



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

Public Notice

**Issuing Office: CELRB-PML-E
Notice No: Ashtabula West Breakwater Repair**

**Published: 21 May 25
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OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

ASHTABULA WEST BREAKWATER REPAIR CITY OF ASHTABULA, ASHTABULA COUNTY, OHIO

This public notice has been prepared pursuant to Section 404(a) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). It is being administered in conformance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulation, "Practice and Procedure: Final Rule for Operation and Maintenance of Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Projects involving the Discharge of Dredged Materials into Waters of the United States or Ocean Waters," 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 337.1. The purpose of this public notice is to specify what fill materials would be discharged into waters of the United States by implementation of the proposed action, advise all interested parties of the proposed project, and to provide an opportunity to submit comments or request a public hearing.

Ashtabula West Breakwater (AWB) is located on the south shore of Lake Erie at the mouth of the Ashtabula River, 59 miles east of Cleveland Harbor and 15 miles west of Conneaut Harbor, Ohio (Figure 1). The harbor is located in Ashtabula County, Ohio. Ashtabula Harbor has a pair of east and west arrowhead breakwaters that converge and protect the mouth of the Ashtabula River from wave action on Lake Erie. The AWB runs northeast and has a length of 7,890 feet, while the east breakwater runs northwest and has a length of 4,340 feet. This general layout is characteristic of many Great Lakes harbors.

During a 2019 inspection, two breaches were observed along the AWB totaling 62 feet in Reach N and 80 feet in Reach Q. Reach N is boxed in yellow, reach Q is outlined in red in Figure 1. During a 2023 inspection, there was one 15 foot breach in Reach N and one 40 foot breach in Reach Q (Figure 2). The AWB Reach Q was observed to have multiple locations of core loss below the waterline, and significant displacement of lakeside slope stones, leading to widespread cap stone displacement. The AWB in its existing state is compromised and has a reduced capability to protect the harbor from significant wave and storm events.

The preferred repair plan consists only of essential repairs to allow the structure to continue to serve its intended function and does not include any additions or betterments that would constitute a change in the project's original purpose. The AWB repair consists of a rubble-mound overlay at 1V (vertical) on 2H (horizontal) slope along the lakeside of the existing

structure up to the design crest elevation of +10 feet low water datum (LWD)¹. The project would entail the placement of new stone along deteriorated portions of the breakwater up to the crest elevation. The head of the structure is vulnerable to high wave energy requiring an armor stone 8-ton to 17-ton (with a slope of 1V:2H). The remainder of the AWB is known as the “trunk” of the breakwater and requires a smaller armor stone of 5.3-ton to 12-ton (side slope 1V:2H). This alternative’s reach extends from Station 40+00 to Station 46+21 and will wrap around the northern end of the northern lighthouse (Figure 3). The repair footprint has been broken up into four repair zones: zone 1 is station 40+00 to 41+50, zone 2 is station 41+75 to 42+00, zone 3 is station 42+25 to 44+25, and zone 4 is station 44+25 to 46+21 (Figure 4).

Pursuant to USACE regulations, a Section 401 water quality certification (WQC) from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) is required for discharges into the waters of the United States. Therefore, a copy of this public notice has been provided to OEPA requesting a WQC, or waiver thereof, for the proposed repairs.

USACE has reviewed the National Registers of Historic Places (NRHP) as well as consulted with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify known historic properties and archaeologically sensitive areas within the area of potential effects (APE). Currently, the NRHP includes one property within the APE, the Ashtabula Harbor Light. Coordination with the SHPO was initiated on January 23, 2025, requesting concurrence that the proposed project would no adverse effect on the Ashtabula Harbor Light. A response was received on March 04, 2025, regarding the effects determination, with concurrence stating that no historic properties would be affected and that no further coordination was required.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the USACE determined that the recommended plan would have no effect on federally listed species or their designated critical habitat. A letter was sent to the Ohio U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) field office on December 23, 2024, documenting the effects determination. A response was received from the USFWS on January 6, 2025, stating: “Due to the project type, size, and location, we do not anticipate adverse effects to federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species or proposed or designated critical habitat.”

