DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DETROIT DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
477 Michigan Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48226-2550

SEP 0 6 2016

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES, PUBLIC GROUPS, TRIBES, AND CITIZENS

This notice is being issued by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Detroit District, on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), for a habitat restoration project at the mouth of the Clinton River on Lake St. Clair in Harrison Township, Macomb County, Michigan. The Clinton River Mouth Project is within and adjacent to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Harley Ensign Memorial Boating Access Site (Enclosure 1). The purpose of this notice is to coordinate with interested agencies, public groups, tribes, and citizens as well as to advertise an upcoming public meeting about the proposed project.

The purpose of the Clinton River Mouth Project is to improve the fish and wildlife habitat at the mouth of the Clinton River in Lake St. Clair. The Clinton River, including its tributaries and a portion of Lake St. Clair, is a designated Area of Concern (AOC) under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1987[1]. In October 2011, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) released the Stage 2 Remedial Action Plan (RAP) for the Clinton River, which identified a number of beneficial use impairments (BUIs) along with specific actions to be implemented under each BUI. The Clinton River Mouth Project was approved by the MDEQ in this document as part of a package of projects proposed by the Clinton River AOC Public Advisory Council (PAC). The proposed project was determined to be necessary for removal of the Fish and Wildlife BUIs and is one of several projects in the Clinton River AOC that the USEPA, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and Clinton River PAC are working together on with the goal to remove the majority of BUIs in the Clinton River AOC over the next year.

The MDNR Harley Ensign site is built on top of a former USACE dredged material disposal site. The site includes a public boat launch and a MDNR Fisheries Station at the west end with the remainder covered with areas of trees (mostly cottonwood) and shrubs and open areas that have been overrun by invasive Phragmites, which is of minimal value to wildlife. In addition, Lake St. Clair lacks emergent wetlands, which are an important habitat type for many species, including birds and fish, and also provide shoreline protection. The proposed Clinton River Mouth Project would improve fish and wildlife habitat by providing quality coastal habitat at the MDNR Harley Ensign site and emergent wetland habitat in the adjacent waters of Lake St. Clair.

Specific project components proposed for the top of the MDNR Harley Ensign site include invasive species removal[2], creation of approximately 3.8 acres of wet mesic savanna habitat, creation of approximately 0.5 acre of sedge meadow habitat, and creation of approximately 1 acre of limestone-cobble shoreline habitat (Enclosure 2). About two-

1 Designated by the International Joint Commission, which was established by the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty as the bi-national organization (United States & Canada) responsible for the Great Lakes and other boundary waters.
2 Phragmites control measures were initiated in the fall of 2015 with herbicide spraying and cutting; further treatments are planned in 2017.

thirds of the cottonwood trees (70) will be removed to allow for the establishment of more desirable tree species, such as oaks, while achieving the more open, park-like canopy cover that is characteristic of coastal savanna habitat. The trees to be removed range from 7 to 54 inches in diameter. The entire 3.8 acres of new wet mesic savanna habitat will receive up to a one (1) foot topsoil amendment (about 6,000 cubic yards) and will then be planted with a variety of native grasses, shrubs, and desirable tree species. The sedge meadow habitat will be created by filling (approximately 5,000 cubic yards) in two (2) artificial ponds that were constructed by the MDNR for zebra mussel research and are no longer used. Hummocks (large masses of roots) will be used to establish the vegetation characteristic of sedge meadows. The limestone-cobble shoreline habitat will be created around the perimeter of the Harley-Ensign site that is currently riprap. The crevices between the stones will be filled with a sandy/limestone soil mix and then native vegetation will be planted. Recreational access to the water will be maintained with established pathways in select locations within the project site.

Further specific project components include the establishment of approximately fourteen (14) acres of emergent wetland in Lake St. Clair along the south side of the Harley Ensign site. These wetlands are important given that this type of habitat is rare along the developed shoreline of Lake St. Clair at existing water levels. Currently, the water depth is not ideal for emergent wetland habitat, which typically establishes in 0.5 – 1.5 feet of water. To obtain ideal water depths and maximize the amount of emergent wetland habitat created, approximately 60,000 cubic yards of dredged material from the Channels of Lake St. Clair federal navigation channel will be barged to the site and will be placed (most likely by hydraulically pumping material) into the project site. The dredged material will go through a full suite of chemical and toxicity testing to ensure that only suitable[3] dredged material is used for wetland creation. The emergent wetlands will extend approximately 325 feet from the south side of the Harley Ensign site. Beyond that will be a transition slope for approximately 75 feet to connect the emergent wetland to the existing lake bottom. To protect the wetland area from wave energy, a number of large woody debris structures will be placed along the outer edge of the project boundary (approximately 400 feet from shore at the outer edge of the transition slope). These structures will be constructed to be completely submerged except in very low lake levels and will not be visible from shore, but will be marked with buoys to minimize any navigation hazards.

Construction of these project components is expected to begin in spring 2017, with the majority of the work taking place in August – November 2017. Partial closures of the Harley Ensign site are expected to occur during construction activities to allow access to the site for construction equipment and materials, but access to the boat launch and the majority of the parking lot will be maintained throughout the duration of the project.

This project will be assessed to ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Clean Water Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

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3 The results of this testing will be reviewed under a Joint Permit Application submitted by the MDNR (property owner) to the MDEQ and USACE Regulatory Offices.

Under the NHPA and the particular implementing regulation, 36 CFR § 800.2(d)(2), it states that government agencies must provide the public with information about an undertaking and its effects on historic properties and seek public comment and input. This notice provides the public with such information and seeks comment and input from the public. The USACE, on behalf of the USEPA, has reviewed the proposed project under

Section 106 of the NHPA and has reached a preliminary determination that the proposed project is an undertaking and that there would be "no historic properties affected" based on no historic properties being present in the project area. Any person who has a historical or cultural interest that may be affected by the proposed action may submit comments regarding this effects determination. The comments must be submitted in writing and must clearly state what historical or cultural interest may be affected by this activity. Comments should be sent within thirty (30) days of the date of the public meeting stated below and to the address stated below. Any comments will be reviewed by the USACE, on behalf of the USEPA, and the USACE may change the effects determination based on the comments received. The USACE will also consult with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office on behalf of the USEPA regarding this project before a final effects determination is made. Upon reaching a final effects determination, documentation will be available for public inspection on the USACE website prior to approving the undertaking.

The USEPA will hold a public meeting at 6:00pm on Monday, September 19, 2016 at the Harrison Township Office Board Room, 38151 L'Anse Creuse, Harrison Township, MI 48045, to provide an opportunity for further dialogue about and to gather public feedback about the proposed project.

In addition to providing comments at the September 19, 2016 public meeting, any comments regarding the proposed project described in this notice may be sent in writing within thirty (30) days of the date of the public meeting to: ATTN: CELRE-PLE (Charles A. Uhlarik) at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, 477 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48226-2550. If no comments are received by the end of the review period, it will be assumed that you have no comment. All comments received will be given consideration in the preparation of the final project design. The final design will be submitted by the property owner, MDNR, to the MDEQ and USACE Regulatory Offices through a Joint Permit Application. A second opportunity for public comments will occur during the permit review process.

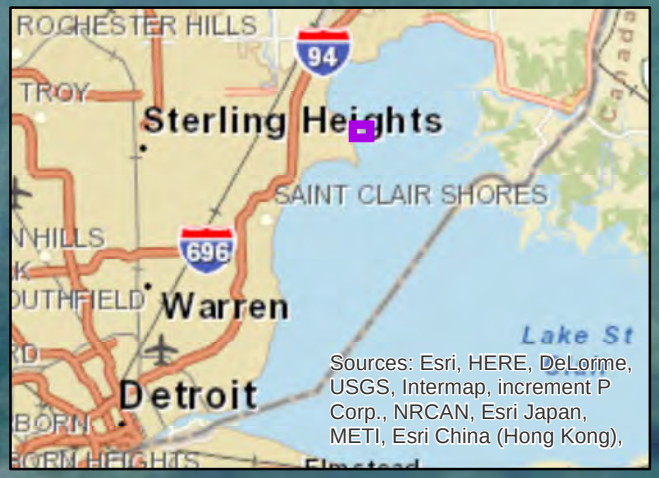
Sincerely,

Hal F. Hunnington for

Charles A. Uhlarik
Chief, Environmental Analysis Branch

Enclosures (2)

