

MEMORANDUM


Agenda Item No. 11(B)3

TO: Hon. Chairperson Barbara Carey-Shuler, Ed.D
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: December 4, 2003

FROM: George M. Burgess
County Manager

SUBJECT: Update Report:
Miami River
Dredging Project



The intent of this report is to provide an update on the Miami River dredging project now that dredging is nearing. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Miami-Dade County signed the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) on July 30th 2003. The USACE is the leading agency on this dredging project and released the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the dredging of the Miami River on August 29th, 2003. It now expects to receive bids in November 2003, and to begin dredging the Miami River sometime between March 2004 and July 2004. The entire project should be completed sometime in the spring of 2007.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has recommended maintenance dredging of the Federal Navigational Channel for the entire 5.5 mile length of the Miami River, from the mouth to the Water Control Structure located in the vicinity of N.W. 36 Street. This Channel, essentially runs down the center of the river. The river has not been dredged since the creation of the Federal Channel in 1933. Maintenance dredging will restore the Federal Channel to its proper depth of 15 feet (at low tide) and between 150 feet wide at the mouth of the river to 90 feet in the upper section, improving safety and maritime commerce on the river. This dredging is also a significant environmental improvement project, since removal and proper disposal of the sediments will enhance water quality and prevent degradation of fisheries habitat and recreational waters in Biscayne Bay.

On May 22, 2001 the Board of County Commissioners (Board) discussed the project and expressed concerns about odor, traffic, birds, and other impacts to the community. The USACE has addressed the Board's concerns by adding language in the project plans and specifications that will "prohibit open air drying of the contaminated sediments on the land provided in the vicinity of the Jai-Alai facility".

The USACE is conducting a competitive solicitation process that will encourage the successful contractor to propose alternative handling, treatment and disposal of the sediments to minimize impacts to the community. A Request for Proposals (RFP) form of solicitation was issued instead of an Invitation to Bid (ITB). This allows more than just price to be considered in making the contract award. An ITB awards the contract to the responsible low bidder based solely on price. The RFP allows for evaluations of the prospective contractors based on a combination of technical qualifications and responsiveness, past performance, and price factors.

The RFP process is intended to ensure that a responsible contractor is selected for the job that is capable of meeting all project requirements, including the concerns expressed at the Board meeting May 22, 2001. Miami-Dade County will have representation on the evaluation team for the RFP.

The purpose of the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) mentioned above is to identify the definitions and general provisions of the project, and define the obligations of the USACE and Miami-Dade County, including the cost-sharing requirements. To provide consistent and effective communication, the PCA created a Project Coordination Team that will meet on a regular basis until the end of the project.

FUNDING

There are two clear partitions of the River Dredging Project. The project for the center of the river (the Federal Navigational Channel) is estimated by USACE to cost \$54 million (80 percent from the Federal Government, 10 percent from the State of Florida, 5 percent from the Florida Inland Navigational District, 2.5 percent from the City of Miami, and 2.5 percent from Miami-Dade County). The project area outside the Federal Navigational Channel ("bank-to-bank") is estimated to cost \$12 million to dredge and is a local responsibility, as there is no Federal participation outside of the Navigational Channel. We have tentatively negotiated with the City of Miami a 62.5 percent (\$7,500,000) County, 37.5 percent (\$4,500,000) City of Miami cost share split based on the geography of the Miami River. This split cost share is based on 50 percent Countywide and 50 percent "municipalities". Since the uppermost 25 percent of the Miami River lies within the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA), Miami-Dade County will be responsible for 25 percent of the "Municipal" 50 percent resulting in the aforementioned 62.5 percent from the County (\$990,000 of Capital Outlay Reserve has been funded for this in FY 2003-04). We will continue to work with the State of Florida and the Florida Inland Navigational District for additional funding to support the County's portion of the bank-to-bank project.

DREDGING

A dredge removes material from within the Channel width, as shown in Figure 1. The Channel width is also the dredging limit for the Federal Navigational Channel portion of the two partitions of the project. As the dredge removes the material from the Channel width, material adjacent to the Channel will fall into the hole created as the dredge removes material. The dredge will continue to remove material from the Channel width until material ceases to fall into the Channel. This creates the channel slope. The steepness of the slope depends upon the type of material. The more unconsolidated and fine-grained the sediment, the flatter the slope and the farther outside of the channel material will be removed. In the Miami River, the extent of the slope may also be influenced by rock and hard material that under lays the Channel in many locations.

