



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALABAMA STATE PORT AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES WETLAND CREATION PLANNING NOW UNDERWAY

MOBILE, Ala. - May 20, 2021. Planning is underway for the creation of 1,200 acres of wetlands in the Upper Mobile Bay through the beneficial use of dredged sediments, according to the Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA). The project, known as the Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site (Planning) Project, considers an area in the Bay about 1.5 to 2.5 miles south of the Causeway (Hwy 90/98) and I-10.

The \$2.5 million planning project is funded by the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf States Act (RESTORE Act)-Bucket 2. It is a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council-approved project, sponsored and directed by ASPA.

Utilizing dredged sediment to create wetlands rather than placing this material in upland or open-water management areas is a wise use of this valuable Alabama natural resource. Benefits resulting from this wetland creation project will include improved water quality, more habitat for living coastal and marine organisms, and implementation of improved dredging practices that support navigation-related industries and thus the region's economy.

Planning activities are expected to be complete by the end of 2021. Members of the Moffatt & Nichol project team, which include local coastal engineers and scientists, will perform investigations, studies, and engineering design work for meeting all federal and state compliance requirements. Work to define the exact location of the wetland site and identify sources of material for construction of the wetland will take place during the latter part of the year. As part of the planning process, a construction permit application will be filed with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Upon completion of the planning phase at the end of 2021, the ASPA anticipates requesting construction funds for the first 100 acres of wetlands from the RESTORE Council in 2022. It is anticipated that an additional 1,100 acres of wetlands will be created over the next 10 – 20 years. Additional information may be found at (www.UpperMoBayWetlands.com) and in the ASPA's social media accounts.

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BACKGROUND

Each year the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Alabama State Port Authority remove approximately six million cubic yards of sediment from Alabama's Mobile Harbor federal navigation channel and adjacent public berths. Current practices place dredged materials in permitted open-water or upland management areas. These valuable sediments can be used to create wetlands and habitat. Current, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) wetland mapping indicates there are 6,200 acres of wetlands (emergent marsh) in the Upper Mobile Bay/Lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta area. By constructing this project, sediments could remain in the Upper Mobile Bay system, increasing these important wetland habitats by 15 percent.