Enclosure 1



North Breakwater

Wetland Creation Area

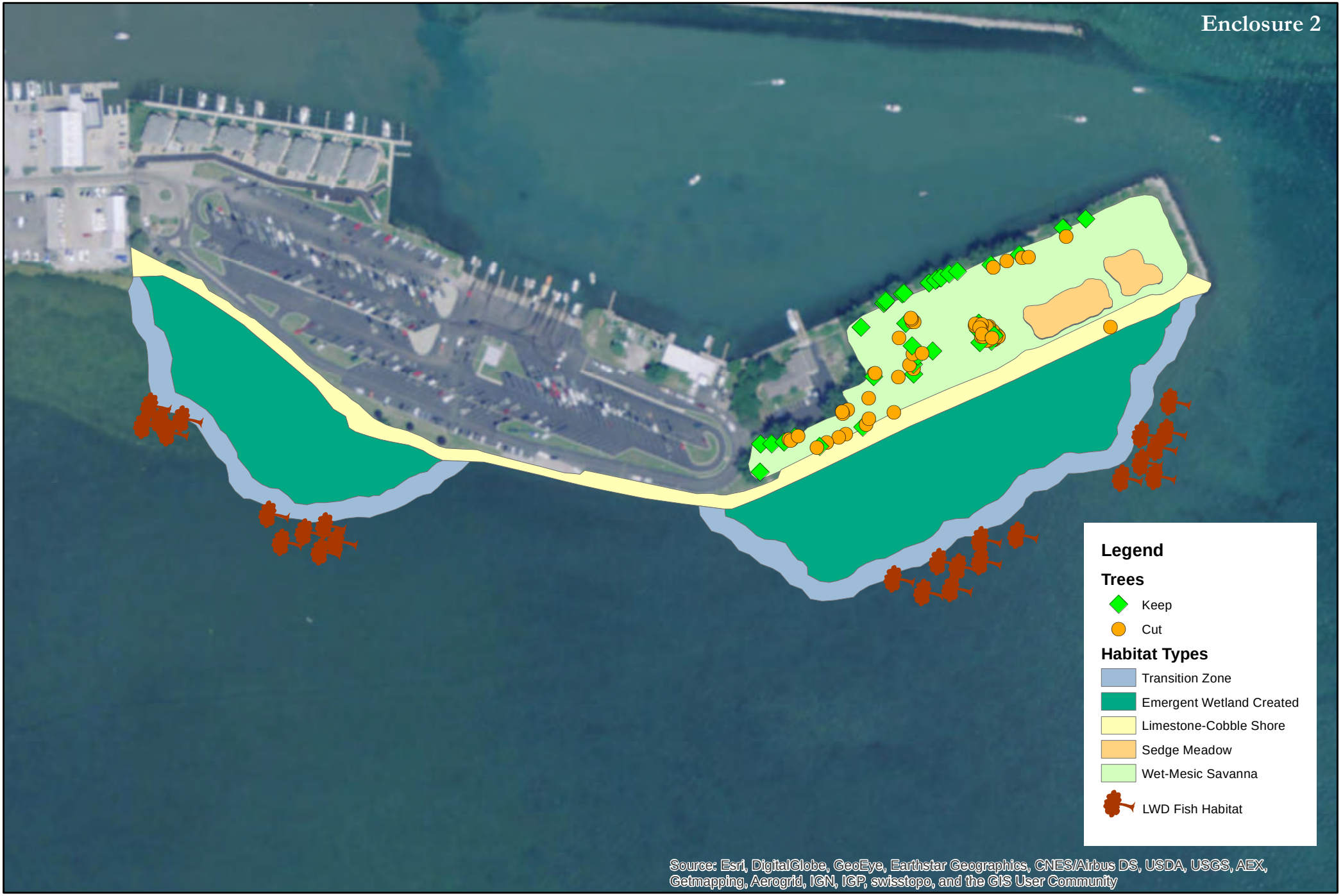
DMPS

Ponds

Wetland Creation Area

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Enclosure 2



U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers ®
Detroit District

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Clinton River Mouth Proposed Action

August, 2016

Detroit District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers