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Supplemental Public Comment 3  
June 2008

**RESOLUTION NO. 2008-035**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE DEL NORTE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
DECLARING THE AREA OF STATE WATERS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE KLAMATH  
RIVER TO THE MOUTH OF SMITH RIVER AN OCEANOGRAPHIC AREA OF  
UNIQUE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO DEL NORTE COUNTY**

WHEREAS, The fishing community of Del Norte County is a historic and important present day contributor to our economic base. Along with dollars generated directly from fishing, our harbor and its fishermen create a destination for sport fishermen and seafood lovers, increasing our counties revenue; and

WHEREAS, Since the reduction in our off shore fleet through federal actions, most of our fishery dollars are now generated from our near shore state waters. Because of our local weather patters, ocean fishermen who work and play in our county must fish close to our port or risk injury; and

WHEREAS, This makes the state waters from the mouth of the Klamath River to the mouth of Smith River of the highest economic importance to our county's fishing community. At this time there are no species of near shore finfish listed as over-fished by the federal or state government. In 1998, the federal government decreased the overall fishing effort, creating conditions that have the area currently rebuilding all near shore species through historically high protection levels; and


WHEREAS, This high level of protection has already cost our county through fishery reductions, and has brought our fishing infrastructure close to the point of collapse. Thus, any farther reductions may collapse our fishing community; and

WHEREAS,. Any closures of this area will be fought with the highest degree of effort available to our county. We also ask that any regulatory managers of these waters take our counties reliance of above-mentioned area and maintain our fishermen's access to it. We do this because we understand the importance of our fisheries to our county's economic base; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, hereby declares the area of state waters from the mouth of the Klamath River to the mouth of Smith River an oceanographic area of unique economic importance to Del Norte County.

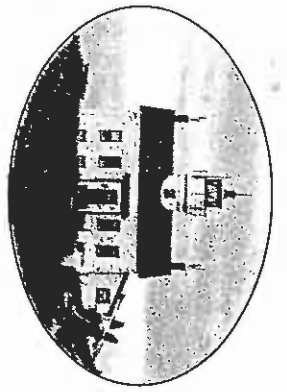
**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 27<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2008.

Ayes: Supervisors Hemmingsen, Sullivan, McClure, McNamer, Finigan  
Noes: None

  
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David Finigan, Chair  
Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

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# The Daily



# Triplicate

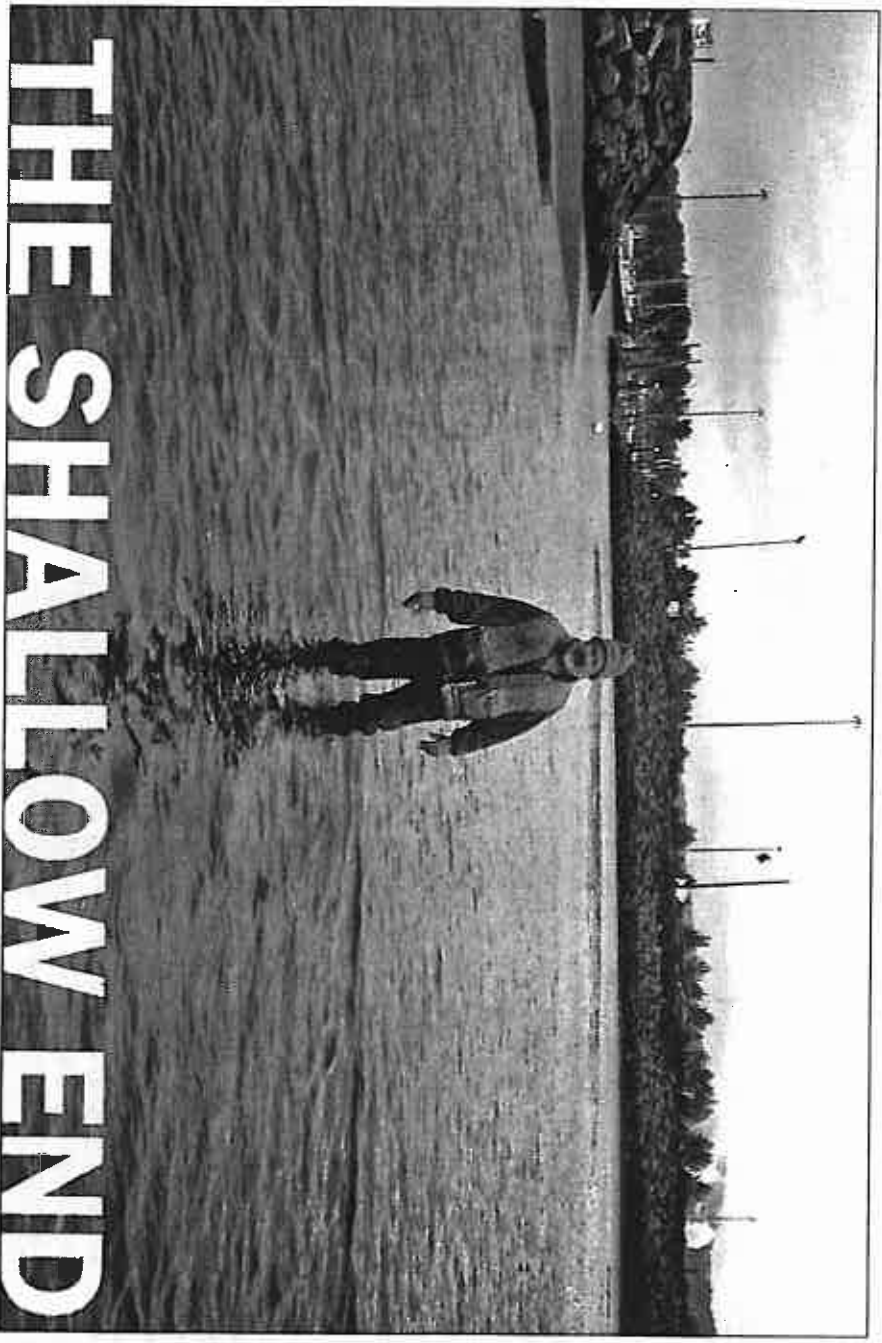
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Del Norte Court

TUESDAY  
MAY 13, 2008

## IN FOCUS: OVERDUE DREDGING



# THE SHALLOW END

Crescent City Harbor Facilities Manager Paul McAndrews stands knee-deep in the federal channel that leads to the inner boat basin last month. The channel is supposed to be 15 feet deep, but sediment and materials from the ocean have washed into the channel the past eight years, fueling an ever-growing need for dredging.

Photo by Crescent City Harbor District

# As channel fills with sediment, harbor navigation gets trickier

By Michelle Ma

Triplicate staff writer

Early last month, local fisherman Victor Pomilia untied his boat, preparing to leave the harbor on a fishing trip.

As he motored out of the boat basin, Pomilia's Spirit of America vessel stalled in shallow water, dragging on the muddy bottom. His boat had run aground in the federal channel.

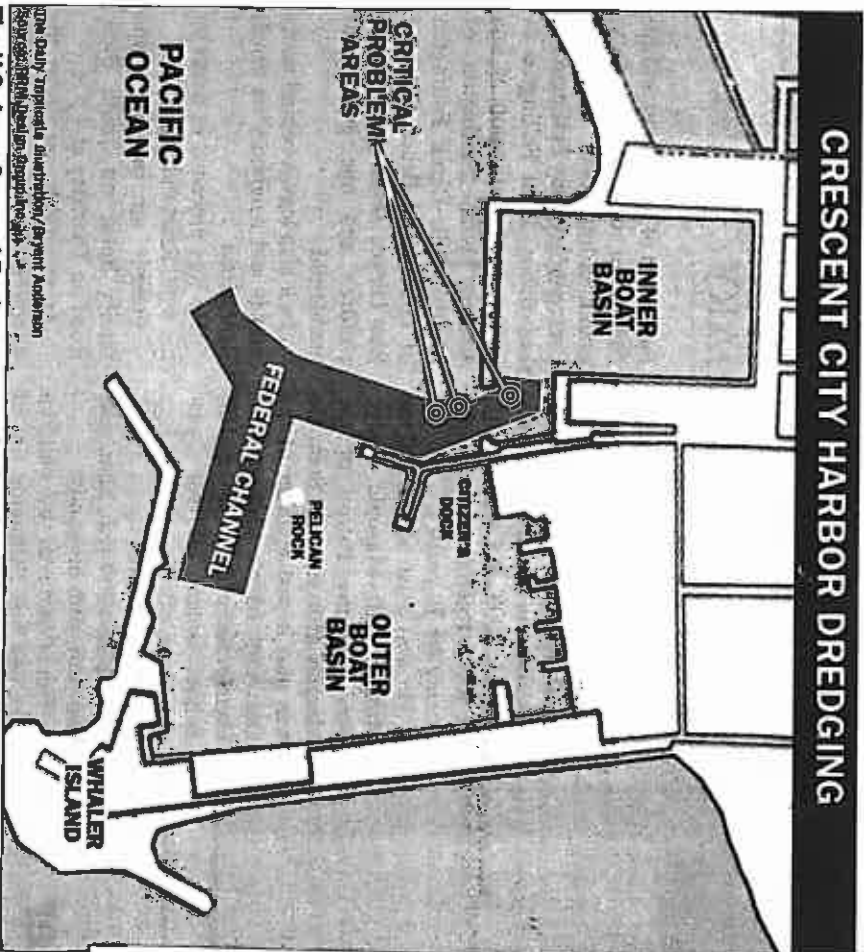
"I knew it was shallow and I knew it was getting worse," said Pomilia, whose boat draws down more than 6 feet. The fisherman backed up and waited for the tide to come in.