Any interested parties and/or agencies desiring to express their views concerning the proposed project may do so by filing their comments, in writing, no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. Any person who has an interest which may be affected by the proposed project may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the undersigned within 30 days of the date of this public notice. The request must clearly set forth the interest which may be affected, and the manner in which the interest may be affected, by this activity.

This activity is being coordinated with the following agencies, as well as other appropriate federal, state and local agencies and organizations:

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

¹ Low Water Datum (LWD) for Lake Erie is 569.2 feet above mean sea level at Rimouski, Quebec, Canada (International Great Lakes Datum 1985).

Ohio State Historic Preservation Office
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Interested parties are encouraged to contact the USACE - Buffalo District with their comments regarding the proposed AWB repair project. Please review this public notice and send your comments in writing within 30 days to the following e-mail address:

ashtabula.harbor.west.breakwater.repair@usace.army.mil

or via mail to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Buffalo District
Environmental Analysis Team
478 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14202
ATTN: Environmental Analysis – Ashtabula West Breakwater Repair

Figures

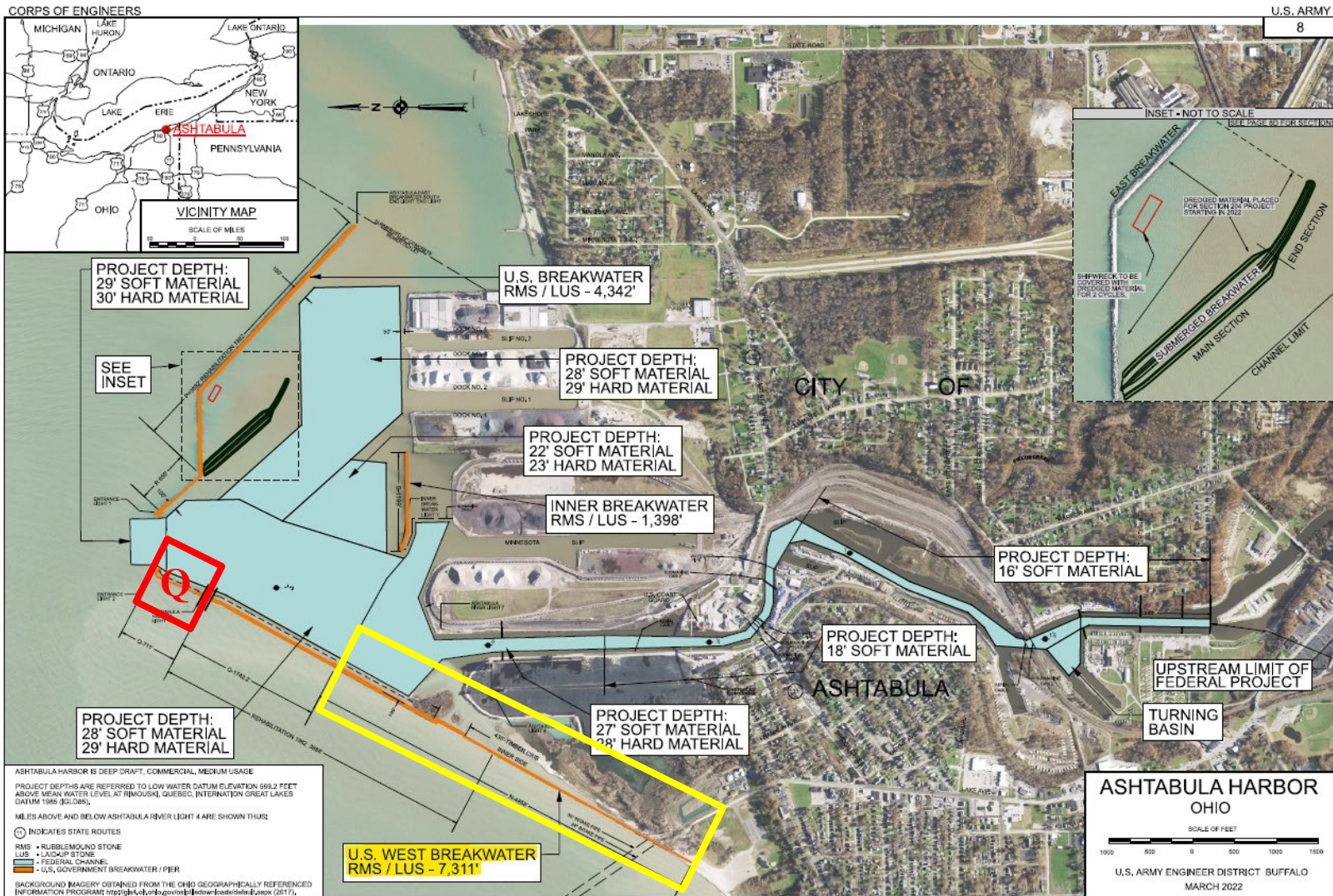


Figure 1: Ashtabula Harbor overall structures map with Reach Q (Red) and Reach N (Yellow).

