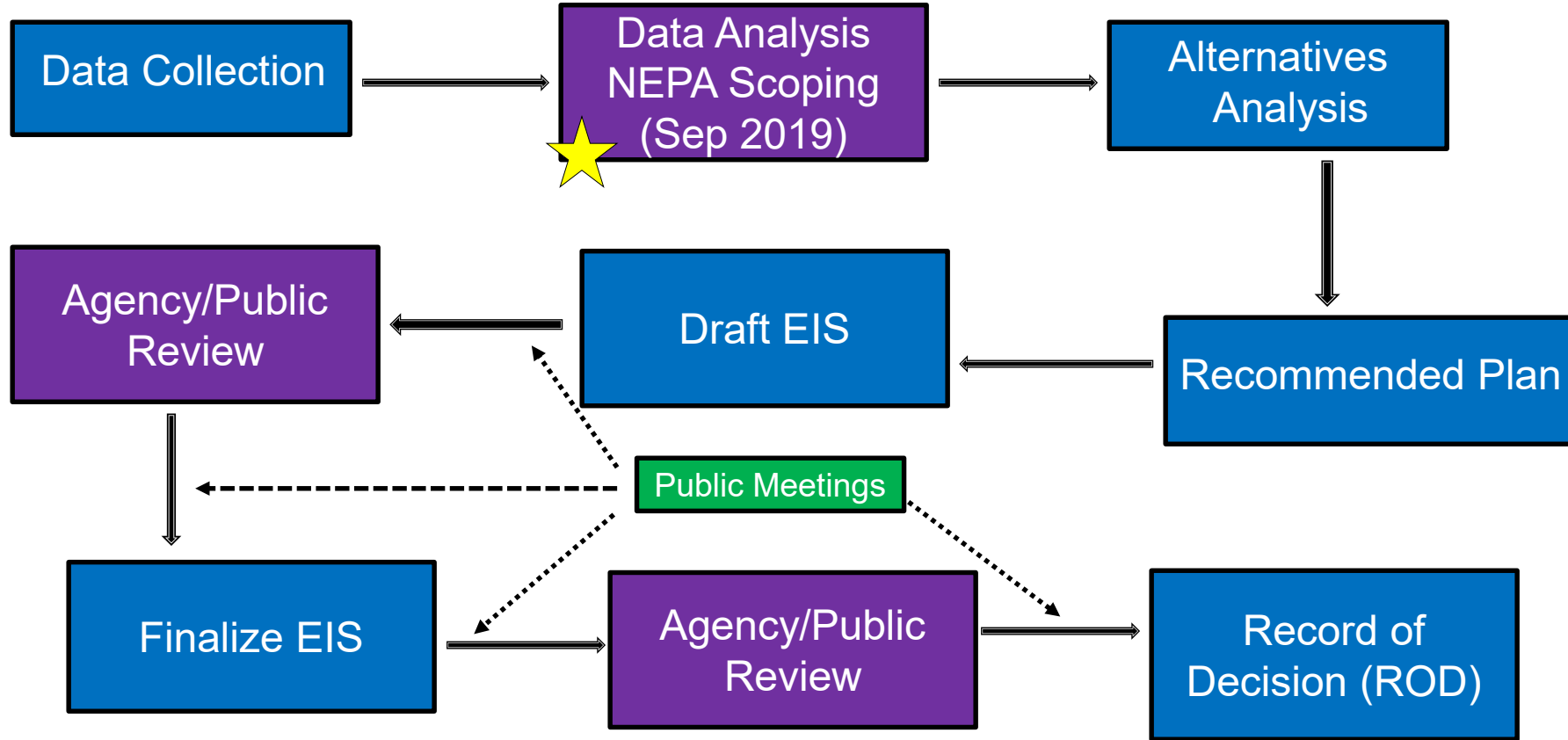
## Inherently Federal Government Functions

