



US Army Corps  
of Engineers ®



## Black Rock Channel and Tonawanda Harbor, NY

### Harbor Features

- Located on the Niagara River in the City of Buffalo, Erie County, NY.
- Authorization: Rivers & Harbor Acts of 1888, 1919, 1922, 1925, 1935, 1945, and Flood Control Act of 1954.
- Deep draft commercial project.
- Project depths are 21 feet in the Black Rock Channel and 16 feet in Tonawanda Harbor.
- The Black Rock Channel permits pleasure craft and commercial vessels to travel between Buffalo Harbor and Tonawanda Harbor.
- The Black Rock Lock, located within the Black Rock Channel, can accommodate pleasure craft and commercial vessels up to 625 feet long with drafts up to 21 feet.
- 91K tons of material shipped and received in 2020.
- Bird Island Pier is approximately 2 miles long and forms the west side of the Black Rock Channel.
- Project includes 4.1-mile federal channel connecting Buffalo Outer Harbor and Black Rock Lock, a 3.4-mile federal channel downstream of the Black Rock Lock, and a 2.5-mile federal channel and turning basin around Tonawanda Island approximately 8.1-miles downstream of the Black Rock Lock.
- Major stakeholders: U.S. Coast Guard, Suit-Kote, NOCO Energy Corp., and United Refining Co.

### Project Requirements

- In addition to routine operation and maintenance (O&M), critical requirements include repairs to the upper east guide wall, Bird Island Pier, main power cabling, and fabrication and installation of new miter gates and new dewatering bulkheads.



- Maintenance dredging is conducted infrequently to maintain the navigation channel. The channel was last dredged in 2015.
- Repairs to deteriorated sections of the Bird Island Pier are needed to ensure the Black Rock Channel and shoreline are adequately protected. Engineering and design efforts are ongoing; and the first phase of construction is planned for 2024. Additional repairs will be needed to repair all the degraded sections.
- New upper and lower miter gates are needed. The current gates are original to the project (1914) and are well beyond fatigue life. Engineering and design of new miter gates was completed in 2020. Fabrication of the lower miter gates was initiated in 2021 and is scheduled to be completed in 2023. Fabrication of the upper miter gates was initiated in 2022 and is scheduled to be completed in 2025. Installation of the gates is tentatively scheduled to start in late 2024.

### **Project Requirements**

- Geotechnical evaluation of the upper east guidewall to support the ongoing design effort discovered potential foundation concerns. A comprehensive lock evaluation has been initiated to further investigate the issue and determine if and what remedial measures are needed. Potential repairs would need to be completed expeditiously to ensure planned miter gate installations remain on-schedule.

### **Consequences of Not Maintaining the Project**

- Failure to adequately fund routine O&M could result in closure of the lock.
- Elimination of the U.S. connection to the Intercoastal Waterway from Lake Erie.

- Inability for commercial and recreational vessels to reach destinations on the upper Niagara River.

### **Transportation Importance**

- Asphalt and metal products are the primary commodities shipped or received through the lock.
- With 1,318 lockages in 2020, the lock provided safe passage for 2,332 vessels (138 commercial and 2,194 recreational).
- The lock provides the only means for deep draft commercial vessels to reach delivery ports on the upper Niagara River, including fuel storage facilities and refinery.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 2023, and 2024  
Black Rock Channel and Tonawanda Harbor, NY  
Project Requirements and President's Budget (\$1,000)**

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>FY22 Requirement</b>	<b>FY22 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY23 Requirement</b>	<b>FY23 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY24 Requirement</b>	<b>FY24 President's Budget</b>
Operation of Lock	1,302	1,302	1,320	1,320	1,383	1,383
Operational Routine Maintenance of Lock	687	687	693	693	729	729
Project Condition Surveys	36	33	34	34	35	35
Real Estate Management	34	34	55	55	56	36
Facility Security Maintenance	64	64	65	65	68	68
Environmental Compliance Management	5	5	5	5	5	5
Cultural Resources Management and Curation for Navigation	5	5	5	5	5	5
Engineering and Design - Main Power Cabling Renewal	100	100	0	0	0	0
Construction - Main Power Cabling Renewal	300	0	300	300	0	0
Engineering & Design Bird Island Pier Repair	250	250	0	0	0	0
Construction Bird Island Pier Repair	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	10,000	5,000
Engineering & Design Lower West Guide Wall Repair	100	100	0	0	0	0
Construction Lower West Guide Wall Repair	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering & Design Upper East Guide Wall Repair	300	300	350	350	0	0
Construction Upper East Guide Wall Repair	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	0
Evaluate Guard Gates and New Bulkheads	100	0	100	100	0	0
Construction, Guard Gate Repairs/New Bulkheads	3,000	0	5,000	3,000	2,000	0
Installation of Lower Miter Gates	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	0
Fabrication Upper Miter Gates	4,500	4,500	0	0	0	0
Installation of Upper Miter Gates	3,000	0	0	0	3,000	3,000
Lock Evaluation	0	0	2,300	2,300	0	0
Rehab Hydraulic Cylinders and Hydraulic Power Units	220	220	0	0	0	0
Engineering & Design, Chamber Resurfacing	0	0	0	0	100	100
Operational Condition Assessment	0	0	0	0	35	35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,003</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>23,227</b>	<b>21,227</b>	<b>22,416</b>	<b>10,396</b>

**Congressional Interests**

- Representative Brian Higgins D-NY-26
- Senator Charles Schumer D-NY
- Senator Kirsten Gillibrand D-NY