

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) FOR PIER AND SUPPORT FACILITIES FOR TRANSIT PROTECTION SYSTEM AT U.S. COAST GUARD AIR STATION/SECTOR FIELD OFFICE, PORT ANGELES, WASHINGTON

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and Navy regulations (32 CFR Part 775), and Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 5090.1D, the Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an EA has been prepared and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for the construction of pier and support facilities for Transit Protection System at the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Air Station/Air Sector Field Office Port Angeles (AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles) located in Port Angeles, Washington.

The Navy issued a Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives (DoPAA) on January 24, 2015, and solicited public and agency comments from January 24, 2015 through February 25, 2015, with a Notice of Availability (NOA) published in the local newspaper (*Peninsula Daily News*). The DoPAA was also posted on the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Northwest website at <http://go.usa.gov/tAr4> for review and comment. The Navy and USCG hosted a public meeting on the DoPAA in Port Angeles on February 5, 2015 to provide information about the Proposed Action and receive public comments. The Navy received 50 public comment documents during the public comment period, including input from the Washington Board of Pilotage Commissioners, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Ecology, City of Port Angeles, Port of Port Angeles, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, and Point No Point Treaty Council. The Navy considered all relevant comments in preparing the Draft EA.

The Draft EA was published in November 2015 and included a new action alternative based on the Navy's concerns regarding the availability of a used pontoon for Alternatives 2 and 3, as well as in response to public comments received on the DoPAA. A NOA was published on November 30, 2015 in the *Peninsula Daily News*. The Draft EA was made available for public review on the NAVFAC Northwest website. The public comment period on the Draft EA was from November 30, 2015 to January 28, 2016, with a public meeting held in Port Angeles on January 12, 2016. The Navy received 21 public comment documents (consisting of 106 individual comments) and letters from the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the Washington Department of Ecology during the public comment period. The Navy reviewed and

considered all relevant comments that were received during the 60-day Draft EA comment period. An NOA of the Final EA and FONSI will be published in the *Peninsula Daily News* and copies of the documents will be available on the NAVFAC Northwest website.

The comments received on the Draft EA were concerned with impacts to Icicle Seafoods, Inc. aquaculture operations, the rationale for siting the project at Ediz Hook, the rationale for selecting Alternative 1 over other alternatives, impacts to biological resources, impacts to recreation, the presence of increased military facilities and operations in the Port Angeles Harbor and the possibility of the proposed project becoming a terrorist target, the potential for the project to contaminate the harbor, and the potential future impacts of climate change on the proposed project. Other comments pertained to issues such as the regulatory compliance aspects of the project, the Navy's methods of soliciting public comments on the Draft EA, the cumulative effects analysis, and concerns about effects on tourism and the visual clutter of the proposed project. Some commenters suggested that the EA analysis was inadequate and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was warranted.

The Navy responded to numerous public comments by including additional pertinent information and clarifications in the Final EA. Additional information on the potential impacts to Icicle Seafoods from the proposed project has been included. The Navy's rationale and justification for siting the proposed project at Ediz Hook and selecting Alternative 1 as the Preferred Alternative are detailed in Chapter 2 of the EA. As stated in the EA, the proposed action is not expected to have significant impacts to biological resources, recreation, or visual resources. The proposed project would be in compliance with Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection requirements to minimize the risk of a terrorist attack, and a discussion of this has been included in the final EA. New discussions pertaining to climate change, sea level rise, tsunamis, and greenhouse gas emissions have been added to the EA. The Navy has evaluated the analysis presented in the EA, including the cumulative impacts analysis, and has determined that the analysis of impacts is adequate and demonstrates that the proposed action will not have a significant impact on the human environment, and that preparation of an EIS is not warranted or required.

Proposed Action: The Navy is proposing to construct, operate, and maintain a pier and upland support facilities at AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles, Washington. The proposed action would entail constructing a new berthing pier for up to seven Transit Protection System (TPS) vessels, with full hotel services, an Alert Forces Facility (AFF) with temporary living accommodations

for 20 to 30 TPS crew members, a Ready Service Armory (RSA) for storing small arms and ammunition, a diesel fuel marine storage tank and fuel distribution system, and other upland improvements.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a staging location for TPS vessels and crews that escort Navy submarines to and from their dive/surface points in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Naval Base (NAVBASE) Kitsap Bangor. The project is needed to comply with USCG requirements for underway hour limits and required crew rest between escort missions.

Existing Conditions: The proposed project is located at USCG AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles, on the eastern end of the Ediz Hook peninsula. The project site is located in the coastal zone, and consists of developed and undeveloped areas and includes uplands, beach, and nearshore marine waters. Existing USCG in-water facilities include a T-shaped pier for berthing and a wave attenuation structure. A jetty east of the entrance gate extends approximately 215 feet offshore from the inner Ediz Hook shoreline into aquatic tidelands. Nearby properties located outside USCG AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles include a public boat ramp to the west, the Puget Sound Pilots Station, and Icicle Seafoods' onshore and offshore aquaculture facilities, including 20 individual fish pens in which Atlantic salmon are raised.

The upland portion of the project area is developed with buildings, roads, sidewalks, and lawn. The beach area is fairly narrow and consists of silt, sand, and small cobbles. Aquatic vegetation in the nearshore area consists of brown algae, sea lettuce, kelp, and eelgrass. The Ediz Hook area potentially provides habitat for six federally listed fish species; numerous marine mammals, including the federally listed Southern Resident killer whale and humpback whale; and numerous migratory birds, including the federally listed marbled murrelet. The project area vicinity includes designated critical habitat for Puget Sound Chinook salmon, North American green sturgeon Southern Resident killer whale, and Coastal-Puget Sound bull trout, as well as essential fish habitat (EFH) for groundfish, pelagic species, and salmon. The project area is within the usual and accustomed fishing grounds and stations of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Alternatives Analyzed: The EA analyzes three action alternatives and the No Action Alternative. The action alternatives represent three different location options on Ediz Hook.

- Under Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) the project would be located about 0.4 mile east of the entrance gate, to the west of the existing medical and dental clinic. The pier would consist of a fixed approach trestle and fixed pier.
- Under Alternative 2 the project would be located on the existing jetty about 0.1 mile east of the entrance gate. The pier would consist of a fixed approach trestle, a transfer span, and a floating pontoon.
- Under Alternative 3 the project would be located at the eastern end of USCG AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles, approximately 1 mile east of the entrance gate, near an abandoned runway. The pier would consist of a fixed approach trestle, transfer span, and a floating pontoon. A wave attenuation structure would be built to protect the floating pontoon from wave action.

Under the No Action Alternative, the status quo would continue. The Navy would not construct a TPS pier and upland facilities at USCG AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles. The TPS vessels would continue to be berthed on an interim basis at Port of Port Angeles facilities. Crew members would continue without a dedicated facility for overnight accommodations and mission planning, and underway hour limits, policies, and regulations would continue to be unmet. For these reasons, the No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action.

Alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further consideration included extending the existing T-Pier at AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles, use of existing or to be developed Port of Port Angeles facilities, construction of the project at Naval Magazine Indian Island, or USCG Station Neah Bay. These alternatives were eliminated from detailed analysis because they did not meet one or more of the Navy's selection criteria.

None of the action alternatives analyzed will result in significant impacts to the human environment. Alternative 1 is the Preferred Alternative because it meets the purpose and need and avoids long term impacts to the Puget Sound Pilots facility and recreational and ecological resources at the rock pile that would occur with implementation of Alternative 2. Additionally, Alternative 1 is responsive to public concerns regarding siting. Alternative 1 avoids impacts to the expansive eelgrass beds associated with Alternative 3, which would also affect some of the last undeveloped land on Ediz Hook.

Environmental Effects: The following is a summary of the environmental consequences of the proposed action:

Land Use and Recreation. Under the Preferred Alternative the TPS pier would extend approximately 40 feet into a DNR leased area used by Icicle Seafoods, Inc. for floating fish pens. The proposed action could affect ongoing and future use of this area by constraining the location or configuration of aquaculture operations. The pier was designed to minimize the distance it would extend into the lease area. Proposed treaty mitigation under this alternative (removal of fill) would affect lands uses in DNR aquatic tidelands, but would be consistent with the City of Port Angeles' and DNR's goals of restoring nearshore and shoreline areas on Ediz Hook. Treaty mitigation would also result in Icicle Seafoods having to relocate their laydown area. Construction activities would result in localized, short-term access restrictions on small, non-motorized recreational watercraft that traverse close to the shore. During operations, access restrictions would have a minor impact on recreational boaters by reducing the aquatic areas open for public use along the south shore of Ediz Hook. The Preferred Alternative does not preclude primary or critical land uses in the project vicinity, and no designated recreation areas would be lost. The Preferred Alternative would not displace any adjacent land uses, and would have no direct impact on zoning or land use designations on or adjacent to USCG AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to land use or recreation.