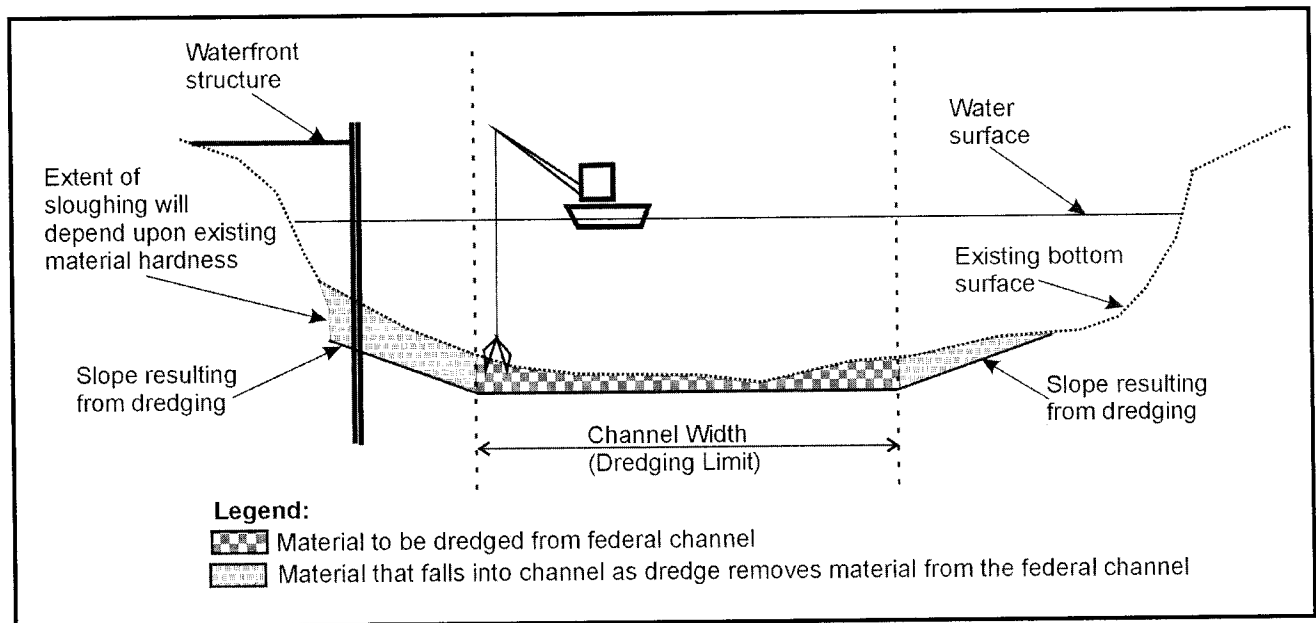


Figure 1

Federal Channel Dredging Project

The Miami River is a federally authorized channel constructed in the 1930s. The width of the Channel varies from 150 feet wide at the mouth of the river, to 125 feet wide above the NW 17th Avenue bridge, to 90 feet wide above the NW 27th Avenue bridge. The federally authorized Channel depth is -15 feet mean low water (MLW). The river has not been maintained since its construction. The dredging will restore the original constructed channel depths and increase efficiency and safety of port operations. The Miami River dredging project will remove accumulated infill; no blasting or removal of rock is included.

Bank to Bank Dredging Option

The County and the City of Miami are extending the federal dredging project beyond the limits of the Federal Channel, essentially “bank to bank”. This will allow contaminated material outside the Federal Channel to be removed from the Miami River system. Figure 2 shows the additional dredging for the bank-to-bank option.

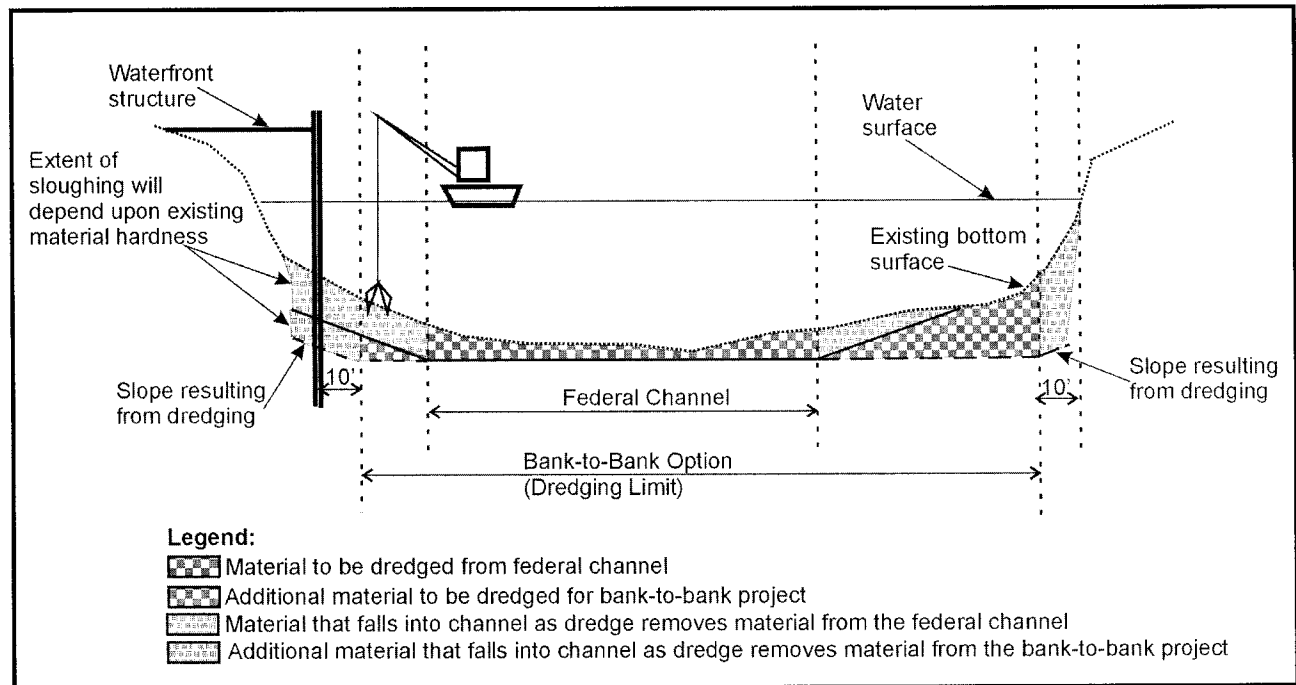


Figure 2

The cost of this additional dredging is the responsibility of the local funding partnership and has been permitted separately from the Federal Channel portion of the project. The federal government will not participate in the cost but has included it as an option in the RFP and will include it in the scheduled contract. The County has secured permits and is pursuing funding options for this bank-to-bank option.