Draft Environmental Assessment to Relocate 87-foot WPB to USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

Proposed Relocation of 87-foot WPB
USCG Station Wrightsville Beach
Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina
USCG Project No. 7332374

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AECOM Project Number 60503777

U.S. COAST GUARD
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
TO
RELOCATE 87-FOOT WPB TO USCG STATION WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA

This U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with Commandant's Manual Instruction M16475.1D and is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and the Council of Environmental Quality Regulations dated 28 November 1978 (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508).

This Draft EA serves as a concise public document to briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining the need to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement or a Finding of No Significant Impact.

This Draft EA concisely describes the proposed action, the need for the proposal, the alternatives, and the environmental impacts of the proposal and alternatives. This Draft EA also contains a comparative analysis of the action and alternatives, a statement of the environmental significance of the preferred alternative, and a list of the agencies and persons consulted during EA preparation.

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Date	Mr. Tanner M. Dunlap Environmental Project Manager	Title/Position
6/20/17		Chief, Environmental Compliance
Date	Mr. Gregory O. Carpenter Environmental Reviewer	Title/Position

In reaching my decision/recommendation on the USCG's proposed action, I have considered the information contained in this Draft EA on the potential for environmental impacts.

6/20/2017	Sean P. Hannigan	Commanding Officer USCG CEU Cleveland
Date	Sean P. Hannigan Responsible Official	Title/Position

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List of Acronyms

AECOM	AECOM Technical Services, Inc.
AFSA	Anadromous Fish Spawning Area
AOR	Area of Responsibility
APE	Area of Potential Effect
CAMA	Coastal Area Management Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CESQG	Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
CZMP	Coastal Zone Management Program
DCM	Division of Coastal Management
DMF	Division of Marine Fisheries
EA	Environmental Assessment
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
IPaC	Information for Planning and Conservation
LMR	Living Marine Resources
LUP	Land Use Plan
MLLW	Mean Lower Low Water
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NC	North Carolina
NCDEQ	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
NHP	Natural Heritage Program
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
SAR	Search and Rescue
SAV	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
STA	Station
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WPB	Coastal Patrol Boat
WRC	Wildlife Resources Commission

1 Project Justification

1.1 Introduction

AECOM Technical Services, Inc. (AECOM) completed this Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on behalf of the United States Coast Guard (USCG). The EA evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action to permanently relocate an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to an existing mooring location at USCG Station (STA) Wrightsville Beach located at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina (NC). The EA was performed in accordance with: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Section 102[2][c]), as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 *Code of Federal Regulations* parts 1500-1508); *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* (Department of Transportation 1979, rev. 1982, rev. 1985) Order 5610.1C; and USCG Policy *NEPA: Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*, COMDTINST M16475.1D. NEPA requires the assessment of environmental consequences of Federal actions that may affect the quality of the human and natural environment. Based on the potential for impacts described herein, the USCG will either publish a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

STA Wrightsville Beach is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet (**Figure 1**). The geographic location of the dock and moorings in the Project Area is latitude 34°11'21.76" north and longitude 77°48'46.41" west. STA Wrightsville Beach was established on Water Street in 1969 and was originally designed to house a crew of 18. The Station occupies 2.11 acres and consists of one main multi-purpose building, a garage, and several small ancillary outbuildings. The Station can be accessed from the main gate off Water Street on the southern side of the Station. The Project Area can be approached by water from the northeast, west, or southwest.

The docks and moorings at STA Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the Station. The main pier is partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, and wood-decked pier that extends approximately 150 feet from the concrete bulkhead. One concrete-surfaced floating pier is located parallel to the main pier on the southern side. One concrete-surfaced floating pier and one wood-decked pier are located perpendicular to the main pier on the northern side. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the western side (i.e., outermost face) of the concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The wood-decked pier extends approximately 95 feet from the main pier. The wood-decked pier is fronted along the western, eastern, and northern sides by a timber-pile fender system. Foam-filled marine fenders and mooring cleats are located along the western side of the wood-decked pier.

The Project Area is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the USCG Station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is a public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach. Immediately outside the Project Area is a small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) adjacent to the concrete bulkhead. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The main pier crosses over the beach and access to the beach is provided via stairs. **Figure 2** is an aerial photograph of the Project Area showing the proposed mooring location and orientation, and the Station buildings, piers, boat basin, and moorings. Photographs of the Project Area are included in **Appendix A**.

1.2 Purpose and Need Statement

The purpose and need of this project is to ensure optimum readiness and enable the USCG to effectively meet operational and mission execution requirements in support of maritime safety and security operations. The USCG's 87-foot WPB is a multi-mission vessel that allows the USCG maximum flexibility and response capability for their mandated missions. It is a fast, sturdy, highly maneuverable boat capable of operating in rough seas with wave height up to 8 feet (sea state 5). It was designed to meet specific operational mission requirements and it includes an innovative stern launch-and-recovery system using a rigid hull inflatable boat. The 87-foot WPB is the dividing line between the USCG's small response boats and large cutters and they are vital to offshore missions. Currently, there is not an 87-foot WPB homeported in Sector North Carolina. Offshore patrols and missions are being conducted either by 110-foot WPBs from SFO Fort Macon in Atlantic Beach, NC or by 87-foot WPBs from Sector Hampton Roads in Virginia on a rotating schedule. Under current operations, vessels and manpower are being diverted from other missions, which reduces operational readiness and mission effectiveness.

Additionally, because search and rescue (SAR) and law enforcement activities in Sector North Carolina are presently carried out by cutters from other Units, longer underway times and increased transit hours are required of the equipment and crew. Not having an 87-foot WPB homeported in Sector North Carolina results directly in increases in response times and reduced law enforcement coverage within Sector North Carolina's Area of Responsibility (AOR).

The USCG's Fifth District is scheduled to receive four Sentinel Class cutters in 2016-2018, including two cutters assigned to Cape May, New Jersey and two cutters assigned to Atlantic Beach, NC which will replace two 110-foot WPBs that were decommissioned in March 2017. The assignment of Sentinel Class cutters to the Fifth District creates an opportunity to improve operational readiness and efficiency by allowing for relocation of one existing Fifth District 87-foot WPB from Cape May, New Jersey to Sector North Carolina. From 2009 to 2011, the Fifth District provided Sector North Carolina an average of 19 weeks of 87-foot WPB support to meet SAR needs in the southern offshore SAR zone. During the same period, each of the 110-foot WPBs in Sector North Carolina averaged 17 weeks as the District's southern SAR cutter. The cutter support provided by other WPBs to assume southern SAR coverage duties is a clear indication of the need for another cutter in Sector North Carolina. Currently, the Fifth District's 110-foot WPBs are the most capable offshore living marine resources (LMR) enforcement platforms available; however, they currently spend a large portion of their time covering the southern SAR zone. This shift in resources has a direct negative impact on the District's LMR enforcement mission. Without a dedicated 87-foot WPB to support SAR operations in Sector North Carolina, the Fifth District will be challenged to meet mission demands and maximize effectiveness of these valuable resources.

In consideration of relocating one of the Fifth District's existing 87-foot WPBs to a location within Sector North Carolina, a Commandant (CG-43) directed Feasibility Study was conducted in 2013. The study involved identifying and comparing potential homeport sites within Sector North Carolina to assist in the homeport decision analysis. As part of the Feasibility Study, all 11 of the Sector North Carolina Units were reviewed for the possibility to serve as a permanent homeport for an 87-foot WPB and its crew. The potential homeport sites were evaluated based on a detailed comparison of homeporting criteria, planning factors, and shore facilities requirements as defined in the Integrated Logistics Support Plan for the 87-foot WPB. Following the initial reviews, many of the Units were eliminated from further consideration due to a combination of factors including, but not limited to, inadequate berthing and/or maneuverability; shallow navigational depth; limited waterfront services, such as utility connections and pier length; insufficient land and building area; and remote geographic location. Several Units were identified as potentially having mooring locations that would be suitable for a short duration; however, STA Wrightsville Beach was identified as the only Unit having suitable mooring permanently available for an 87-foot WPB. Furthermore, no other Units were identified as having the required depth and available site area (land and/or waterfront) necessary to construct new moorings without a substantial reconfiguration of the existing facilities or the relocation of existing boats.

In addition to meeting the requirements needed to adequately support the proposed homeport relocation, STA Wrightsville Beach previously served as the homeport of an 82-foot WPB (the *Point Warde*) from 1987 until 2000 when the boat was decommissioned. The cutter was required to meet the SAR and LMR demands in the southern portion of the Fifth District's AOR and the impact of the loss is evident from the necessary shifting of WPBs from other areas of the District to Sector North Carolina. The assignment of Sentinel Class cutters to the Fifth District's operational fleet provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the former WPB homeport location in an effort to maximize resources to ensure mission effectiveness and execution. Based on the results of the site evaluations, the Feasibility Study proposed STA Wrightsville Beach as the new homeport for the existing 87-foot WPB. Unless this vessel is homeported at STA Wrightsville Beach, Sector North Carolina would continue to be without a coastal patrol boat and unable to efficiently and effectively execute its operational missions within its AOR. STA Wrightsville Beach was chosen as the location for the new homeport of an existing 87-foot WPB because it is in a preferred geographic location near the middle of Sector North Carolina's AOR, suitable mooring is currently available, and no immediate waterfront or dock improvements would be needed to accommodate the 87-foot WPB and its crew. The outermost face of the existing wood-decked pier has adequate depth, fendering, and utilities for mooring the 87-foot WPB.

The proposed action would not require dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel and no in-water or significant onshore construction or dock improvements would occur. Additionally, STA Wrightsville Beach previously served as the homeport of an 82-foot WPB from 1987 until 2000 and presently, other 87-foot WPBs periodically moor at STA Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time during patrol rotations. Throughout this period, the USCG has not received adverse reaction from the community to the mooring of these cutters. The proposed vessel relocation project would involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored WPBs. In addition, because the

Station is located in a suburban waterfront area and adjacent to an active navigational channel, Wrightsville Beach residents and visitors are accustom to the sights and sounds of moored and passing vessels.

The moored 87-foot WPB would not extend into Banks Channel and would not directly or indirectly block or impair the existing navigation channel. The proposed action would not interfere with existing public rights of access to, or use of, navigable waters or coastal resources. The moored 87-foot WPB would be within the viewshed of the adjacent properties along the shoreline; however, it is anticipated that the portion of the boat that would be visible would take up a relatively small proportion of the vertical and horizontal fields of view. The height of the boat is approximately 20 feet from the waterline to the roof of the pilot house. Since the boat would be moored along the outermost face of the pier, it is estimated that approximately 12 feet of the boat (and the mast) would be visually evident above the pilings. The profile of the boat's superstructure, which would be visible above the pier, is approximately 30 feet at its widest point.

The potential degree of visual intrusion that the moored boat would have on the adjacent shoreline properties would depend on the horizontal and vertical fields of view at a specific location. However, the moored boat would not be expected to present a significant visual intrusion since it would be located within a disturbed/human-modified landscape along the developed waterfront and it would not create a substantial change to the existing environment of the active navigational channel. The presence of the moored 87-foot WPB would not be expected to have a significant negative impact on the aesthetic value of the coastal resources.

The proposed action is to permanently relocate an 87-foot WPB to an existing mooring location at STA Wrightsville Beach, which would serve as homeport to the boat and its crew. STA Wrightsville Beach currently hosts two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. STA Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting NC's coastline in the Station's AOR from pollution and marine accidents, conducting SAR missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. There are currently 27 active duty and approximately 40 reserve personnel assigned to STA Wrightsville Beach. There is a boat crew available 24 hours a day and the Station responds to numerous calls for assistance annually. The Station's AOR extends north to Surf City, south to Kure Beach, along the Intra-Coastal Waterway south to Snows Cut, and ocean side to Smith Island.

STA Wrightsville Beach is located within Sector North Carolina. Sector North Carolina's AOR includes the inland waterways of NC, NC's 300 miles of coastline and the exclusive economic zone, which extends from the baseline (i.e., the low-water line of a coastal state) out to 200 nautical miles off-shore. NC's busy waterways include two major, international ports, a commercial fishing fleet of approximately 8,000 vessels, and an active commercial ferry system. NC waterways are some of the most difficult to navigate due to the shifting sands, shallow inlets, and prevalence of hurricanes.

1.3 Alternatives Considered

The following sections present and briefly discuss feasible alternatives that meet the purpose and need for this project. The alternatives evaluated in this Draft EA were:

- No Action (status quo)
- Alternate Mooring Location
- Alternate Homeporting Location
- Permanent Relocation of an 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach

1.3.1 No Action Alternative

This alternative would have Sector North Carolina continuing to rely on the 110-foot WPBs from SFO Fort Macon and the 87-foot WPBs from Sector Hampton Roads to carry out offshore patrols and missions (status quo). This alternative would result in Sector North Carolina being unable to efficiently and effectively execute its mission requirements within its AOR and would divert vessels and manpower from other missions. Under the 'no action' alternative, this disruption of other missions would continue and the result would be further demand on manpower and current assets. The inability to utilize the most appropriate USCG resources and equipment available to conduct missions within Sector North Carolina's AOR does not fulfill the USCG's purpose and need to ensure optimum readiness and to effectively meet operational and mission execution requirements.

1.3.2 Alternate Mooring Location Alternative

This alternative would have Sector North Carolina moor the 87-foot WPB at a public marina or other off-site location. This alternative would require identifying and leasing available dockage for the boat. Geographically separating the boat from the station would result in delays in mission response time and degradation of mission readiness. Also, mooring the boat at an off-site location would present considerable security challenges due to the USCG's inability to restrict access to a public marina and because the moored vessel would be out of the USCG's immediate control. This alternative would also result in additional costs to the USCG for dockage fees and fuel (traveling to and from an off-site marina). Mooring the 87-foot WPB at a public marina or other off-site location would reduce operational efficiency and expose USCG personnel and assets to unnecessary risks. Under this alternative, the ability of Sector North Carolina to meet its mission requirements would be impaired.

1.3.3 Alternate Homeporting Location Alternative

This alternative would have the 87-foot WPB homeported at another location within Sector North Carolina. Review of the 2013 Feasibility Study indicates that other Units within Sector North Carolina potentially have suitable moorings available for short durations; however, with the exception of STA Wrightsville Beach, no Units have suitable moorings permanently available for an 87-foot WPB. This alternative would require waterfront construction (e.g., dock extension or enlargement); utility/infrastructure upgrades; dock improvements (e.g., mooring devices, fendering); new construction or substantial reconfiguration of existing shore support, work space and storage facilities; dredging; long commute times for USCG personnel and extended interruptions due to extreme weather or road and bridge conditions; and/or relocation of existing boats to accommodate the 87-foot WPB and its crew. This alternative would involve a substantial financial investment for the USCG, would be disruptive to critical USCG missions, would delay the homeport shift and potentially render the USCG unable to meet time-critical deployments, and would likely result in significant impacts to a greater number of environmental resources.

