



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
4400 PGA BOULEVARD, SUITE 500
PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA 33410

July 23, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Regulatory Division
South Permits Branch
Palm Beach Gardens Section

PUBLIC NOTICE
SAJ 2005-07908 and SAJ 2008-04086
Southern Palm Beach Island Comprehensive Shoreline Stabilization Project
Public Scoping Meeting

SCOPING MEETING: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Jacksonville District is conducting a public scoping meeting as part of the initiation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Town of Palm Beach and Palm Beach County's proposal to construct beach nourishment and dune restoration projects between Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) R-monuments 128+955 and R-138+551 with sand placement and the construction of seven (7) low profile, shore-perpendicular groins (groin field). All sand is proposed to be sourced from an upland sand mine. The scoping process is used to determine the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be considered in the Draft EIS and to identify the significant issues related to the proposed action early, so the draft EIS produced for public review and comment appropriately identifies and discloses the anticipated effects, fully considers the significant issues, is thorough, and balanced. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register July 5, 2013, and may be found at the following internet website:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-07-03/pdf/2013-16027.pdf>

The scoping process will identify concerns of Federal, State, and local agencies, any affected Native American Indian tribe, the proponents of the action, and the public. The scoping meeting is one venue in which to identify or raise environmental or social concerns and/or concepts for minimizing the potential environmental effects of the project. At the meeting you will be able to ask questions and provide comments or suggestions on any issues that you believe should be addressed in the EIS. The date, time, and location for the public scoping meeting are as follows:

Date: August 12, 2013
Time: 5:30 pm (EST)
Location: Town of Palm Beach Council Chambers, 2nd floor
Town Hall
360 South County Road
Palm Beach, Florida

For those that are unable to attend the scoping meeting, you may provide comments in response to this public notice. Please address any comments to Garrett Lips at the letterhead address, or by email at Garrett.G.Lips@usace.army.mil

APPLICANTS: Town of Palm Beach
Attn: Rob Weber
360 South County Road
Palm Beach, Florida 33401

BACKGROUND: The area between the Palm Beach Inlet and the South Lake Worth Inlet has been roughly divided into 11 beach segments known as “reaches” to facilitate area location. Reaches 1–8 are located mainly within the Town of Palm Beach. Reaches 9–11 are associated with the Town of South Palm Beach, Town of Lantana, and Town of Manalapan. The FDEP and the Corps, under the Coast of Florida Study, conducted an extensive offshore geotechnical investigation of the region which extended south to R–132, but did not cover the entire Study Area. The Corps issued a Notice of Intent for the Central Palm Beach County Comprehensive Erosion Control Project EIS on Monday, May 3, 2010. The project was subsequently withdrawn and no authorization was issued.

WATERWAY & LOCATION: The project is located in waters of the United States along the Atlantic Ocean shoreline between Florida Department of Environmental Protection Range monuments R–128+955 and R–138+551, approximately 2.02 miles. The northern limit is adjacent to the William O. Lockhart Municipal Pier, and the southern limit is just north of Lantana Public Beach/East Ocean Avenue in Palm Beach County, Florida.

Directions to the site are as follows: From Interstate 95 in Palm Beach County, take the Lake Worth Road exit, and go east. Travel approximately 1.9 miles and find State Road A1A. The project can be accessed from either the parking area at the pier or from the southern limits at the Lantana public beach.

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE: Latitude: 26.60196 °
Longitude: -80.03655 °

PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: The basic project purpose is shoreline stabilization.

Overall: The overall project purpose is to stabilize the shoreline within the southern portion of Reach 8, all of Reach 9, and the northern portion of Reach 10.

PROPOSED WORK: Proposed Action is to construct beach nourishment and dune restoration projects between FDEP monuments R–128+955 and R–138+551 with sand placement and the construction of seven (7) low profile, shore-perpendicular groins (groin field). The proposal would require approximately 150,000 cubic yards of fill. All sand is proposed to be sourced from an upland sand mine. Construction of the Applicants’ proposed projects would impact 0.6 acres of intertidal and sub-tidal hardbottom in Reach 8 and 1.05 acres of nearshore hardbottom in Reaches 9 and 10 based on in-water surveys conducted in 2010 and 2012, respectively.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The overall project area includes tidal waters of the Atlantic Ocean, inter-tidal and sub-tidal unconsolidated bottoms and nearshore hardbottom, dry beach, and upland developments. The shoreline along the upland developments is mostly armored with bulkheads. Between 2000 and 2012, the quantity of the exposed hardbottom within the Study Area has varied significantly. Reach 8 has averaged 6.28 acres of exposed hardbottom with a low of 0.45 acre and a high of 11.37 acres. Reach 9 has averaged 6.94 acres with a low of 0.61 acre and a high of 18.77 acres. Reach 10 has averaged 20.86 acres with a low of 3.27 acres and a high of 38.48 acres.

ALTERNATIVES: An evaluation of alternatives to the proposed project, including a No-Action alternative will be performed. The Draft EIS will analyze reasonable alternatives that could achieve the project purpose. Alternatives will be determined through scoping, but are expected to include at a minimum the applicants proposed project, a non-structural sand placement-only alternative, and dune only, in addition to a “no action” alternative.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION INFORMATION: The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment: Best management practices would be utilized to limit turbidity while construction activities are being conducted.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION: The applicants would offset unavoidable losses of ecological functions and services through in-kind replacement by constructing nearshore mitigation reefs consisting of rubble rip rap or other appropriate material.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) completed a programmatic biological opinion (BO) in 2010 for the effects of sand placement on nesting beaches in Florida. The Corps will request the FWS’s approval the project complies with the BO. The FWS has also previously provided programmatic concurrence for the West Indian manatee, eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperii corais*), and wood stork (*Mycteria americana*). The Corps will determine the effects the proposed project may have on the swimming sea turtles [loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp’s Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)], smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*), and *Acropora* spp. and its designated critical habitat. The following corals are candidates to be protected under ESA: [Boulder star coral (*Montastraea annularis*), Mountainous star coral (*Montastraea faveolata*), Pillar coral (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*), Rough Cactus Coral (*Mycetophyllia ferox*), Star coral (*Montastraea franksi*), Lamarck’s Sheet Coral (*Agaricia lamarcki*), Elliptical Star Coral (*Dichocoenia stokesii*)]. The Corps will determine the effects of the project on the listed and candidate species during the preparation of the DEIS. The Corps will initiate consultation with the FWS and NMFS pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as appropriate.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: The Corps is not aware of any cultural resources on the project site or that may be affected as a result of the project. The Corps will coordinate the project with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the associated Native American Indian Tribes for their review once an application is submitted.

AUTHORIZATION FROM OTHER AGENCIES: Water Quality Certification may be required from the FDEP.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT:

An EIS is being prepared for the construction of the beach nourishment and dune restoration project. The draft EIS is expected to be completed and available for public review in April 2014.

If you have any questions concerning this project, you may contact Garrett Lips at the letterhead address, by electronic mail at Garrett.G.Lips@usace.army.mil, or by telephone at 561-472-3519 prior to the end of the 45-day scoping period ending August 19, 2013.

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicants. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The jurisdictional line has not been verified by Corps personnel.