



FIGURE 1

**Notice of Availability for the Final Poplar Island Restoration Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); Project Location Is Near Tilgham Island, in Talbot County, Maryland**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DOD.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, has prepared a Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement for the restoration of Poplar Island to its approximate size in 1847. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the District is conducting public coordination and distributing the documents for public review and comment.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions about the proposed actions, Feasibility Study, and EIS can be addressed to Study Manager, Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ATTN: CENAB-PL-PC, P.O. 1715, Baltimore, Maryland 21203-1715, telephone (410) 962-3639. E-mail: stacey.e.brown@ccmail.nab.usace.army.mil.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

Currently, the name Poplar Island refers to a group of four small remnant islands, located adjacent to Jefferson and Coaches Islands in the upper middle Chesapeake Bay. The project location is approximately one mile north of Tilghman Island, on the Bay's eastern shore.

1. Island restoration would create, 1,110 acres of wildlife habitat by placing, shaping, and planting approximately 38 million cubic yards of clean dredged material. The habitat created would include approximately 555 acres each of intertidal wetlands and upland habitat. The material would be dredged during maintenance of the southern approach channels to Baltimore Harbor and placed behind containment dikes at the project site. The plan includes a 35,000-ft perimeter dike surrounding the four remnant islands and protecting the south side of Coaches Island. The containment dike on the west side of the restored island will be constructed of on-site sand and armor stone brought to the site.

2. Poplar Island has been identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and many other natural resource management agencies as a valuable nesting and nursery area for

many species of wildlife, including black duck, bald eagles, osprey, heron, and egret. Habitat for many wildlife species native to the upper Chesapeake is sparse and degrading in the project area. The complex of upland, wetland, near-shore, and shoal habitats that will result from the restored island will offer a diversity of habitat resources. The project design includes development of 50% wetland and 50% upland habitat. Of the wetlands, 80% will be developed as low marsh and 20% as high marsh. Small upland islands, ponds, and dendritic guts or channels will be created to increase habitat diversity within the marsh areas. It is expected that habitat diversity will be increased in the upland areas by constructing small ponds and providing both forested and relatively open scrub/shrub areas.

3. The decision to implement this action is being based on an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activities on the public interest. The decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposed project are being balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal, including the cumulative effects thereof, are being considered; among these factors are economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, flood hazards, fish and wildlife values, flood plain values, land use, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, and the general needs and welfare of the people.

4. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describes the impacts of the proposed projects on environmental and cultural resources in the study area. The EIS also applies guidelines issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (Pub. L. 95-217). An evaluation of the proposed actions on the waters of the United States was performed pursuant to the guidelines of the Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The proposed dredging, construction, and placement of dredged material is in compliance with Section 404(b)(1) guidelines.

5. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Water Act, the Corps of Engineers has solicited comments from the public, Federal, state and local agencies and officials, and other interested parties. Any comments received are being

considered by the Corps of Engineers in the decision to implement the project. To make this decision, comments are being used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments regarding the environmental restoration proposal have been incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Statement are required by NEPA. Public comments were also used to determine the overall public interest. Opportunities for public comment included a series of three public scoping and information meetings and a final public hearing, held in November 1995, to present the proposed project and draft EIS. In addition, a number of informal meetings were held in order to present information to citizen interest groups, including watermen, charterboat captains, local officials, and regional planners. The public review and comment period for the draft feasibility study and draft EIS began on 13 November 1995 and closed on 25 January 1996. Comments received throughout the study process have been incorporated into the final EIS.

6. This Notice of Availability is being sent to organizations and individuals known to have an interest in the restoration of Poplar Island. Please bring this notice to the attention of any other individuals with an interest in this matter. Copies of the EIS are available upon request or for review at the following locations:

Talbot County Free Library, 100 W. Dover St., Easton, MD.  
St. Michales Branch, Talbot County Free Library, 106 No. Fremont St., St. Michaels, MD.  
Dorchester County Public Library, 303 Gay St., Cambridge, MD.  
Frederick Douglas Library, University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, Princess Anne, MD.  
Twin Beaches Library, 3819 Harbor Rd., Chesapeake Beach, MD.  
Enoch Pratt Free Library, 400 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD.

7. Requests for copies of the EIS may be mailed to the following address: District Engineer, ATTN: CENAB-PL-PC, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, P.O. Box 1715, Baltimore, MD 21203-1715.

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*Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.*  
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**Inland Waterways Users Board**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.