1.3.4 Relocate 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat to Station Wrightsville Beach Alternative

This alternative proposes permanent relocation of an 87-foot WPB to an existing mooring location at STA Wrightsville Beach, which would serve as homeport to the boat and its crew. As a result of the proposed homeporting, the number of Station personnel will increase by an additional 11 crew members. Based on a detailed comparison of homeporting criteria, planning factors, and shore facilities requirements, STA Wrightsville Beach was identified as the only Sector North Carolina Unit suitable for the long-term homeporting of an 87-foot WPB. As previously mentioned, STA Wrightsville Beach was also the homeport of an 82-foot WPB (the *Point Warde*) from 1987 until 2000 and presently, other USCG 87-foot WPBs periodically moor at STA Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time during patrol rotations. The proposed vessel relocation project would involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored WPBs. The proposed mooring location for the boat is along the western side (i.e., outermost face) of the existing wood-decked pier, located approximately 150 feet from the shoreline.

The 87-foot WPB is a unique vessel that serves as a multi-mission platform capable of performing SAR, marine environmental protection and response, recreational boating safety, fisheries enforcement, law enforcement, and ports, waterways, and coastal security up to 200 nautical miles offshore. The boat has a maximum continuous speed of 25 knots (approximately 29 miles per hour) and its patrol speed is approximately 10 knots. The 87-foot WPBs have a range of 900 nautical miles and they are equipped with berthing for a 10 person crew plus a spare berth (11 berths total) and provision stores for three- to five-day missions.

STA Wrightsville Beach is located along a coastal shoreline that is heavily used for recreational and navigational purposes by commercial fisherman, tourists, and Wrightsville Beach residents. The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of Banks Channel and no in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur as a result of the preferred alternative. The moored 87-foot WPB would not extend into the navigation channel (or channel setbacks) and would not directly or indirectly block or impair the existing navigation channel. The preferred alternative would not require dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel.

Relocation of an existing 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach would enhance coastal security and enforcement operations in Sector North Carolina and would maximize mission effectiveness and safety in the USCG's Fifth District. It would not duplicate existing capabilities, but would close operational gaps and strengthen readiness requirements.

The 87-foot WPB and its crew would routinely patrol the coastal waters of Sector North Carolina and would typically be deployed for approximately 15 days per month, depending on multiple factors such as maintenance and the operations tempo (i.e., the rate of deployments). The boat would be expected to spend the majority of its operating time in Sector North Carolina's AOR; however, it could also be deployed temporarily outside of Sector North Carolina. The location and duration of each individual deployment would depend on a number of unknown factors. Therefore, this EA focuses on the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed homeport location at STA Wrightsville Beach.

1.4 Area of Potential Effect

The area of potential effect (APE) includes an area in the proposed mooring location that consists of the boat's footprint and a 100-foot buffer from the sides of the boat, measuring approximately 285 feet by 220 feet (approximately 1.4 acres). The principal characteristics of the 87-foot WPB include an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. The APE is located adjacent to the federally maintained navigation channel, Banks Channel. Review of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Hydrographic Survey of Wrightsville Beach – Banks Channel, dated April 2016, indicates that the depth at the proposed mooring location is approximately 18 feet below mean lower low water (MLLW). The mooring location, orientation, boat dimensions, and the 100-foot buffer for this proposed vessel relocation project are shown on **Figure 2**.

2 Summary of Environmental Impacts

This section evaluates the significance of environmental impacts of the proposed project on the physical, natural, socioeconomic, and cultural environment. CEQ regulations (40 *Code of Federal Regulations* 1508.27) define "significance" in terms of the *context* of the action and the *intensity* of the impacts. The context considers society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. The intensity of impact refers to the severity of an impact, and the following factors are considered:

- Beneficial and adverse impacts
- Public health and safety
- Unique geological characteristics
- Controversial nature of the action
- Uncertain effects
- Precedent-setting actions
- Cumulative impacts
- Historic landmark impacts
- Impacts to endangered or threatened species or their habitat
- Potential for violation of Federal, state, or local environmental standards

The duration of the impacts are also considered. Temporary impacts are reduced early in the project, short-term impacts occur during the life of the project and long-term impacts exist after project completion.

2.1 Physical Environment

2.1.1 Geology, Topography, and Soils

Affected Environment: STA Wrightsville Beach is situated within the navigable abutting Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet. STA Wrightsville Beach is located on the south end of Wrightsville Beach and the docks and moorings at STA Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the Station. Sediments within the Project Area were not analyzed as part of the proposed action; however, an in-water marine resource survey was conducted in the Project Area on June 15, 2016 (**Appendix B**). The survey revealed that the seafloor consisted of a barren, silty sand environment. The substrate was composed of silty sand that was fine-grained on average, but also contained lesser percentages of very fine-grains to medium-sized grains. It was noted that the substrate contained less than 10 percent shell fragments that ranged in degree of weathering.

Wrightsville Beach is located within the Outer Coastal Plain Physiographic Province. The geology of the area consists of undivided surficial deposits of sand, clay, and gravel in marine and eolian environments of the Quaternary period. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey map, the onshore area adjacent to the Project Area consists of Newhan fine sand on 0 to 10 percent slopes. Newhan fine sand consists of excessively drained sands with a very low runoff rate. This soil unit consists of sand to a depth of approximately 80 inches. Permeability is very high and available water capacity is very low. These soils do not meet the requirements of a hydric soil and belong to the Class A hydrologic group.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts on the physical environment. The alternate mooring location alternative would have no impacts on the physical environment. Under the alternate homeporting location alternative, waterfront construction, utility/infrastructure upgrades, onshore building construction, and/or dredging would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location. Therefore, the alternate homeporting location alternative would be expected to have impacts on the physical environment. For the proposed action, no impacts to soils, sediments, or geology would occur

because the Project Area is located entirely within the waters of Banks Channel and no in-water or onshore construction activities are involved in the proposed action.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would not disturb land areas or sediment; therefore, the proposed action would have no impact on geology, topography, and soils. No mitigation is necessary.

2.1.2 Climate and Air Quality

Affected Environment: Average temperatures in Wilmington range from a minimum of 36 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in January to 90°F in July. The mean annual temperature is 64°F. The area receives approximately 58 inches of precipitation a year. According to the information from the State Climate Office of NC, the average wind speed at Wrightsville Beach for 2015 was 11.6 miles per hour. New Hanover County has good air quality, with air quality index values below 50 since 1999. An air quality index of 50 or below represents good air quality with little potential to affect public health.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), under the requirements of the 1970 Clean Air Act as amended in 1977 and 1990, established primary and secondary standards for six airborne pollutants or criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, lead, and sulfur dioxide. The primary standards, known as National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), are intended to protect public health. The secondary standards are intended to protect public welfare and account for air pollutant effects on soil, water, visibility, material, vegetation, and other aspects of general welfare. For each pollutant, NAAQS has two designations: attainment areas that meet the NAAQS and non-attainment areas that do not meet the NAAQS. Areas that were previously in non-attainment and are re-designated to attainment are designated as maintenance areas. For Federal or federally funded actions proposed in a non-attainment or maintenance area, the General Conformity Rule (40 CFR Parts 51 and 93) requires a determination of whether the action interferes with State Implementation Plans to meet or maintain the NAAQS.

According to information reviewed on the USEPA and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Division of Air Quality's websites, New Hanover County has been designated as an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Therefore, the General Conformity Rule does not apply.

Anticipated Impacts: Current operation of vehicles, vessels, and stationary fuel-burning equipment as part of USCG activities would continue under the 'no action' alternative with no change in impacts on climate and air quality. The alternate mooring location alternative would have additional, minor long-term impacts on climate and air quality due to the increased travel that would be required to commute between the Station and an off-site marina. The alternate homeporting location alternative would have adverse impacts on climate and air quality from operation of the vessel and from excessive travel if the selected homeport is in a remote location that would require long commutes for USCG personnel. Under the proposed action, permanent homeporting of the 87-foot WPB would have additional, minor adverse impacts on climate and air quality from mobile source emissions. The 87-foot WPB would be equipped with two twin-turbocharged, eight cylinder diesel engines that would meet USEPA emissions standards. Operation of the vessel would cause minor localized effects on air quality; however, similar vessels from SFO Fort Macon and Sector Hampton Roads periodically moor at STA Wrightsville during rotations. Therefore, mooring the 87-foot WPB at STA Wrightsville Beach would result in no change in impacts on climate and air quality. There would be an increase in the number of vehicles traveling to and from the Station because the additional 11 crew members would be required to commute between their homes and STA Wrightsville Beach. However, it is anticipated that the 87-foot WPB and its crew would be deployed approximately 180 days per year and deployments would typically be durations of three to five days. Therefore, crew members would not be commuting daily and overall emission contributions from the additional personnel vehicles would not be significant.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The 87-foot WPB would comply with applicable federal regulations governing air pollution emissions for marine vessels. The USCG anticipates that personnel vehicles would meet federal mandated emission standards and North Carolina emissions inspection requirements. No additional mitigation measures are proposed.

2.1.3 Noise

Affected Environment: STA Wrightsville Beach is located along a coastal shoreline that is heavily used for recreational and navigational purposes by commercial fisherman, tourists, and Wrightsville Beach residents. Existing noise levels in the vicinity of STA Wrightsville Beach are typical of those normally associated with urban waterfront environments (e.g., vehicles, voices,

heating, ventilation and air conditioning units, boat noise, wind, and waves, etc.). These noises are loudest during daylight hours, during the summer months, and during storms.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts on noise levels. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative since the boat would likely be moored at an existing marina. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, increases in noise levels would occur during operation of the boat and during potential construction activities. For the proposed action, vessel-related noises would occur from operation of the 87-foot WPB. There are no schools or hospitals within 1,500 feet of the Project Area but residential homes and a small public beach are located adjacent to the Station. Vessel-related noise may be audible to nearby residences and visitors to the adjacent public beach; however, the noise would be similar to existing vessel-related noise in the area and the overall noise contribution from the addition of one USCG vessel at STA Wrightsville Beach would be negligible. The boat would generate noise that could deter species from using the area; however, not any more or less than what is currently occurring from existing boat traffic. Because the Project Area is located in a suburban waterfront area and adjacent to an active navigational channel, anthropogenic disturbance is typical and any impact to fish, birds, and other wildlife would be minor and short-term. Fish and wildlife would likely relocate to a nearby habitat when the engine starts, and would likely return after the engine is turned off or the boat leaves the dock.

The proposed action would have minor adverse impacts on noise levels during operation of the boat. No significant impacts on existing ambient noise levels would result from the proposed action. Noise generated by existing vessels is pervasive and would not be significantly increased by the additional vessel. Normal transit speed of the boat would be approximately 10 knots and the majority of its operations would be conducted offshore; therefore, it is anticipated that operation of the boat would be indistinguishable from existing vessel activity and the ambient noise environment in the vicinity of the Project Area. Further, the 87-foot WPB would only be moored at the Station for approximately 15 days per month.

According to the USCG's Reference Guide to State Boating Laws dated 2008, the state of North Carolina has neither operational noise regulations for vessels, nor a vessel-muffling alteration law. The Town of Wrightsville Beach does not currently regulate vessel-related noise. The Noise Control Act specifies federal performance standards, which the USCG must incorporate into the design of new vessels and equipment to reduce noise emission.

Boat operations are considered a temporary intrusion of noise. The impact of the permanent homeporting of the 87-foot WPB on noise levels is not significant because the noise would be similar to other sources of vessel-related noise nearby, the noise would be localized and intermittent, and it would only last for short durations.

Mitigations and Conclusions: Design and operation of the 87-foot WPB would be in accordance with all local, state, and federal noise regulations. The USCG would also restrict vessel-related noise, to the maximum extent possible, to normal daylight hours. No additional mitigation is necessary.

2.1.4 Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste

Affected Environment: Currently, STA Wrightsville Beach is classified as a Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator (CESQG) of hazardous waste under Resource Conservation and Recovery Act regulations (USEPA ID No. NC8690308244). A CESQG generator is defined as any entity, other than a household, that generates 100 kilograms (220 pounds) or less per month of hazardous waste or one kilogram (2.2 pounds) or less per month of acutely hazardous waste, and never accumulates more than 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) of hazardous waste at any one time. The types of wastes generated are consistent with the Station operations (e.g., used oil, engine coolant, and spent batteries from routine vessel and vehicle maintenance and used fluorescent lamps and paint from facility maintenance), and are disposed off-site by a licensed contractor. The Station follows the USCG's policies and procedures as prescribed in the *Hazardous Waste Management Manual* (COMDTINST M16478.1B) and the *Vessel Environmental Manual* (COMDTINST M16455.1A) applicable to all waterborne assets.

Anticipated Impacts: There would be no anticipated impacts from the 'no action' alternative. Under the alternate mooring location alternative, the boat would likely travel to the Station for routine maintenance activities. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, there would be no anticipated changes in the use, handling or disposal of hazardous materials at the alternate homeport location. The hazardous materials used and waste generated would be expected to increase due to routine

maintenance activities and there would be potential for fuel and petroleum releases associated with the boat. Under the proposed action, waste streams generated by the Station would continue to be handled and disposed of in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. No changes in the use, handling or disposal of hazardous materials related to Station operations would occur as a result of the proposed action. Permanent homeporting of the vessel would involve the use of materials and generation of wastes similar to those currently present at the Station. The 87-foot WPB is equipped for extended deployments (three to five days) and as a result, the vessel and its operations would use and generate a commensurate quantity of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes. Therefore, the quantity of material used and wastes generated may increase slightly due to routine maintenance activities; however, it is not anticipated that the quantity would exceed the Station's CESQG generator status. Fuel and other petroleum products contained within the vessel could potentially be released while docked or during routine maintenance activities (via leaks or accidents). However, it is very unlikely that a release would occur and if so, these releases are not anticipated to be significant.

Mitigations and Conclusions: Any hazardous materials used or hazardous wastes generated in association with the 87-foot WPB would be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. With implementation of safety measures (including a spill prevention, control and countermeasures plan) and proper procedures for the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes associated with the vessel, no adverse impacts are anticipated.

2.2 Natural Environment

The site was inspected by an environmental scientist from AECOM on May 24, 2016. A photographic log of STA Wrightsville Beach was completed during the site survey and is included in **Appendix A**. An in-water marine resource survey of the Project Area was also conducted on June 15, 2016. A copy of the marine survey report is included in **Appendix B**.

Further, the USACE, on behalf of the USCG, conducted site investigations and prepared an EA and FONSI for STA Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed maintenance dredging activities. Several alternatives were evaluated including alternate dock configurations and maintenance dredging using multiple dredging methodologies and disposal scenarios. As part of the EA, an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment was prepared and coordinated with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and to address public objections to the dredging, an assessment of erosion on the adjacent properties was conducted in November 2012. Results of the site investigations; regulations and requirements review; and coordination with federal, state, and local agencies during the EA found that the proposed dredging activities would not significantly affect the quality of the human environments. All comments received on the EA were resolved either through project modification or by the provision of additional information. In 2014, maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at STA Wrightsville Beach. Results of the 2013 EA are discussed in further detail in the sections below, as appropriate.