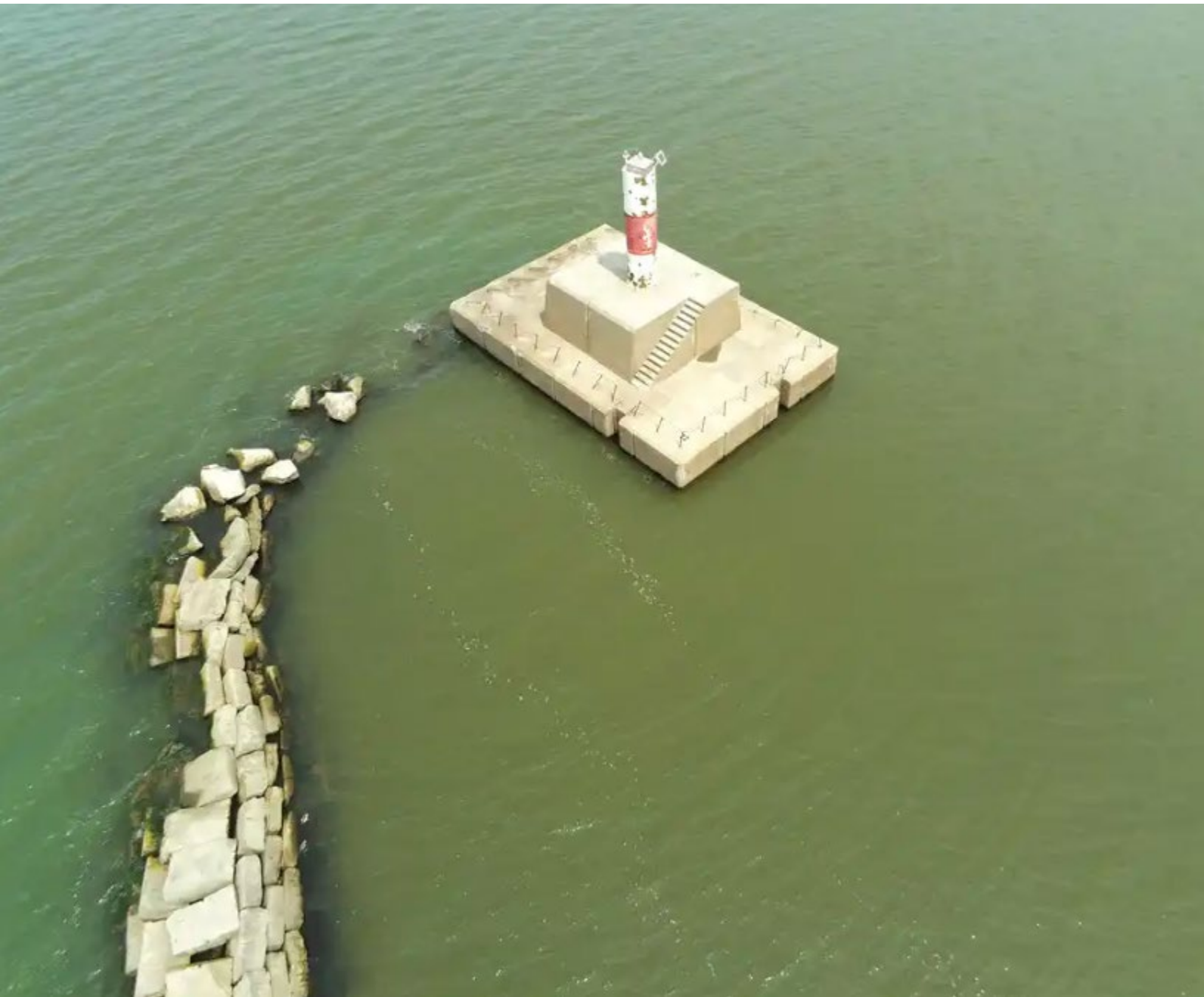


Figure 2: Reach Q breach

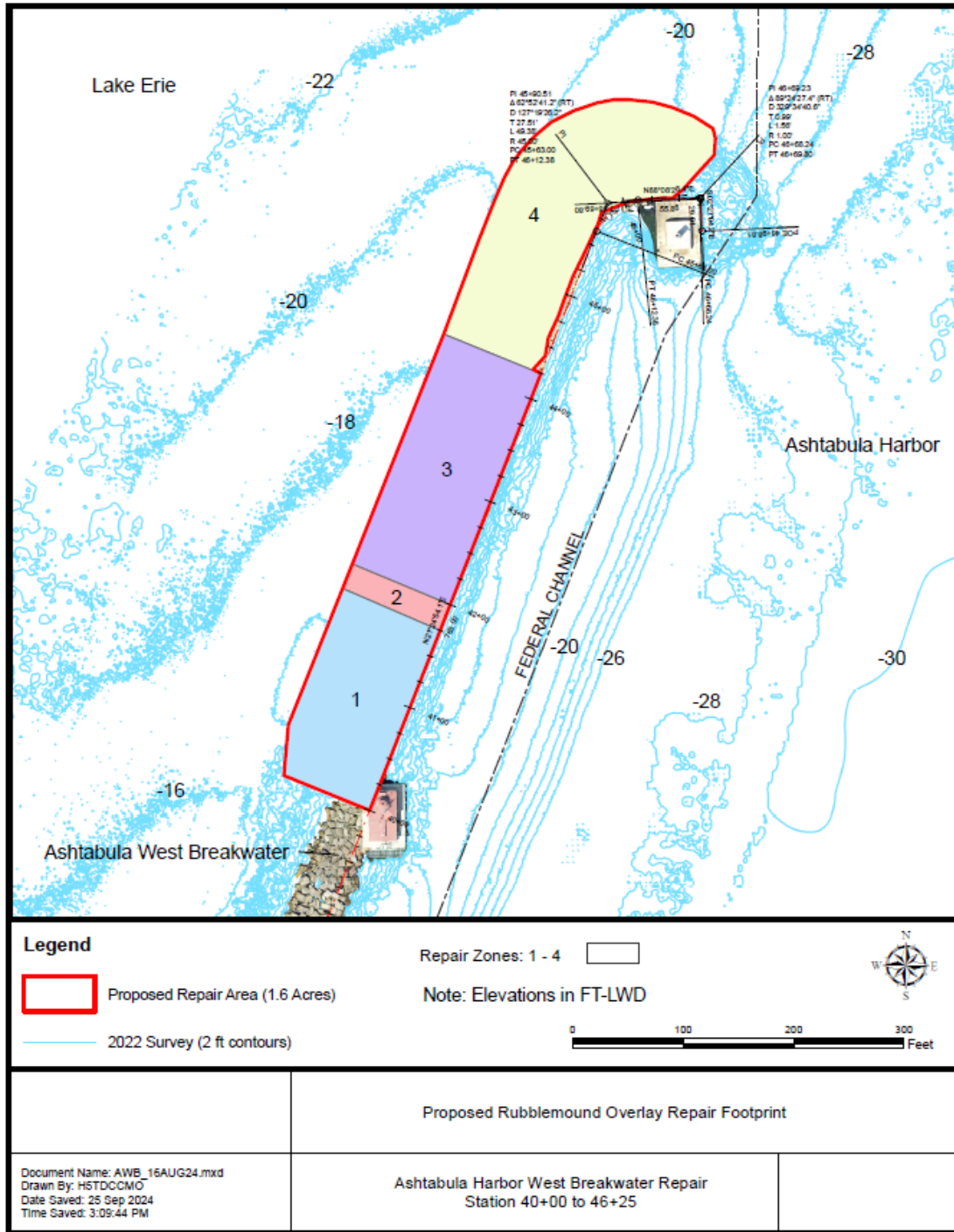


Figure 3: Ashtabula Western Breakwater proposed repair footprint with sections

