

Final Supplement to the Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance

Westport, Grays Harbor County, Washington



November 2005



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Seattle District

**Final Supplement to the Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment for
the South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance
November 2005**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this environmental assessment (EA) supplements the December 2004 South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA), which in turn supplemented the February 2004 South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance Final Environmental Assessment (EA), both of which are hereby incorporated by reference. The December 2004 SEA evaluated the impacts of a proposal to preserve the status quo, by protecting against the undue risk of the recurrence of a breach in the vicinity of the South Jetty. That SEA presented a contingent interim action plan, to be implemented if either of two predesignated thresholds indicating the presence of a risk of breach were to arise, and established a responsive action associated with each threshold. Subsequent to the finalization of the Final SEA and the promulgation of the associated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), Threshold No. 1 was determined to have been reached and Responsive Action No. 1 was implemented on 9 December 2004, through the excavation of sand from the mitigation stockpile along the eastern shore of Half Moon Bay, which was then transported for placement in an area adjoining the southwest corner of Half Moon Bay.

1.1 *Background and Need*

The EA of February 2004 and the SEA of December 2004 provide additional discussion of the background and need for the South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance Project. As indicated in the Final SEA, the design of Responsive Action No. 1 (if triggered by the occurrence of Threshold No. 1) was described as follows: "Responsive Action No. 1: The Corps would place approximately 20,000 cubic yards of clean sand along approximately 1,000 linear feet of beach in the southwest corner of Half Moon Bay, as illustrated in Figure 2. . . . Excavated material would be placed shoreward of the +9 feet above MLLW contour line (the mean higher high water contour) at its natural angle of repose. . . . Sand would be placed completely within the footprint of the 1994 breach fill placement, and fully within the narrower footprint of placement used in February 2004." Placement of sand was initiated on 15 December 2004 and was completed on 6 January 2005. A post-construction survey of the sand placement project was conducted on 10 January 2005. An overlay of graphical representations of the survey data delineating the footprint of the sand placement completed in January 2005 (Appendix B, Exhibit 1) demonstrates that its eastern terminus extended approximately 90 feet beyond the eastern terminus of the project design as illustrated in Figure 2 of the December 2004 SEA.

The placement of sand over a footprint that exceeded the design footprint expressed in the December 2004 SEA was a mistaken attempt to match the contours of the existing upland sand dunes and to connect the berm of placed sand with the adjoining crest of the existing dune. Post-construction evaluation determined that this eastward extension of the sand placement footprint adjacent to the southern shoreline of Half Moon Bay did not directly and materially contribute to the accomplishment of the project purpose, as prescribed in the SEA, of preserving the status quo in the South Jetty area by protecting against an undue risk of recurrence of a breach through the South Jetty breach fill material. The additional increment of sand placement was insufficiently supported under NEPA, for the following reasons: this additional increment of sand placement

was not described in the project design in the SEA, was not noticed to the public, was not subjected to an evaluation of the resulting effects on the quality of the human environment, was not a component of the project as delineated and approved in the FONSI accompanying the SEA, and was ostensibly justified by a rationale not directly related to the purpose of sand placement delineated in the SEA.

1.2 Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed work is to rectify the misplacement of that increment of sand that extends eastward beyond the eastern limit of the design of the interim action project's Responsive Action No. 1.

1.3 Location

The project area is located adjoining the southern shoreline of Half Moon Bay, in Westhaven State Park, Westport, Grays Harbor County, Washington (T16N, R12W, Section 1). The location of the proposed work is shown in Exhibit 1.

1.4 Authority

See Section 1.4 of the SEA for a discussion of the authority for the Corps to undertake sand placement in the vicinity of the South Beach Jetty.

1.5 Previous documents

Additional information on the history of Grays Harbor and the Chehalis River Navigation Project engineering structures, erosion in the project area, and the natural resources of Grays Harbor can be found in the South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance Supplemental Environmental Assessment of December 2004, and the numerous previous documents that are referenced therein. All those cited documents are hereby incorporated into this document by reference.

2. ALTERNATIVES

The Corps has considered two alternatives for remedying the increment of sand volume that was mistakenly placed: No action; and removal of the incremental volume of misplaced sand from its present location, and transportation and placement within the design footprint described in the SEA of December 2004.

2.1 No Action

The No Action alternative was removed from further consideration, as it would not achieve the project purpose of rectifying the mistaken placement of an incremental volume of sand outside the design footprint as described and depicted in the SEA. Because there is no justification directly and materially related to the contingent interim action project's purpose of maintaining the status quo by averting an undue risk of recurrence of a breach, action to remove the sand must be taken.

