

as preferred alternatives to propose for site designation. Management strategies were developed for the sites selected as preferred alternatives.

To provide input to the process, the Corps and EPA convened a facilitated Ocean Disposal Site Designation Working Group (Working Group). The purpose of the Working Group was to assist in identifying and evaluating the best long-term ocean option for the MCR and the existing Columbia River channel and proposed channel improvements projects. Representatives from state, local, and federal agencies participated in the Working Group as well as individuals representing the crab fishing industry and other interests. The Working Group assembled for a

series of eight meetings between July 1997 and August 1998 and provided information for EPA and the Corps to consider in evaluating preferred alternative ODMDS. The Corps and EPA considered the information gathered by the Working Group, as well as new information gathered during the 5-year feasibility study for channel improvements, and historical information to identify three proposed sites in the Draft IFR/EIS (1998). The configurations of the sites included relatively shallow, high-energy areas deemed well-suited for active sediment movement away from deposition areas and back into coastal beach zones.

Numerous comments were received on the Draft IFR/EIS and the Corps and

EPA sought additional input from the Working Group in meetings to discuss further refinements to the alternative site locations. Further discussion and meetings led to an evaluation for designation of a single shallow-water site and a single deep-water site to be used and managed in conjunction with a Clean Water Act Section 404 disposal site (North Jetty) in the area of the mouth of the Columbia River (Figure 2). These discussions were factored into the NEPA process. The NEPA process led to the current proposal that the four ODMDS sites designated in 1986 be proposed for de-designation and that the Shallow Water site and the Deep Water site be proposed for designation.

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