Monitoring

FOR DREDGED MATERIAL PLACEMENT SITES

Quick Facts

- State and federal permits, which set environmental standards, are required for all dredged material placement sites.
- Compliance monitoring tracks both water quality and the effectiveness of environmental restoration projects.
- The MPA conducts extensive monitoring beyond permit requirements.
- Monitoring has found no adverse environmental impacts to date.

Developing and operating a dredged material placement site in Maryland is a lengthy and complex process. State regulations regarding the placement of dredged material, combined with environmental permits required by the Maryland Department of the Environment and the US Army Corps of Engineers, generally lead to several years of planning prior to construction, as well as additional monitoring once the placement site is operating.

The Maryland Department of Transportation Port Administration (MPA) conducts monitoring to ensure that placement sites comply with permits.

- **Discharge monitoring:** This addresses water that is released from the placement site. It measures acidity, alkalinity, total suspended solids, turbidity, metals, nutrients, priority pollutants, and living resources. Permits determine the frequency of reporting as well as discharge limits for all of these elements. Water cannot be released from the placement sites unless these limits are met.
- **Mitigation monitoring:** Mitigation occurs when the MPA offsets environmental impacts at one site by conducting an environmental stewardship project elsewhere. Mitigation is often required for the construction of a new dredged material placement site. For example, the Masonville placement site includes enclosed water along the shoreline; the MPA made environmental improvements in the cove next to the placement site to compensate for the lost open water. The MPA monitors mitigation projects such as tree plantings, wetland construction, trash interceptors, and reef and fish habitat to ensure successful environmental outcomes.
- **Habitat restoration:** Poplar Island is an example of restoring wildlife habitat using dredged material. Detailed monitoring of wetlands, wildlife, underwater grasses, sediment quality, and other factors is critical. Restoration strategies are adjusted as the project evolves.

The MPA also conducts extensive monitoring beyond permit requirements. For example, the MPA has been monitoring the waters surrounding the Hart-Miller Island placement site for more than 35 years. No adverse environmental effects have been noted. Monitoring reports on all MPA dredging activities are available by contacting greenport@marylandports.com.

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