



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT
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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

MAINTENANCE DREDGING OF THE MURRELLS INLET FEDERAL NAVIGATION CHANNEL

GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

June 2023

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (Corps) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, to assess the potential environmental effects of conducting maintenance dredging of Murrells Inlet Federal navigation channel (Murrells Inlet) in Georgetown County, South Carolina. The dredged sediments will be placed on the Garden City Beach and Huntington Island State Park. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) summarizes the results of the USACE evaluation and documents the USACE's conclusions.

The proposed maintenance dredging project will remove material from the Federal navigation channel. A total of 500,000 to 750,000 cubic yards is expected to be dredged. Maintenance dredging will be by means of a hydraulic cutterhead dredge that will transport the sand through a pipeline to be discharged as a slurry and placed directly on the front beach of Garden City Beach and on both the front beach and at the terminal west end of the south jetty of Huntington Island State Park.

The No Action Alternative is the same as the most probable future condition without the proposed project. A basic alternative to any proposed plan of improvement is the "No Action" alternative. Adoption of this alternative implies acceptance of the existing conditions in the proposed project area.

Alternative measures for dredged material disposal were evaluated based on compliance with environmental laws and regulations, compliance with executive orders, level of environmental impacts including impacts to climate, land use, water resources and aquatic habitat, terrestrial resources and wildlife, air quality and noise, cultural resources, endangered species, hazardous toxic and radioactive waste, and socioeconomics, cost effectiveness, engineering feasibility, compliance with the Federal standard, and the ability of the Alternative to meet the project purpose and need. The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative are the only Alternatives that were evaluated in detail in the EA. For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS:

A summary assessment of the potential effects of the proposed plan is listed and described below.

Table 1. Summary of Potential Effects of the Proposed Action

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Unaffected by action
Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquatic resources/wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fish and wildlife habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic properties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Floodplains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, toxic & radioactive waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hydrology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Navigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise levels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socioeconomics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tribal trust resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>*Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation: For any resources that fall in this category, a description of the required mitigation is included in the paragraphs following this table</i>			

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan for the modifications. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed throughout the EA will be implemented, as appropriate, to minimize impacts.

Pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) issued a biological opinion, dated 12 April 2023, that determined that the recommended plan will not jeopardize the continued existence of the following federally listed

species or adversely modify designated critical habitat: piping plover, rufa red knot, loggerhead sea turtle, green sea turtle, and seabeach amaranth. All terms and conditions, conservation measures, and reasonable and prudent alternatives and measures resulting from these consultations shall be implemented in order to minimize take of endangered species and avoid jeopardizing the species.

Pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that historic properties would not be adversely affected by the recommended plan. The SHPO concurred with the determination September 8, 2022.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the recommended plan has been found to be compliant with section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230). The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines evaluation is found in Appendix G of the Final EA.

A water quality certification pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act was obtained from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). All conditions of the water quality certification shall be implemented in order to minimize adverse impacts to water quality.

A determination of consistency with the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management program pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 was obtained from the SCDHEC Ocean and Coastal Resource Management . All conditions of the consistency determination shall be implemented in order to minimize adverse impacts to the coastal zone.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials has been completed.

The draft Supplemental EA and FONSI has been distributed for a 30-day comment and review period. The final Supplemental EA addresses the comments received during this review period. Since USACE has determined that the proposed action of maintaining the existing navigation channel would not result in significant adverse individual or cumulative effects to environmental resources or human health, and does not represent either a substantial change to the Project relevant to environmental concerns or present significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns, the preparation of a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted, and the issuance of a FONSI is appropriate. The Supplemental EA for the proposed action can be downloaded from the internet (in PDF format) at <https://www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/NEPA-Documents/>.

Date _____

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