

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Federal Financial Assistance Grant Number: 44068 Shooting Island Shoreline Restoration, Ocean City, Cape May County, New Jersey**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's (Department) Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program (Program) supports projects that reduce communities' vulnerability to the growing risks from coastal storms, sea level rise, flooding, erosion, and associated threats through strengthening natural ecosystems that also benefit fish and wildlife. The Program is funded by the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 and is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The purpose of the Program is to undertake a variety of actions to restore wetlands and other natural areas, better manage storm water using green infrastructure, and assist states, tribes and local communities in protecting themselves from major storms such as Hurricane Sandy. Overall, the Program goals relate to coastal resiliency and ecosystem enhancement. The Program provides technical and financial assistance to identify, protect, conserve, manage, enhance, or restore habitat and infrastructure on both public and private lands that have been negatively impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

The Department, as lead Federal agency, and its Project partner, the City of Ocean City, New Jersey, are proposing the Shooting Island Shoreline Restoration Project (Project), Federal Financial Assistance Grant Number: 44068. As the Project administrator, the City of Ocean City is managing the Project activities in cooperation with the NJDEP DFW, which owns the island. Shooting Island is located in Great Egg Harbor Bay, Cape May County, New Jersey.

The purpose of the Project is to protect and restore Shooting Island from significant degradation of its shoreline and wetlands as a result of wind and storm driven waves as well as vessel wakes. This will be accomplished through the combined construction of approximately 4,150 linear feet of rock sill and oyster habitat around the northern and northwestern shorelines of Shooting Island. Shooting Island is also located within 500 – 1,000 feet of dense residential and commercial development and recreational facilities, which will benefit from the island's improved resiliency. The Project is expected to offset the continued loss of coastal land and marsh habitat and to increase resiliency of coastal communities in this area to sea level rise.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates two alternatives to provide protection against erosion, wave action, and sea level rise and to enhance island marsh habitat: a No Action Alternative, and the Proposed Action Alternative (the Project). The EA further analyzes the potential impacts these alternatives would have on the natural and human environment. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the regulations of the Council on

Environmental Quality for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and Department regulations (43 CFR Part 46), policy and guidance).

### **No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, no restoration or enhancement activities for Shooting Island would take place. The result of no action along the shoreline of Shooting Island would likely result in continued land loss and, combined with sea level rise and island subsidence, accelerated marsh habitat loss. Under this alternative, there would be no elevation increase or improvement of marsh habitat and no increased resiliency of coastal areas to sea level rise. The no action alternative would result in continued and greater adverse flooding impacts to the City. Also, the no action alternative would result in a significant loss of nursery fisheries habitat.

### **Proposed Action Alternative**

Under this alternative, more than 150 acres of tidal wetlands on Shooting Island would be restored and protected. The Project, designed in close consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), includes two main components: 1) construction of approximately 2,700 linear feet of shoreline rock sill around the northern shoreline of Shooting Island to protect existing marsh and allow for further development of marsh on the island; and, 2) creation of approximately 1,450 linear feet of living shoreline along the northwestern shoreline using oyster habitat components. The project will result in reestablishing the historic shoreline, improving stability of the island and expansion through natural accretion, and improving fish and invertebrate habitat, fisheries diversity and abundance and the resiliency of nearby coastal communities.

The Proposed Action Alternative will have minimal or negligible impacts on geology and sediment, topography, water resources and wetlands, biological resources and vegetation, human health and safety, cultural resources, socioeconomics, environmental justice communities, land use, recreation, coastal zone resources, or air and noise.

The Department finds there will be no significant adverse impacts resulting from the proposed activities of the Project. Therefore, the Department concludes that a Finding of No Significant Impact be issued for the proposed project.

This Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact becomes a Federal Document when signed by the responsible official.



Grayford Payne, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition  
U.S. Department of Interior

12/04/2018

Date



**Reference:**

**Environmental Assessment**

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