



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

GALVESTON ISLAND COASTAL EROSION DRAFT DETAILED PROJECT REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT GALVESTON, TEXAS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The Detailed Project Report and Environmental Assessment (DPR/EA) dated February 2023, for the Galveston Island Coastal Erosion addresses beneficial use of dredged material for coastal storm risk management opportunities and feasibility in Galveston, Texas.

The Final DPR/EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated six alternatives that would slow/delay erosion of beachfront and offer storm risk reduction in the study area. The recommended plan is the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) and includes:

- Galveston Harbor and Channel (GHC) has been maintained by the Corps for navigation purposes, carried out periodically with the dredged sand placed into an ocean disposal area or deposited landward by hopper dredge. Galveston Island has sustained coastal storm damages and experienced localized, acute, erosion rates along the beach averaging 2.7 to 5.75 feet per year landward. Dredging the GHC provides the opportunity for the beneficial use of dredged material to delay/protect Galveston Island beachfront from coastal erosion. The maintenance dredging planned entails removing approximately 530,000 cubic yards (CY) of beach sand from the GHC to be placed on Galveston Island from Sunbather Lane west 1.7 miles. Dredged material would be deposited onto the beach using a submerged or floating pipeline, then moved with heavy equipment to match the beach profile template.

In addition to a “no action” plan, 5 alternatives were evaluated. The alternatives included beach nourishment on the west end of Galveston Island, differentiated by their respective location (Alternatives 2 and 3), seawall extension (Alternatives 4 and 5), west seawall beach nourishment (Alternative 6). Two alternatives (Alternative 2 and 3) meet the objective of preventing or delaying coastal erosion damage. Detailed information about these two alternatives can be found in Chapter 4 of the DDPR/EA.

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the recommended plan are listed in Table 1:



Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquatic resources/wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fish and wildlife habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic properties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Floodplains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, toxic & radioactive waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hydrology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise levels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal trust resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed in the DPR/EA will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts.

Examples of BMPs include but are not limited to:

- Use of silt fencing to limit soil migration and water quality degradation;
- Refueling and maintenance of vehicles and equipment in designated areas to prevent accidental spills and potential contamination of water sources and the surrounding soils;
- Limiting idling of vehicles and equipment to reduce emissions;
- Limiting ground disturbance necessary for staging areas, access routes, pipeline routes, etc. to the smallest area necessary to safely operate during construction and restoring staging area and access routes to result in no permanent loss;
- Minimizing project equipment and vehicles transiting between the staging area and restoration site to the greatest extent practicable, including but not limited to using designated routes, confining vehicle access to the immediate needs of the project, and coordinating and sequencing work to minimize the frequency and density of vehicular traffic.



- Minimizing use of construction lighting at night and when in use, directing lighting toward the construction activity area and shielding from view outside of the project area to the maximum extent practicable.

If, for some reason, the BMPs are not implemented, the impacts of any of the action alternatives would only minimally increase from those described in Chapter 4. The increase in impacts would not be substantial enough to cause an adverse insignificant impact to become significant.

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the recommended plan.

Public review of the draft DPR/EA and FONSI was completed on 15 August 2022. All comments submitted during the public review period were responded to in the Final DPR/EA and FONSI.

Pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) issued a biological opinion (Consultation No: 02ETTX00-2018-F-2491) to the Galveston Parks Board (the Non-Federal Sponsor), dated 17 June 2019, that determined that the planned beach nourishment would not jeopardize the continued existence of the following federally listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitat: Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), and piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*). In a letter of agreement dated October 11, 2022, the FWS accepted the USACE's request to operate under the current Galveston Parks Board biological opinion with the understanding that the USACE would abide by all terms and conditions, conservation measures, and reasonable and prudent alternatives and measures resulting from those consultations and that they shall be implemented in order to minimize take of endangered species and avoid jeopardizing the species.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that the recommended plan has no effect on historic properties.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the recommended plan has been found to be compliant with section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230). The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines evaluation is found in Appendix C of the DPR/EA.

A water quality certification pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act was obtained from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. All conditions of the water quality certification shall be implemented in order to minimize adverse impacts to water quality.

A determination of consistency with the Texas Coastal Zone Management program pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 will be obtained from the Texas General Land Office prior to construction. In a letter dated 19 September 2022, the Texas General Land Office stated that the recommended plan appears to be consistent with state Coastal Zone Management plans, pending confirmation based on information to be developed during the pre-



construction engineering and design phase. All conditions of the consistency determination shall be implemented in order to minimize adverse impacts to the coastal zone.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials has been completed. The project area is located in Ecoregion 4 nearshore habitat and includes EFH designated by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council for several life stages of fish and crustaceans, including highly migratory species and commercially and recreationally important species. EFH in the project vicinity includes sand, shell, and water column. These species are ubiquitous along the Texas coast with seasonal differences in abundance. The National Marine Fisheries Service provided concurrence with the USACE's findings of "no significant adverse effect" determination. The common bottle nosed dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) is the most likely marine mammal occurring in the nearshore. Other species of dolphins and whales are primarily restricted to deeper offshore waters; therefore, it is unlikely that any of these species would occur in or near the project area.

Technical, environmental, and cost effectiveness criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the recommended plan would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date

Rhett A. Blackmon
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander