

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **Notice of availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed construction of the City of Fort Pierce's Marina and Storm Protection System, St. Lucie County, Florida (FEMA-1545-DR-FL)**

Interested parties are hereby notified that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is considering providing funds through the Public Assistance Program to assist in repairing the City of Fort Pierce's outer harbor and for the installation of a Storm Protection System. An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; and the Regulations for Implementation of the NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500 to 1508). This Draft EA summarizes the purpose and need of the proposed project and addresses a number of topics including feasible alternatives that were considered, environmental impacts of the alternatives, and mitigation of adverse impacts.

The City of Fort Pierce is proposing to repair the City Marina's outer harbor and to provide hazard mitigation consisting of a Storm Protection System. The outer harbor would be reconstructed by installing two dock complexes, consisting of northern and southern dock units. The southern dock previously contained 98 slips and the new southern dock would also contain 98 slips. The northern dock previously contained 32 slips; the proposed new docks would contain 39 slips. The outer harbor entrance would be moved from the south side to the northern portion of the harbor to improve public access and navigation.

The City of Fort Pierce is proposing to construct a Storm Protection System that would provide protection from a 100-year storm event; it would protect the Fort Pierce City Marina's outer and inner harbors, as well as publicly owned waterfront properties.

The Storm Protection System would consist of one large (10.51 acres) Storm Protection Island located southeast of the outer harbor; a series of 11 smaller Free Form Breakwater Habitat Islands (totaling 3.52 acres) located east of the outer harbor; and Tombolo Point, a 0.64-acre peninsula constructed off of the bulkhead south of the outer harbor. The Storm Protection System would be constructed using sand filled Geotubes. The large Storm Protection Island would also be anchored by T-shaped riprap revetments (t-groins) and rock-filled marine mattress units. A veneer of sand would be provided to complete the Storm Protection Island and Tombolo Point. Native vegetative plantings would be added to enhance shoreline stabilization and to provide a diversity of habitat.

The 11 Free Form Breakwater Habitat Islands would be constructed east and northeast of the outer harbor. These Free Form Breakwater Habitat Islands would be constructed with Geotube cores. In contrast to the Storm Protection Island, the Free Form Islands would not include any sand fill and the Geotube cores would be covered with natural limestone rock to provide a breakwater armor layer of protection.

The Storm Protection System would provide hazard mitigation against future storm events as well as enhance the Indian River Lagoon by creating habitats. Native vegetative plantings would be added to enhance shoreline stabilization and to provide a diversity of habitats, including oyster beds, lime-rock artificial reefs, mangrove fringes, and coastal dune plantings. Oyster shells and lime rock would be used at lower elevations to promote the establishment of oyster beds, hardbottom communities, and other essential fish habitats. The Storm Protection System would also lower current velocities within the outer harbor, which would provide an estimated 8.12 acres of new seagrass recruitment areas.

The following summarizes what is outlined in the EA as conditions that must be met as part of implementation of this proposed action.

The City of Fort Pierce would be required to obtain Clean Water Act permits for the project. The permits would place project conditions that would minimize impacts. The permits would require the use sediment control to reduce turbidity during construction, and thereby minimize water quality impacts. Two different methods are proposed for work near shore, turbidity barriers and 150 meter mixing zones; one method would be used within the Intracoastal Waterway, 150 meter mixing zones. The City of Fort Pierce would obtain all required permits and adhere to all permit conditions.

Any pilings within the Indian River Lagoon that are treated with chromated copper arsenate would be wrapped to prevent the possible leaching into the water column.

Mitigation would be required for the impacts to 0.43 acres of seagrass, as determined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FL DEP) permits. Mitigation that would be required includes:

1. All work would be conducted from a shallow-draft barge. The barge is required to operate within waters of sufficient depth (one-foot clearance from the deepest draft of the vessel to the top of submerged resources) to preclude bottom scouring, propeller dredging, and damage to submerged surfaces. Piles would be driven from barge-mounted cranes.
2. Restoration of estuarine bottom to enhance seagrass recruitment within a seagrass area adjacent to the North Causeway in Fort Pierce would be provided. Nearby spoil islands would be scraped down and 1.94-acres of a dredge hole would be filled and then covered with the scrapings from the spoil islands. Bird stakes would be added to the area to encourage roosting of waterfowl, which would add natural fertilizer for revegetating the seagrass beds.
3. The City of Fort Pierce would provide channel markings at the North Causeway Island Park and Boat Ramp. The City would install signage to protect existing seagrass beds from boaters using these ramps. Existing seagrass damage would undergo restoration where prop scars are not naturally healing.

4. The City of Fort Pierce would deed 26 acres of submerged land to the State of Florida. This 26-acre parcel contains pristine seagrass beds, tidal flats, and submerged mangrove areas; it is located immediately adjacent to the State of Florida's Fort Pierce Inlet State Park. An additional 30 acres would be given to the State as proprietary public interest.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) special conditions for the protection of sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish, as described in *Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Construction Conditions*, would be implemented.

NMFS conditions identified in the *NMFS-COE Key Construction Conditions for Docks or Other Minor Structures Constructed in or over Johnson's Seagrass* would be implemented. Additionally, USACE/NMFS's *Dock Construction Guidelines* would be implemented.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWCC) *Standard Manatee Conditions for Work-In-Water* conditions would be implemented. The project must also be reviewed for confirmation that it is consistent with the Lucie County Manatee Protection Plan and USACE/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Manatee Key 2005 Plan.

The following measures would be incorporated into the project in order to further minimize impacts to threatened or endangered species from the installation of the Storm Protection System.

- Fill material for the exposed sections of the Storm Protection System would exhibit the same sediment characteristics of the surrounding sediments. Additionally, fill material would consist of limestone rocks or oyster shells and would not be made of concrete or other fill.
- All permit conditions that are placed on the project by USFWS, NMFS, FL DEP or FWCC would be adhered to.

A lease would be required from the State of Florida for sovereign submerged lands for the southern marina facility in the outer harbor. In addition, a lease would be required for the habitat islands. The City of Fort Pierce would obtain these leases.

FEMA funding is conditional upon the City of Fort Pierce obtaining all applicable permits, including but not limited to Sections 401 and 404 Clean Water Act permits from the FL DEP and USACE, and adherence to all permit conditions. Compliance with permit conditions established by the State Historic Preservation Office, NMFS, USFWS, USACE, and FL DEP as part of this permitting process will ensure that applicable environmental regulations are adhered to.

If prehistoric or historic artifacts, vessel remnants, or any other physical remains that could be associated with Native American cultures, colonial or early American settlement, or maritime history are encountered at any time within the project area, the permitted project shall cease all activities involving disturbance in the immediate vicinity

of such discoveries. The City of Fort Pierce, or other designee, shall contact the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Compliance and Review Section at 850-245-6333, as well as Ms. Heather Batson of FEMA, and the appropriate permitting agencies. The project activities shall not resume without verbal and/or written authorization.

The Storm Protection System would be monitored in accordance with the *City of Fort Pierce Island Performance Plan*. In conformance with this plan, repairs to the rock revetment and t-groin structures would be required when a damage value of  $S = 3$  (or greater) occurs.

The City of Fort Pierce would obtain and maintain insurance coverage and/or establish and maintain an island maintenance and performance fund sufficient to cover the repair of the Storm Protection System in accordance with FEMA hazard mitigation program requirements.

The Storm Protection System would be monitored and maintained in accordance with the *City of Fort Pierce Waterfront Storm Protection System Habitat Monitoring Plan* to provide assurances that the proposed habitat areas, planted and naturally recruited, will be monitored and maintained for success.

The Storm Protection System would be monitored and maintained in accordance with the *City of Fort Pierce Waterfront Storm Protection Island Maintenance Plan* that outlines a program for routine island maintenance activities that will support the planned ecological communities.

Failure to comply with permit and project conditions could jeopardize FEMA funding.

**FEMA has determined that the proposed action to repair the outer harbor of the City Marina and construct hazard mitigation in the form of a Storm Protection System will have no significant adverse impacts on the quality of the biological or human environments. It is important that we receive your input on the Draft EA to ensure that all relevant issues and concerns of the residents of St. Lucie County are considered and addressed. Copies of the Draft EA may be viewed at the following locations:**

**St. Lucie County  
Fort Pierce Branch Library**  
101 Melody Lane  
Fort Pierce, Florida 34950  
(772) 462-1615

**Mr. Ed Seissiger  
City of Fort Pierce**  
Fort Pierce City Hall, 100 N. U.S. 1  
1st Floor Engineering Office  
Fort Pierce, Florida 34950  
(772) 460-2200

The Draft EA is also available online at FEMA's website  
<http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm>

You may provide your comments on the EA by mailing, faxing, or emailing them to the following address:

Heather Batson, Environmental Specialist  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
36 Skyline Drive  
Lake Mary, FL 32746  
Email: [heather.batson@dhs.gov](mailto:heather.batson@dhs.gov)  
Fax: 407-268-8977

Comments must be received by November 22, 2010. **If no substantive comments are received following agency and public review, the Draft EA will be considered the Final EA and no additional information or modifications will be incorporated.** We look forward to your input.