Water Quality and Sediments. Pile driving and barge and tug operations during construction would have minor impacts on water quality by causing short-term, relatively localized turbidity changes associated with re-suspension of bottom sediments. These effects would be diminished by periods of higher currents and tidal change, and a Sediment Management Plan would be implemented to control the spread of sediments. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented during construction to avoid or minimize the risk of spills into the water. Over the long term, localized effects on circulation would occur near the new piles during tidal movements, but decreased longshore currents south of the pier are not predicted. Compensatory mitigation to remove in-water structures would offset localized circulation impacts caused by the project and would provide an overall benefit to circulation in the North Harbor area. Impacts would be localized and minor, and no state water quality or sediment quality standards would be violated. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to water quality or sediment quality.

Biological Resources. Noise from pile driving would have the potential to impact biological resources in the project area vicinity. Construction noise would be localized and temporary,

but could result in temporary avoidance of the area by birds, masking of marbled murrelet vocalizations, and exposure of fish and marine mammals to levels of underwater noise that can affect behavior and cause injury.

Following construction, the completed pier structure would result in new overwater coverage and increase of physical barriers, which could reduce the quality of fish foraging and rearing habitat over a small area.

Implementation of BMPs and minimization measures would minimize adverse effects to the extent practicable, and with the exception of permanent shade, all effects of the project would cease upon completion of construction. Minimization measures include timing restrictions on pile driving activities, restrictions to avoid impacts to eelgrass, monitoring and establishment of pile-driving shutdown zones for marine mammals, and use of a bubble curtain or other noise attenuation device during impact pile driving. Individual marine mammals may be exposed to sound pressure levels during pile driving operations, which may result in Level B behavioral harassment (defined by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as potential behavioral disruption). Any exposures will likely have only a minor effect on individuals and no effect on the population. In compliance with the MMPA, the Navy will receive an Incidental Harassment Authorization from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and comply with all conditions.

The Navy completed consultations under the Endangered Species Act with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NMFS. NMFS concurred with the Navy's conclusions that the Proposed Action is not likely to adversely affect Pacific eulachon, North American green sturgeon, Southern Resident killer whale, and humpback whale, and issued a Biological Opinion for species that the Proposed Action is likely to adversely affect (Puget Sound Chinook salmon and designated critical habitat, Hood Canal summer-run chum salmon, and Puget Sound steelhead). The Navy received a draft Biological Opinion from USFWS for species the Proposed Action is likely to adversely affect (bull trout and designated critical habit, and marbled murrelet). The Navy also completed consultation with NMFS under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for adverse effects to EFH for Pacific coast groundfish, coastal pelagics, and Pacific coast salmon.

Underwater noise impacts associated with pile driving would be localized, temporary, and periodic, and increases in turbidity would be localized and temporary. Displacement or loss of habitat would affect a small area, and mitigation measures would be implemented to minimize impacts. For these reasons, there

would be no significant impact to biological resources under the Preferred Alternative.

Noise. Construction activities would generate temporary, periodic increased noise levels within 2.4 miles of the project site, primarily during pile driving. Mild to moderate annoyance and interference with outdoor speech at adjacent properties could occur. Noise levels would attenuate to near ambient noise levels at the closest residences to the project site. Noise levels at the Puget Sound Pilots Station during impact pile driving would be high enough to cause intermittent, short-term interference with daytime sleep. During operations, noise generated by vessel operations would cause a slight increase in ambient noise levels at the Puget Sound Pilots Station, but would not exceed maximum permissible levels specified in state or local regulations. Because construction noise would be temporary and is exempt from noise thresholds established by the City of Port Angeles and State of Washington, there would be no significant noise-related impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative.

Cultural Resources. There would be no significant impacts to cultural resources. The potential for finding archaeological resources is extremely low given the depth of fill that occurs within the project area. An archaeological monitor would be present during excavations exceeding 4.5 feet in depth. No historic architectural properties are located within the Area of Potential Effect, and consultation with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe determined that the Preferred Alternative would have no adverse effect on Traditional Cultural Properties.