Pomilia, who knows how to maneuver around the harbor's shallow spots in low waters, was caught off-guard. Only a month before, he had successfully left the harbor under similar conditions.

"It was a minus tide, but I'd been able to slip by before," Pomilia said. "It's just proof that the harbor has been filling in."

Many local fishermen have reported similar groundings as they enter and exit the boat basin. Even the Lady

See DREDGING, A3



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must dredge the harbor's federal channel, which leads to the inner boat basin. Adequate funding hasn't been secured for the dredging project, and the channel has filled with sediment over the past eight years. Fishing boats have run aground in the critical problem areas. The harbor is responsible for dredging the inner and outer boat basins.

# LOCAL

## Harbor raises moorage rates after passing lean budget

By Michelle Ma

Triplicate staff writer

Harbor commissioners Tuesday confirmed last week's decision to raise all moorage rates to help pay for utilities, repairs and maintenance in the harbor.

A 10-percent increase in slip rental fees would apply across-the-board to all boats that dock in the Crescent City harbor's inner and outer basins. Harbor staff recently surveyed regional ports and found the rate increase to be comparable to what other harbors charge for vessel moorage, said Harbormaster Richard Young.

An ordinance must be written and passed before rates will rise, but the extra charge will probably be instated later this summer, officials said.

The decision to raise rates came alongside commissioners' grim approval of next fiscal year's preliminary budget. Commissioners and staff met last Friday afternoon to piece together the leanest Harbor District budget they could manage, commissioners said. They examined each line item last week, and confirmed Tuesday that nothing more could be cut.

"Everything (on the budget) is a necessity," said of it at all."

For a commercial fishing port that usually brings in about \$15 million a year to the local economy—close to \$20 million in good years—officials agree it would be disastrous to lose the harbor, let alone restrict any further fishermen's business due to shallow waters.

Crescent City Harbor has always been known for its rich, abundant fishing industry. Other state and federal restrictions, combined with a decline of some significant fisheries, have already burdened the local fleet of about 100 commercial fishing boats and nearly 70 recreational vessels.

"This is the highway to the

Commissioner Gary Young as he flipped through the budget during Tuesday's meeting. "We've trimmed it as much as we can trim."

Several new purchases—including a new electrical cabinet needed to maintain power throughout much of the harbor—are vital to the harbor but costly to absorb, commissioners said.

Officials said they need to find ways to increase revenue to the harbor, especially as expenses continue to rise. One likely source is rental revenue from a new sandwich shop slated to open soon in the harbor.

The final budget will likely be adopted at the board's July 1 meeting. A copy of the early budget is available for public review in the harbor office.

In other news, the harbor's log-cabin-look-alike RV park project will go before the Del Norte County Planning Commission tonight. Even if the harbor gets a use permit from the county, more permitting must be done before the project can go forward, Harbormaster Young said.

Reach Michelle Ma at [mma@triplicate.com](mailto:mmma@triplicate.com).

## Dredging

Continued from A1

Washington, a tall-masted ship that recently visited Crescent City, touched bottom in the harbor.

The harbor's federal channel that stretches along Citizen's Dock to the inner boat basin hasn't been dredged in eight years. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommends that it be dredged on a five-year cycle, but Congress hasn't appropriated enough money to complete the project.

Crescent City Harbor commissioners recently approved a letter asking Del Norte County Board of Supervisors to declare a local emergency to address the need for dredging. County supervisors will likely approve this declaration at today's meeting in Klamath, thus forwarding the request to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

If the state affirmed the emergency declaration, California could pay for 75 percent of the dredging project's

included in the federal government's yearly budgets.