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



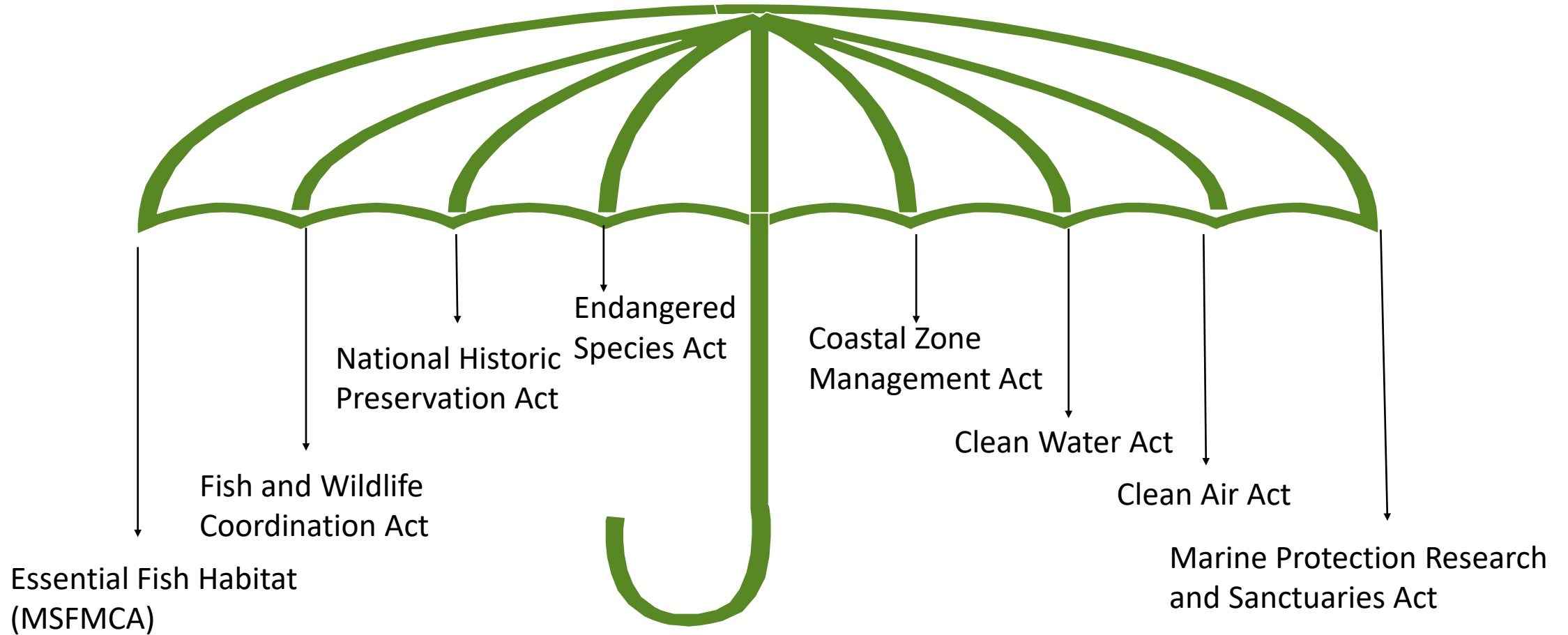
# THE NEPA PROCESS



Where we are today

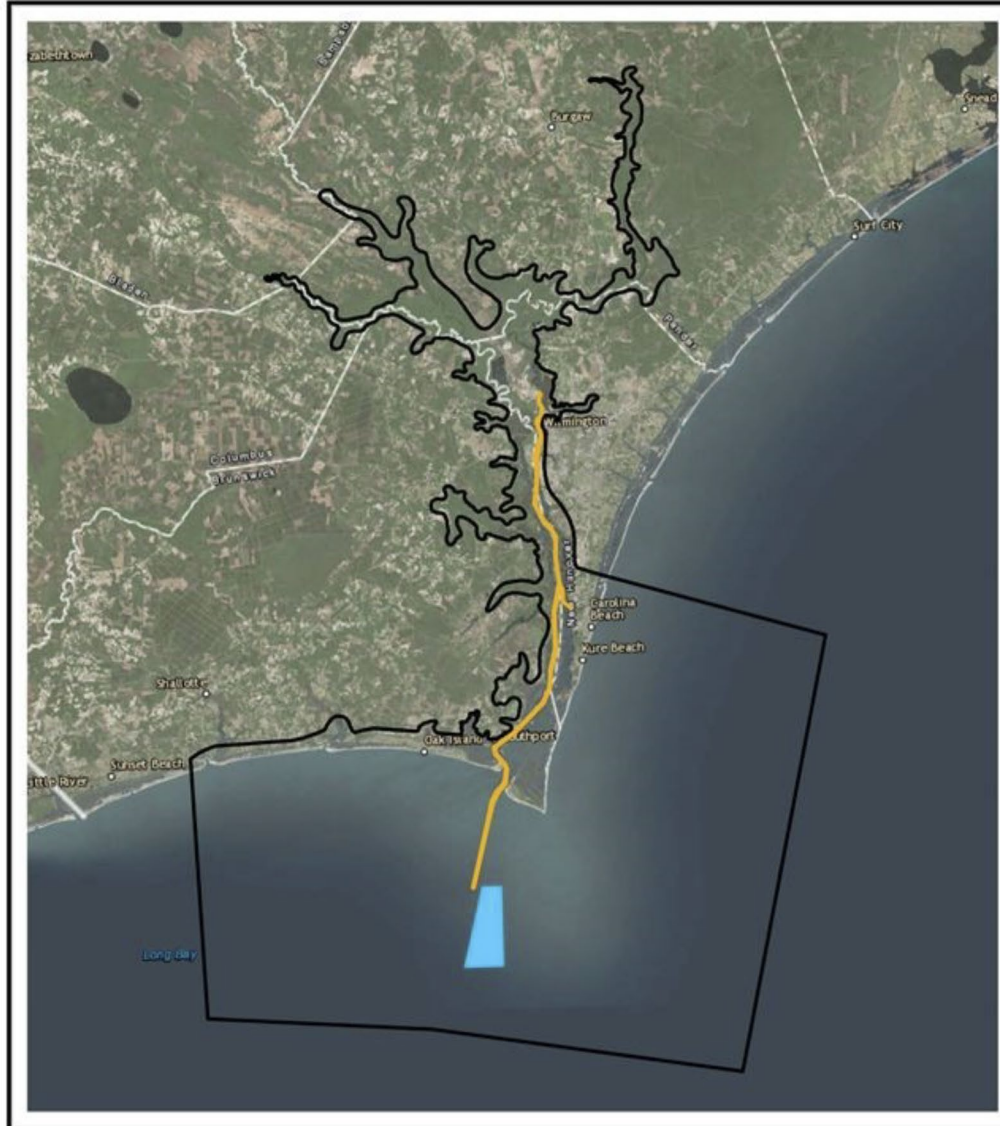


# ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE & NEPA (NEPA UMBRELLA)



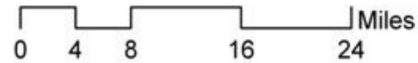


# WILMINGTON HARBOR STUDY AREA & AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT



**Legend**

- ODMS
- Federal Navigation Channel
- Approximate Study Boundary







# WHY IS THE PORT PURSUING THIS?

- The fleet of containerships is increasing in size to reduce marine transport costs. Cargo capacity of ships built in 2018 is three times larger than ships built in 1995.
- Existing channel conditions at Wilmington Harbor cannot accommodate these larger vessels efficiently.
- To remain competitive, the Port sees a need to evaluate harbor improvement alternatives to remain a port-of-call for US East Coast to Asia containership services.





# Current and Future USEC Port Depths – Major Container Ports

Port	Current	Future Depth & Status	Projected Completion
	<b>Depth</b>		
Boston*	40 feet	48 feet - under construction	2024
New York*	50 feet	50 feet - constructed	Complete
Philadelphia	45 feet	45 feet - constructed	Complete
Baltimore	50 feet	50 feet - constructed	Complete
Norfolk	50 feet	55 feet – in design	2025
<b>Wilmington, NC</b>	<b>42 feet</b>	<b>42 feet – constructed</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Charleston*	45 feet	52 feet – under construction	2021
Savannah*	42 feet	47 feet – under construction	2020
Jacksonville*	40 feet	47 feet – under construction	2025
Port Everglades	42 feet	48 feet – in design	2024
Miami	50 feet	50 feet - constructed	Complete

\* USEC-Asia service loop partners with Port of Wilmington, NC



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED BY PORT



- Allow existing and projected future cargo vessels to have less restricted access to berths and terminals, reducing delays and increasing the efficiency of port operations
- Allow cargo vessels to be loaded more efficiently
- Allow larger cargo vessels to be used that can deliver more cargo at lower unit costs
- Achieve the full capability and efficiency of terminal and infrastructure improvements at the Port of Wilmington.





# 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

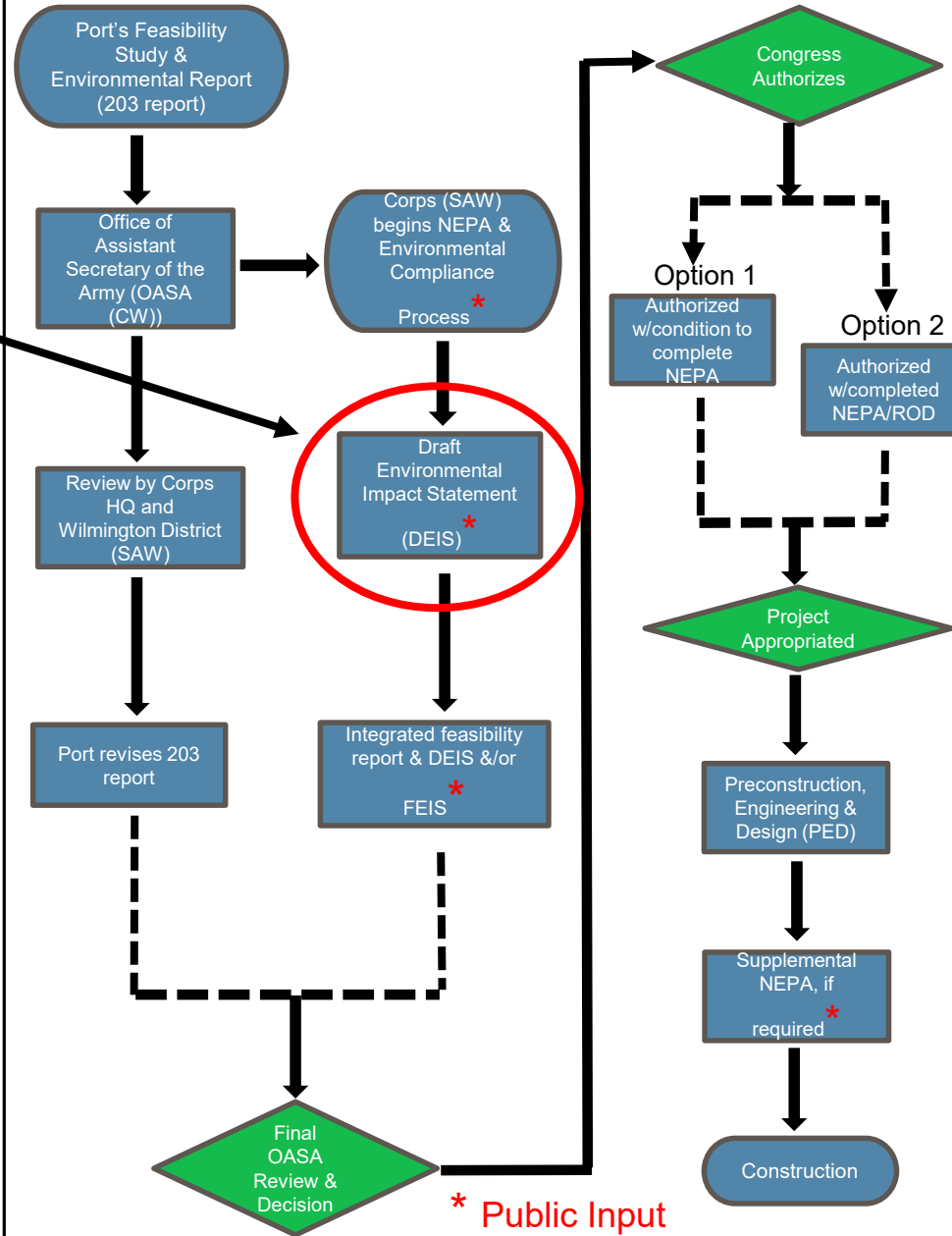






Next Milestone

# SECTION 203 & NEPA PROCESS





# HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

Submit scoping comments by 12 October 2019 in writing to:  
[WHNIP203@usace.army.mil](mailto:WHNIP203@usace.army.mil)

All WHNIP 203-related documents:

[https://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Dredging/Wilmington-Harbor/WHNIP\\_203\\_Study/](https://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Dredging/Wilmington-Harbor/WHNIP_203_Study/)

- Comment on the Draft and Final EISs
- Attend any future public meetings (TBD)



# QUESTIONS?



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