DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
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CECW-CO

28-Aug-23

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS AND DISTRICT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Expanding Beneficial Use of Dredged Material in the USACE

1. References:

a. EM 1110-2-5025, Dredging and Dredged Material Management, 31 July 2015.

b. CECG - Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Command Philosophy Notice, 25 January 2023.

2. Purpose: On 25 January 2023, LTG. Scott A. Spellmon issued a “Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Command Philosophy Notice” outlining the USACE’s goal to beneficially use at least 70% of its dredged material by the year 2030. Achieving the beneficial use (BU) goal of 70% by 2030 will require innovation and commitment as we focus on dredged material as a resource with benefits to the ecosystem, economy, and project delivery. The intent of this memorandum is to encourage robust innovation, planning, and categorization of dredged material for beneficial use. Additionally, this policy memorandum clarifies which dredged material placement activities shall be classified as beneficial use and how to capture this information in the USACE data systems. Finally, this memorandum introduces transitional placement as a third description for dredged material.

3. Background: To construct and maintain the nation’s navigable channels to authorized dimensions, the USACE performs periodic construction and recurring maintenance dredging activities. These activities occur on coastal, intracoastal, and inland systems and include dredging for deep draft and shallow draft channels. While the characteristics and quality of dredged material differs between authorized projects, it is the goal of the USACE to expand the beneficial use of dredged material that provides environmental, recreational, flood and coastal storm risk reduction, and economic benefits. Engineer Manual (EM) 1110-2-5025 defines 13 overarching Dredged Material Management Categories for placement. Districts have latitude in determining whether the material should be described as beneficial use, disposal, or transitional placement (TP), and determining the category that most closely describes the placement.

4. Beneficial use is defined as the productive and positive use of dredged material, which cover broad use categories ranging from fish and wildlife habitat development to human recreation to industrial/commercial uses (Reference 1.a). Disposal is defined as

the placement of material in an area where the material is anticipated to remain in place and have no measurable benefit. In open water placement sites, nondispersive sites are considered disposal; in confined placement sites, disposal applies if the material is not intended to be offloaded for another beneficial use. Transitional placement is keeping sediment in the riverine or coastal system as a part of a management process or in a period of transition. Generally, this material will be managed or dredged again and is considered neither beneficial use nor disposal. The transitional placement category is separated from open water beneficial use to capture those efforts of managing sediment within a system without a specific beneficial use intent or when material was placed in a site temporarily. If material is placed in open water and based on best professional judgement there is a benefit derived, the open water beneficial use category, or another beneficial use category should be selected.

5. Enclosure A further clarifies which Dredged Material Management Categories and definitions from EM 1110-2-5025 are considered beneficial use, transitional placement, or disposal and should be used to categorize dredged material in the Dredge Information System (DIS) and Regional Sediment Management (RSM) Sediment Placement Data Viewer. These classifications are a framework to report planned placement actions once due diligence is complete for a selected placement alternative. Dredging and environmental leads at each District should discuss placement action prior to entry into DIS to determine if there is an intentional direct benefit (BU), efficient management by temporarily or transitionally retaining sediment in the system (TP), or no benefit (disposal). When differentiating between beneficial use and transitional placement, beneficial use placement is intentional and directly creates habitat or benefits, while transitional placement captures those events that keep sediment in the system but do not immediately create measurable benefits. Consultation with subject matter experts from the RSM program may be necessary to correctly define and classify dredged material placement actions. Electronic correspondence can be sent directly to the RSM program at RSM@usace.army.mil.

6. USACE Navigation is the proponent for this clarification memo in coordination with the Flood Risk Management and Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration programs. The point of contact is the Coastal Navigation Program Manager, Ms. Kate Skelton, (202) 309-4949, katharine.c.skelton@usace.army.mil.

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Encl A. *Consolidated dredged material classifications as they appear in the DIS and introduction of Transitional Placement (TP) as an open water placement option.*

Engineer Manual (EM) 1110-2-5025 defines 13 overarching Dredged Material Management Categories for dredge placement that are to be reported by the Districts in the DIS. Placement data entered in the DIS are quantified and visualized in the RSM Sediment Placement Data Viewer. The EM does not specify which of the 13 placement activities should be considered beneficial use and which should be considered disposal. Additionally, the conventional classification scheme of either disposal or beneficial use does not fully characterize open water dredged material placement operations where sediment is retained in the system, but the sediment is not intentionally used beneficially.

