

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

NOTICE: WFF-13-04

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA): Wallops Island Post-Hurricane Sandy Shoreline Repair

AGENCY: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's (GSFC) WFF

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the NEPA of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and NASA policy and procedures (14 CFR Part 1216 Subpart 1216.3), NASA has made a Finding of No Significant Impact with respect to its proposed Wallops Island Post-Hurricane Sandy Shoreline Repair at WFF, Accomack County, Virginia.

ADDRESS: The Final Environmental Assessment (EA) that supports and serves as a basis for this FONSI may be reviewed at:

- Chincoteague Island Library, Chincoteague, Virginia
- Wallops Flight Facility Visitor's Center, Route 175 near Chincoteague, Virginia
- Eastern Shore Public Library, Accomac, Virginia

An electronic copy of the Final EA is available on the Internet at http://sites.wff.nasa.gov/code250/Tiered_Shoreline_Renourishment_EA.html.

A limited number of copies of the EA may be obtained by contacting the NASA representative at the address or telephone number indicated below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Mr. Joshua Bundick, NASA Wallops Flight Facility, Mailstop: 250.W, Wallops Island, Virginia, Phone: (757) 824-2319, Email: Joshua.A.Bundick@nasa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: In response to storm damage incurred during Hurricane Sandy in October 2012, NASA proposes to repair portions of its recently nourished Wallops Island shoreline. Though the beach and seawall served their intended purpose of reducing Sandy's potential damage to the launch facilities on Wallops Island, much of the dune and elevated berm were lost and now cannot provide the level of storm damage reduction for which they were originally designed.

With the exception of a shortened time between the initial beach fill and the first renourishment cycle (approximately two years versus five years), the proposal is essentially the same as the renourishment component described in NASA's October 2010 *Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Wallops Flight Facility Shoreline Restoration and Infrastructure Protection Program (Final PEIS)*.

As such, the EA prepared for the proposal tiers from the *Final PEIS* and provides a focused analysis of the proposed repair work. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers served as Cooperating Agencies in preparing the EA as each has both specialized expertise and regulatory authority regarding the proposal.

Alternatives Considered

The EA evaluates in detail two alternatives: the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. Under the Proposed Action, NASA would fund the placement along the Wallops Island shoreline of up to approximately 800,000 cubic yards of sand dredged from an offshore shoal. Additionally, should funds permit, NASA would repair a portion of its rock seawall. Under the No Action Alternative, NASA would not make the subject repairs.

Environmental Analysis

The EA examines the potential effects of the alternatives on physical, biological, and social resources. Resources evaluated in detail include coastal processes, water quality, the coastal zone, air quality, noise, benthos, wildlife, finfish and habitat, marine mammals, threatened and endangered species, and cultural resources. In summary, the EA concludes that potential effects to these resources would be negligible to minor.

Public Involvement

NASA notified the public of the availability of the Draft EA through a combination of mailed correspondence and published notices in local newspapers. The Draft EA was also available for public review on the Internet, at local libraries, and at the WFF Visitor Center.

NASA provided a 30-day public comment period on the Draft EA. Of the comments NASA received during the public review period, the majority of them reemphasized comments previously offered during the public review of the *Final PEIS*. The most common comment themes were: (1) coastal vulnerability to climate change, (2) the need to obtain quality shoreline monitoring data, (3) and the need to protect biological resources during project execution. No commenters expressed strong concerns regarding the proposal. In preparing the Final EA, NASA considered all comments received.

Related Environmental Reviews

While preparing the EA, NASA conducted consultations pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), and Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.). As such, NASA met its obligations with respect to these statutes in parallel with the development of the EA.

Conclusion

On the basis of the Final EA, NASA has determined that the environmental impacts associated with its funding of the post-Hurricane Sandy shoreline repairs on Wallops Island will not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



William A. Wrobel
Director
Wallops Flight Facility

19 JUNE 2013

Date