



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHARLESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
69A HAGOOD AVENUE
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29403-5107

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FOLLY BEACH SHORE PROTECTION PROJECT: FOLLY RIVER BORROW AREA

CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

December 2017

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (USACE), to evaluate the effects of proposed Federal activities on the human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) summarizes the results of the USACE evaluation, and documents the USACE's conclusions. The USACE is proposing to dredge a portion of the Folly River to perform an emergency beach rehabilitation on the northeast end of Folly Beach, South Carolina, pursuant to the Food Control and Coastal Emergency Act (P.L. 84-99), 33 USC 701n. Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Irma caused significant erosion and dune loss to Folly Beach, putting life, property, and habitat at risk.

The emergency rehabilitation will repair the northeast end of the beach to the pre-storm condition. This includes placement of 306,428 cy of material for the beach fill lost due to Hurricane Matthew and 445,441 cy of material resulting from damage during Hurricane Irma, from a designated borrow area in the Folly River. Approximately 13,000 linear feet of shoreline will be renourished, extending from 8th Street East to the last groin past the last structure on the east end of the island.

The proposed action is part of the Folly Beach Shore Protection Project (Project), which was authorized by Section 501 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, Public Law 99-662, as amended, and modified by the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 1992, Public Law 102-104. The purpose of the Project is to reduce damage to structures and shorefront property related to erosion and storms. The beach has been renourished several times since the Project was authorized, including most recently in 2014. The USACE described the affected environment and evaluated environmental effects for the Project in numerous previous NEPA documents, and the findings from the previous NEPA documents are generally still

relevant as they relate to the placement of material on Folly Beach, including most recently a signed Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI in 2013. Therefore, the findings from these previous NEPA documents are incorporated by reference into the EA for the emergency action.

Pursuant to NEPA, the EA on which this FONSI is based, updates and supplements the existing environmental analyses by addressing the borrow area in the Folly River. It documents the environmental impacts of dredging and transporting fill material from a designated area in the Folly River to Folly Beach for the emergency rehabilitation under the Project. The intent of the EA was to determine whether the proposed resumption of use of the Folly River for this emergency renourishment involves a substantial change to the project that is relevant to environmental concerns, or whether there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts, either of which would warrant preparation of a supplemental EIS (40 CFR 1502.9(c)).

The designated borrow area in the Folly River has been determined to contain beach quality material for Folly Beach. The river channel and portions of the channel shoulder will be dredged by means of a hydraulic cutter head dredge that will transport the sand through a pipeline. The pipeline will extend from the borrow area in the Folly River through the channel to an area across from the "Washout," and pump the material along the beach. The USACE and the City of Folly Beach (City) will implement a number of measures to minimize impacts to the river, marsh habitat, and existing infrastructure that are outlined in the EA. Surveys of the pipeline alignment from the borrow area will be conducted to ensure no cultural resources are being impacted. Presence of federally listed species in the Folly River is low, as described in the EA associated with this FONSI.

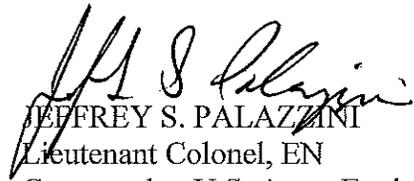
Due to the emergency nature of the beach rehabilitation and associated funding constraints, the work is expected to occur from January to September 2018. However, the schedule could change due to contractual issues, inclement weather, equipment failure, or other unforeseen difficulties.

The EA associated with this FONSI also address an option by the USACE to add an estimated additional 250,000 cy of material from the Folly River navigation channel to the beach, and to add an estimated 40,000 cy of sand to nearby Bird Key Stono Seabird Sanctuary (Sanctuary) to benefit piping plovers and other resident birds, provided and to the extent that O&M funding is available. Although this would be a beneficial use of the material for endangered species, potential protective measures for placement would be implemented.

Previous NEPA documents for the Folly Beach Shore Protection Project evaluated six nonstructural and six structural alternatives, and a no action alternative, which resulted in beach nourishment as the selected alternative. For the EA associated with this FONSI, the alternatives include the no action alternative; rehabilitation to pre-storm condition using material from the Outer Continental Shelf; and rehabilitation to pre-storm condition using material from the Folly River. The alternative for use of the Folly River was determined to be the most environmentally acceptable alternative and most cost effective. The No Action alternative was eliminated because it leaves lives, property, and significant infrastructure and habitat vulnerable and at risk.

The USACE has determined that the proposed action for the use of the Folly River borrow area for the emergency rehabilitation of Folly Beach does not involve a substantial change to the project, significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts, or a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the preparation or supplementation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted. The Final EA can be downloaded from the internet (in PDF format) at <http://www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/NEPADocuments.aspx> or a copy may be obtained by contacting Ms. Bethney Ward (Bethney.P.Ward@usace.army.mil; (843) 329-8162).

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