



US Army Corps
Of Engineers
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: July 22, 2008

Comment Deadline: September 5, 2008

Corps Action ID #: SAW-2006-40848-071

All interested parties are hereby advised that the Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) is releasing the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and announcing a Public Hearing for an interim beach fill project to protect oceanfront development and infrastructure until such time that a Federally authorized shore protection project can be implemented at Topsail Beach, Pender County, North Carolina.

Specific plans and location information are described below and shown on the attached plan. This Public Notice is available on the Wilmington District Web Site at www.saw.usace.army.mil/wetlands.

Public Hearing will be held at the Historical Society Assembly Building, 720 Channel Boulevard, Topsail Beach, NC, August 26, 2008 at 6:00 P.M.

Applicant: The Town of Topsail Beach
C/o Mr. Steve Foster, Town Manager
820 South Anderson Boulevard
Topsail Beach, North Carolina 28445

Agent: Coastal Planning & Engineering, Inc.
C/o Ms. Dawn York
330 Shipyard Boulevard
Wilmington, North Carolina 28412

Authority

The Corps will evaluate this project pursuant to applicable procedures to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Location

The Town of Topsail Beach is located on the southern end of Topsail Island adjacent to New Topsail Inlet in Pender County on the central North Carolina coast. The fill placement area will encompass the Topsail Beach/Surf City limit to Godwin Avenue, a linear distance of approximately 4.7 miles, or 25,000 feet of oceanfront shoreline.

Existing Site Conditions

Topsail Island is a 22-mile long and 0.5-mile wide barrier island on the Atlantic Ocean. Due to the northeast-southwest orientation, the island faces the Atlantic Ocean on the southeast. Other water bodies within the project vicinity include New Topsail Inlet immediately to the southwest, Banks Channel and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW) to the northwest, and New River Inlet at the far northeastern end of Topsail Island.

Applicant's Stated Purpose

The stated purpose of the project is to address a severe erosion problem by conducting a one-time interim beach fill project to protect oceanfront development and infrastructure until such time that a federally authorized shore protection project can be implemented. At this time, the construction date for the Federal project is uncertain. A Draft General Reevaluation Report-Environmental Impact Statement (GRR-EIS) has been prepared by the Corps and was released for public review and comment in June 2006 (USACE, 2006). Given the current status of the GRR-EIS and the need for Congressional authorization, funding, preparation of plans and specifications, and right-of-way acquisition, the federal project may not be implemented until Fiscal Year 2012, or possibly later. Accordingly, the Town would like to construct an interim project to protect its development and infrastructure during the period between now and the time the federal project is constructed. In order to account for any possible delays in the construction of the federal project, a construction date of 2016 was used in the development of the alternatives and economic analysis for the interim project. This would maintain the baseline conditions described in the Draft GRR and EIS. The applicant has prepared a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Project Description

The fill placement area will occur between Godwin Avenue on the south to a point 2,000 feet northeast of Topsail Beach/Surf City town limits, a total ocean shoreline length of approximately 25,000 feet. The fill would consist of three sections, a 1,000-foot transition on the south beginning at a point opposite Godwin Avenue, a 22,000-foot main fill section that would extend to the Topsail Beach/Surf City town limits, and a 2,000-foot northern transition (Figure 1). The beach fill would have a variable width berm constructed to an elevation of +6.0 feet NAVD. The volume of material for the interim project is based on providing erosion protection until such time a federal storm damage reduction project is implemented. The volume of beach fill material could range from a minimal amount needed to counter long-term erosion losses during the interim period (approximately 5 years) to a maximum amount that would include a contingency volume to account for possible storm related erosion losses during the time period. The material to construct the interim project would be derived from an offshore borrow site or a combination of borrow sites.

