



FEMA

U. S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 4
3005 Chamblee Tucker Rd
Atlanta, GA 30341

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
HUNTING ISLAND STATE PARK BEACH RETORATION PROJECT
BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
FEMA-4241-DR-SC and FEMA-4286-DR-SC**

BACKGROUND

On October 5, 2015 and October 11, 2016, President Obama declared major disasters (FEMA-DR-4241-SC and FEMA-DR-4286-SC) for the State of South Carolina, due to flooding, authorizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide federal assistance to designated disaster areas. The FEMA funding project worksheets (PW) ID for the proposed Federal actions are PA-04-SC-4241-PW-00799(0) and PA-04-SC-4286-PW-00966(0).

Severe storm surge, heavy rainfall, and flooding along the Atlantic Carolina Coast caused substantial beach erosion to South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism's (SCPRT) Hunting Island State Park. The state parks department identified the need to have restored the capacity of the shoreline to withstand future storm events, reduce erosion, and decrease risk from future events to human life and improved property. From 1968 to 2005 there were seven nourishment projects including a 2006-2007 restoration project that combined nourishment with the installation of groins. Prior to the completed 2019 beach restoration authorized by US Corp of Engineers (USACE), the beach has not been renourished since the previous project's completion in 2007. The 2019 beach restoration action reduced risk of storms to the park's infrastructure, provided restoration of sea turtle and shorebird habitat, protection to historic properties, namely the historic lighthouse, and increased and restore recreation use opportunities of the park's open green spaces.

As part of the beach nourishment project funded by USACE, the completed beach restoration resulted in approximately 11,500 linear feet (LF) of ocean shoreline sand renourishment using a cutterhead dredge from a single, offshore borrow area approximately two (2) miles out in the Atlantic. The sand dredged was transported through a pipeline corridor from dredger to shoreline. Additionally, the construction of two (2) new groins was completed during that time. Total nourishment of the permitted areas consisted of 1,170,000 cubic yards of sand. The new groins were installed between two existing groins north of the lighthouse. Once sand nourishment and groin construction were completed sand fencing was installed and dune vegetation planted. In addition to USACE's project, SCPRT (applicant); proposed to restore approximately 81,663 CY of lost sand attributable to both storm events at the same time as the nourishment project to the engineered and designed beach template. The sand under review for FEMA funding accounts for seven percent (7%) of the overall sand that was lost and replaced. Furthermore, the sand lost due to the storms fell within the USACE -permitted project of renourishing 11,500 LF of ocean shoreline; the USACE -permitted project utilized the same offshore borrow area and pumped the sand through the same pipeline as FEMA -funding project. Additionally, the FEMA -funding project includes replacement costs for 4,500 LF of sand fencing and 7,012 LF of vegetation that was also included in the USACE -permitted project.

The project is located within three reaches. Reach 1 is from 32.357640, -80.444690 to 32.367440, -80.440490; Reach 2 is from 32.371070, -80.438660 to 32.376930, -80.436150; and Reach 3 is from 32.385470, -80.432180 to 32.387589, -80.431044.

A public notice is posted on the SCPRT's website, at the Hunting Island State Park's Visitor Center, and on FEMA's website.

The Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) is available for viewing at:
<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/region/4>.

Or per request to FEMA by emailing FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov or visiting the SCPRT's website at: <https://southcarolina parks.com/hunting-island>

FINDINGS

The permitted action as described in the USACE EA had potential to impact biological, coastal, water quality, cultural, floodplains, and social economic resources. During construction, impacts to biological resources are expected to have occurred and are expected to have been minimized through equipment modification, timing of the project, monitoring, and limiting work. Coordination with the USACE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have taken place and will continue through post-construction via reporting and monitoring. Short-term impacts to coastal resources are anticipated to have occurred during construction. Restoration of the engineered beach template have restored the natural and beneficial impacts of the floodplain and wetlands. Long-term positive impacts to socio-economic resources are expected. Coordination with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has taken place with FEMA following up with SHPO and interested Tribes, and concurrence of no effect to historic properties was received.

The permitted action is not expected to have significant adverse cumulative impacts on any resource based on the review conducted when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions within the proposed project area.

CONDITIONS

The beach restoration project completed in 2019 during the construction was to adhere to all requirements as identified in the USACE and State Joint Critical Area Permitting designated as SAC-2015-01701-REVISED and #2015-01701-1IG, respectively, including all Prudent and Reasonable Measures, Terms and Conditions, and agreed to adhere to the Conservation Measures from the USFWS Biological Opinion #04ES1000-2016-F-0468-R001, issued to USACE on September 7, 2017. The applicant was also to adhere to and comply with the requirements covered by the 1997 South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion (SARBO), dated September 25, 1997. Furthermore, all post-construction requirements in the permitting and biological opinions are to be adhered to. The two FEMA funding projects will require verification of compliance during the FEMA closeout review process. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the USACE's EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, comments from the public, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a major federal action that will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment, nor does it have the

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potential for significant cumulative effects. As a result of this FONSI, and in accordance with FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, an EIS will not be prepared, and the proposed project as described in the attached SEA may proceed.

APPROVAL

**STEPHANIE
D EVERFIELD** Digitally signed by
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Stephanie D. Everfield
Environmental Officer
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