

Draft
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
Replacement of the St. George Island State Park Restrooms and Bath Houses
St. George Island, Franklin County, Florida
FEMA-1595-DR-FL

As a result of Hurricane Dennis, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized by Presidential Disaster declaration (FEMA-1595-DR-FL) on July 10, 2005 to provide Federal assistance to designated disaster areas in Florida. The areas that received the most damage were concentrated in the Panhandle region of Florida and included Franklin County. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (PL 93-288) Section 406 authorizes FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) Program to provide financial and other forms of assistance to State and local governments to support response, recovery, and mitigation efforts following Presidentially declared disasters. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has applied for funding from FEMA to replace the St. George Island State Park's public restrooms and bath house/shower facilities at two locations within the State Park. Each location housed two structures, each containing separate men's and women's restroom facilities. These facilities were the only publicly owned and accessible restroom facilities for visitors to the State Park.

As a result of Hurricane Dennis, the public restrooms and bath house facilities at both the West Beach and East Beach Use Areas were damaged beyond repair and have been demolished. Currently, these portions of the State Park are closed to visitors and no public restrooms are available at the Park. FDEP is proposing to replace the two separate men's and women's facilities at each location with one combined structure at each location. The new, combined facilities will be relocated approximately 80 feet landward of the previous locations and elevated 15 feet above sea level in order to minimize damage from future storm and flood events.

The project consists of building two identical 1,225-square foot structures, one each at each Beach Use Area. The structures will be located between existing parking lots in an area that has been pre-disturbed. The structures will be elevated 15 feet above sea level on concrete pilings. Access ramps and an American with Disabilities Act compliant lift station will provide public access to the facilities. A new aerobic treatment disposal system will be installed at each facility. The disposal system will be composed of two aerobic treatment tanks and two 3,000-gallon dosing tanks. Treated waste from the dosing tanks will be transferred via 3-inch mains to drain fields located behind the parking lots at each Beach Use Area. Both locations where this will occur are adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico beach in an area composed primarily of beach sands.

An Environmental Assessment (EA), dated June 2006, was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The purpose of the EA was to analyze and document the proposed alternative's potential environmental impacts, serve as a means to document the proposed alternative's compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the Replacement of the St. George Island State Park Restrooms and Bath Houses EA:

The above action is not in an identified Coastal Barriers Resource Act unit and it will not result in any significant adverse impacts related to geology and soils; hydrology and floodplains; wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; water quality; air quality; vegetation and wildlife; state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; hazardous materials and toxic wastes; and traffic and transportation. Additionally, the safety of Park occupants would not be adversely impacted by hazardous environmental conditions. The proposed project alternative has been reviewed and, to the best of our knowledge, does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x). The public comment period was from Thursday, 29 June 2006 to Saturday, July 15, 2006 with notice published in the local paper, the Apalachicola Times. The Draft EA was available for viewing at the Franklin County Library (both the Eastpoint Branch and the Apalachicola Program Center), the Apalachicola Municipal Library, and the St. George Island State Park. Additionally, the Draft EA was made available on the FEMA website.

The following summarizes what is outlined in the EA and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative:

1. In accordance with the special conditions attached to the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) permit, all excavated material shall be maintained seaward of the CCCL. It must remain on-site and be distributed at locations identified by the engineer seaward of the CCCL.
2. Appropriate erosion control and Best Management Practices will be utilized to minimize any impacts resulting from parking lot runoff, erosion and/or sedimentation during construction.
3. Dust and airborne dirt generated by construction activities shall be controlled through general dust control BMPs or a specific dust control plan could be developed if warranted. The contractor and St. George Island State Park personnel will meet to review the nature and extent of potential and known dust-generating activities and will cooperatively develop specific types of control techniques appropriate to the project and local situations. Any burning of materials, vegetation or debris would be undertaken according to relevant local laws and ordinances, including, but not limited to, the current St. George Island State Park and FDEP ordinances or regulations of the FDEP.
4. If project activities include the stockpiling of sands on-site, the project applicant will be required at the direction of the engineer to cover these sands to help prevent fugitive dust and erosion. Fencing and straw/hay bales should be installed to reduce loss. Following construction activities, exposed, compacted sands would be graded and restored.

5. If an accidental spill occurs during construction, the contractor will be responsible for minimizing the amount spilled and for any clean-up required. Federal and state regulations regarding the reporting and clean-up of accidental spills will be complied with.
6. To avoid impacts to threatened or endangered species, FDEP will comply with mitigation measures suggested by USFWS. These measures include:
 - a) Monitoring of shorebird presence and activities by Park staff from January 27, 2006 until project construction is complete.
 - b) Daily sea turtle nesting surveys, beginning on May 1, 2006 by park staff, to continue until September 1st.
 - c) Tarps or plastic material will be placed over the proposed sites for the two sewage disposal drain fields and will be accomplished by the park staff or the contractor as soon as the state permit notice-to-proceed is issued.
 - d) "Disturbance Free Zones" will be posted away from the construction areas where potential bird resting and nesting may occur, and will be conducted by park staff prior to commencement of construction.
 - e) Post and rope will be placed to delineate the beach access areas from each of the beach pull-off parking areas. This will be done by the general contractor when these pull-off parking areas are improved and opened for public use.
 - f) Additional compatible beach-quality sand will be placed in areas just seaward of the two beach use area sites to construct a continuous dune system approximately 500 feet in length and overlapping the proposed construction areas. This will form a "dune-like" feature that will discourage crawling of sea turtles into the construction areas. This will be performed by park staff or by the general contractor prior to May 1, 2006.
7. A Hurricane Ivan Dune Restoration Planting Project will be conducted during the months of April and May 2006 to enhance the beach dune community, thereby providing a benefit to both shorebirds and nesting sea turtle habitat. This will be done by landscape contractors and monitored by Division Staff along with the environmental engineering consultants.
8. To minimize risks to safety and human health, all construction activities will be performed using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of the appropriate equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions; additionally, all activities will be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) regulations.
9. To ensure that during the construction process any items of archaeological, historical or architectural interest are protected the FDEP, Division of Recreation and Parks and its contractors shall monitor excavation activities. In the event any items of interest are discovered, FDEP should make all reasonable efforts to protect the items and to avoid further harm to the items until the significance of the discovery can be determined. The FDEP shall notify FEMA and the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer immediately.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with NEPA, FEMA has determined that the proposed action, implement with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above and in the EA ,will not have a significant adverse effect on the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the EA may proceed. Furthermore, FEMA has determined that the proposed project would comply with Executive Orders 11988, 11990, and 12898.

APPROVAL

Brent Paul
Environmental Officer
DHS/FEMA Headquarters

Date: _____