2.2 Removal and Re-placement of the Incremental Volume of Misplaced Sand

The removal and re-placement of the incremental volume of misplaced sand is selected as the preferred alternative. Approximately 1000 cubic yards of sand would be excavated from the misplacement footprint illustrated in Exhibit 1. This material would be mechanically rehandled and placed on an unimproved portion of the breach fill access road to raise and widen a relatively low, narrow area of the breach fill. Minor grading would occur for pioneering an access route on the sand. No building materials (i.e., rock) would be used to provide routes for use in transporting the sand. A hydraulic excavator would be used to load misplacement materials into conventional trucks to transport the sand the short distances (less than 800 feet) involved and place the sand at the re-placement area within the footprint prescribed in the SEA. Excavated material would be placed shoreward of the contour demarking +9 feet above mean lower low water (MLLW) at its natural angle of repose, to minimize impacts on intertidal ecology. The misplaced sand to be excavated had been derived in December 2004 and January 2005 from the same source as the sand on top of which it will be placed – the buried revetment migration stockpile along the eastern shoreline of Half Moon Bay – so the grain size and composition of the transported sand would be fully consistent with the material it would cover. Sand would be re-placed as illustrated in Exhibit 1; this placement location would fall completely within the footprint of the design as depicted in Figure 2 of the SEA. The footprint of misplaced sand from which sand would be removed extends over approximately 0.1 acres, and after being transported that excavated sand would be re-placed over an area of approximately 0.1 acres. The finished topography of the removal area would be formed into undulating dunes at an average top elevation of approximately +23 feet MLLW, in order to conform as closely as possible to the state of the underlying and surrounding dunes prior to the mistaken placement. Care would be taken, in the course of transportation and re-placement, to minimize impacts on native dune grass.

3. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Discussion of the present environment existing in the Half Moon Bay region – including information on geology/sediment dynamics, vegetation, benthic invertebrates, fish, shorebirds, threatened and endangered species, and recreation – remains as described in the December 2004 SEA.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The effects of the mistaken sand placement on a 0.1-acre portion of existing sand dunes, extending 90 feet beyond the design footprint as depicted in the December 2004, did not appreciably differ from or exceed the effects on geology/sediment dynamics, vegetation, benthic invertebrates, fish, shorebirds, threatened and endangered species, and recreation as described in the December 2004 SEA. The misplacement of the sand covered only sparsely vegetated dunes where invasive vegetation was present, and no native dunegrass was affected.

The removal, transportation, and re-placement process is expected to require one day, and the impacts of doing so on the quality of the human environment would not appreciably add to the insignificant impacts disclosed and evaluated in the December 2004 SEA. The temporary and geographically narrow restriction on pedestrian access to the excavation, access route, and re-placement areas would be minimal. The composition and grain size of the sand excavated and re-placed, the footprint within which re-placement would occur (above the 9-foot above MLLW contour, within the February 2004 placement footprint, and within the December 2004 design footprint), and the manner of placement would all be identical to those respective features of the contingent interim action project evaluated in the December 2004 SEA. As was the case with the sand placement in December 2004 / January 2005, little, if any, native dune grass vegetation would be disturbed by the transportation and re-placement activities and the Corps would make every effort to avoid such impacts, including oversight of the sand removal, transportation, and re-placement by a Corps biologist. Following the re-placement activities, public access to the Pacific Ocean and Half Moon Bay beaches would be essentially identical to access under present conditions, and views of the ocean from parking areas and the vicinity would not be substantially affected.

The impacts on the quality of the human environment of (1) the misplacement of sand over 0.1 acres of existing dunes in December 2004 / January 2005, and (2) the construction-period and long-term impacts of removal, transportation, and re-placement of misplaced sand within the original design footprint as prescribed in the December 2004 SEA are considered to be insignificant when viewed in isolation, and insignificant when viewed in combination with the December 2004 / January 2005 contingent interim action sand placement project.

5. MITIGATION

The Corps would instruct the contractor to avoid negatively impacting native dune grass to the maximum extent possible. Best management construction practices that would be implemented in this effort, as appropriate, would include the use of unvegetated access routes, use of vehicles with large tires that require no improved road access, and/or construction of temporary access routes using removable steel plates. If any native dune grass plants are severely damaged or destroyed by construction, the Corps would replant affected breach fill areas with appropriate numbers of sprigs to compensate for plants lost. In mitigation for the transportation and placement activity conducted in December 2004 / January 2005, 3,604 sprigs have already been

slated for planting over an area of 4,055 square feet in the Fall of 2005. Although the Corps has concluded that the construction-period and long-term impacts of the proposal to remove, transport and re-place sand that was misplaced in December 2004 / January 2005 would be insignificant, in compensation for those minor impacts the Corps would nevertheless plant an additional 4,469 sprigs, in addition to the native dune grass replanting activity already planned, consisting of an additional 5,055 square feet in replanting area. The native dune grasses would be replanted in areas not densely planted as part of the prior revegetation effort conducted in the South Jetty vicinity in 2002. In addition, planting areas would be selected to avoid locations that could be disturbed by future maintenance activities. Native dune grass would be planted to promote invasive plant species control and would reduce wind erosion of the breach fill.

6. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The cumulative effects of sand placement and associated navigation feature maintenance activities in the vicinity of Half Moon Bay have been disclosed and evaluated in the December 2004 SEA and the documents cited therein. The proposed project to excavate and replace sand within the design footprint specified in the December 2004 SEA would not produce any incremental or cumulative environmental effects on biological resources or recreational uses of the South Jetty, Half Moon Bay, and environs.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

7.1 National Environmental Policy Act

This supplemental environmental assessment (EA) satisfies the documentation requirements of NEPA. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is enclosed as Appendix A.

7.2 Endangered Species Act

In accordance with Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, federally funded or constructed projects must take into consideration impacts to federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, as well as their designated critical habitat.

The Corps prepared and submitted a Biological Evaluation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in November 2004, evaluating the species and critical habitat impacts of the contingent interim action project that was executed in December 2004 and January 2005. The Service concurred with the Corps' conclusion that the effects of that project on the federally listed bull trout, western snowy plover, bald eagle, brown pelican, and marbled murrelet may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, listed species or designated critical habitat. The Corps has coordinated with the Service its conclusion that the removal and re-placement of the mistaken increment of sand is similarly not likely to adversely affect listed species or designated critical habitat.

7.3 Clean Water Act

As described in the December 2004 SEA, placement of materials in order to maintain a dike or similar structure, in a manner that does not alter the character, scope, or design of a preceding authorized placement of fill, is exempted under Section 404(f)(1)(B) from the requirements of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). In the course of this proposed project, sand would be excavated from the misplacement footprint, which is located shoreward of the +9 MLLW contour line, and thus outside the geographic reach of the Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The location of re-placement of the sand would be limited to the area specified in Exhibit 1, which is within the design footprint under the December SEA and which is above the MHHW (+9 ft MLLW) contour, as well. Although the re-placed sand material is expected to function as renourishment material and be subsequently distributed along the shoreline through storm events, high tides, waves, and currents, as further described in Sections 2.3 and 4.1 of the December 2004 SEA, re-placed sand would be characterized as material maintaining the sand that was placed in February 2004. The February 2004 placement was authorized in accordance with a CWA Section 404(b)(1) evaluation, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and an EA. The proposed sand re-placement project would remain within the footprint of, and would not otherwise alter the character, scope, or design of, that February 2004 sand placement. The proposed excavation, transportation, and re-placement of sand therefore constitutes maintenance material and exempt from the requirements of CWA Section 404 pursuant to Section 404(f)(1)(B) of the CWA.

7.4 Coastal Zone Management Act

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA), as amended, requires federal agencies to carry out their activities in a manner which is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved state Coastal Management Program. Through its letter of November 19, 2004, the Washington State Department of Ecology concluded that it had previously provided (on October 31, 2003) a determination that the placement of sand material adjoining the beach at Half Moon Bay and in the breach area adjoining the South Jetty was consistent with the State of Washington Shoreline Management Program, and therefore satisfies the requirements of the CZMA.

7.5 National Historic Preservation Act

See Section 7.5 of the December 2004 SEA for a description of the compliance of the proposed sand re-placement with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

7.6 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

See Section 7.6 of the December 2004 SEA for a description of the compliance of the proposed sand re-placement with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

8. CONCLUSION

Based on the information contained in this environmental assessment supplement, the Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed action to excavate and replace sand within the design footprint described in the December 2004 SEA is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human or natural environment, and therefore does not require the preparation of a Federal environmental impact statement.