For the purposes of calculating placement percentages, open water transitional placement should be selected in DIS where open water placement results in the conservation of sediment within inland, coastal, and marine systems, but where the placement is temporary or made without direct beneficial use intent. This differs from the purposeful construction or nourishment of aquatic habitats and beaches where dredged material discharges have measurable and easily recognizable benefits, and from the disposal of dredged material where sediment is intentionally transported and discharged into an area where its residence has no probable benefit. Districts shall use their best professional judgement to determine if a placement is beneficial use, disposal, or transitional placement and select the category that most closely aligns with the intent of the placement. The open-water transitional placement category has a null value and will not count for or against the beneficial use goal. Districts are encouraged to be innovative with beneficial use placement sites; if the purpose of the placement is beneficial use but does not fit any of the categories in the DIS, select the multipurpose category to capture the beneficial use intent. Not all situations may be covered by the 13 overarching categories, therefore districts shall determine the category that best fits the placement both in description and if it is beneficial use, transitional placement, or disposal. Category descriptions are guidelines and not constraints.

For each dredging project, multiple categories can be selected as needed and the corresponding quantity of material can be applied to the appropriate category. For example, if 75% of the quantity will be placed in a nearshore site and 25% will be placed in a non-dispersive open- water site, both categories would be selected with the proper quantity applied to each category. For upland placements that will be offloaded later for beneficial use, select either the appropriate beneficial use category, or the confined disposal category and appropriate beneficial use category and then assign the proper

quantities to each category. This can be done at the time of contract (if known), or later to update the project's final sediment use.

Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry and Aquaculture ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Material placed for use by the agriculture, forestry, horticulture, and aquaculture industries. Examples: provide livestock pastures, cattle bedding, incorporating dredged material into marginal soils.
Aquatic Habitats ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Placed to improve submerged habitats extending from near sea, river, or lake level down several feet. Examples are tidal flats, oyster beds, seagrass meadows, fishing reefs, clam flats, and freshwater aquatic plant beds Select "Open-Water Placement TP" (described below) when sediment is kept in the system, but without specific BU intent.
Beach/Shoreline Nourishment ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Beach nourishment is placement of material from a borrow area, channel, or rehandled stockpile directly onto a beach or river shoreline, in the littoral zone, nearshore, or shallow water with the intent to expand, stabilize or nourish the beach or shoreline. Select "Open-Water Placement TP" (described below) when sediment is kept in the system, but without specific BU intent.
Confined (Diked) Placement ***Disposal***	**Disposal** Placement of dredged material in a diked nearshore or upland Confined Disposal Facility (CDF). Upland placements not intended for a BU fall into this category. If dredged material placed at a CDF will be offloaded for BU, select a placement category that characterizes the offloaded sediment use for that quantity of material.
Confined Aquatic Disposal ***Disposal***	**Disposal** Confined aquatic disposal (CAD) is the placement of contaminated dredged material into an open water placement site that is capped with

	uncontaminated sediment. The uncontaminated cap sediment is classified as BU under aquatic habitats.
Construction and Industrial/Commercial Uses ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Placement activities to improve or construct harbor and port facilities, residential and urban areas, airports, dikes, levees and containment facilities, roads, and island and historic preservation areas. Material placed in a CDF and rehandled for construction activities would be classified in this category.
Island Habitats ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Placement activities that construct, improve, or maintain islands and/or high zone wetland habitats.
Multipurpose Uses and Other Land Use ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Combinations of uses, aquatic and/or land based. Purpose(s) does not need to be defined in DIS. Example: a park and recreational development built over an existing solid waste landfill using dredged material as a cap.
Open-Water Placement ***Transitional Placement*, *Disposal* or *Beneficial Use*** (see definitions, at right)*	Select either: **TP/Disposal/Beneficial Use** Open-water placement in riverine, lacustrine, estuarine, and marine environments with overlying volumes of water. *Open-water placement areas are classified either as: (1) *Transitional Placement (TP)* when sediment is kept in the system but will naturally move through the system or be rehandled; (2) *Disposal* when sediment is removed from the dispersive system or discharged where it has no demonstratable value; or (3) *Beneficial Use* when placement is intended for direct BU. If known, BU placement should be categorized based upon the specific intent of that placement "Aquatic Habitats", "Beach Nourishment", "Multipurpose", etc.
Parks and Recreation ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Placement activities supporting the development of recreational areas range from simple projects such as fill for a recreation access to large and complex projects that support both public and private commercial and noncommercial recreation facilities.
Strip Mine Reclamation, Solid	**Beneficial Use**

Waste Landfill, and Alternative Uses ***Beneficial Use***	Material, including moderately contaminated material, used for the reclamation of abandoned strip mine sites, capping or protecting solid waste landfills, or manufacturing bricks and hardened materials such as road surfaces. Material placed in a CDF and rehandled for reclamation activities would be classified in this category.
Upland Habitats ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Material placed upland to construct or improve habitats. Upland habitat includes terrestrial communities not normally subject to inundation.
Wetland Habitats ***Beneficial Use***	**Beneficial Use** Material placed to construct or nourish wetland habitats, including freshwater and saltwater marshes, relatively permanently inundated freshwater marshes, bottomland hardwoods, freshwater swamps, bogs, and freshwater riverine and lake habitats.