



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Galveston District

News Release

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Corps of Engineers to dredge entrance to Brownsville Ship Channel

The Galveston District Corps of Engineers plans to dredge the entrance to the Brownsville Ship Channel later this month to alleviate a draft restriction there. A contract for hopper dredging of the inside jetty channel has been awarded to Weeks Marine, Inc., of Covington, La., with work expected to begin in about 10 days.

The dredging project is designed to help keep the Port of Brownsville open to navigation, carrying out one of the Corps' primary missions of maintaining safe waterways for commercial traffic, according to Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander.

"Navigation has been impacted at the inside jetty channel, with a 35 foot draft restriction because of shoaling," Weston said. "The authorized depth is 44 feet there, and some traffic has been turned away due to the draft restriction."

The work consists of the removal of approximately 450,000 cubic yards of maintenance dredging, using a hopper dredge, and should be completed in about a month. The dredged material will be placed in a near-shore berm just off South Padre Island.

Although original plans were for the dredged material to be placed on South Padre Island to nourish the beaches there, Weston said the Corps will not be able to do that because of the turtle nesting season.

"The optimal—and original—scenario was to nourish South Padre Island beaches while we took care of the shoaling problem," Weston said. "However, we are at a point where we must dredge the harbor to keep it safe for navigation. Unfortunately, that need is intersecting with the turtle nesting season, preventing us from placing the material on the beaches.

"We continue to work closely with the General Land Office, Port of Brownsville, and South Padre Island to seek alternate solutions for providing their critically important beach re-nourishment material," he added.

The inside jetty channel was originally dredged every two years, but has recently changed to an annual dredging.

The contract, which was awarded on May 1, is for \$2, 405,750.

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