

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRICT COMMANDER (CENWS-DC)

SUBJECT: Finding of No Significant Impact for the Shoalwater Bay Shoreline Erosion Project, Pacific County, Washington.

1. Overview: Attached is the **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)** for your signature and supporting environmental documentation for placement of about 600,000 cubic yards of sand from a nearby in-water borrow site and placing it to restore about 12,500 feet of deteriorated barrier dune. The proposed work is authorized by Section 545 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000 (Public Law 106-541), as amended by Section 5153 of WRDA 2007 (Public Law 110-114).

The purpose of proposed work is to reduce coastal erosion and the resulting flooding and coastal storm damage to the Shoalwater Reservation and the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe in a manner that is cost-effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible, and that will improve the economic and social conditions of the Shoalwater Bay Tribe. As summarized in the Final Environmental Assessment dated July 2009 (enclosure 1), as amended by the errata sheet dated 19 December 2009 (enclosure 2), the proposed work complies with all pertinent environmental laws.

In a memorandum dated 17 November 2009 (enclosure 3), Corps Headquarters concluded that there are no unresolved policy issues in the project decision document and final environmental assessment and stated that “The Seattle District Commander will sign the FONSI subsequent to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works). In a memorandum dated 29 December 2009, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) determined that the proposed project is the most cost effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible plan, and would improve the economic and social conditions of the Shoalwater Bay Tribe (enclosure 4).

2. Requested Action: Signature on FONSI by District Commander.

3. Enclosures:

Enclosure 1 – Final Post-Authorization Decision Document and Final Environmental Assessment

Enclosure 2 – Errata Page; Final Post-Authorization Decision Document and Final Environmental Assessment

Enclosure 3 – Memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) dated 17 November 2009

Enclosure 4 – Memorandum for Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations dated 29 December 2009

4. **Point of Contact:** If you have any questions, please contact me at (206) 764-6922 or evan.r.lewis@usace.army.mil.



EVAN LEWIS
Acting Chief, Environmental Resources Section

Enclosures (4)

EL 1/22/10
LEWIS/PM-PL-ER/s/

SDG 1/23/10
BABCOCK/PM-CP

EL 1/25/10
for THOMASON/PM-PL

PF 1-25-10
FELDMEIER/OC

MSB 1/25/10
SWANSON/PM

DDC

WRIGHT/DC/s/

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

SHOALWATER BAY SHORELINE EROSION PROJECT PACIFIC COUNTY, WASHINGTON

1. Background: The project area is located on the north side of the entrance to Willapa Bay, a large estuarine system located on the southwest Pacific Ocean coast of the State of Washington, in Pacific County. The project will be located on and adjacent to the Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation on the northern edge of Willapa Bay, between Cape Shoalwater/Washaway Beach and Toke Point. The Shoalwater Reservation was created by an Executive Order in 1866; is approximately one mile square in size, and has 2/3 of its area specifically set aside as intertidal and subtidal lands to support the Shoalwater Tribe's subsistence shellfish harvesting and other fishery related activities.

The Shoalwater Reservation has a recent history of flooding and storm damage. On March 3, 1999, a combined storm and high tide caused severe flooding of the Shoalwater Reservation shoreline and surrounding community. The Shoalwater Reservation also experienced severe flooding and debris damage from winter storms in February 2006 and December 2007. The flooding is believed to be a direct result of erosion and breaching of the barrier dune on Graveyard Spit that fronts the Tokeland Peninsula. The limited wave protection currently afforded by the eroded barrier dune will continue to decrease, and flooding of the Shoalwater Reservation and adjoining lands will occur at increasingly frequent intervals.

2. Project Description: The proposed project consists of the restoration of a deteriorated barrier dune system to protect the Shoalwater Reservation. Approximately 600,000 cubic yards of sand will be dredged from a nearby borrow site and placed along 12,500 feet of the barrier dune.

3. Impacts: Environmental impacts associated with the proposed action include: a temporary and localized increase in noise and turbidity, which may temporarily disrupt fish and wildlife in the area, temporary and localized disruption of benthic productivity, and temporary disruptions to recreational and Tribal cultural uses at the project site.

The benefits of this project include coastal erosion protection and the reduced potential for flooding and storm damages to the Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation as well as the surrounding communities. This project is also designed to halt the transformation of North Cove from important productive tidal flats to upper salt marsh habitat. The dune restoration component will likely provide an increase in nesting habitat for the threatened Western snowy plover, as they prefer to nest on secluded sand beaches and dunes.

The dune restoration and preservation of the tidal flats will not only benefit fish and wildlife species native to the project area, but it will allow for the continued existence and traditional uses of North Cove by the Shoalwater Tribe. In addition, the preferred project alternative project meets the required project authorization goals as it:

- is a cost-effective means of providing erosion protection;
- is environmentally acceptable and technically feasible; and
- will improve the economic and social conditions of the Shoalwater Bay Tribe.

4. Findings: For the reasons described above, I have determined that this barrier dune restoration on and near the Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation will not result in significant adverse impacts on the human environment. The proposed action is not a major Federal action, and therefore does not require an environmental impact statement.

23 JUN 2010.
Date


William E. Acheson
Lt. Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Acting District Commander