

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT: Shoreline Enhancement and Restoration Project

AGENCY: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) policy and procedures (14 CFR Part 1216 Subpart 1216.3), the NASA has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to its proposed Shoreline Enhancement and Restoration Project at Wallops Flight Facility (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, Accomack, Virginia
- Northampton Free Library, Nassawadox, Virginia

An electronic copy of the Final EA is available on the Internet at:
https://code200-external.gsfc.nasa.gov/250-wff/SERP_EA.

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:

Shari Miller
Center NEPA Manager
NASA Wallops Flight Facility
Mailstop: 250.W
Wallops Island, Virginia 23337
Phone: 757-824-2327
e-mail:Shari.A.Miller@nasa.gov

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Wallops Island's constructed beach system has served its intended purpose of reducing damage to the range assets. However, the area has been severely, eroded. The effects are most apparent within the southern half of Wallops Island, where the majority of NASA's most critical launch assets are located. Within this area, storms, winds, and waves have acted to reduce the beach berm, in some places by three feet or more. A large portion of that eroded sand has migrated to

the north end of Wallops Island. Without being restored to regain full functionality, the beach berm and dune system can no longer provide the level of storm damage reduction for which it was originally intended. Therefore, the Proposed Action is to renourish the beach along the southern and mid-Wallops Island in the area adjacent to launch infrastructure and to construct a series of parallel nearshore breakwater structures that would reduce the intensity of wave action and slow sediment transport.

All elements of the proposal are described in NASA's October 2010 *Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Wallops Flight Facility Shoreline Restoration and Infrastructure Protection Program* (Final SRIPP PEIS). Accordingly, the EA prepared for the proposal tiers from the Final SRIPP 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 three alternatives and the No Action Alternative. Under the Proposed Action, NASA would fund the placement of up to approximately 1.3 million cubic yards of sand along the Wallops Island shoreline. Alternative 1 would source sand from the existing beach at the northern end of Wallops Island where longshore transport has accumulated sediment from mid- and south-Wallops Island. Alternative 2 would renourish the beach using material from Outer Continental Shelf Unnamed Shoal A, an offshore sand ridge located at the southern end of the Assateague ridge field. Alternative 3 would involve the renourishment activities proposed by Alternatives 1 or 2 and, prior to renourishment, a series of rubble mound breakwaters would be constructed approximately 200 feet offshore from the mean high water line of the Wallops Island shoreline infrastructure protection area. Under the No Action Alternative, NASA would not undertake any beach renourishment activities.

NASA has selected Alternatives 1 and 3, sourcing renourishment sand from the northern end of Wallops Island and constructing a series of rubble mound breakwaters as the Preferred Alternative.

Environmental Analysis

The EA examines the potential effects of the alternatives on physical, biological, and social resources. Resources evaluated in detail include coastal geology and processes, water quality, coastal zone management, air quality, noise, benthos, wildlife, fisheries and essential fish habitat, marine mammals, special status species, cultural resources, and recreation resources. In summary, the EA concludes that potential effects to these resources would be negligible to not significant and fall within the bound of analysis in the Final SRIPP PEIS.

Public Involvement

During the scoping period that began February 27, 2018, and ended March 29, 2018, NASA invited federal, state, and local agencies and members of the public to provide input to the development of the EA.

NASA notified the public of the availability of the Draft EA for review and comment during a 30-day public comment period through advertisements placed in the Chincoteague Beacon, Eastern Shore News, Eastern Shore Post, and The Daily Times. The advertisements also announced a public meeting held at the WFF Visitor Center on December 19, 2018, from 5 to 7 p.m. An electronic version of the Draft EA along with the advertisement of the public meeting was available to the public on the NASA project website. Print copies of the Draft EA were available for public viewing at the Chincoteague Island Library, Chincoteague, VA; Eastern Shore Public Library, Accomac, VA; Northampton Free Library, Nassawadox, VA; and the WFF Visitor Center, Rt. 175, Wallops Island, VA. Print copies were also available upon request. In preparing the Final EA, NASA considered all comments received.

The Final EA and FONSI (this document) are also available for review on the project website and in the same local repositories as the Draft EA. As with the Draft EA, advertisements were placed in the Chincoteague Beacon, Eastern Shore News, Eastern Shore Post, and The Daily Times.

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.), Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) and Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.). As such, NASA has met its obligations with respect to these statutes in parallel with the development of the EA.

Conclusion

In accordance with the Final SRIPP PEIS, NASA prepared the EA prior to initiating a beach renourishment action. On the basis of the Final EA, NASA has determined that the environmental impacts associated with harvesting sand from the northern end of Wallops Island, renourishing the middle and southern ends of Wallops Island, and constructing a series of rubble mound breakwaters will not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment and that these actions are consistent with the Final SRIPP PEIS. Therefore, a new Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



David L. Pierce
Director, Wallops Flight Facility

16 July 2019

Date