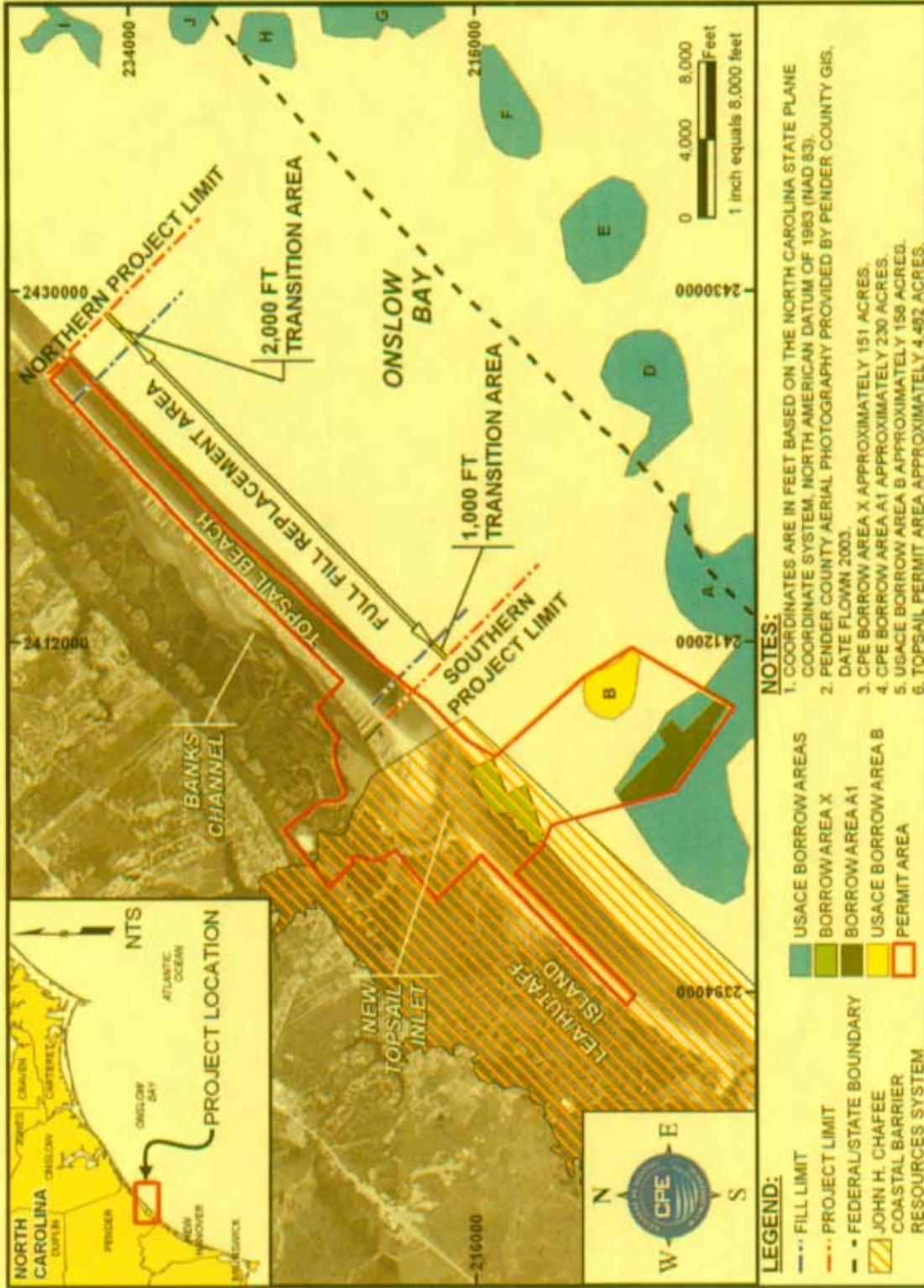


Figure 1 – Topsail Beach Interim (Emergency) Beach Fill Project – Permit Request Location Map

The potential borrow sites include a portion of Borrow Area A (Borrow Area A1) identified by the USACE in the Draft GRR/EIS with the area considered for the interim project shown in Figure 1. Borrow Area A1 contains a total volume of approximately 2.0 million cy. The second potential borrow area, designated as Borrow Area X in Figure 1, was developed specifically for the interim project and lies offshore of New Topsail Inlet outside the areas investigated by the USACE. Borrow Area X also contains approximately 2.0 million cy.

Borrow Area B (Figure 1) is considered as a possible source for the interim project, however the volume of material available in Borrow Area B is an estimated total volume of 820,000 gross cy with an overfill factor of 1.23 resulting in a potential net volume of suitable beach fill material of 660,000 cy. The superposition of the 500 m buffer around the probable hardbottom areas located close to Borrow Area B eliminated approximately 54% of the borrow area. The remaining area of Borrow Area B lying outside the 500 m buffer contains approximately 230,000 cy of relatively fine grained material (0.19 mm mean grain size) in a shallow deposit (2 to 3 ft). The shallow nature of the deposit in Borrow Area B would not render it economical to dredge with a cutterhead pipeline dredge. Ultimately, the small volume of material that could reasonably be obtained from Borrow Area B compared to the increase in potential environmental resources associated with the placement of pipeline around probable hardbottom or use of a hopper dredge resulted in its elimination as a viable borrow source for the Topsail Beach Interim Beach Fill Project.

