



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD**  
**JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8175**

Planning and Policy Division  
Environmental Branch

APR 26 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulation (33 CFR 230.11), this letter constitutes the Notice of Availability of the Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for maintenance dredging of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) near Venice, and areas within the Venice Inlet. The proposed work is located in Sarasota County, Florida. The Preferred Alternative includes placing dredged sediments on Venice Beach, in the nearshore south of Venice Inlet, or in an upland disposal site located east of the GIWW. The placement option chosen will be based on the characteristics of the dredged sediments to ensure that only compatible material is placed in the coastal system.

The Proposed FONSI and EA are available for review online at:  
<<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/Divisions-Offices/Planning/Environmental-Branch/Environmental-Documents>>.

A hard copy of the report is also available for viewing at the Sarasota County Public Library located at 260 Nokomis Ave. N., Venice, Florida 34285

We welcome your views and comments on the EA, as well as information about resources and important features within the described project area. Please provide any written comments by May 26, 2018 via email to [Aubree.G.Hershorin@usace.army.mil](mailto:Aubree.G.Hershorin@usace.army.mil) or by mail to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Jacksonville District  
Planning and Policy Division  
Attn: Aubree Hershorin, Ph.D.  
P.O. Box 4970  
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Questions concerning maintenance dredging of the GIWW should be directed to Aubree Hershorin at (904) 232-2136 or via e-mail at [Aubree.G.Hershorin@usace.army.mil](mailto:Aubree.G.Hershorin@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.  
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure



**US Army Corps of Engineers  
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT**

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**PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**MAINTENANCE DREDGING OF THE GULF INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY  
NEAR VENICE AND VENICE INLET**

**VENICE, SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (USACE) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the White House's Council of Environmental Quality regulations to assess the environmental effects of conducting maintenance dredging of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) near Venice, Florida. The dredged sediments will be placed on the beach, in the nearshore, or in an upland disposal site, as discussed in the attached document. The EA evaluates the effects of the Preferred Alternative, several suitable alternatives, and the No Action alternative.

I have reviewed the EA for the proposed action. This Finding incorporates by reference all discussions and conclusions contained in the EA enclosed hereto. Based on information analyzed in the enclosed EA, reflecting pertinent information obtained from agencies having jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise, I conclude that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and does not require an Environmental Impact Statement. Reasons for this conclusion are in summary:

- a. The Preferred Alternative is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with the USACE determination the activities associated with the Preferred Alternative may adversely affect nesting sea turtles, and that the Statewide Programmatic Biological Opinion for Shore Protection Activities along the Coast of Florida (SPBO; revised March 13, 2015) applies to this project. USFWS concurred with the USACE determination that the Preferred Alternative may adversely affect the threatened piping plover and threatened rufa red knot, but is not likely to adversely affect the threatened Florida manatee, the

endangered Eastern indigo snake, or the threatened Florida scrub-jay. USFWS' Piping Plover Programmatic Biological Opinion (P3BO; issued May 22, 2013) applies to this project. Beach and nearshore placement of dredged materials will not adversely modify loggerhead terrestrial critical habitat. USFWS concurrences were provided to the USACE in a letter dated \_\_\_\_\_. The USACE determined that the project may adversely affect sea turtles in the water if a hopper dredge is utilized for project construction. In this case, the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Gulf of Mexico Regional Biological Opinion (GRBO; issued November 19, 2003; revised June 24, 2005 and January 9, 2007) applies to this project.

- b. This project is being coordinated with the State of Florida, and all applicable water quality standards will be met. Water Quality Certification in the form of a Joint Coastal Permit will be obtained from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) prior to construction.
- c. The USACE has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program. The final concurrence from the State will be issued with the FDEP Joint Coastal Permit.
- d. The Preferred Alternative has been coordinated with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer and the appropriate federally recognized Tribes in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act and consideration given under the NEPA. Coordination will be completed prior to project construction.
- e. The proposed project has been evaluated pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Jacksonville District's Migratory Bird Protection procedures will be implemented for this project. These procedures have been coordinated with the USFWS and the State of Florida.
- f. Benefits to the public will include improved navigation at the Venice Inlet and along this portion of the GIWW, restoration of habitat for protected species and other wildlife at the beach placement sites, and enhanced opportunity for recreation at the beach placement sites.

All practicable means to avoid and minimize adverse environmental effects have been incorporated into the Preferred Alternative. Measures that will be in place during construction to eliminate, reduce, or avoid adverse impacts to below the threshold of significance to fish and wildlife resources include the following:

- Dredging and placement activities will occur within the authorized and permitted template;
- Water-based activities will follow standard sea turtle protection measures and the terms and conditions of the NMFS GRBO;

- Water quality will be protected by adherence to the State of Florida water quality criteria;
- Dredged material placement will comply with the shoreline protection measure conditions of the SPBO and the P<sup>3</sup>BO issued by the USFWS; and
- Any water-based activity would follow standard manatee protection measures.

In view of the above and the attached EA, and after consideration of public and agency comments received on the project, I conclude that the Preferred Alternative would not result in a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

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Jason A. Kirk, P.E.  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
District Commander

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