American Indian Traditional Resources. Underwater noise associated with pile driving would have a temporary impact on harvestable marine resources by potentially causing injury or behavioral changes to fish during construction. The inner Ediz Hook shoreline and aquatic tidelands and bedlands would be altered by the proposed project. Long-term impacts on habitat important to the tribes would be offset by treaty mitigation to restore nearshore intertidal habitat. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to American Indian traditional resources and tribal treaty rights.

Socioeconomics. Over the approximately 18-month construction period, the Preferred Alternative is predicted to benefit the local economy by generating up to 267 construction jobs and \$1.7 million in state and local taxes. It is also predicted to generate \$2.6 million in federal taxes. Estimated economic benefits (direct, indirect, and induced) during facilities operation include annual wages of \$72,000, an annual economic

output of \$274,000, \$17,498 in federal taxes annually, and \$12,770 in state and local taxes annually. Adverse economic impacts to Icicle Seafoods would occur in the form of lost revenue caused by a shortened fish crop season and delay to the next rearing cycle. The smaller fish crop would also result in a decrease in revenue to the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and there could be a loss of revenue to the City of Port Angeles for rental of the upland portion of the laydown area which would be removed for treaty mitigation. No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to minority or low income populations would occur during construction or operation.

Marine Traffic and Transportation. Construction vessels would cause a small temporary increase in marine traffic in Port Angeles Harbor, which would not adversely affect marine shipping or Icicle Seafoods' operations. Under Alternative 1, a small portion of the Icicle Seafoods fish pens would be located inside the Naval Vessel Protection Zone for moored blocking vessels; under Alternative 2, a small portion of the Icicle Seafoods fish pens and of the Puget Sound Pilots Station would be inside the Naval Vessel Protection Zone for moored blocking vessels. Icicle Seafoods vessels and Puget Sound Pilots vessels would normally be permitted to transit within the 500-yard Naval Vessel Protection Zone as defined in 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 165.2015. The Naval Vessel Protection Zone for moored blocking vessels would not affect marine traffic and transportation lanes, which would be well outside the restricted areas. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to marine traffic and transportation under the Preferred Alternative.

Shore Traffic and Circulation. Construction traffic would result in some temporary congestion and short delays near the entrance gate to USCG AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles, particularly in the morning and evening during the start and end of the work day. The construction contractor would coordinate with the City of Port Angeles to prepare a traffic control plan to minimize traffic delays. Traffic would be managed to ensure unrestricted access to the nearby Ediz Hook boat launch by users. Facility operations and maintenance would not impact shore traffic. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to shore traffic and circulation under the Preferred Alternative.

Visual Resources. Construction activities would result in temporary visual disturbance to the landscape. There would be increased visual clutter in construction areas, but no views from the nearby public viewpoint would be blocked. Visual changes during construction would be small and localized, primarily affecting views of the Ediz Hook shoreline and

nearshore from water-based viewpoints within Port Angeles Harbor. Over the long term, the proposed pier, facilities, and operations would increase the visual clutter along the south shore of Ediz Hook from nearby public viewpoints, but would be similar in nature to existing facilities and operations at USCG AIRSTA/SFO Port Angeles. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would not have a significant impact on visual resources.

Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials. Construction activities such as demolition, excavation, and construction of new facilities would generate various solid wastes, involve use of hazardous materials, and generate small quantities of hazardous waste/spills. The construction contractor would dispose of solid waste and hazardous materials in accordance with applicable guidance, laws, and regulations, and BMPs and a Spill Prevention Plan would be implemented during construction. Over the long term, the Preferred Alternative would result in an increase in the amount of solid and hazardous wastes generated, but would not adversely affect the ability of the base to properly dispose of or use these materials. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to solid or hazardous wastes under the Preferred Alternative.

Finding: Based on the analysis presented in the EA and coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, State Historic Preservation Officer, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, the Navy finds that implementation of the proposed action will have no significant impact to the quality of the human environment. Pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.14, the potential for a substantial economic impact on a local aquaculture operation does not require preparation of an EIS.

The EA prepared by the Navy addressing this action is on file and interested parties may obtain a copy from: Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest, 1101 Tautog Circle, Room 203.

24 AUG 2016

Date



W. A. Bulis

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