



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## Wilmington District

### **Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species (SLOPES) for Wilmington District, Department of the Army Permits Affecting the West Indian Manatee in North Carolina.**

The purpose of this public notice is to announce that the Wilmington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) have developed a SLOPES agreement concerning potential effects to the federally threatened West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*).

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires that federal agencies, in consultation with the Services (both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service), take such actions as necessary to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of such endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species which is determined by the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, as appropriate, to be critical.

This SLOPES details how the USACE, Wilmington District, Regulatory Division and Civil Works, will make determinations of effect to the West Indian manatee when USACE is the lead Federal agency for a project, and it is applicable to activities regulated pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act in the state of North Carolina. Note that if another Federal agency is the lead for a project, procedures for satisfying the requirements of Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA will be dictated by that agency and will not be applicable for consideration under this SLOPES.

Major threats to the West Indian Manatee include degradation and loss of foraging and wintering habitats, watercraft collisions, harassment, and exposure to cold. Proper application of the procedures outlined in the SLOPES will ensure that activities regulated under Section 404 of the CWA and/or Section 10 of the RHA in North Carolina are processed in accordance with the requirements of Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA.

### **GEOGRAPHIC AREA COVERED BY THE SLOPES**

There are one hundred (100) counties in North Carolina. A twenty-two (22) county subset of these counties comprises the area where the West Indian Manatee may be located and constitute the consultation area. Those counties are:

Beaufort	Craven	Martin	Perquimans
Bertie	Currituck	New Hanover	Pitt
Brunswick	Dare	Onslow	Tyrrell
Camden	Hyde	Pamlico	Washington
Carteret	Jones	Pasquotank	
Chowan	Lenoir	Pender	

## **PURPOSE OF THE SLOPES**

This SLOPES formalizes the coordination between the USACE, Wilmington District and the USFWS Raleigh Ecological Services field office for effect determinations and the need for further consultation. The SLOPES addresses effects to the West Indian Manatee only. Effects to other federally listed species and/or to federally designated critical habitat will be processed via traditional consultation methods unless separate SLOPES or other agreements with the Service have been reached for those species and/or critical habitat.

## **TIMEFRAME**

The SLOPES was signed and became effective on March 4, 2025. There is not an expiration date for the SLOPES; However, it may be modified or amended only by written mutual agreement of the parties. Additionally, it may be terminated, in its entirety, by written mutual agreement of the parties. An individual party to this agreement may withdraw from the agreement after providing 30 days written notice of such intent to withdraw to the other participating signatory.

## **WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSED IN THE SLOPES?**

For USACE Civil Works, the SLOPES covers the following activities: Dredging and dredged material placement, shoreline protection and other in-water activities funded or conducted by USACE. For the USACE Regulatory Division, the SLOPES covers all activities authorized under all current Nationwide Permits (NWP) and all current Wilmington District (SAW) Regional General Permits (RGPs) or Programmatic General Permits (PGPs). Additionally, this SLOPES Agreement covers USACE authorizations of activities conducted under any Individual Permits (IPs)/Letters of Permission (LOP) where the USFWS has received a Public Notice from the USACE, Regulatory Division, and provided no comments explicitly restricting use of the West Indian Manatee SLOPES.

## **WHAT IF THE USACE IS NOT THE LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY**

If another federal agency is the lead for a project, procedures for satisfying the requirements of Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA will be dictated by that agency and will not be applicable for consideration under this SLOPES.

## **WHO CAN I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SLOPES AGREEMENT**

The West Indian Manatee SLOPES can be viewed here:

[West Indian Manatee SLOPES link](#)

Individuals who do not have internet access, or who may have additional questions should contact either John Policarpo, USACE at [john.n.policarpo@usace.army.mil](mailto:john.n.policarpo@usace.army.mil) or by telephone at 910-251-4000 or Andrew Williams, USACE at [andrew.e.williams2@usace.army.mil](mailto:andrew.e.williams2@usace.army.mil) or by telephone at 919-440-0119.