



**US Army Corps
Of Engineers**
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: June 28, 2021
Comment Deadline: July 28, 2021
Corps Action ID Number: SAW-2021-01266

The Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) received an application from the Village of Buxton seeking Department of the Army authorization to dredge 1.2 million cubic yards of beach quality sediments from an offshore borrow source, and deposit the material along an approximately 2.9-mile section of oceanfront shoreline, in the Village of Buxton, Dare County, North Carolina.

Specific plans and location information are described below and shown on the attached plans. This Public Notice and all attached plans are also available on the Wilmington District Web Site at:

<https://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory-Permit-Program/Public-Notices/>

Applicant: Dare County
Attn: Mr. Robert Outten
954 Marshall Collins Drive
Manteo, North Carolina 27954

AGENT (if applicable): Ms. Haiqing Kaczowski
Coastal Science and Engineering, Inc.
160 Gills Creek Parkway
Columbia, South Carolina 29209

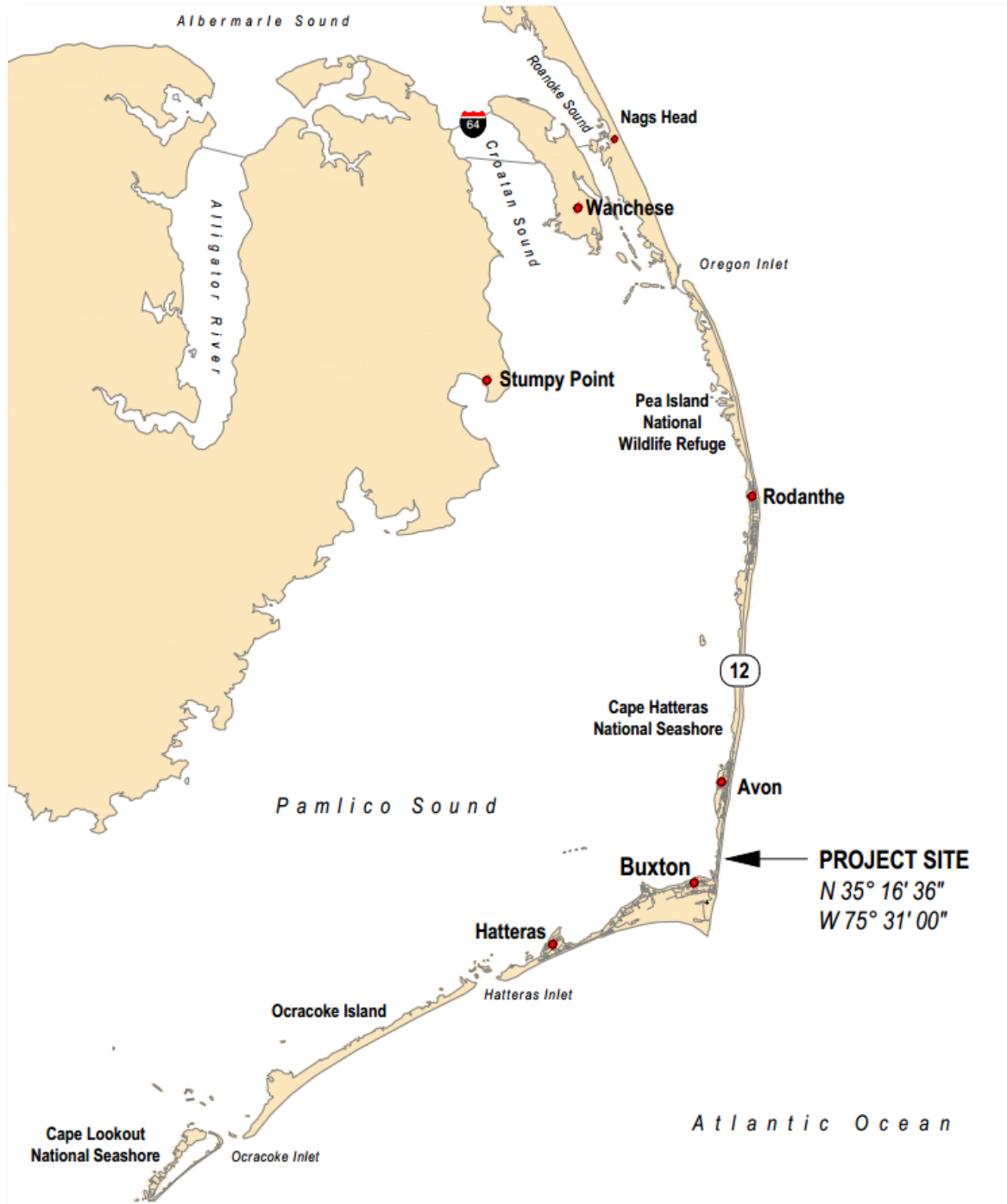
Authority

The Corps evaluates this application and decides whether to issue, conditionally issue, or deny the proposed work pursuant to applicable procedures of the following Statutory Authorities:

- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344)
- Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403)
- Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1413)

Location

Location Description:



Directions to Site: The project begins at the National Park Service Haulover public beach access and extends 2.9 miles south to the old Cape Hatteras Lighthouse location, in the Village of Buxton, Dare County, North Carolina

Project Area (acres): 295 acres Nearest Town: Village of Buxton
Nearest Waterway: Atlantic Ocean River Basin: Atlantic Ocean
Latitude and Longitude: 35.271380N, -75.517797W

Existing Site Conditions

The Village of Buxton encompasses approximately 2.5 miles of ocean shoreline on a barrier island located on North Carolina’s Outer Banks. The width of the berm of the island’s dune system varies considerably with location along the town’s beach and with seasonal accretion and erosion events. Along most of the project area, dune system is non-existent due to continuing erosion processes. Dune habitat has decreased significantly due to excessive erosion of the base or toe of the dunes by waves that travel unimpeded over eroded wet beach to directly impact remaining dunes, NC-12 and other infrastructure.

Applicant’s Stated Purpose

The purpose of the proposed action is to restore the critically eroded oceanfront and to protect NC Highway 12 from future flooding and overwash. It is intended to widen the beach, improve storm protection, and provide an erosion buffer to reduce chronic damage to NC Hwy 12 and federal, state, and county infrastructures.

Project Description

The proposed action will include sand placement along a 2.5-mile section of the Village’s oceanfront shoreline. Beach quality sand would be dredged using a self-contained ocean-certified hopper dredge and/or a hydraulic cutterhead pipeline dredge. Material will be obtained from two borrow areas located in state waters offshore of Dare County. The Borrow Area is approximately 200 acres in size and is located 2 miles offshore of the Village of Buxton within state waters. Placement onto the beach would be accomplished via submerged pipeline with direct pump-out. Once discharged, the sand will be shaped and graded according to the design template using earth-moving equipment such as bulldozers and excavators. Further details explaining the project description are located in applicant prepared narrative entitled “*Buxton Village Beach Nourishment*”.

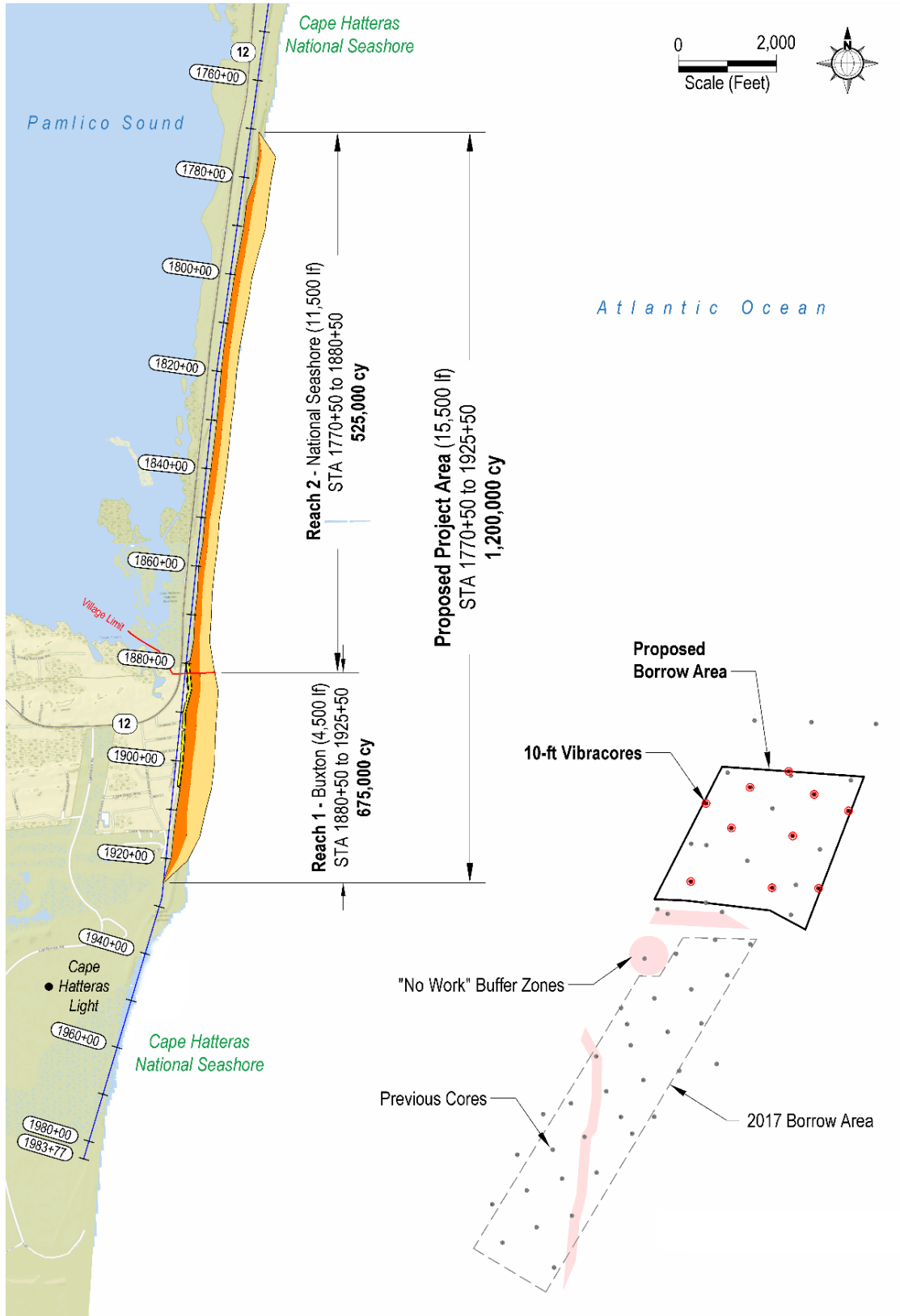


Figure 2. Plan view for the proposed project within the Village of Buxton including the including the project limits, main placement area and borrow areas.

Avoidance and Minimization

The applicant provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment: An extensive alternatives analysis was performed and reviewed for this project. This included the evaluation of a no action alternative; a nourishment with offshore sand source and winter construction, and a nourishment with offshore sand source and summer construction (applicant preferred). Many alternatives were identified and evaluated through the scoping and pre-application process, and further detailed descriptions of all alternatives and mitigative measures may be reviewed in the application and associated applicant-prepared information.

Essential Fish Habitat

The Corps' determination is that the proposed project may adversely affect EFH or associated fisheries managed by the South Atlantic or Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Councils or the National Marine Fisheries Service.

- This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Implementation of the proposed project would impact (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY- marine substrate, estuarine substrate, water columns, emergent wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, artificial reefs, hardbottoms) (see project description) utilized by various life stages of the following species: (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY – coastal migratory pelagics, corals, golden crab, shrimp, snapper grouper, spiny lobster, Atlantic highly migratory species). Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial individual or cumulative adverse impact on EFH or fisheries managed by Fishery Management Councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the NMFS.
- The Corps will consult under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and will not make a permit decision until the consultation process is complete.
- The Corps has initiated consultation the Magnuson-Stevens Act and will not make a permit decision until the consultation process is complete.

Cultural Resources

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Appendix C of 33 CFR Part 325, and the 2005 Revised Interim Guidance for Implementing Appendix C, the District Engineer consulted district files and records and the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places and initially determines that:

- Should historic properties, or properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register, be present within the Corps' permit area; the proposed activity requiring

the DA permit (the undertaking) is a type of activity that will have no potential to cause an effect to an historic properties.

- No historic properties, nor properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register, are present within the Corps' permit area; therefore, there will be no historic properties affected. The Corps subsequently requests concurrence from the SHPO (or THPO).
- Properties ineligible for inclusion in the National Register are present within the Corps' permit area; there will be no historic properties affected by the proposed work. The Corps subsequently requests concurrence from the SHPO (or THPO).
- Historic properties, or properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register, are present within the Corps' permit area; however, the undertaking will have no adverse effect on these historic properties. The Corps subsequently requests concurrence from the SHPO (or THPO).
- Historic properties, or properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register, are present within the Corps' permit area; moreover, the undertaking may have an adverse effect on these historic properties. The Corps subsequently initiates consultation with the SHPO (or THPO).
- The proposed work takes place in an area known to have the potential for the presence of prehistoric and historic cultural resources; however, the area has not been formally surveyed for the presence of cultural resources. No sites eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are known to be present in the vicinity of the proposed work. Additional work may be necessary to identify and assess any historic or prehistoric resources that may be present.

The District Engineer's final eligibility and effect determination will be based upon coordination with the SHPO and/or THPO, as appropriate and required, and with full consideration given to the proposed undertaking's potential direct and indirect effects on historic properties within the Corps-identified permit area.

Endangered Species

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Corps reviewed the project area, examined all information provided by the applicant and consulted the latest North Carolina Natural Heritage Database. Based on available information:

- The Corps determines that the proposed project would not affect federally listed endangered or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat.
- The Corps determines that the proposed project may affect, not likely to adversely affect federally listed endangered or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat.

- By copy of this public notice, the Corps initiates consultation under Section 7 of the ESA and will not make a permit decision until the consultation process is complete.
- The Corps will consult under Section 7 of the ESA and will not make a permit decision until the consultation process is complete.
- The Corps has initiated consultation under Section 7 of the ESA and will not make a permit decision until the consultation process is complete.
- The Corps determines that the proposed project may affect, not likely to adversely affect federally listed endangered or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat. Consultation has been completed for this type of activity and the effects of the proposed activity have been evaluated and/or authorized by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion or its associated documents, including 7(a)(2) & 7(d) analyses and Critical Habitat assessments. A copy of this public notice will be sent to the NMFS.
- The Corps is not aware of the presence of species listed as threatened or endangered or their critical habitat formally designated pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) within the project area. The Corps will make a final determination on the effects of the proposed project upon additional review of the project and completion of any necessary biological assessment and/or consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Marine Fisheries Service.

Other Required Authorizations

The Corps forwards this notice and all applicable application materials to the appropriate State agencies for review.

North Carolina Division of Water Resources (NCDWR):

- The applicant did not provide or satisfy all 9 elements required for a complete 401 certification request. Therefore, the 401 Certification process has not started. The Corps will generally not make a final permit decision until the NCDWR issues, denies, or waives the state Certification as required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (PL 92-500).
- The Corps will generally not make a final permit decision until the NCDWR issues, denies, or waives the state Certification as required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (PL 92-500). The receipt of the application and this public notice, combined with the appropriate application fee, at the NCDWR Central Office in Raleigh constitutes initial receipt of an application for a 401

Certification. Unless NCDWR is granted a time review extension, a waiver will be deemed to occur if the NCDWR fails to act on this request for certification within 120 days of the date of this public notice. Additional information regarding the 401 Certification may be reviewed at the NCDWR Central Office, 401 and Buffer Permitting Unit, 512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604-2260. All persons desiring to make comments regarding the application for a 401 Certification should do so, in writing, by July 28, 2021 to:

NCDWR Central Office
Attention: Mr. Paul Wojowski, 401 and Buffer Permitting Unit
(USPS mailing address): 1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1617

Or,

(physical address): 512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604

North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (NCDCM):

- The application did not include a certification that the proposed work complies with and would be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the approved North Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program. Pursuant to 33 CFR 325.2 (b)(2) the Corps cannot issue a Department of Army (DA) permit for the proposed work until the applicant submits such a certification to the Corps and the NCDCM, and the NCDCM notifies the Corps that it concurs with the applicant's consistency certification. As the application did not include the consistency certification, the Corps will request, upon receipt, concurrence or objection from the NCDCM.
- Based upon all available information, the Corps determines that this application for a Department of Army (DA) permit does not involve an activity which would affect the coastal zone, which is defined by the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Act (16 U.S.C. § 1453).

Evaluation

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values (in accordance with Executive Order 11988), land use,

navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, the evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines.

Commenting Information

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials, including any consolidated State Viewpoint or written position of the Governor; Indian Tribes and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing will be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.

The Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District will receive written comments pertinent to the proposed work, as outlined above, until 5pm, July 28, 2021. Comments should be submitted to Mr. Josh Pelletier, Washington Regulatory Field Office, 2407 West Fifth Street , Washington, North Carolina 27889, at (910) 251-4605.