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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

The release of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Figure Eight Island Shoreline Management Project, on Figure Eight Island, New Hanover County, NC

AGENCY: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of Availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Wilmington District, Wilmington Regulatory Field Office has received a request for Department of the Army authorization, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, from Figure Eight Beach Homeowners' Association Inc. (HOA) to install a terminal groin structure along Rich Inlet and to conduct a supplemental beach nourishment on approximately 4,500 linear feet of oceanfront beach and 1,400 linear feet of back barrier shoreline to protect residential homes and infrastructures along the central and northern sections of Figure Eight Island. The terminal groin structure will be placed perpendicular on

the northern tip of the island along the shoulder of Rich Inlet; and the proposed source of the material for the nourishment will be dredged from an area within Nixon Channel, a back barrier channel, that has been previously used for past beach nourishment projects. In case the quantity of material from Nixon Channel is not sufficient, material pumped from (3) nearby upland disposal islands will be used to supplement the nourishment needs. The majority of the material will be disposed within the fillet area, or down shore, of the groin. Pending storm events and shoreline changes, maintenance, or periodic nourishment, of the beach is proposed a maximum of once every five years, or potential 6 separate events over the 30-year study period. Nixon Channel and the upland disposal islands are the proposed material sources for the periodic maintenance, or renourishment, events.

DATES: Written comments on the Supplemental EIS must be received at (see **ADDRESSES)** no later than 5 p.m. on August 24, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Copies of comments and questions regarding the Supplemental EIS may be addressed to: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, Regulatory Division. ATTN: File Number 2006-41158, 69 Darlington Avenue, Wilmington, NC 28403. Copies of the Supplemental EIS can be reviewed on the Corps homepage at,

http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/RegulatoryPermitProgram/MajorProjects,

under Figure Eight Island Terminal Groin: Corps ID # SAW-2006-41158.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposed

action and SEIS and/or to receive CD or written copies of the Supplemental EIS can be directed to Mr. Mickey Sugg, Wilmington Regulatory Field Office, telephone: (910) 251-4811.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. *Project Purpose and Need.* Figure Eight Beach HOA has addressed the continuing oceanfront erosion problems associated with Rich Inlet and Nixon Channel erosion hot-spot on the estuarine side of the island over the past several decades. Past actions to protect the shorelines have provided some protection, however they are seeking a longer term solution to handle shoreline erosion in order to protect the island's $907,352,900 (based on the 2012 reappraisal) assessed property tax value. Their stated needs of the project continue to be the following: 1) Reduce erosion along approximately 2.3 miles of oceanfront and 0.34 miles of back barrier shorelines, 2) Provide reasonable short-term protection to residential structures to any unpredicted shoreline change over the next five years, 3) Provide long-term protection to homes and infrastructure over the next 30 years, 4) Maintain the tax value of homes, properties, and infrastructure, 5) Use beach compatible material, 6) Maintain navigation conditions within Rich Inlet and Nixon Channel, 7) Maintain recreational resources, and 8) Balance the needs of the human environment with the protection of existing natural resources.

2. *Proposed Action.* Within the Town's preferred alternative, known as Alternative 5D, the installation of the terminal groin is the main component in the

protection of the oceanfront shoreline. The location of the structure will be approximately 420 feet north of the initial location described in the Draft EIS which was published in the Federal Register (77 FR 29618) on May 18, 2012. The proposed structure is just north of the existing homes along the shoulder of Rich Inlet. Its total length is approximately 1,500 feet, which approximately 505 feet will project seaward of the 2007 mean high water shoreline. The landward 995-foot anchor section would extend across the island and terminate near the Nixon Channel Shoreline. This section will be constructed of 14,000 to 18,000 square feet of sheet pile with portions of the length wrapped with rock. Although engineering design plans are not finalized, basic construction design of the seaward 505-foot part of the structure will be in the form of a typical rubble (rock) mound feature supported by a 1.5-foot thick stone foundation blanket. Crest height or elevation of this section is estimated to be +6.0 feet NAVD for the first 400 feet and would slope to a top elevation of +3.0 feet NAVD on the seaward end. Approximately 16,000 tons of stone would be used to construct the terminal groin. The concept design of the structure is intended to allow littoral sand transport to move over, around, and through the groin once the accretion fillet has completely filled in.

Construction of the terminal groin will be kept within a corridor varying in width from 50 feet to 200 feet. Within this corridor, a 40-70 foot wide trench will be excavated to a depth of -2.5 feet NAVD in order to construct the foundation of

the landward section. The approximate 6,000 cubic yards of excavated material will be replaced on and around the structure once it's in place. Material used to build the groin will be barged down the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW), through Nixon Channel, and either offloaded onto a temporary loading dock or directly onto shore. It will then be transported, via dump trucks, within the designated corridor to the construction site.

Material used for nourishment will be dredged, using a hydraulic cutterhead plant, from a designated borrow site within Nixon Channel, which has been previously used for beach fill needs. Approximately 294,500 cubic yards will be required for both the oceanfront (237,500 cubic yards) and the Nixon Channel shoreline (57,000 cubic yards) fill areas under the 2006 and 2012 shoreline study conditions. Beach compatible material from (3) upland disposal islands would serve as a contingency sediment source.

Engineer modeling results have shown that periodic nourishment will be required approximately once every five years to maintain the beach and Nixon Channel shorelines. The combined 5-year estimated maintenance needs for both areas are 320,000 cubic yards of material under the 2006 condition and 255,000 cubic yards of material under 2012 condition, equivalent to approximately 58,000 and 45,000 cubic yards per year respectively. This material will come from the designated Nixon Channel borrow site and the (3) upland disposal areas.

3. *Alternatives.* Several alternatives have been identified and evaluated through the scoping process, and further detailed description of all alternatives is disclosed in Section 3.0 of the Supplemental EIS. At the time of the Draft EIS release in 2012, the applicant's preferred alternative had been the Alternative 5B described in Section 3.0 of the SEIS. However, the Figure Eight Beach HOA evaluated two other minor variations of this alternative and determined that one of those variations, Alternative 5D, would best suit their needs. Alternative 5D, the applicant's preferred alternative, is to install a terminal groin structure approximately 420 feet north of Alternatives 5A and 5B, to conduct initial supplemental beach nourishment, and to implement a periodic beach nourishment plan over a 30-year period.

4. *Scoping Process*. To date, a public scoping meeting was held on March 1, 2007; several Project Delivery Team (PDT) meetings have been held; comprising of local, state, and federal government officials, local residents and nonprofit organizations; Draft EIS was released for public comments on May 18, 2012; and a Public Hearing was conducted on June 7, 2012.

The COE is consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and with the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Endangered Species Act. Additionally, the SEIS assesses the potential water quality impacts pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and is coordinated

with the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (DCM) to insure the projects consistency with the Coastal Zone Management Act. The COE is coordinating closely with DCM in the development of the SEIS to ensure the process complies with State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements, as well as the NEPA requirements. The Supplemental EIS has been designed to consolidate both NEPA and SEPA processes to eliminate duplications.

Dated: July 2, 2015.

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Henry Wicker,
Regulatory Division Assistant Chief,
Wilmington District.

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