



**US Army Corps of Engineers
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

ST. JOHNS COUNTY COASTAL STORM RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT SOUTH PONTE VEDRA BEACH, VILANO BEACH, AND SUMMER HAVEN REACHES

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District (Corps), has conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The Corps assessed the alternatives and their effects of the following actions in the Final Integrated Feasibility Report and EA, dated March 2017, for the South Ponte Vedra Beach, Vilano Beach, and Summer Haven reaches of the St. Johns County Coastal Storm Risk Management project in St. Johns County, Florida. The final recommendation is contained in the report of the Chief of Engineers, dated 08 August 2017. These reports are incorporated herein by reference.

The recommended plan includes beach and dune nourishment within the Vilano Beach reach and a small portion of the South Ponte Vedra Beach reach. The design includes construction of a 60-foot equilibrated berm extension from the +8.0 foot 1988 North Atlantic Vertical Datum contour between the R monuments R103.5 and R116.5 along 2.6 miles of shoreline. The project template will include a dune feature that reflects the average 2015 dune position. Tapers of a maximum length of one thousand feet will extend from the northern and southern ends of the berm extension, connecting the extension to the existing shoreline. The addition of tapers results in sand placement from R102.5 to R117.5 along 3 miles of shoreline.

Initial construction of the recommended plan will require approximately 1,310,000 cubic yards of sand, and each periodic nourishment event will require approximately 866,000 cubic yards. The periodic nourishment interval is expected to be approximately 12 years, equaling an estimated 3 periodic nourishment events in addition to initial construction over the 50-year period of federal participation.

The sand source identified for the project is the St. Augustine Inlet system, located adjacent to the project area to the south. There is approximately 6.5 million cubic yards (MCY) of beach quality sand in the inlet system. This volume is more than adequate to meet the initial construction volume. The periodic nourishment volume is approximately 866,000 cubic yards every 12 years. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP's) inlet management plan for St. Augustine Inlet states a bypassing objective of 278,000 cubic yards per year of which one third should go to beaches to the north. One third of the bypassing objective is 92,666 cubic yards per year. Over 12 years, 1.1 MCY would be available to meet the 866,000 cubic yard need for a periodic nourishment event.

Native vegetation will be planted on areas of the existing dune disturbed by construction, as well as the newly constructed dune to stabilize the fill. It is assumed that dune planting will only be necessary for initial construction and that vegetation will naturally grow and spread to any areas that are nourished in the future.

A portion of the project is located in the Coastal Barrier Resource System unit P04A. In accordance with the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982, no federal funds will be expended for this portion of the project. The cost share for this area is a non-federal responsibility for both initial construction and periodic nourishment.

The Draft EA for the project was forwarded for review and comment to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), North Florida Ecological Services Office; the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Southeast Region; the FDEP; the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; and the State Historic Preservation Officer, as well as all other known interested parties.

In accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the work will be conducted in accordance with Biological Opinions issued by the USFWS on 13 March 2015 for impacts to nesting sea turtles and on 22 May 2013 for impacts to endangered Piping Plovers, and by the NMFS on 29 October 1997 for impacts to sea turtles in the water. The Corps will take measures to minimize the effects to threatened and endangered species, including sea turtles. The project will not jeopardize the continued existence of any federally-listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitat, and the recommended plan will have beneficial effects to protected species habitat within the project area. Reasonable and prudent measures will be taken to substantially minimize the impact of incidental take to listed species.

In accordance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I have determined that the recommended plan, as proposed, will have no adverse effect on historic properties. Coordination with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer and appropriate federally recognized tribes is complete. As stated in the EA, remote sensing targets identified as having a high probability of being shipwrecks in the sand source areas will be buffered; if additional investigations are required, consultation will be re-initiated and investigations will be conducted prior to construction. No construction work will begin prior to completion of consultation.

This project is being coordinated with the State of Florida and all applicable water quality standards will be met. In accordance with section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, a Water Quality Certification in the form of a Joint Coastal Permit will be obtained from the FDEP prior to construction.

In accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, the Corps has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program. The final concurrence from the State of Florida will be issued with the FDEP permit prior to construction.

In a letter dated 25 October 2016, the USFWS determined that the proposed project is consistent with the purposes of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982.

Within the EA, the Corps has evaluated the recommended plan's potential effect on migratory birds pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The Corps' migratory bird protection

procedures will be implemented for this project. These procedures have been coordinated with the USFWS and the State of Florida.

Benefits to the public will include the restoration of habitat for protected species and other wildlife; protection of upland structures from storm damage; and enhanced opportunity for recreation.

The Corps will ensure the following measures are in place during construction to eliminate, reduce, or avoid adverse impacts, and to keep impacts below the threshold of significance to the human environment:

1. Dredging and placement activities will occur within the template of areas that were coordinated with the resource agencies;
2. Water-based activities will follow standard sea turtle protection measures and the conditions of the NMFS South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion;
3. Dredged material placement will comply with the shoreline protection measure conditions of the USFWS Statewide Programmatic Biological Opinion (2011; revised 2015) and subsequent modifications pertaining to this project issued by the USFWS in a letter dated 22 December 2016; and
4. Any water-based activity will follow standard manatee protection measures.

Technical and economic criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resource Council's 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in the evaluation of the alternatives. It is my determination that the recommended plan does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

A copy of this finding and the EA will be made available to the public on the following website: [http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx#St Johns](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx#St%20Johns).

Date: _____

6 Sep 18



Andrew D. Kelly, Jr.
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander