

Dredging the Silt Out of the Cape Fear River

- Natural channel was 18 feet deep in Colonial times.
- New Inlet opened by a storm in 1761; depth at ocean bar of both inlets reduced to 12 feet.
- New Inlet blocked by Corps of Engineers in 1870s; channel maintained at 16 feet during nineteenth century.
- Channel dredged to 20 feet in 1892
26 feet in 1911
30 feet in 1932
32 feet in 1949
34 feet in 1958
- Channel dredged to 38 feet in 1970; ocean bar increased to 40 feet in 1973.
- Project to increase depth to 42 feet authorized in 1998; work commenced in 2000.
- Channel opened at 42 feet in 2004. Environmental mitigation and other aspects of project remain incomplete. Total cost of this “Wilmington Harbor Project” is estimated to reach \$384 million in 2016. The State pays 35%.

● Annual cost including maintenance dredging:	\$27 million
● Annual vessel calls requiring deepened channel:	< 100
● Federal and State subsidy per vessel call:	\$270,000
● Average number of container moves per vessel call:	1100
● Federal and State subsidy per container move:	\$250
● State Ports Authority revenue per container move:	\$80
● Additional land cost to shipper per container move:	\$30

