

# Savannah Harbor Expansion, Dredging and Mitigation Begin

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**Reference:** McDowell RJ, CA Pruitt, RA Bahn (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2015 Georgia Water Resources Conference*, April 28-29, 2015, University of Georgia, Athens.

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**Abstract.** The study for the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP) began in the 1990s and continued into 2012. With recent legislation and an October 8, 2014, Project Partnership Agreement with the State of Georgia, the Corps of Engineers is starting this long awaited project to deepen Savannah Harbor by 5 feet. The Port of Savannah is the fourth busiest container terminal in the nation, the second largest on the East Coast and the largest single container port in North America. Deepening Savannah Harbor from 42 to 47 feet is estimated to cost \$706,000,000 and take at least 5 years. Large container vessels must await high tide or light load to reduce drafts in order to call at Savannah, reducing overall transportation efficiency. Once SHEP is completed, these delays will be reduced and the project will generate \$174,000,000 in net benefits to the nation annually. The port is also located in an exceptionally environmentally sensitive area. For this reason, SHEP involves robust environmental monitoring that started in 2013 in addition to surface water, endangered species, wetlands, dissolved oxygen and cultural resources mitigation. Approximately half of project costs are for mitigation and demonstrates how the project balances human needs with the needs of the environment. SHEP is one of many infrastructure improvement projects around the world to help capture efficiencies as the world’s container vessel fleets grow larger.