corners of the square site are: 40°48'25" North latitude (N) by 124°16′22" West longitude (W); 40°49′03″ N by 124°17′22″ W; 40°47′38″ N by 124°17′22″ N; and 40°48′17″ N by 124°18′12" W (North American Datum from 1983). This action is necessary to provide an acceptable ocean dumping site for disposal of suitable dredged material from Northern California dredging sites, including Humboldt Bay and Harbor; the suitability of proposed dredged material will be determined by appropriate sediment testing protocols. The designation of the HOODS is for a period of 50 years. Disposal operations at the site will be prohibited if the site management and monitoring program is not implemented.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Site designation will be effective October 30, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Send questions or comments to: Mr. Allan Ota, Ocean Disposal Coordinator, U.S.
Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX (W-3-3), 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, California 94105, telephone (415) 744–1980. The supporting document for this designation is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Designation of an Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site off Humboldt Bay, California, July 1995, which is available for public inspection at the following locations:

A. EPA Public Information Reference Unit (PIRU), Room 2904 (rear), 401 M Street, SW., Washington, DC.

B. EPA Region IX, Library, 75 Hawthorne Street, 13th Floor, San Francisco, California.

C. Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District, PO Box 1030, Eureka, California.

D. Humboldt County Library, 421 I Street, Eureka, California.

E. Humboldt State University Library, Arcata, California.

F. Arcata City Library, 500 7th Street, Arcata, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Allan Ota, Ocean Disposal Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX (W–3–3), 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, California 94105, telephone (415) 744–1980.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

Section 102(c) of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA) of 1972, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 1401 *et seq.*, gives the Administrator of EPA authority to designate sites where ocean dumping may be permitted. On October 1, 1986 the Administrator delegated authority to designate ocean dredged material disposal sites (ODMDS) to the Regional Administrator of the EPA Region in which the sites are located. The HOODS designation action is being made pursuant to that authority.

The EPA Ocean Dumping Regulations (40 CFR 228.4) state that ocean dumping sites will be designated by publication pursuant to 40 CFR part 228. This site designation is being published as final rulemaking in accordance with § 228.4(e) of the Ocean Dumping Regulations, which permits the designation of ocean disposal sites for dredged material.

The HOODS is located between approximately 3 and 4 nautical miles (5 and 7 kilometers) west of the Humboldt Bay entrance and occupies an area of approximately 1 square nautical mile (3 square kilometers). Water depths within the area range from approximately 160 to 180 feet (49 to 55 meters). The coordinates of the corners of the square site are: 40°48'25" North latitude (N) by 124°16′22" West longitude (W); 40°49′03" N by 124°17′22" W; 40°47′38" N by 124°17′22″ N; and 40°48′17″ N by 124°18′12" W (North American Datum from 1983). EPA Region IX designates the HOODS as an ocean dredged material disposal site for continued use for a period of 50 years.

Site use is subject to implementation of site management and monitoring requirements contained in the Final EIS, which are now identified as the Site Management and Monitoring Plan (SMMP) for the HOODS. The SMMP incorporates a tiered site monitoring structure and MPRSA Section 103 permit review, and identifies standard conditions that must be included in any permit or authorization for disposal site use.

B. EIS Development

Section 102(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq., requires that Federal agencies prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on proposals for major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The object of NEPA is to build into the agency decision-making process careful consideration of all environmental aspects of proposed actions, including evaluation of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action.

A Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS was published in the Federal Register on April 21, 1995 discussing EPA's intent to designate an open ocean dredged material disposal site off Humboldt Bay, California (60 FR 19916). The Draft EIS, titled: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

for Designation of an Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site off Humboldt Bay, California, evaluated a range of potential alternative disposal sites as summarized below. The comment period closed on June 5, 1995. EPA received 4 comment letters on the Draft EIS and incorporated changes where appropriate to the Final EIS. The Proposed Rule was published in the Federal Register on April 21, 1995 (60 FR 19872). No comments were received regarding the Proposed Rule. On August 4, 1995, a Notice of Availability for public review and comment on the Final EIS was published in the Federal Register (60 F \hat{R} 39956). The comment period for the Final EIS closed on September 5, 1995. No comments were received following the 30-day comment period.

EIS Alternatives Analysis. On average, over 800,000 cubic yards of dredged material are generated annually as a result of routine federal maintenance dredging operations by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in Humboldt Bay and Harbor. Historically, most of this dredged material has been disposed at 3 different sites offshore of Humboldt Bay. Although dredged material has been disposed at the sites known as "SF-3" and "NDS" in the past, environmental and navigational safety concerns shifted disposal operations to the HOODS for the last 3 years.

EPA's analysis of alternatives included detailed examination of several potential ocean dumping sites for dredged materials from the Humboldt Bay region and other nearby harbors or dredging sites, including potential alternative means of handling these dredged materials other than disposal at an ocean dump site. Alternatives evaluated in detail in the Final EIS are discussed below. Note that designation of an ocean dumping site does not authorize any actual dumping and does not preclude EPA or the Corps from finding in the future, or for individual projects, that alternative means of managing dredged materials from the Humboldt Bay region are available and environmentally preferable.

EPA has determined that it is necessary to designate an ocean dumping site for dredged materials from Humboldt Bay site now, even if alternatives to ocean dumping should eventually prove to be available, because it is unlikely that alternative means of managing dredged material will accommodate all of the dredged material that will be generated in the future. As discussed in the Final EIS, there are significant limitations at present to the potential alternatives to