APPENDIX A- Final Finding of No Significant Impact



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SEATTLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 3755
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-3755

CENWS-PM-PL-ER

**SOUTH JETTY BREACH FILL MAINTENANCE
SAND RE-PLACEMENT
WESTPORT, GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

1. Background. The accompanying environmental assessment (EA) is a supplement to, and incorporates by reference, the *South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance Final Environmental Assessment*, prepared in February 2004 by the Corps of Engineers (*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2004a*), as well as the *South Jetty Breach Fill Maintenance Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment*, prepared in December 2004 by the Corps of Engineers. The first document evaluated the impacts of placement of approximately 25,000 cubic yards of sand on the south jetty breach fill in February 2004, as well as expected additional placements of sand over the subsequent three to five years. The Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) evaluated impacts on Half Moon Bay resources that would be expected if the Corps of Engineers were to take interim breach fill maintenance action to preserve the status quo by protecting against the risk of breach recurrence in the vicinity of the South Jetty, pending the development of a long term management strategy. That SEA limited the geographic extent of sand placement to the design promulgated in Figure 2 of the SEA, and to the boundaries of the footprint of the sand placed in the prior nourishment project in February 2004. Sand placement under the contingent interim action project commenced on 15 December 2004, and was completed on 6 January 2005. Survey data delineating the footprint of the sand placement completed in January 2005 demonstrates that its eastern terminus extended approximately 90 feet beyond the eastern terminus of the project design as illustrated in Figure 2 of the December 2004 SEA. The mistaken placement of sand beyond the scope of the design prescribed in the December 2004 SEA exceeded the project parameters established in that SEA and noticed to the public and interested governmental agencies.

2. Purpose and Need. The purpose of the proposed work is to rectify the misplacement of that increment of sand that extends eastward beyond the eastward limit of the design of the interim action project's Responsive Action No. 1.

3. Proposed Action. Approximately 1000 cubic yards of sand will be excavated from the misplacement footprint illustrated in Exhibit 1. Minor grading would occur, for re-placement of sand on the existing access route on the sand. No building materials (i.e., rock) will be used in transporting the sand. A hydraulic excavator will be used to load sand on conventional trucks to transport the sand the short distances (less than 800 feet) involved and place the sand within the

footprint prescribed in the SEA. Excavated material will be placed shoreward of the contour demarking +9 feet above mean lower low water (MLLW) at its natural angle of repose, to minimize impacts on intertidal ecology. The misplaced sand to be excavated had been initially derived in December 2004 and January 2005 from the same source as the sand on top of which it will now be placed – the buried revetment migration stockpile along the eastern shoreline of Half Moon Bay – so the grain size and composition of the transported sand will be fully consistent with the material it will cover. Sand will be placed completely within the footprint of the design as depicted in Figure 2 of the SEA. The misplacement footprint from which sand will be removed extends over approximately 0.1 acres, and once excavated that sand will be placed over an area of approximately 0.1 acres. The finished topography of the removal area will be formed into undulating dunes at an average top elevation of approximately +23 feet MLLW, in order to conform as closely as possible to the state of the underlying and surrounding dunes prior to the mistaken placement. A Corps biologist will oversee excavation, transportation and re-placement, to minimize impacts on native dune grass.

4. Summary of Impacts. The removal, transportation, and re-placement process is expected to take one day, and the impacts on the quality of the human environment will not appreciably add to the insignificant impacts disclosed and evaluated in the December 2004 SEA. The temporary and geographically narrow restriction on pedestrian access to the excavation, access route, and re-placement areas will be minimal. The composition and grain size of the sand excavated and re-placed, the footprint within which re-placement will occur (above the 9-foot above MLLW contour, within the February 2004 placement footprint and within the December 2004 design footprint), and the manner of placement will all be identical to those respective features of the contingent interim action project evaluated in the December 2004 SEA. As was the case with the sand placement in December 2004 / January 2005, little, if any, native dune grass vegetation will be disturbed by the transportation and re-placement activities, and the Corps will make every effort to avoid such impacts. Following the re-placement activities, public access to the Pacific Ocean and Half Moon Bay beaches will be essentially identical to access under present conditions, and views of the ocean from parking areas and the vicinity will not be substantially affected.

Despite the conclusion that the proposed action will not result in any significant impacts on the quality of the human environment, the Corps will implement mitigation to compensate for the minor construction-period and long-term environmental impacts of removing, transporting and re-placing sand that was mistakenly placed in December 2004 / January 2005. In addition to the native dune grass replanting activity already planned, the Corps will plant an additional 4,469 sprigs over an additional 5,500 square feet in compensation for those minor impacts of the sand removal and re-placement. The native dune grasses will be replanted in the Fall of 2005, and will concentrate on any areas disturbed in the course of construction activities, as well as areas not densely planted as part of the prior revegetation effort conducted in the South Jetty vicinity in 2002.

5. Finding. Based on the information contained in the accompanying environmental assessment supplement, and summarized here, the Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed action to excavate sand and then re-place it within the design footprint described in the December 2004 SEA is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the

human or natural environment, and therefore does not require the preparation of a Federal environmental impact statement.

Date

Debra M. Lewis
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