In addition to the borrow areas discussed above, the USACE identifies an additional five (5) offshore borrow areas in Section 7.04 of the Draft GRR/EIS (USACE, 2006). These offshore borrow areas, Borrow Areas A, C, D, E, and F, lie seaward of the 3-mile state territorial limit and would require permits from the U.S. Minerals Management Service (MMS). Usage of the USACE offshore borrow areas located beyond the 4.8 km (3 mi) state territorial limit would not meet the purpose and need of the project. In particular, the acquisition and utilization of beach compatible material for shore protection project no later than March 31, 2009.

An additional source of borrow material, Banks Channel located behind Topsail Beach, was considered a potential alternative however it has not been evaluated in detail due to the small volume of material that could be removed from within the limits of the authorized navigation channel. A recent maintenance operation in Banks Channel and Old Topsail Creek, completed in fall 2007, removed approximately 160,000 cy of shoal material and deposited the material along 4,000 feet of shoreline extending north of the Sea Vista Hotel/Condominium. This operation further reduced the quantity of material that could be used for the interim project that would be available from the existing navigation channels. Upland borrow sources are also not an economical option for the interim project. Cost estimates for truck haul material from upland borrow areas located near the Town of Wallace, NC determined the unit cost for the material was non-competitive. Accordingly, upland borrow sources were not evaluated in detail for the proposed interim project. Beach fill alternatives evaluated in detail for the interim project are listed below and include constructing the project using either Borrow Area A1, Borrow Area X, or a combination of Borrow Areas X and A1. For the combined use of Borrow Areas X and A1, only the two seaward most dredge cuts of Borrow Area X would be used. This particular portion of Borrow Area X contains an estimated 784,000 cy of material. The Applicant's Preferred Alternative includes the use of Borrow Area X which contains an

estimated 2.0 million cy of material. Two dredging methods were also evaluated; ocean certified cutter-suction pipeline dredge (pipeline dredge) and hopper dredge using direct pumpout (hopper dredge).

The naming convention for the various beach fill alternatives is as follows:

- Alternative 3a: Borrow Area A1 with pipeline dredge
- Alternative 3b: Borrow Area X with pipeline dredge
- Alternative 3c: Borrow Areas X and A1 with pipeline dredge
- Alternative 3d: Borrow Area A1 with hopper dredge
- Alternative 3e: Borrow Area X with hopper dredge
- Alternative 3f: Borrow Areas X and A1 with hopper dredge

Based on the goals, needs and objectives of the interim project, **Alternative 3b** is the Applicant's Preferred Alternative. The proposed construction timeframe for the interim beach fill activities will occur in early calendar year 2009.

The estimated environmental impacts are shown in Table 1.

BEACH FILL SURVEYS & DESIGN. Typical cross-sections of the beach along the Topsail Beach project area will be surveyed. Nearshore profiles will extend seaward to at least the -30-foot NAVD depth contour. The total volume of beach fill to be placed in front of the existing development and infrastructure will be based on an evaluation of erosion of the project area from 2002 through the expected construction date of the Federal project. Additional offshore and inshore data for Lea/Hutaff Island were also obtained along the northern 5,000 feet of the island. This data was used in the evaluation of possible impacts associated with the removal of sediment from the selected offshore borrow area and for future impact evaluations following project implementation through the use of numerical modeling.

GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS. The offshore sand search investigations have included bathymetric surveys, sidescan sonar surveys, seismic surveys, cultural resource surveys, vibracore collection and analysis, and ground-truth diver surveys to verify existence or non-existence of hard bottoms. The results of the offshore investigations coupled with the compatibility of the sand resource area and native beach sand were assessed to define the borrow area. All sediment compatibility assessments were based on State of North Carolina sediment compatibility standards that went into effect in February 2007.

PROPOSED MONITORING PLANS. The applicant has proposed monitoring plans, in response to comments by the resource agencies, for shorebirds, sea turtle nesting, and macroinvertebrates/infaunal species. Details of these plans are provided in the DSEIS.

This notice is to inform interested parties of our issued July 25, 2008 Notice to release the DSEIS which can be found on the Federal Register website, <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/the-federal-register/about.html> and to announce a Public Hearing for this project, August 26, 2008, at the Historical Society Assembly Building, 720 Channel Blvd., Topsail Beach, NC at 6:00 p.m.

Additionally, the DSEIS has been placed on the Town of Topsail Beach's website located at <http://topsailbeach.org/>.

As disclosed in the Notice, any written comments pertinent to the proposed work, as outlined above, must be submitted to this office, Attention: Dave Timpy, until 4:15 p.m., September 5, 2008. Questions can be directed to Mr. Timpy at (910) 251-4634, Wilmington Regulatory Field Office.