Many smaller, shallow ports along the coast of California, Oregon and Washington are in great need of being dredged, much like Crescent City, said Steve Chesser, dredging program manager for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District, and former project manager for the Crescent City dredging project for the Corps.

But up and down the coast, it's the same story—funding is hard to come by, Chesser said.

"It really puts the congressional folks on the spot, because they have a lot of competing interests," Chesser said.

federal government, said Harbormaster Richard Young. Fishermen, harbor officials and government representatives recognize that a shallow-access channel could effectively stop boats from entering or exiting the harbor and hurt the local economy.

"We're trying to do everything we can to help acquire funding for that project," said Del Norte County Supervisor Gerry Hemmingsen, who also fishes out of the harbor. "It's pretty inconvenient and dangerous. I think we need to make the case that this is an emergency."

### Economic implications

If no action is taken to remove the sediment that continues to fill the harbor's access channel, the local fleet of fishing boats could be forced to dock elsewhere. Already, many local fishermen must watch the tides to plan when it's safe—and possible—to enter or exit the boat basin. For some boats, low or minus tides almost always guarantee hitting bottom in the access channel, forcing fishermen to wait until it's safe to move.

"We have to operate everything around the tide," said David Evanow, a local fisherman.

Evanow said his large boat, the Darin Alan, and his smaller one that draws down about 4 feet, have both run aground in the harbor's access channel. It used to be just the larger, deep-drawing vessels that would hit bottom, Evanow said, but now smaller boats also have problems.

"At a low tide, it's frightening how bad it is," Evanow said. "If this harbor keeps going as it

said. "There really will be a disaster if this harbor doesn't function anymore."

### Waiting on Congress

Funding to dredge the harbor's federal channel must now come from Congress through an appropriations process. Years ago, dredging for shallow coastal ports such as Crescent City used to be included in the president's budget, but the projects now require Congress to request specific funding.

The Army Corps estimates it will probably cost \$2 million to \$3 million to dredge Crescent City's federal channel, depending on where the material is disposed. Once that money is available, the Army Corps can then contract out to complete the dredging project.

Even though dredging the federal channel is at least three years overdue, only about \$556,000 is currently available for Crescent City dredging, said Liz Murguia, district representative for U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson, who is trying to secure additional money for the work. The Democratic congressman has requested \$2.3 million in the 2009 fiscal year appropriations process, but it remains to be seen if the funds will be secured, Murguia said.

"It is a top priority for the congressman, but there are numerous hurdles to securing the funds—not the least of which is whether or not there will be any congressional earmarks in this year's budget," Murguia said in an e-mail.

Fort Bragg's harbor is another shallow-water port within Thompson's district that needs congressional funding to be dredged, Murguia said. Funds to dredge deep-water commercial

equipment keeps coming." All parties involved are considering a short-term solution to dredge only the most shallow parts of Crescent City's federal channel. The Army Corps might be able to hire the local Harbor District through a contract to dredge the problematic spots.

The harbor has a dredge that staff uses to remove material from the inner and outer boat basins. But dredging the federal channel is the federal government's responsibility, Harbormaster Young said, so it's important that the harbor doesn't set a precedent of dredging the federal channel with local money.

As sediment and materials from the ocean have washed into Crescent City Harbor, a channel designed to be 15 feet deep has filled in to depths shallower than 3 feet in some locations. The Army Corps recommends removing about 100,000 cubic yards of material every five years, and now an estimated 174,000 cubic yards of material await removal.

Vessels entering and leaving the boat basin must take turns maneuvering along the inbound side of the channel to avoid shallow spots by the sea wall. But when tides are low, all parts of the channel are shallow, fishermen said.

This would present a problem if all boats needed to evacuate the inner basin because of a fire or tsunami during a low tide. Similarly, if boats need to seek shelter in the harbor, they might not be able to enter if the channel is too shallow.

"It's a dangerous harbor right now," said Pomilia, the fisherman who owns Spirit of America.

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dorado docks out by Whaler Island, but must enter the federal channel's shallower section to fill up at the fuel dock along Citizen's Dock. The boat hasn't come close to running aground, but the Dorado's captain, Lt. Chris Weber, said he must watch the tides to know when the channel is deep enough for the cutter to tie up by the fuel dock.

Weber said he plans to send a "high priority" internal memo to recommend that the harbor's federal channel be dredged for the safety of the Coast Guard's rescue missions, enforcement and patrol. The memo will try to gain support from the Coast Guard to work toward getting

more quickly, Weber said. "My concerns are ensuring we can respond at any time," Weber said. "With that mission in mind, that's where my concerns arise."

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