

SHORELINES – January 2004
As presented to the Island Review Magazine.

“Thank you”

Although discussing Federal appropriations can sometimes be as dull as watching grass grow in the middle of winter, there is some rather interesting and good news to report from Capitol Hill.

Bogue Banks and Carteret County received an early Christmas present of sorts in November when the U.S. House and Senate approved the FY 2004 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill (E&W Bill for short) in simple roll call voting. The appropriation figures in the E&W Bill contain the Federal cost-sharing funds necessary for our Section 933 and 50-year Shore Protection Projects. These funds are crucial to keeping our projects on track and in some cases, determine whether our projects are constructed at all.

The conference report that constitutes the E&W Bill passed in the House by a 387-36 vote, 11 not voting, and the report passed by unanimous consent in the Senate later that same day (November 18th). The E&W Bill has been submitted to the President for his signature that ratifies the bill into law and concludes a non-stop, wild year for the Section 933 Project appropriation.

In theory there are 13 appropriation bills that should be signed into law by the President by October 1st, which is the first day of the Federal Fiscal year. In actuality however, only a handful of appropriation bills are actually passed by October and the process usually drags deep into fall and sometimes into the winter. This year was no exception.

The Bogue Banks Shore Protection Project Feasibility Study (a.k.a. 50-year Project) and Section 933 Project fared very well in the conference bill thanks to the tremendous efforts of the Beach Commission, our State elected officials, our U.S. Congressional Delegation, the County, Marlowe & Co., and scores of Bogue Banks residents that all donated a tremendous amount of time and effort this past year. In total, **\$16.317 million** of Federal funding has been authorized to maintain the Morehead City Harbor Navigation Project and nourish the beaches of Bogue Banks in FY 2004. There is also a potential that the Wilmington District of the Corps can obtain additional funding from a source specifically designated for the beneficial use of dredged material to assist the Morehead City Harbor Section 933 effort. Thus, there is a possibility that an additional \$2.6 million can be secured for the Section 933 Project (up to \$5.6 million total). A summary of the appropriations relevant to Bogue Banks is provided below. Please note that there are three accounts of Corps funding that will be discussed as we review the final tally for this year - General Investigations, Construction General, and Operations and Maintenance.

Highlights of FY 2004 E&W Development Appropriations concerning Bogue Banks

- (1) **Bogue Banks Shore Protection Feasibility Study - \$400,000** (Corps general investigation account): According to the Feasibility Agreement that was executed in 2001, the Corps required \$105,000 in FY 2004 to keep the Shore Protection Project on schedule. However, the Wilmington District requested \$400,000 to essentially "make-up" for the previous appropriation shortcomings in FY 2001-03. FY 2004 is the last year of the 4-year study and will be funded at an impressive ~100% level, cumulatively.
- (2) **Morehead City Harbor Base Disposal Plan and Section 933 Project - \$15.917 million**

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- (a) **Base Disposal Plan - \$12.917 million** (Corps operation & maintenance account): This level of funding was recommended by the President when he first disclosed his budget in February 2003 and according to the Wilmington District of the Corps, is an adequate funding level to construct the Base Disposal Plan that includes all dredging scheduled for the Morehead City Harbor and beach nourishment along the shorelines of Ft. Macon and Atlantic Beach.

- (b) **Section 933 Project - \$3.0 million** (Corps construction general account): There is a line item in the Corps' construction general account for the Beneficial Uses of Dredged Material (Section 204). The references to this funding are located on pages 55 and 99 in the Conference Report. On page 56, there is specific language directing the Corps to use **\$3 million** of these funds for the Morehead City Section 933 Project. The remaining funds are available for any other beneficial use project in the U.S., but the Wilmington District has been in communications with Headquarters regarding this fund and represents a potential additional funding source of \$2.6 million.

Unfortunately, the lawsuit concerning Norfolk and Bean Stuyvesant dredging appears to be far from any type of closure, and has essentially placed the Brandt Island Pump-out to Ft. Macon and Atlantic Beach (Base Disposal Plan areas) and Pine Knoll Shores (Section 933 area) on hold until the dispute is settled in the Federal Court system. We will be discussing possible alternatives with the Corps in the not to distant future. Although this does put a damper on the good news described above, the appropriations secured in FY 2004 for Bogue Banks is an incredible accomplishment, especially during this time of budget deficits and war. The appropriations reflect a true a community effort that everyone involved should be very proud of. Thank you so much for all your efforts.

Believe it or not, the President releases his FY 2005 budget in February 2004, which will start a new budget cycle that will most likely see all types of cat and mouse games from Capitol Hill in what is anticipated to be a very politically charged election year.

But before we get ahead of ourselves, please take the time to pat yourself on the back for the appropriation successes in FY 04. Thank you again and have a wonderful Holiday.