2.2.1 Terrestrial Environment

Affected Environment: STA Wrightsville Beach is located on the south end of Wrightsville Beach and the docks and moorings at STA Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the Station within Banks Channel. The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of Banks Channel and no in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would be involved in the proposed action. Immediately outside the Project Area is a small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) adjacent to the concrete bulkhead. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The main pier crosses over the beach and access to the beach is provided via stairs.

STA Wrightsville Beach is developed with paved roadways, paved parking lots, and buildings. Habitats include mowed grassy areas, scattered shrubs, and narrow tree lines along the southwestern and northeastern boundaries of the property. Wildlife found in this area is typical for an urban environment. Species generally would include squirrels, amphibians, small reptiles, insects, songbirds, and migratory birds.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), NMFS, NC Natural Heritage Program (NHP), and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) were consulted regarding potential sensitive species and habitat issues at STA Wrightsville Beach. Copies of resources reviewed, submitted consultation letters, and any responses received are included in **Appendix D**. The USCG completed background research and records review using various maps and available online sources for the Project

Area including, but not limited to: the NC OneMap Habitat Map; the NC NHP Natural Areas Map; the USFWS Critical Habitat Mapper; and the NC NHP Species/Community Search for the Wrightsville Beach Quadrangle.

Based on the USCG's review, the Project Area is not located in a significant natural heritage natural area or a conservation/managed area. The closest significant natural heritage natural area is Masonboro Island located approximately 900 feet from the Project Area, across Banks Channel. The closest conservation/managed area is the portion of Masonboro Island located over 1,000 feet from the Project Area, across Shinn Creek and the Masonboro Inlet. Masonboro Island is an undeveloped barrier island, which has been classified as having an "Exceptional" representational rating and a collective value rating of "C2 (Very High)". Review of the habitat map indicates that portions of the Project Area are located in a Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat Assessment Area with a Conservation Planning Tool Rating of 1 (i.e., moderate conservation value). Review of the NC NHP database search indicates that 58 species/communities (i.e., 46 species, 10 natural communities and 2 animal assemblages) are identified within the Wrightsville Beach topographic quadrangle, including nine Federally-listed terrestrial species under USFWS and/or NMFS jurisdiction.

The Project Area will occur entirely within the estuarine waters of Banks Channel and no onshore construction or activities will be involved in the proposed action. There would be no change in the mission or use of the waterfront by personnel at STA Wrightsville Beach as a result of the proposed action. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on the terrestrial environment.

As previously mentioned, an EA and FONSI were prepared for STA Wrightsville Beach in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the 2013 EA found that significant natural heritage areas and terrestrial wildlife resources would not be adversely affected. In 2014, maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at STA Wrightsville Beach. No listed species were encountered during the previous dredging activities.

Anticipated Impacts: There would be no anticipated impacts from the 'no action' alternative. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, construction of new buildings, utility/infrastructure upgrades, and/or substantial reconfiguration of the existing facilities would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location. Therefore, the alternate homeporting location alternative would be expected to have impacts on the terrestrial environment.

Based on reviews of the habitat requirements for the species and communities identified with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area, the USCG concluded that no effects to terrestrial species and communities would occur as a result of the proposed action because no onshore construction or activities would be involved in the proposed action and suitable habitat is not present. In a letter dated October 7, 2016, the USFWS concurred with the USCG. The NC WRC responded to the USCG's request for consultation via electronic mail on December 2, 2016 stating that the NC WRC does not feel that the proposed action will significantly impact terrestrial or aquatic wildlife species or habitats and that the proposed action may continue as proposed. On January 12, 2017, the NC NHP provided information about natural heritage sources for the Project Area. This information is discussed further in Section 2.2.6 below. The NMFS responded to the USCG's request for consultation via electronic mail on September 8, 2016 stating that the "NMFS does not provide concurrence on an action agency's no effect determination."

Activities under the proposed action would occur in open water, in a developed area of Banks Channel and no impacts to terrestrial flora and fauna would occur, although resident wildlife would be subject to vessel-related noise. For the proposed action, since the impacts are limited to the docks and moorings area, no impacts to the terrestrial environment are anticipated for this preferred alternative.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would not have significant impacts on the terrestrial environment because no special terrestrial resources are present. No mitigation is necessary.

2.2.2 Water Resources and Aquatic Environment

Affected Environment: The Project Area is located entirely within the estuarine waters of the federally maintained Banks Channel, which connects to Masonboro Inlet. The confluence of Banks Channel and Masonboro Inlet is located approximately 1,300 feet from the Project Area.

The Project Area as well as the remainder of Banks Channel is estuarine and marine deepwater habitat. The footprint of the 87-foot WPB includes an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. Based on review of the USACE's Hydrographic Survey of Wrightsville Beach - Banks Channel dated April 2016, the depth at the proposed mooring location (i.e., along the western side of the existing wood-decked pier) is approximately 18 feet below MLLW. Therefore, the space between the vessel draft and channel bottom depth is sufficient to allow for water circulation. In addition, the stern, bow and starboard side of the boat will be surrounded by open water allowing for water circulation. Normal transit speed of the boat would be approximately 10 knots, resulting in a small wake that should not adversely impact the surrounding shores.

The Project Area is located in the Cape Fear River Basin (US Geologic Survey Hydrologic Unit 03030005). The portion of Banks Channel where the Project Area is located (Index #: 18-87-10-1) is classified by the NC Division of Water Resources as "SA; HQW", which is described as "Market Shellfishing, Salt Water" and "High Quality Waters." All "SA" waters are High Quality Waters by supplemental classification.

The USCG completed background research and records review using various maps and available online sources for the Project Area including, but not limited to: the NC OneMap Habitat Map; the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) Anadromous Fish Spawning Areas (AFSA) map for the Cape Fear River area; the NC DMF Fishery Nursery Areas map for the Wrightsville Beach Area; the NC DMF Mapped Fish Habitats in Coastal NC; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Environmental Sensitivity Map for Wrightsville Beach; and the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Plan Amendments.

Based on the USCG's review, the Project Area is not located in a conservation/managed area, significant natural heritage natural area, Primary Nursery Area, or within AFSA waters. The Project Area is located in a shellfish growing area; however, review of the NC DMF Shellfish Harvesting Area Closure Map indicates that the Project Area is located in a portion of Banks Channel (Wrightsville Beach Area) where shellfish harvesting is prohibited. Based on review of the NC OneMap Habitat Map, there is no submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) located within or adjacent to the Project Area. The closest area of SAV is located over 0.5-mile from the Project Area, across the Masonboro Inlet.

The marine resource survey in June 2016 revealed that benthic (bottom-dwelling) resources are sparse, likely due to a high rate of sediment deposition and a dynamic tidal environment. In general, the seafloor within the Project Area consists of a barren, silty sand environment. No protected or listed marine species or resources (federal or state) were observed during the marine resource survey. During the marine resource survey, several non-protected resources were observed either on the substrate or within the water column. Aquatic biota such as barnacles, sponges, and a variety of fish species were observed in the estuarine environment surrounding the Project Area. The benthic (bottom-dwelling) ecosystem in the boat basin and surrounding underwater area is populated by organisms commonly found on muddy, sandy bottoms including invertebrates such as crustaceans (e.g., crabs), mollusks (e.g., snails), and echinoderms (e.g., urchins).

Anticipated Impacts: There would be no anticipated impacts from the 'no action' alternative. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, waterfront construction, dock improvements and/or dredging would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location. Therefore, the alternate homeporting location alternative would be expected to have adverse impacts on water quality and aquatic resources.

No significant impacts to the marine environment are expected as a result of the proposed action. The presence of the 87-foot WPB could lead to minor variations in water temperature and available light due to the boat's shadow. However, minor variations in these characteristics are already common in the Project Area. Further, there is no SAV present in the Project Area that would require light for photosynthesis, and all managed species potentially present in the Project Area are mobile, so they are capable of occupying the nearby habitats that they find most favorable. Because the Project Area is located in a suburban waterfront area and adjacent to an active navigational channel, the existing underwater environment in the vicinity of the Project Area experiences frequent noise from boat traffic and other anthropogenic disturbances and any impact to aquatic resources would be negligible.

The proposed action would not cause degradation of shellfish beds and would not directly or indirectly impair water quality standards based on the fact that the past and current use, which is consistent with the proposed action use, has not had these

impacts. Further, considering the high concentration of both recreational and commercial boating activity that exists in Banks Channel, the current shellfish area prohibition, and the small footprint that the boat would occupy, any impact to shellfish habitat would be negligible and would not affect commercial populations.

The Project Area is not located within a small surface water supply watershed or public water supply field; therefore, the proposed action would not have an effect on public water supplies.

As previously mentioned, an EA and FONSI were prepared for STA Wrightsville Beach in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the 2013 EA found that aquatic resources would not likely be adversely affected. Mitigation of secondary and cumulative impacts to aquatic resources was deemed not applicable to the project.

Mitigation and Conclusions: The proposed action involves permanent relocation of an 87-foot WPB to an existing, frequently used mooring location at STA Wrightsville Beach. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur and the proposed action would not require dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel. STA Wrightsville Beach is located in a coastal area already heavily used for residential, recreational and commercial purposes. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on the marine environment and no mitigation is necessary.

2.2.3 Floodplains and Coastal Zone

Affected Environment: The Project Area is located entirely within Banks Channel and by definition is in the floodplain. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panel 3156J; Map 3720315600J), the Project Area is located in Zone AE (special flood hazard areas subject to inundation by the 1 percent annual chance flood) with a base flood elevation between 13 and 14 feet.

The Project Area is located in NC's Coastal Management Zone and in areas designated as Areas of Environmental Concern under the NC Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP). A Federal Consistency Determination was prepared to comply with the requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) passed in 1972. The CZMA provides for management of the nation's coastal resources and balances economic development with environmental conservation. It requires that federal agencies be consistent in enforcing the policies of state coastal zone management programs when conducting or supporting activities that affect a coastal zone. The CZMA is intended to ensure that federal activities are consistent with state programs for the protection and, where possible, enhancement of the nation's coastal zones.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts to floodplains and the coastal zone. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, construction activities would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location, and because USCG buildings and operations need to be in close proximity to the waterfront, impacts to floodplains and the coastal zone would be expected.

The Project Area is subtidal; therefore, no significant floodplain impacts associated with the proposed action are anticipated. The USCG determined that the proposed action is consistent with the CZMA and NC's CZMP. AECOM, on behalf of the USCG, prepared and submitted a Federal Consistency Determination (**Appendix C**) to the NC Division of Coastal Management (DCM) on November 10, 2016. In a letter dated January 4, 2017, the NC DCM concurred with the determination stating "DCM has reviewed the submitted information pursuant to the management objectives and enforceable policies of Subchapters 7H and 7M of Chapter 7 in Title 15A of the North Carolina Administrative Code and concurs that the proposed Federal activity by the United States Coast Guard is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with NC's certified coastal management program." A copy of the NC DCM concurrence letter is included in **Appendix C**.

As previously mentioned, an EA and FONSI were prepared for STA Wrightsville Beach in 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. A Federal Consistency Determination was prepared for the proposed activities and the NC DCM concurred with the consistency determination provided that certain conditions were adhered to such as obtaining all necessary permits and authorizations, conducting the dredging activities outside of time of year restrictions, and adhering to mitigation measures described in the consistency submission.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of Banks Channel and would not involve construction or land disturbance; therefore, the proposed action would have no impact on floodplains, and no floodplain mitigation is necessary. The proposed action is consistent with the CZMA and NC's CZMP, and no mitigation is necessary.

2.2.4 Wetlands

Affected Environment: Reviews of the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory Map and the NC Coastal Wetlands Map were completed to determine the potential presence of wetlands. The USFWS National Wetlands Inventory Map did not identify wetlands in or near the Project Area. However, the Project Area as well as the remainder of Banks Channel is classified as Estuarine and Marine Deepwater (E1UBL) habitat. The nearshore area located adjacent to the south and southeast of the Project Area is classified as Estuarine and Marine Wetland (E2US2P). This includes a small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) located immediately adjacent to the concrete bulkhead and approximately 130 feet from the proposed mooring location. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The NC Coastal Wetlands Map indicates that there are no coastal wetlands in or near the Project Area. The closest area of mapped coastal wetlands is located over 1,000 feet to the northwest of the Project Area, across Banks Channel.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts on wetlands. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, construction activities would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location; therefore, there is potential for impacts to wetlands. For the proposed action, no wetlands exist in the Project Area and the proposed mooring location is located entirely in open water. In addition, no construction activities or dock improvements would occur as a result of the proposed action. Therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands.

Mitigations and Conclusions: Wetlands would not be affected and no mitigation is necessary.

2.2.5 Prime and Unique Farmlands

Affected Environment: The Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 U.S.C. 4201, et seq.) is intended to preserve prime farmland for agricultural purposes whenever possible. The Project Area is located within Banks Channel, which is not prime or unique farmland.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts on prime and unique farmlands. The alternate mooring location alternative would involve mooring the boat at an existing marina; therefore, there would be no anticipated impacts to prime or unique farmlands. The alternate homeporting location alternative would involve homeporting the 87-foot WPB and its crew at an existing Unit; therefore, there would be no anticipated impacts to prime or unique farmlands. For the proposed action, no prime or unique farmlands exist in the Project Area or on-shore at STA Wrightsville Beach; therefore, there would be no impacts to prime or unique farmlands.

Mitigations and Conclusions: Prime and unique farmlands would not be affected and no mitigation is necessary.

2.2.6 Threatened or Endangered Species

Affected Environment: The USCG conducted a USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) database query on July 19, 2016 for the Project Area (**Appendix D**). A total of nine endangered, seven threatened, one threatened due to similarity of appearance, and one candidate species were identified under USFWS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area. No species proposed for listing were identified. Further, no designated or proposed critical habitat is known to occur in the Project Area. Based on review of the IPaC database query generated for the Project Area and the NMFS Southeast Regional Office website, a total of 11 endangered, two threatened, and three candidate species were identified under NMFS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area. No species proposed for listing were identified. There is no designated or proposed critical habitat for NMFS listed species within the Project Area. The Federally-listed and candidate species under USFWS and/or NMFS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area are listed in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – Summary of Records of Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species

Species Common Name (*Scientific Name*)	USFWS Status	NMFS Status	Habitat	Suitable Habitat Present in Project Area
Piping Plover *(Charadrius melodus)*	T	-	Migration stops along the Atlantic coast. Forages along sandy beaches and shallow wetlands.	No
Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*)	T	-	Migration stops along the Atlantic coast. Forages along sandy beaches and shallow wetlands. Main food source is horseshoe crab eggs.	No
Red-Cockaded Woodpecker *(Picoides borealis)*	E	-	Mature pine forest (specifically longleaf and loblolly pines) for nesting and roosting.	No
Atlantic Sturgeon, Carolina DPS (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*)	E	E	Anadromous species; migrate from estuarine and marine waters into freshwater in the spring and early summer to spawn; spawn in moderately flowing water in deep parts of large rivers; sub adults and adults live in coastal waters and estuaries.	No
Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*)	E	E	Anadromous species that prefers near shore marine, estuarine, and riverine habitat of large river systems; migrate periodically into faster moving freshwater areas to spawn.	No
Cooley's Meadowrue (*Thalictrum cooleyi*)	E	-	Sunny, moist areas such as open, savanna-like forest edges and clearings; non-riverine swamp forests; roadsides and power line rights-of-way in former savannas.	No
Golden Sedge (*Carex lutea*)	E	-	Wet savannahs with sandy soils.	No
Rough-leaved Loosestrife (*Lysimachia asperulaefolia*)	E	-	Longleaf pine uplands and pond pine pocosins in moist, sandy or peaty soils with low vegetation.	No
Seabeach Amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*)	T	-	Ocean beaches and island-end flats.	No
Northern Long-eared Bat *(Myotis septentrionalis)*	T	-	Roosts in hollow trees and buildings (warmer months), in caves and mines (winter); mainly in the mountains. During late spring and summer roosts and forages in upland forests.	No
West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*)	E	-	Warm waters of estuaries and river mouths. Primary foraging habitat is seagrass beds; diet is mainly submergent, emergent and floating vegetation.	Yes
American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*)	T (S/A)	-	Fresh to slightly brackish lakes, ponds, rivers, and marshes.	No
Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)	E	E	Shallow coastal waters with rocky bottoms, beds of sea grass or algae, and submerged mud flats. Nests on undisturbed, deep-sand insular or mainland beaches. Forages in ocean and sounds close to shore.	No
Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*)	E	E	Shallow coastal and estuarine waters, often over sandy or muddy bottoms where crabs are numerous. Nests on elevated dune areas, especially on beaches adjacent to large swamps or bodies of open water with narrow ocean connections. Forages in ocean and sounds; benthic feeders.	No

Species Common Name (*Scientific Name*)	USFWS Status	NMFS Status	Habitat	Suitable Habitat Present in Project Area
Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)	E	E	Marine, open ocean, often near the continental shelf; also seas, gulfs, bays and estuaries. Nests on sloping sandy beaches backed up by vegetation, often near deep water and rough seas. Forages in oceans and sounds.	No
Loggerhead Sea Turtle, Northwest Atlantic Ocean DPS (*Caretta caretta*)	T	T	Open sea, mostly over the continental shelf, and in bays, estuaries, lagoons, creeks and mouths of rivers; warm temperate regions not far from shoreline. Nests on open sandy beaches above high-tide mark, seaward of well-developed dunes. Forages in ocean and sounds.	No
Green Sea Turtle, North Atlantic Ocean DPS (*Chelonia mydas*)	T	T	Near shore, pelagic, bays, sounds, tidal flats. Nests on beaches, usually on islands, deep sand. Foraging occurs in shallow, low-energy waters with abundant submerged vegetation.	No
Magnificent Ramshorn (*Planorbella magnifica*)	C	-	Shallow, freshwater lakes and ponds.	No
Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*)	-	E	Pelagic; prefers cold waters and open seas. Feeding occurs primarily in high latitude waters; primary food source is krill.	No
Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)	-	E	Pelagic; migrates seasonally to colder high latitude water for feeding (summer) and warmer low latitude waters for breeding (winter). In North Atlantic, primary food sources are fishes, krill, and calanoid copepods.	No
Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)	-	E	Open ocean and coastal waters, sometimes including inshore areas such as bays. Primary food sources are schooling fishes and krill.	No
North Atlantic Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*)	-	E	Open ocean and coastal waters. Primary food source is plankton.	No
Sei Whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*)	-	E	Pelagic; deep water, along edge of continental shelf and in open ocean. Feeds on copepods, euphausiids, squid and small schooling fishes.	No
Sperm Whale (*Physeter microcephalus*)	-	E	Pelagic; deep water. Feeds on medium to large squids, octopus, and various fishes.	No
Giant Manta Ray (*Manta birostris*)	-	C	Deep, offshore marine waters but may migrate seasonally to productive coastal areas. Feeds at the surface near both nearshore and offshore areas, and in sandy bottom areas. Primary food source is zooplankton.	No
Porbeagle Shark (*Lamna nasus*)	-	C	Upper pelagic zone; continental shelves and slopes from close inshore (especially summer) to far offshore. Primary food source is small to medium-sized bony fishes and cephalopods.	No
Thorny Skate, Northwest Atlantic DPS (*Amblyraja radiate*)	-	C	Deep, offshore waters. Primary food sources are crustaceans, small fishes and worms.	No

Notes:

E = Endangered
T = Threatened
C = Candidate
T (S/A) = Threatened due to similarity of appearance
DPS = Distinct Population Segment
- = Not under agency jurisdiction

On August 31, 2016, the USCG submitted Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 Consultation letters to the USFWS and the NMFS requesting project review (**Appendix D**).

Review of the NC NHP Species/Community Search for the Wrightsville Beach Quadrangle along with their habitat requirements was performed. Review of the NC NHP database search indicates that 58 species/communities (i.e., 46 species, 10 natural communities and 2 animal assemblages) are identified within the Wrightsville Beach topographic quadrangle, including nine Federally-listed species under USFWS and/or NMFS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area. On November 10, 2016, the USCG submitted information request packages to the NC NHP and the NC WRC requesting any additional information or potential concerns regarding the presence of state-listed threatened and endangered species, other significant natural resources, or wildlife resources that may be potentially affected by the proposed action (**Appendix D**).

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267), established procedures designed to identify, conserve, and enhance EFH, for those species regulated under a Federal fisheries management plan. Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires Federal action agencies to consult with NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect EFH. As part of the EFH consultation process, the guidelines require Federal action agencies to prepare a written EFH Assessment describing the effects of that action on EFH (50 CFR 600.920(e)(1)).

As identified in the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Plan Amendments, the Project Area is located in an area of EFH and the following EFH may be found in the Project Area: estuarine water column, marine water column, estuarine soft bottom/subtidal, and marine soft bottom. Designated EFH for coastal pelagic species (all life stages of cobia and Spanish mackerel), penaeid shrimp (larvae, juvenile), summer flounder (larvae, juvenile, adult), red drum (all life stages), and bluefish (juvenile and adult) may also be present in the Project Area. Additionally, the Project Area is considered a coastal inlet, which is an EFH Habitat Area of Particular Concern for penaeid shrimp and red drum. On August 31, 2016, the USCG submitted a Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Consultation letter to the NMFS requesting project review (**Appendix D**).

Anticipated Impacts: The ‘no action’ alternative would have no impacts on threatened or endangered species. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, onshore and/or in-water construction activities would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location. Therefore, there is potential for impacts to threatened, endangered or candidate species, their habitats, designated critical habitats, and/or EFH.

An effects determination was prepared for each of the Federally-listed and candidate species under USFWS and/or NMFS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area. Based on the results of the effects determinations, the USCG concluded that no effect to Federally-listed species would occur as a result of the proposed action based on the lack of suitable habitat and limited resources present in the Project Area, degree of development and disturbance in the Project Area and the nearby surrounding area, presence and use of the existing mooring locations in the Project Area, and high volume of boat traffic in Banks Channel.

In a letter dated October 7, 2016, the USFWS stated that the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) is known to occur seasonally within the coastal waters of New Hanover County, including Masonboro Inlet. The USFWS provided information to assist the USCG in avoiding impacts to manatees while conducting any in-water projects. The USFWS also concluded that “the proposed permanent basing of a WPB patrol boat at Station Wrightsville Beach is not likely to adversely affect the West Indian manatee and will have no effect on any other federally listed species under jurisdiction of the Service.” The NMFS responded to the USCG’s request for consultation via electronic mail on September 8, 2016 stating that the “NMFS does not provide concurrence on an action agency’s no effect determination.”

Reviews of the habitat requirements for the State-listed threatened and endangered species and species of concern identified with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area were performed. The USCG concluded that no effects to State-listed species or species of concern would occur as a result of the proposed action based on the lack of suitable habitat and limited resources in the Project Area, degree of development and disturbance in the Project Area and the nearby surrounding

area, presence and use of the existing mooring locations in the Project Area, and/or high volume of boat traffic in Banks Channel.

The NC WRC responded to the USCG's request for consultation via electronic mail on December 2, 2016 stating that the NC WRC does not feel that the proposed action will significantly impact terrestrial or aquatic wildlife species or habitats and that the proposed action may continue as proposed. On January 12, 2017, the NC NHP responded to the USCG's inquiry and provided information related to 'documented occurrences' of natural heritage resources on or in the vicinity of the Project Area and 'potential occurrences' of natural heritage resources that have been documented within a one-mile radius of the Project Area. One state-listed species of special concern, the diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*), has been documented on or in the vicinity of the Project Area. Three state and federally-listed threatened species have been documented within a one-mile radius of the Project Area: loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*); Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*); and the seabeach amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*). The following state and federally-listed endangered species have been documented within a one-mile radius of the Project Area: Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) and the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), as well as the state-endangered seabeach knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*). The NC NHP noted that one natural area and one managed area have been documented within a one-mile radius of the Project Area. Natural areas are evaluated based on the presence of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and special habitats. Managed areas are where natural resource conservation is one of the primary management goals. Masonboro Island is classified as a natural heritage program natural area with an exceptional representational rating and a very high collective rating. Masonboro Island is also identified as a managed area owned by NCDEQ and named 'The Masonboro Island Component of the North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve'.

No significant impacts to the marine environment are expected as a result of the proposed action. The presence of the 87-foot WPB could lead to minor variations in water temperature and available light due to the boat's shadow. However, minor variations in these characteristics are already common in the Project Area. Further, there is no SAV present in the Project Area that would require light for photosynthesis, and all managed species potentially present in the Project Area are mobile, so they are capable of occupying the nearby habitats that they find most favorable. Therefore, the USCG concluded that there would be no adverse effects to EFH as a result of the proposed action.

The maximum draft of the 87-foot WPB is 5 feet 7 inches and based on the USACE's 2016 hydrographic survey of Banks Channel, the depth at the proposed mooring location (i.e., along the outermost face of the existing wood-decked pier) is approximately 18 feet below MLLW. Therefore, the space between the vessel draft and channel bottom depth is sufficient to allow for water circulation. In addition, the stern, bow and starboard side of the boat will be surrounded by open water allowing for water circulation. Therefore, the boat would not create any impairment of normal species behaviors or block passage through the Project Area.

As previously mentioned, an EA and FONSI were prepared for STA Wrightsville Beach in 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. As part of the 2013 EA, an EFH Assessment was prepared and coordinated with the NMFS. The USCG determined that the proposed dredging activities would result in minimal, temporary and short-lived impacts to fisheries and aquatic habitat. The NMFS concluded that with the exception of the open-water disposal option, the proposed dredging and disposal alternatives were acceptable. The NMFS stated that it would have no objection to the project as proposed provided that open-water disposal would only occur when absolutely necessary and each instance of open-water disposal would be separately coordinated with the NMFS. No response pursuant to the ESA was received from the NMFS's Protected Species Division with regard to sea turtles (in water), shortnose sturgeons, and Atlantic sturgeons. As a result of coordination with other resources and permitting agencies, the USCG informed NMFS of their determination that no effects to listed species would occur as a result of either dredging or disposal, provided that all work was conducted in compliance with permit authorization conditions and the environmental commitments listed in the FONSI. No listed species were encountered during the previous dredging activities.

The proposed action involves relocating the permanent homeport of an 87-foot WPB to an existing, frequently used mooring location at STA Wrightsville Beach. There would be no change in the mission or use of the waterfront by personnel at STA Wrightsville Beach as a result of the proposed action. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur and the proposed action would not require dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel. STA Wrightsville Beach is located in a coastal area that is heavily used for residential, recreational and commercial purposes. The

ESA Section 7 determination concluded that the proposed action would not likely adversely affect the West Indian manatee and would have "no effect" on any other federal- or state-listed species, their habitats, or designated critical habitats.

Mitigation and Conclusions: The proposed action would not likely adversely affect the West Indian manatee and would have no effect on any other threatened and endangered species. The proposed action would comply with all precautions set forth in the "Guidelines for Avoiding Impacts to the West Indian Manatee" prepared by the USFWS to avoid impacts to manatees. No other mitigation is necessary.

2.3 Socioeconomic Environment

2.3.1 Land Use and Zoning

Affected Land Use and Development Environment: STA Wrightsville Beach is located approximately 1.6 miles southwest of Wrightsville Beach at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, NC. Land records indicate that the Station sits on an approximately 2.11-acre parcel, owned by the United States of America. The Station is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet. The docks and moorings at STA Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the Station. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the outermost face of the existing concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The Project Area is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the USCG Station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is a public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach. The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of Banks Channel. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur as a result of the proposed action.

STA Wrightsville Beach is classified as "Office & Institutional" in recent (2016) New Hanover County property assessment data. The adjacent properties to the south, east, and northeast are classified as "Residential – R-1".

The NC Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) of 1974 was passed in accordance with the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act. CAMA requires each of the 20 coastal counties in NC to develop a local land use plan (LUP) in accordance with guidelines established by the NC Coastal Resources Commission. Each LUP includes local policies that address growth issues such as the protection of productive resources (i.e., farmland, forest resources, fisheries), desired types of economic development, natural resource protection and the reduction of storm hazards. According to the 2005 CAMA LUP adopted by the Town of Wrightsville Beach and the 2006 LUP adopted by New Hanover County and certified by the Coastal Resources Commission, Banks Channel is classified as "Conservation – P-1" and "Conservation Area", respectively. The proposed action will comply with the Town of Wrightsville Beach and the New Hanover County LUPs.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts on land use and zoning. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate homeporting location alternative. The proposed action would not affect land use, zoning, existing or future development patterns, or approved land use and development plans because there would be no changes in land use.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would not affect land use and zoning. No mitigation is necessary.

2.3.2 Socioeconomic Environment

Affected Environment: STA Wrightsville Beach is located in New Hanover County, NC. According to United States Census Bureau data, the county supported a population of 213,091 residents in 2015, with a median age of 37.8 and a median household income of $50,088. The county racial mix in 2015 was estimated at about 76.7 percent white and 14.3 percent black or African American, with about 5.4 percent of Hispanic origin.

Wrightsville Beach is one of NC's most accessible beaches and is known as a significant recreational/tourist destination. Data provided by the New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority indicates that in 2015, New Hanover County ranked 8th among NC's 100 counties in tourism expenditures. In New Hanover County, the economic impact of tourism in 2015 was estimated at $520.86 million, a 2.5 percent increase over the prior year. In New Hanover County, travel and tourism provides more than 5,840 jobs and supports a payroll of $121.05 million. Travel and tourism in New Hanover County generates approximately $46.17 million in state and local tax receipts, representing a $209.53 tax saving to each county resident.

Wrightsville Beach and the surrounding communities see a nearly year-round tourism season, with the majority of visitors arriving from March through November. With this point in mind, focusing more closely on the market proximate to the Station (Wrightsville Beach), the United States Census Bureau data indicates that Wrightsville Beach supported a population of 2,540 residents, with a median household income of $64,167, and a median age of 38.6 (2015). In Wrightsville Beach, there were a total of 2,751 housing units, of which 1,240 were used for seasonal, recreational or occasional purposes (2010).

According to the 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the unemployment rate in New Hanover County was 8.9 percent, which is below the statewide average of 9.4 percent. Educational services, health care, and social assistance services accounts for 24.0 percent of all jobs in the county, which is above the statewide average of 23.5 percent. The county also supports arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services (14.1 percent); retail trade (12.1 percent); professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (11.9 percent); and construction (7.4 percent).

There are currently 27 active duty and approximately 40 reserve personnel assigned to STA Wrightsville Beach, all of whom live in the surrounding communities. Typically, six to eight personnel are on duty at a time but the Station is able to quarter 15 USCG personnel during duty rotations. As a result of the proposed homeporting, the number of Station personnel would increase by an additional 11 crew members.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts on the socioeconomic environment. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. The alternate homeporting location alternative would not be expected to have a material impact on the socioeconomic environment of the alternate homeport location. The proposed action is not expected to have a material impact on the existing socioeconomic environment. Under the proposed action, the number of Station personnel would increase by an additional 11 crew members, who would contribute to the local economy by living in available housing in the surrounding communities, dining at restaurants, shopping at local businesses, banking, and paying local taxes. Therefore, the proposed action is expected to have a minor, beneficial impact on the socioeconomic environment. It is anticipated that statistics reflective of the current socioeconomic condition of Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County and surrounding communities would change slightly by the proposed action.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would not adversely affect the socioeconomic environment and no mitigation is necessary.

2.3.3 Community

Affected Environment: STA Wrightsville Beach was originally established on Water Street in 1969 and currently hosts two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. STA Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting NC's coastline in the Station's AOR from pollution and marine accidents, conducting SAR missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. There is a boat crew available 24 hours a day and the Station responds to numerous calls for assistance annually. The 87-foot WPB has a complement of 11 crew members, who would live in available housing in the nearby communities. STA Wrightsville Beach is located within Sector North Carolina. Sector North Carolina's AOR includes the inland waterways of NC, NC's 300 miles of coastline and the exclusive economic zone, which extends from the baseline (i.e., the low-water line of a coastal state) out to 200 nautical miles off-shore.

Anticipated Impacts: Given the apparent need to relocate the permanent homeport of the 87-foot WPB, the 'no action' alternative would be expected to have an impact on the community because it would result in Sector North Carolina being unable to efficiently and effectively execute its mission requirements within its AOR and it would divert vessels and manpower from other missions. Under the alternate mooring location alternative, traffic volume would increase because USCG personnel would be required to travel from STA Wrightsville Beach to an off-site marina. The alternate homeporting location alternative would be expected to have adverse impacts on the community of the alternate homeport location from increased traffic volume, noise and construction-related activities.

The proposed action is not expected to have significant impacts on the existing community. Traffic volume would increase slightly because the 11 additional crew members would be required to travel from their homes to STA Wrightsville Beach;

however, it is anticipated that the crew would be deployed approximately 180 days per year. Vessel-related noise would be similar to existing noise in the area and the overall noise contribution from the additional vessel would be negligible.

STA Wrightsville Beach is located along a coastal shoreline that is heavily used for recreational and navigational purposes by commercial fisherman, tourists and Wrightsville Beach residents. Public and commercial use of Banks Channel would not be disrupted as a result of the proposed action and the proposed action would not interfere with navigational or recreational use of the channel. The proposed action would not result in the loss of coastal uses, impact coastal resources, or prohibit access to coastal resources by the public.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would not have significant impacts on the community and no mitigation is necessary.

2.3.4 Infrastructure/Utilities

Affected Environment: STA Wrightsville Beach is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet. The docks and moorings in the Project Area are located on the west side of the Station. STA Wrightsville Beach can be accessed from the main gate off Water Street on the southern side of the Station. The Project Area can be approached by water from the northeast, west or southwest. The access roads to and from the Station are improved (concrete/asphalt).

Utilities associated with the docks and moorings at the Station include potable water, sanitary sewer, telephone, electrical, and fuel lines, which extend from the shore onto the main pier. These utilities are contained in conduits attached to the pier. Electric power has been extended to shore-ties located along each mooring pier. Potable water and sanitary sewer lines have also been extended along the perpendicular wood-decked pier that is the proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB. Two fuel dispensers are located along the northern side of the main pier. These dispensers are served by the fuel line conduits attached to the main pier.

STA Wrightsville Beach was chosen as the location for the new homeport of an 87-foot WPB because it is in a preferred geographic location near the middle of Sector North Carolina's AOR, suitable mooring is available, and no waterfront or dock improvements would be needed. The existing infrastructure and utilities at STA Wrightsville Beach are sufficient and capable of supporting the operational requirements of an 87-foot WPB and its crew. Future shore improvements will likely be required to better meet logistical support requirements for office and storage space.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impact on infrastructure or utilities. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate mooring location alternative. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, utility/infrastructure upgrades would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location. The proposed action would not involve immediate construction, repair or improvements to the existing infrastructure and utilities. The proposed action would not require additional dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would not affect infrastructure or utilities and no mitigation is necessary.

2.3.5 Public Service/Public Health and Safety

Affected Environment: The NC WRC tracks information on boating safety, including accidents and fatalities. For 2015, the state reports indicated that about 44.3 boating accidents occurred per 100,000 registered boats, up from the past few years (34.1 and 37.0 accidents per 100,000 registered boats in 2014 and 2013, respectively). Fatal boating accidents were down slightly from 2014, decreasing from 6.0 to 5.6 fatal accidents per 100,000 registered boats. The ability of USCG personnel to perform their work and achieve their mission is dependent on their ready access to all available seaworthy vessels. Other public safety (fire, police, health care) are provided by the Town of Wrightsville Beach and local hospitals.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have adverse impacts on public service, health, and safety because it would result in operational inefficiencies and degradation of mission readiness. The alternate mooring location alternative would have adverse impacts on public service, health, and safety because it would increase response time (driving to an off-site marina) and would result in operational inefficiencies. The increase in response times due to a less strategic harbor location could also influence safety and security. The alternate homeporting location alternative would have adverse impacts

on public service, health, and safety due to increased response times if the alternate homeport location is in a remote geographic location (relative to both an AOR and personnel housing perspective). The proposed relocation of the 87-foot WPB would facilitate USCG operations, and these operations promote public service, health and safety. The proposed action would not affect local fire, police, and health care services.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would have beneficial impacts on public service, health and safety from the enhanced capability of Sector North Carolina to fulfill its mission requirements. No mitigation is necessary.

2.3.6 Recreational Resources

Affected Environment: According to the NC WRC, the number of boats registered in-state has steadily decreased from 2011 to 2015, decreasing from 392,566 to 374,823. Registration information for New Hanover County was not available.

Anticipated Impacts: With the number of registered boats in-state and the Station's proximity to the Masonboro Inlet and the Atlantic Ocean, it is logical to presume continued need for boating related distress calls, fisheries and law enforcement, and marine environmental protection and response. Under the 'no action' alternative, Sector North Carolina would be unable to efficiently and effectively execute its mission requirements within its AOR, which could impact recreational use. The alternate mooring location alternative would have adverse impacts on recreational resources because it would increase response times (driving to an off-site marina) and would result in operational inefficiencies. The alternate homeporting location alternative would have adverse impacts on recreational resources due to increased response times if the alternate homeport location is in a remote geographic location (relative to both an AOR and personnel housing perspective). The proposed action would enhance the capabilities of the USCG to accomplish its mandated missions, which improves the safe use of area waterways and would thereby perpetuate social, recreational, and economic values.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would have beneficial impacts on recreational resources from the enhanced capability of Sector North Carolina to fulfill its mission requirements. No mitigation is necessary.

2.3.7 Environmental Justice

Affected Environment: Federal guidance indicates that environmental justice concerns may arise from impacts on the natural and physical environment, such as human health or ecological impacts on minority populations, low-income populations, and Native American tribes, or from related social or economic impacts. According to the United States Census Bureau data for Wrightsville Beach, the estimated 2015 population was 2,540 residents with a median age of 38.6 years and a racial makeup that is less diverse than the county as a whole. Racial breakdowns for 2015 identified a 0.0 percent Native American presence in Wrightsville Beach, which is less than the county as a whole.

Based on the 2015 census data, 18.3 percent of individuals live below the poverty level in Wrightsville Beach, compared to 17.7 percent in New Hanover County. The percentage of minority individuals in Wrightsville Beach is 2.7 percent compared to 23.3 percent in New Hanover County. Because the impoverished and minority percentages of the Wrightsville Beach population are each less than 50 percent overall, and are not higher than the reference populations in New Hanover County, Wrightsville Beach is not considered a low-income or minority population as defined by CEQ regulations.

USEPA records were evaluated using the Environmental Justice View web-tool. According to the web-tool, the nearest Superfund and Brownfield sites are located in Wilmington, NC.

Anticipated Impacts: The 'no action' alternative would have no impacts on environmental justice. The alternate mooring location alternative would have no impacts on environmental justice. There would be no anticipated impacts from the alternate homeporting location alternative. The proposed action would have no adverse impact on any potential environmental justice area as this concept is currently applied. No individuals, including those from low-income or minority communities, would be displaced by the proposed action, nor would traffic, noise, and air quality impacts disproportionately affect low-income or minority communities. There would be no disproportionate impacts to low-income or minority populations under the proposed action. All populations would benefit from improved efficiency and resilience of USCG operations.

Mitigations and Conclusions: The proposed action would not affect environmental justice and no mitigation is necessary.

2.4 Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that impacts from federal undertakings on archaeological and architectural resources (i.e., cultural resources) that are listed or have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in the APE, be taken into account in project planning. If adverse effects result, Section 106 requires that mitigation measures mutually agreeable to the lead agency and the relevant State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) be implemented. The USCG provided a project-specific informational packet to the NC SHPO dated August 25, 2016 requesting their comments on the findings and the proposed action. The packet summarized the results of a literature search and background review of recorded cultural resources at STA Wrightsville Beach.

2.4.1 Prehistoric and Historic Context

Affected Environment:

The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities would be involved in the proposed action. The proposed action will not create any subsurface disturbance that could affect terrestrial or underwater archaeological resources, if present. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur and the proposed action would not require dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel. In addition, the USCG conducted an in-water marine resource survey within the Project Area on June 15, 2016. During the survey, the scientific divers did not observe any evidence of shipwrecks or other underwater archaeological resources on the substrate floor. As previously mentioned, an EA and FONSI were prepared for STA Wrightsville Beach in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the Section 106 consultation conducted during the 2013 EA did not reveal any vessel remains or other underwater archaeological resources within the boat basin and moorings. In 2014, maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at STA Wrightsville Beach. No evidence of vessel remains or other underwater archaeological resources were encountered during the previous dredging activities.

Archaeological Resources: No archaeological investigations have been completed for the APE. There are no National Register-listed or -eligible, or potentially eligible (according to the SHPO Study List) terrestrial or underwater archaeological sites located within or immediately adjacent to the APE. No shipwrecks have been recorded in the APE or within one mile of the APE.

Architectural Resources: No historic architectural surveys have been completed for the APE. There are no National Register-listed or -eligible, or potentially eligible (according to the SHPO Study List) historic architectural resources located within or immediately adjacent to the APE. Eleven historic architectural resources have been identified within one mile of the APE, including seven Surveyed Only sites, one Surveyed Only Local Landmark site, two Blockface-Multiple Properties sites, and one Surveyed Only, Gone Local Landmark site.

The Dosher Cottage (NH2689), the Carolina Temple Apartments (NH0673), the Venters Cottage (NH0672), the McClammey-Anderson Cottage (NH0670), the Gwathmey Cottage (NH0669), the Noell Cottage (NH0668), and the Emerson Cottage (NH0667) are all sites that have been Surveyed Only (but not evaluated) and are located inland from the APE, approximately 0.30 mile to 0.90 mile to the northeast. The Glenn Hotel (NH2691), located approximately 0.50 mile to the northeast of the APE, is a site that was Surveyed Only (but not evaluated) and given a Local Landmark status in 1999. The Glenn Hotel last appeared in a 2006 aerial photograph and is currently listed as Gone. The Denny Cottage (NJ0671), located approximately 0.80 mile to the northeast of the APE, is a site that has been Surveyed Only (but not evaluated) and given a Local Landmark status in 2006. The Streetscape (NH0705) is a Blockface site (an area where multiple resources were surveyed as a group) and consists of the 500 block of South Lumina Avenue. The center point for the Streetscape (NH0705) site is located approximately 0.75 mile to the northeast of the APE. A second Blockface site identified as Streetscape (NH0704) consists of the 400 block of South Lumina Avenue. The center point for the Streetscape (NH0704) site is located approximately 0.99 mile to the northeast of the APE.

Anticipated Impacts: The ‘no action’ alternative would have no impacts on cultural resources. The alternate mooring location alternative would have no impacts on cultural resources. For the alternate homeporting location alternative, onshore and/or in-water construction activities would be needed depending on the alternate homeport location. Therefore, there is potential for impacts to cultural resources under this alternative. The NC SHPO responded in a letter dated September 29, 2016, stating

"We have conducted a review of the project and are aware of no historic resources which would be affected by the project. Therefore, we have no comment on the project as proposed." A copy of the consultation packet and the NC SHPO response letter are included in **Appendix E**.

Mitigations and Conclusions: No cultural or historic resources would be affected by the proposed action and no mitigation is necessary.

2.5 Summary of Potential Impacts

A summary of the potential impacts is presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2 - Summary of Potential Environmental Impacts

Potential Impacts	No Action Alternative	Alternate Mooring Location Alternative	Alternate Homeporting Location Alternative	Relocate 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach
Geology, Topography, Soils	None	None	Impacts to soils, sediments or geology due onshore and/or in-water to construction activities.	No impacts to soils, sediments, or geology. The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of Banks Channel and no in-water or onshore construction activities are involved in the proposed action.
Climate and Air Quality	None	There will be additional minor, long-term emissions due to the increased travel between the Station and an off-site marina.	Adverse impacts from operation of the vessel and from long commutes in remote locations.	Not significant. Minor adverse impacts due to the additional vehicle emissions from commuting crew members. Similar vessels periodically moor at STA Wrightsville Beach; therefore, mooring the 87-foot WPB would result in no change in impacts.
Noise	None	None	Increases in noise levels would occur during operation of the boat and construction activities.	Not significant. Negligible, intermittent and localized impacts from vessel-related noise. Vessel-related noise may be audible to nearby residences and visitors to the adjacent public beach; however, the noise would be similar to existing vessel-related noise in the area and the overall noise contribution from the addition of one USCG vessel at STA Wrightsville Beach would be negligible. Fish and wildlife would likely relocate to a nearby habitat when the boat engine starts and return after the engine is turned off or the boat leaves the dock.

Potential Impacts	No Action Alternative	Alternate Mooring Location Alternative	Alternate Homeporting Location Alternative	Relocate 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach
Hazardous Materials	None	None. The boat would likely travel to the Station for routine maintenance.	Increase in hazardous materials and wastes due to maintenance activities. Potential for accidental releases associated with the WPB.	Not significant. Potential accidental releases from the vessel while docked or during routine maintenance activities (via leaks or accidents). However, it is very unlikely that a release would occur and if so, these releases are not anticipated to be significant. Any hazardous materials used or hazardous wastes generated in association with the 87-foot WPB would be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. With implementation of safety measures (including a spill prevention, control and countermeasures plan) and proper procedures for the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes associated with the vessel, no adverse impacts are anticipated.
Terrestrial Environment	None	None	Impacts to the terrestrial environment due to onshore construction activities.	No impact. No onshore construction or changes to the terrestrial environment would occur.
Water Resources and Aquatic Environment	None	None	Adverse impacts on water quality and aquatic resources due to waterfront construction, dock improvements and/or dredging activities.	Not significant. The presence of the 87-foot WPB could lead to minor variations in water temperature and available light due to the boat's shadow. However, minor variations in these characteristics are already common in the Project Area. Further, there is no SAV present in the Project Area that would require light for photosynthesis, and all managed species potentially present in the Project Area are mobile, so they are capable of occupying the nearby habitats that they find most favorable. Because the Project Area is located in a suburban waterfront area and adjacent to an active navigational channel, the existing underwater environment in the vicinity of the Project Area experiences frequent noise from boat traffic and other anthropogenic disturbances and any impact to aquatic resources would be negligible.
Floodplains and Coastal Zone	None	None	Impacts to floodplains and the coastal zone due to construction activities in proximity to the waterfront.	No impact on floodplains. The proposed project is consistent with the CZMA and NC's CZMP.

Potential Impacts	No Action Alternative	Alternate Mooring Location Alternative	Alternate Homeporting Location Alternative	Relocate 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach
Wetlands	None	None	Potential impacts to wetlands due to construction activities.	No impact. Wetlands not present.
Prime and Unique Farmlands	None	None	None. Homeporting would be at an existing Unit.	No impact. Farmland not present.
Threatened or Endangered Species	None	None	Potential impacts to threatened, endangered or candidate species, their habitats, designated critical habitats, and/or EFH due to onshore and/or in-water construction activities.	Not significant. The ESA Section 7 determination concluded that the proposed action would not likely adversely affect the West Indian manatee and would have "no effect" on any other federal- or state-listed species, their habitats, or designated critical habitats. In a letter dated October 7, 2016, the USFWS stated that the West Indian manatee is known to occur seasonally within the coastal waters of New Hanover County, including Masonboro Inlet. The USFWS provided information to assist the USCG in avoiding impacts to manatees while conducting any in-water projects. The USFWS also concluded that "the proposed permanent basing of a WPB patrol boat at Station Wrightsville Beach is not likely to adversely affect the West Indian manatee and will have no effect on any other federally listed species under jurisdiction of the Service." The NMFS responded to the USCG's request for consultation via electronic mail on September 8, 2016 stating that the "NMFS does not provide concurrence on an action agency's no effect determination."
Land Use and Zoning	None	None	None	No impact. No change in land use or zoning.
Socio-economic Environment	None	None	No adverse impact. Minor, beneficial impact on the local economy of the alternate homeport location.	No adverse impact. Minor, beneficial impact because Station personnel would contribute to the local economy by living in available housing in the surrounding communities, dining at restaurants, shopping at local businesses, banking, and paying local taxes.
Infrastructure/ Utilities	None	None	Impacts to utility/infrastructure due to changes or upgrades.	No impact.

Potential Impacts	No Action Alternative	Alternate Mooring Location Alternative	Alternate Homeporting Location Alternative	Relocate 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach
Community	Limited ability to execute mission requirements.	Minor increase in traffic volume due to USCG personnel traveling from the Station to an off-site marina.	Adverse impacts from increased traffic volume, noise and construction-related activities.	Minor increase in traffic volume due to the 11 crew members commuting from their homes to the Station. Overall noise contribution from the additional boat would be negligible.
Public Service/Public Health and Safety	Limited ability to effectively conduct mission requirements resulting in operational inefficiencies and degradation of mission readiness.	Increased response times resulting in operational inefficiencies and degradation of mission readiness.	Increased response times if the alternate homeport location is in a remote geographic location.	No adverse impact. Beneficial impact due to enhanced capability to fulfill mission requirements.
Recreational Resources	Limited ability to efficiently and effectively execute mission requirements.	Increased response times resulting in operational inefficiencies and degradation of mission readiness.	Increased response times if the alternate homeport location is in a remote geographic location.	No adverse impact. Beneficial impact due to enhanced capability to fulfill mission requirements.
Environmental Justice	None	None	None	No impact.
Cultural Resources	None	None	Potential impacts to cultural resources due to onshore and/or in-water construction activities.	No impact.

3 Statement of Environmental Significance

The permanent relocation of an 87-foot WPB to an existing mooring location at STA Wrightsville Beach is needed to ensure optimum readiness and enable the USCG to effectively meet operational and mission execution requirements in support of maritime safety and security operations. Currently, there is not an 87-foot WPB homeported in Sector North Carolina. As a result, vessels and manpower are being diverted from other missions to assume SAR coverage duties in the southern offshore SAR zone, which reduces operational readiness and mission effectiveness. Without a dedicated 87-foot WPB to support SAR operations in Sector North Carolina, the Fifth District will be challenged to meet mission demands and maximize effectiveness of valuable USCG resources.

In consideration of relocating one of the Fifth District's existing 87-foot WPBs to a location within Sector North Carolina, a Commandant (CG-43) directed Feasibility Study was conducted in 2013. The study involved identifying and comparing potential homeport sites within Sector North Carolina to assist in the homeport decision analysis. The potential homeport sites were evaluated based on a detailed comparison of homeporting criteria, planning factors, and shore facilities requirements as defined in the Integrated Logistics Support Plan for the 87-foot WPB. Several Units were identified as potentially having mooring locations that would be suitable for a short duration; however, STA Wrightsville Beach was identified as the only Unit having suitable mooring permanently available for an 87-foot WPB. Furthermore, no other Units were identified as having the required depth and available site area (land and/or waterfront) necessary to construct new moorings without a substantial reconfiguration of the existing facilities or the relocation of existing boats.

STA Wrightsville Beach was chosen as the location for the new homeport of an existing 87-foot WPB because it is in a preferred geographic location near the middle of Sector North Carolina's AOR, suitable mooring is currently available, and no immediate waterfront or dock improvements would be needed to accommodate the 87-foot WPB and its crew. The outermost face of the existing wood-decked pier has adequate depth, fendering and utilities for mooring the 87-foot WPB.

Any impacts from the proposed permanent homeporting to the terrestrial, aquatic, and human environment would be localized and intermittent and are not significant.

4 Summary of Mitigations

The Noise Control Act specifies federal performance standards, which the USCG must incorporate into the design of new vessels and equipment to reduce noise emission. Design and operation of the 87-foot WPB would be in accordance with all local, state and federal noise regulations. The USCG would also restrict vessel-related noise, to the maximum extent possible, to normal daylight hours. The 87-foot WPB would comply with applicable federal regulations governing air pollution emissions for marine vessels. The USCG anticipates that personnel vehicles would meet federal mandated emission standards and NC emissions inspection requirements.

The Station follows the USCG's policies and procedures as prescribed in the *Hazardous Waste Management Manual* (COMDTINST M16478.1B) and the *Vessel Environmental Manual* (COMDTINST M16455.1A) applicable to all waterborne assets. Any hazardous materials used or hazardous wastes generated in association with the 87-foot WPB would be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Safety measures (including a spill prevention, control and countermeasures plan) and proper procedures for the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes associated with the vessel should be implemented.

The proposed action should comply with all precautions set forth in the "Guidelines for Avoiding Impacts to the West Indian Manatee" prepared by the USFWS to avoid impacts to manatees.

5 Regulatory Requirements

The CZMA requires that Federal agency activity within or outside the coastal zone that affects any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone shall be carried out in a manner which is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved State management programs. The preferred alternative, permanent relocation of an 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach, is not anticipated to adversely affect the coastal zone resources of NC's CZMP other than as evaluated elsewhere within this Draft EA. AECOM, on behalf of the USCG, prepared a Federal Consistency Determination, which was submitted on November 10, 2016, seeking concurrence from the NC DCM. A copy of the NC DCM concurrence letter (Consistency Determination #CD17-0001; NC DCM Project #20170003) is included in **Appendix C**. Compliance with applicable federal environmental regulatory requirements and Executive Orders pertaining to air, water, noise, biota, floodplains, wetlands, coastal zone, waste management, transportation, and cultural and historic resources, etc. are requirements of this project, which have been discussed and presented in this Draft EA. No state or federal permits are required for this project. The project will not affect state-designated environmental areas or wetlands. The project will not affect historic or cultural resources.

6 Public Involvement

During the preparation of this Draft EA, several federal, state, and local agencies and organizations were consulted. In addition to consultation letters discussed in this EA, the USCG will submit this Draft EA to the state and federal agencies and organizations consulted during its completion for review. In addition, copies of the Draft report will be made available to the local community for review at the Northeast Regional Library. A notice will be placed in the *Lumina News* to inform the community about the availability of the Draft EA. Coordinating agencies and the public will be provided a 30-day review period and encouraged to provide comments.

After receiving and considering all comments on the Draft EA from the public and coordinating agencies, the USCG will issue a Final EA and, if applicable, a FONSI. As provided by NEPA and as referenced in COMDTINST M16475.1D, the FONSI for the preferred alternative will be made available to the public for a period of not less than 30 days before the final determination is made and the action is implemented. Any necessary consultations and permits will be conducted and obtained during this period. No on-site activities related to the preferred alternative will be initiated until the environmental review process has been completed.

7 Conclusion

Four alternatives were considered for evaluation in this Draft EA: no action, alternate mooring location, alternate homeporting location, and permanent relocation of an 87-foot WPB to STA Wrightsville Beach. The Draft EA was performed in accordance with NEPA, *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* (Department of Transportation 1979, rev. 1982, rev. 1985) Order 5610.1C, and COMDTINST M16475.1D.

Based on the results presented in this Draft EA, the preferred alternative is permanent relocation of an 87-foot WPB to an existing mooring location at STA Wrightsville Beach, which would serve as homeport to the boat and its crew. The potential adverse environmental impacts presented during this evaluation can either be prevented or reduced to insignificant levels using the mitigation measures presented in this Draft EA. The results of this Draft EA indicate that implementation of the proposed action will not cause significant changes in the quality of the human and natural environment, supporting a preliminary FONSI.

8 Persons and Agencies Contacted

Mr. Daniel Govoni, Federal Consistency Coordinator, NC DCM, 400 Commerce Avenue, Morehead City, NC 28557

Ms. Karla Reece, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office, Protected Resources Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

Ms. Maria Dunn, NC WRC, 943 Washington Square Mall, Washington, NC 27889

Ms. Misty Buchanan, NC NHP, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 1651 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699

NC DMF, Habitat Enhancement and Protection Section, 3441 Arendell Street, Morehead City, NC 28557

Mr. Pete Benjamin, USFWS, Raleigh Field Office, Post Office Box 33726, Raleigh, NC 27636

Ms. Renee Gledhill-Earley, NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, SHPO, 4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699

Ms. Shannon Deaton, NC WRC, 1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699

9 References

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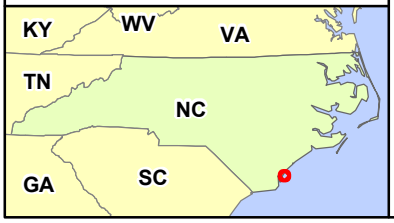
Figures

Z:\GIS\Projects\U\US_Coast_Guard\Wrightsville_Beach\Figure_1_1_Site_Location_Wrightsville_Beach.mxd

Map Location



Site Location Map

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, NC
912 Water Street
Wrightsville Beach , New Hanover County NC
Wrightsville Beach NC Topographic Quadrangle (1983)

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

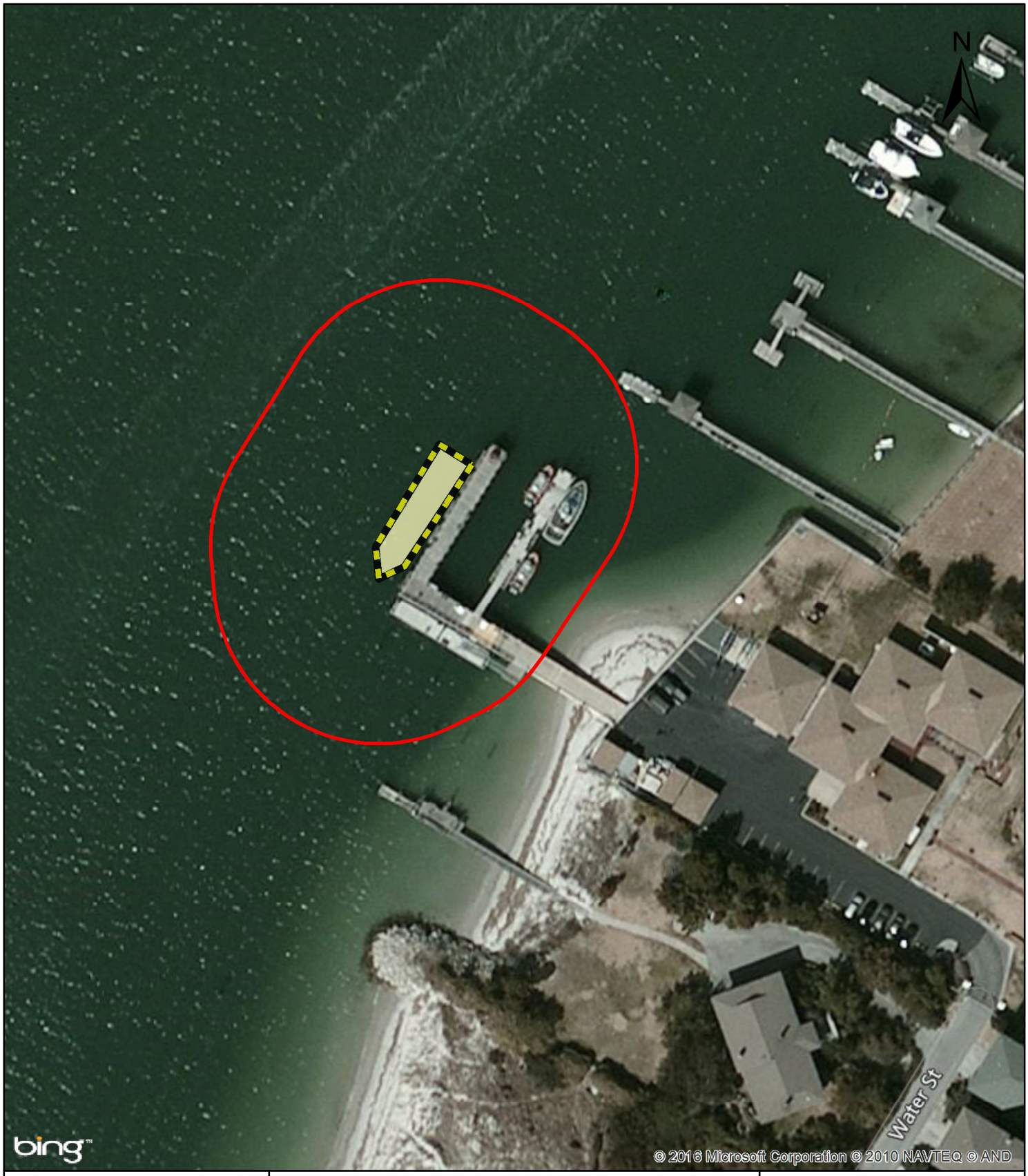
July 2016

60503777

Figure 1

AECOM Environment
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, USA
Phone: (919) 461-1100
Web: http://www.aecom.com

Z:\GIS\Projects\U\US_Coast_Guard\Wrightsville_Beach\Figure_3_Site_Proposed_Project_Area.mxd



Legend

100 ft Buffer

Boat

Proposed Project Area

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, NC
912 Water Street
Wrightsville Beach , New Hanover County NC
Wrightsville Beach NC Topographic Quadrangle (1983)

0 40 80
Feet

1 inch = 80 feet

July 2016

60503777

Figure 2

AECOM Environment
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, USA
Phone: (919) 461-1100
Web: http://www.aecom.com

Appendix A.

Photographic Log

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
1	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View from the western side of the shore of the partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked main pier.

Photo No.	Date:
2	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View from the main pier looking south along the western shoreline. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the south of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 3	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View from the main pier looking northeast along the western shoreline. The concrete bulkhead visible on the right side of the photo is located along the USCG property. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the northeast of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach.

Photo No. 4	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

East

Description:

View of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach from the center of the main pier.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 5	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View of the boat basin and dock and moorings located on the west side of the station. The main pier is visible on the left side of the photo and the floating pier and wood-decked pier are visible in the background.

Photo No. 6	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View looking northeast along Banks Channel from the southern end of the wood-decked pier. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is portside along the west side of the pier (left side of the photo).

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 7	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

North

Description:

View of the timber-pile fender system along the eastern side of the wood-decked pier.

Photo No. 8	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View near the corner of the main pier and the wood-decked pier. The 87-foot WPB would be moored portside. The Banks Channel is visible in the background.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
9	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View along the west side of the wood-decked pier where the 87-foot WPB would be moored portside. A timber-pile fender system, foam-filled marine fenders, and mooring cleats are located along the west side of the wood-decked pier.

Photo No.	Date:
10	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Southwest

Description:

View of Banks Channel looking southwest along the wood-decked pier.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 11	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

East-Southeast

Description:

View from the wooddecked pier of the boat basin and dock and moorings located on the west side of the station. Station Wrightsville Beach is visible in the background. The small beach area (about 310 square feet) adjacent to the bulkhead is visible in the background.

Photo No. 12	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View of the private docks and residential housing located to the northeast of the project area.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No. 13	Date: 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View from the southern boundary of the project area. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the south of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach. The public beach located at the south end of Wrightsville Beach is visible in the background (left side of the photo), beyond which is the Masonboro Inlet.

Photo No. 14	Date: 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View of the entry to the Station Wrightsville Beach boat basin. USCG response boats are visible on the left side of the photo, Banks Channel is visible in the background, and the dock on the right side of the photo is associated with the private residence located to the northeast of the project area.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. **15**	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View of the communications tower, garage, and main multi-purpose building located at Station Wrightsville Beach.

Photo No. **16**	**Date:** 05/27/16

Direction Photo Taken:

East-Southeast

Description:

View of USCG Cutter (CGC) *Beluga*, an 87-foot WPB, which was temporarily moored at Station Wrightsville Beach on 5/26/16 and 5/27/16. The proposed vessel relocation project will involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the 87-foot WPB shown in the photo. *Note: This photo was provided by station personnel.*

Appendix B.

Marine Survey Report

MARINE RESOURCE SURVEY

U.S. COAST GUARD STATION WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

912 WATER STREET, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Prepared by:

AECOM Technical Services, Inc.
7650 Corporate Center Drive
Miami, FL 33126

August 2016

INTRODUCTION

A 2013 feasibility study conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) proposed Station (STA) Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina as a new homeport for an existing Fifth District 87-foot USCG Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB). USCG STA Wrightsville Beach was proposed due to the station's preferred geographic location near the center of Sector North Carolina's area of responsibility and suitable mooring currently available along the outermost face of the existing dock at the station. USCG STA Wrightsville Beach is located at 912 Water Street, immediately north of Masonboro Inlet on Banks Channel, at the southern end of the island of Wrightsville Beach, in New Hanover County, North Carolina (see Figure 1 – Site Location Map in **Attachment 1**).

AECOM Technical Services, Inc. (AECOM) was contracted by the USCG to conduct a marine survey at the USCG STA Wrightsville Beach in anticipation of the relocation of the 87-foot WPB to the station. The marine survey was performed to assess the existing marine resources at the facility, with an emphasis on federal and state threatened or endangered species in the vicinity of the proposed docking location for the 87-foot WPB. This marine survey documents marine organisms observed both on the substrate and in the water column within the survey limits at the time of the survey.

The USCG is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the Proposed Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and USCG Commandment Instruction (COMDTINST M16475.1D (*Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*). This marine survey will be included as an appendix to the EA. This marine survey was conducted in accordance with the Endangered Species Act, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and all implementing regulations. This survey focused on identifying Essential Fish Habitat (as defined under 50 CFR 600) and on identifying federal and state protected species. The in-water survey was conducted on June 15, 2016.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

AECOM Scientific Divers conducted an in-water marine resource survey at the USCG STA Wrightsville Beach on June 15, 2016. After arriving to the station on the morning of June 15, the AECOM dive team checked in with the USCG site contact (BCM Bozeman) and then conducted a formal Health and Safety meeting with the survey team and involved base personnel. After the formalities, the AECOM Scientific Divers conducted a preliminary topside visual assessment of the shoreline, dock structure, and surrounding waters of the USCG Station in preparation for the in-water survey.

Based on the preliminary topside visual assessment of the survey area, the project was divided into three tasks; Task 1 involved establishing the 200-foot long "primary transect" along the western dock face. Task 2a involved conducting ten 100-foot transect surveys toward the west at 20-foot intervals within Banks Channel. Task 2b involved conducting ten 100-foot transect surveys that mirrored the Task 2a transects, at 20-foot intervals toward the east, beneath the USCG STA Wrightsville Beach dock structure.

Due to the significant number of vessels traveling on Banks Channel within and surrounding the survey limits, the USCG provided a USCG-crewed patrol vessel to assist the AECOM Scientific Divers with Task 1 and Task 2a of the marine survey. The USCG crew maintained position of their vessel outside of the survey limits and directed vessel traffic away from the survey area. The water temperature at the time of the survey was approximately 76 degrees Fahrenheit and the water visibility was good, exceeding ten feet of visibility. However, as the day progressed, sporadic lightning and rain reduced visibility to less than ten feet.

RESULTS

TASK 1: Primary Transect

Task 1 involved establishing the 200-foot primary transect along the western face of the dock. The primary transect served as the centerline transect where each of the 20-foot perpendicular survey transects were based, resulting in a 200-foot-by-200-foot survey grid. The transect survey grid and mapped resources are presented on Figure 2 – Survey Limits and Mapped Resources in **Attachment 1**.

TASK 2a: Marine Survey West Transects

In general, the seafloor within the western survey limits was determined to consist of a barren, silty sand environment. The western survey limits extended 100 feet west from the western face of the USCG dock structure into Banks Channel. The substrate was composed of silty sand that was fine-grained on average, but also contained lesser percentages of very fine-grains to medium-sized grains. The substrate also contained less than 10% shell fragments that ranged in degree of weathering. AECOM Scientific Divers recorded written observations and took representative photographs of the transect surveys within the western survey limits (see the Photographic Log in **Attachment 2**).

The substrate within the survey limits located to the west of the primary transect is subjected to swift tidal currents daily. These tidal currents both erode and deposit loose sediments upon each tide cycle. Such a dynamic depositional environment, as observed within the western survey limits, appears to prevent benthic resources from establishing on the seafloor due to either scouring of the loose sediment or depositing sediments over any resources that had the ability to secure a foothold in the loose sediment. This environment was evident by the shifting sediments observed during the marine survey and by the observation of barren, sand-rippled, substrate observed within the survey area to the west of the primary transect. The substrate was observed to be very consistent, composed of silty sand having less than 10% shell fragments and almost completely barren of benthic resources. No protected resources (federal or state) were observed by the AECOM Scientific Divers within the western survey limits at the time of the in-water survey.

A single *Leptogorgia virgulata* gorgonian (orange sea whip) was observed along Transect No. WT-170 located at approximately five feet west of the primary transect and approximately two feet south of the survey transect centerline. The gorgonian was approximately 24-inches in height and 18-inches in diameter. The gorgonian was growing on a piece of metal debris resting on the substrate and not directly on the seafloor. Thus, if the relocation of this single resource is required, it should be a relatively simple task.

TASK 2b: Marine Survey East Transects

In general, the seafloor within the eastern survey limits was very similar to the environment observed within the western survey limits, with observed characteristics of a barren, silty sand environment. The eastern survey limits extended 100-feet east from the primary transect, beneath the USCG dock structure. The substrate was observed to consist of silty sand that was fine-grained on average, but also contained lesser percentages of very fine-grains to medium-sized grains. The substrate also contained less than 10% shell fragments that ranged in degree of weathering. AECOM Scientific Divers recorded written observations and took representative photographs of the transect surveys within the eastern survey limits, which are presented in the attached Photographic Log (see **Attachment 2**).

The substrate within the survey limits located to the east of the primary transect also appears to be subjected to the ebb and flow of strong daily tidal cycles. It was apparent that sediments are being deposited beneath the dock and against the shore. Evidence of scouring parallel to and beneath the docks where the USCG vessels are currently moored was observed. Sediment deposition appeared to be more prevalent (sloping upward or becoming more shallow) as the transects neared the shoreline. The substrate was observed to be consistent throughout the survey area, comprised of silty sand having less than 10% shell fragments and barren of any benthic resources. No protected resources (federal or state)

were observed by the AECOM Scientific Divers within the eastern survey area at the time of the in-water survey.

In addition to the substrate resources described above, the following non-protected resources were observed either on the substrate or within the water column by the AECOM Scientific Divers during the marine survey (observed while conducting Tasks 1, 2a, and 2b, above):

Acorn barnacle *(Balanus* sp.*)*
American stingray (*Dasyatis americana*)
Black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*)
Blue crab *(Callinectes sapidus)*
Boring urchin (*Echinometra lucunter*)
Inshore lizardfish (*Synodus foetens)*
Lined seahorse (*Hippocampus erectus)*
Long-necked sea spider *(Callipallene brevirostris)*
Lumpy sponge (*Strongylacidon* sp.)
Northern sea robin *(Prionotus carolinus)*
Orange sea whip (*Leptogorgia virgulata*)
Pinfish (*Lagodon rhomboides*)
Shark eye *(Neverita duplicata)*
Sheepshead (*Archosargus probatocephalus)*
Southern flounder (*Paralichthys lethostigma)*
Thinstripe hermit crab (*Clibanarius vittatus)*
Tulip snail (*Fasciolaria tulipa*)
Variegated urchin (*Lytechinus variegatus*)

SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) classifies the shoreline of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, as a Subtidal Soft Bottom Habitat. The findings of this marine survey corroborate the habitat classification by the NCDEQ. The seafloor within the entire 200-foot-by-200-foot survey area was observed to be composed of a barren silty sand environment, mostly void of benthic resources throughout the survey area. A highly dynamic tidal environment combined with a high rate of sediment deposition, as observed within the eastern and western survey limits, appears to limit the potential for benthic resources from establishing on the seafloor.

No protected (federal or state) marine resources were observed within the survey limits during the marine survey conducted on June 15, 2016 at the USCG STA Wrightsville Beach.

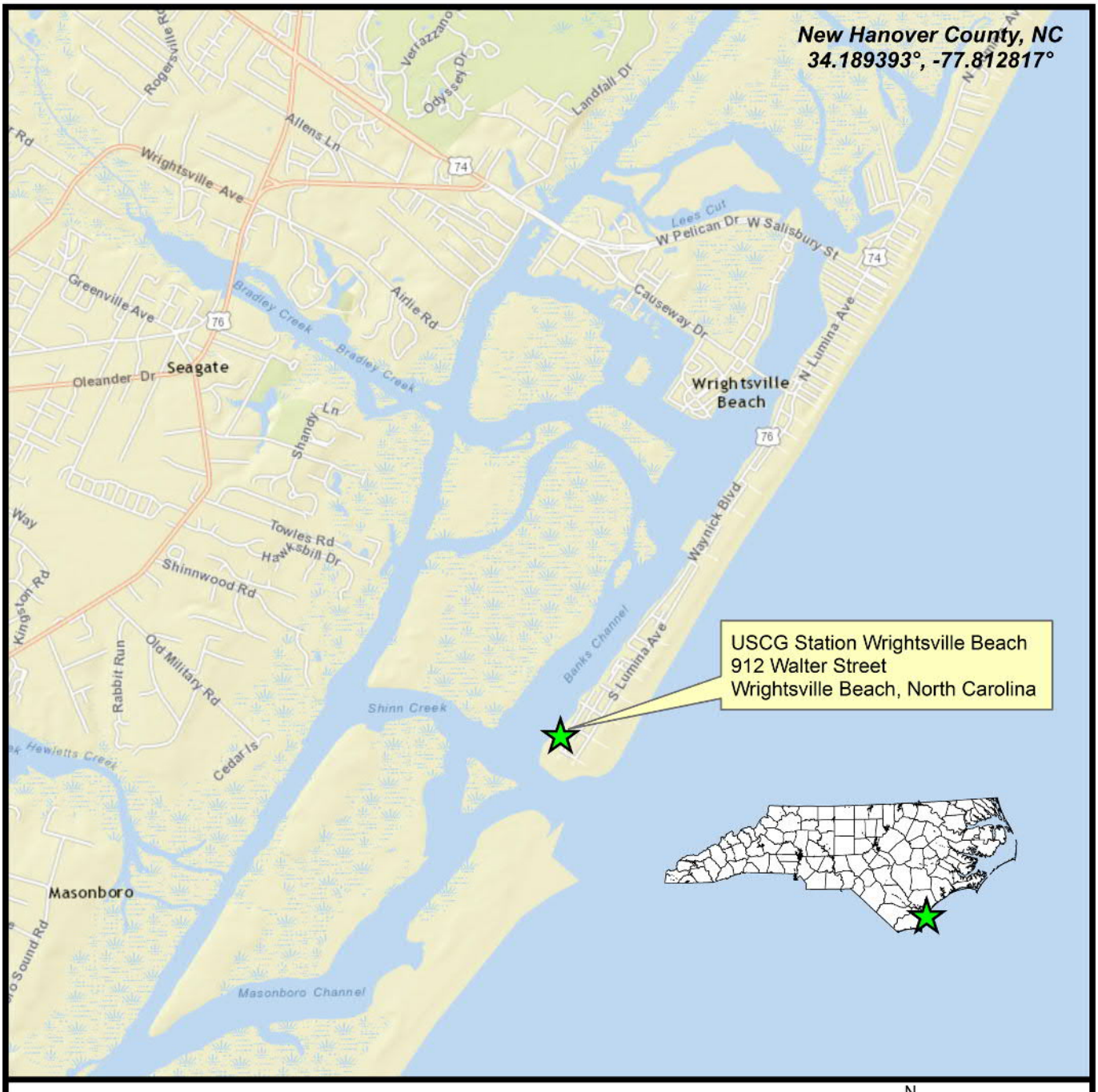
AECOM appreciates the opportunity to provide the USCG with the results of our marine benthic survey for this important project. If the USCG has any questions concerning this report, or if any additional information is needed, please feel free to call me at (305) 514-2477.

Sincerely,
AECOM Technical Services, Inc.

Edward Marks, P.G.
Dive Team Leader

Cc: J. Jones (AECOM)
K. Stannard (AECOM)
L. Cherney (AECOM)

ATTACHMENT 1: ***Figures 1 and 2***



LEGEND

★ Project Location

N

0 1,500 3,000 6,000

Feet

COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 StatePlane North Carolina FIPS 3200 Feet Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic Datum: North American 1983 False Easting: 2,000,000.0026 False Northing: 0.0000 Central Meridian: -79.0000 Standard Parallel 1: 34.3333 Standard Parallel 2: 36.1667 Latitude Of Origin: 33.7500 Units: Foot US	SCALE: 1 inch = 3,000 Feet
DRAWN BY: DCQ	
DATE: 6/24/2016	
CHECKED BY: EM	
DATE: 6/24/2016	
JOB NUMBER: 60503777	
MAP SOURCE: ESRI	
DATA SOURCE: ESRI	

AECOM

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
USCG STATION WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH
WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA

FIGURE 1 - SITE LOCATION

Date: 6/29/2016 Time: 5:55:48 PM

LEGEND

- Survey Limits
- Leptogorgia virgulata
- Marine Survey Primary Transect
- Marine Survey Transect Line

N

0 25 50 100

Feet

COORDINATE SYSTEM:
NAD 1983 StatePlane North Carolina FIPS 3200 Feet
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
Datum: North American 1983
False Easting: 2,000,000.0026
False Northing: 0.0000
Central Meridian: -79.0000
Standard Parallel 1: 34.3333
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Units: Foot US

SCALE:
1 inch = 50 Feet

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

USCG STATION WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH
WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA

FIGURE 2 - SURVEY LIMITS AND MAPPED RESOURCES

Date: 6/29/2016 Time: 5:56:16 PM

ATTACHMENT 2: *Photographic Log*

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Client Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, 912 Walter Street Wrightsville Beach, N.C.	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
1	6/15/2016

Photo Location

View Looking Southwest

Description:

Preliminary topside survey of the shoreline and dock structure at USCG Station Wrightsville Beach. Looking out toward Banks Channel across the dock structure from station seawall.

Photo No.	Date:
2	6/15/2016

Photo Location

View Looking West

Description:

Preliminary topside survey of the shoreline and dock structure at USCG Station Wrightsville Beach. Looking toward Banks Channel, along the floating dock located on the south side of the dock structure.

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Client Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, 912 Walter Street Wrightsville Beach, N.C.	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
3	6/15/2016

Photo Location

View Looking North

Description:

Preliminary topside survey of the shoreline and dock structure at USCG Station Wrightsville Beach. Looking North between the main dock structure (left) and the center floating dock (right) where the smaller patrol boats are docked.

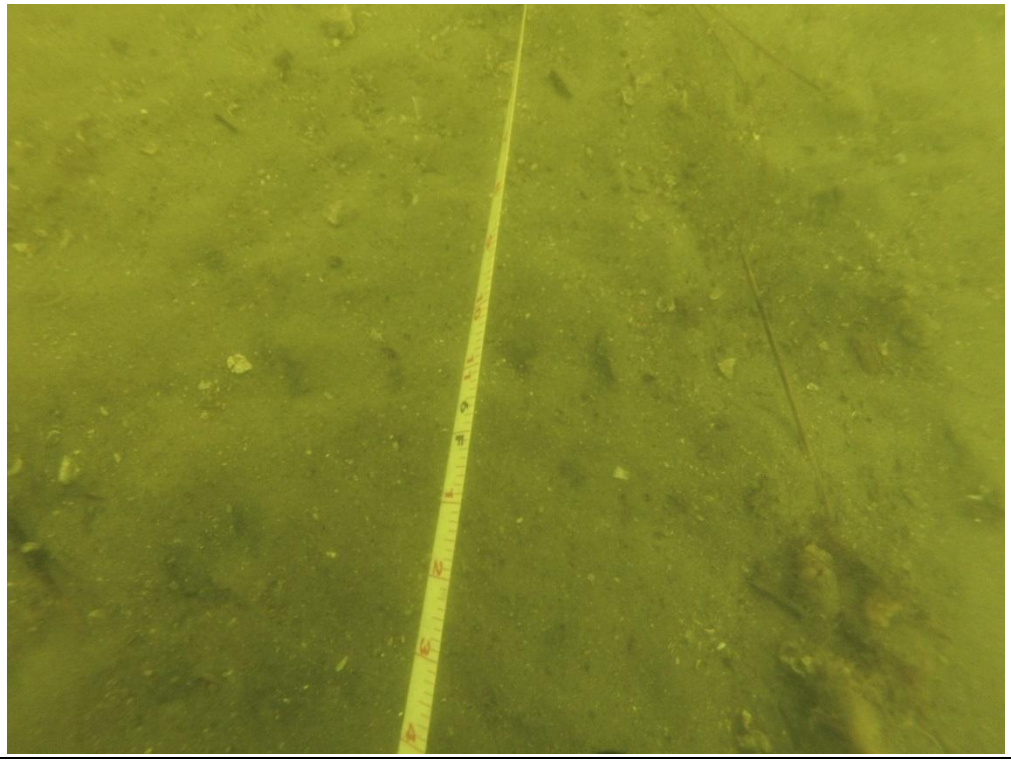
Photo No.	Date:
4	6/15/2016

Photo Location

Transect: WT-10 at 6'

Description:

Representative photo of seafloor west of the primary transect, within Banks Channel. The substrate was observed to be completely barren and was composed of silty sand ranging from very fine to medium grain size with less than 10% shell fragments. The area is subject to swift currents multiple times a day which causes the sand to migrate as evident by the micro sand dunes on the seafloor shown in the photo.



PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Client Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, 912 Walter Street Wrightsville Beach, N.C.	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
5	6/15/2016

Photo Location

Transect: WT-90 at 80'

Description:

Representative photo of seafloor west of the primary transect, within Banks Channel. The substrate throughout the western half of the survey area was observed to be silty sand showing evidence of swift tides.

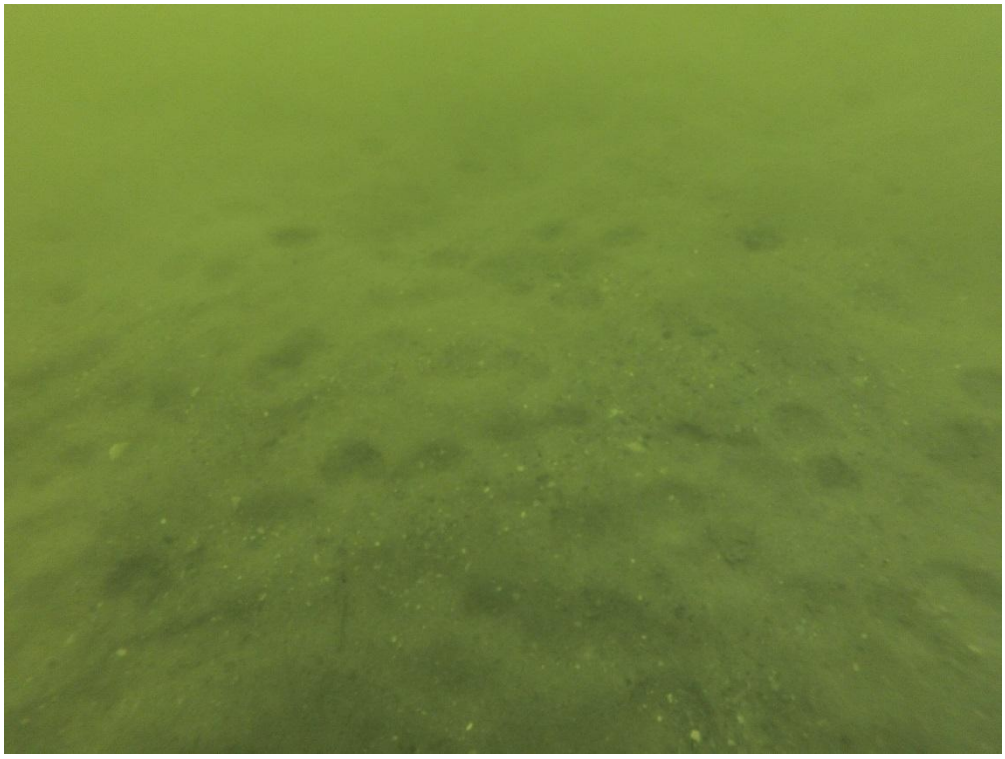


Photo No.	Date:
6	3/8/2016

Photo Location

Transect: WT-110 at 15'

Description:

Photo showing a mature *Triplofusus giganteus* (Horse conch) traveling across the otherwise barren silty sand substrate through the survey area.

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Client Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, 912 Walter Street Wrightsville Beach, N.C.	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
7	6/15/2016

Photo Location

Transect: WT-130 at 25'

Description:

Representative photo of seafloor west of the primary transect, within Banks Channel. The substrate was observed to be very consistent, composed of silty sand having less than 10% shell fragments and being completely barren of any benthic resources.

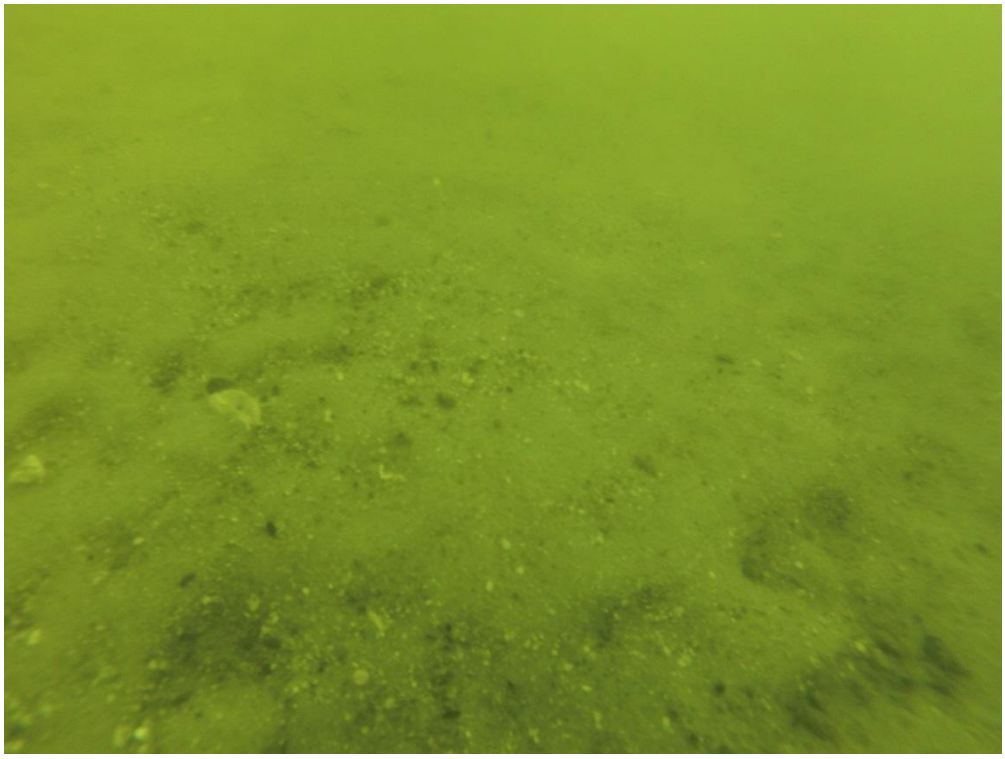


Photo No.	Date:
8	3/9/2016

Photo Location:

Transect: WT-170 at 5'W,2'S

Description:

Photo showing the single small gorgonian *Leptogorgia virgulata* (orange sea whip), observed along Transect No.T-170 located at five feet west of the primary transect and two feet south of the transect centerline. Note that the sea whip was growing on a piece of metal debris resting on the substrate and not on the substrate itself. The gorgonian was approximately 24" high and 18" in diameter.

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Client Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, 912 Walter Street Wrightsville Beach, N.C.	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
9	6/15/2016

Photo Location:

Transect: ET-50 at 14’

Description:

Representative photo of a vertical dock piling that supports the dock structure. Note the *Fasciolaria tulipa* (Tulip snail) in the center of the photo surrounded by sponge colonies, *Strongylacidon sp.* Also note the *Echinometra lucunter* (Boring urchin) to the right of the Tulip snail. No protected resources were observed on the dock structure.

Photo No.	Date:
10	6/15/2016

Photo Location:

Transect: ET-90 at 4’

Description:

Representative photo showing the base of a vertical dock piling. Note the macro algae and sponge colonies, *Strongylacidon sp.* as well as the *Centropristis striata* (Black Sea Bass) and *Lagodon rhomboides* (Pinfish) shown in the photo. No protected resources were observed on the dock structure.

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Client Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, 912 Walter Street Wrightsville Beach, N.C.	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
9	6/15/2016

Photo Location:

Transect: ET-50 at 65’

Description:

Representative photo of the seafloor east of the primary transect, toward the shoreline. The substrate was observed to be composed of silty sand ranging from very fine to medium grain size having less than 10% shell fragments. The survey area was completely barren and is subject to migrating sediments. It is apparent that sediments are being deposited beneath the dock and against the shore.

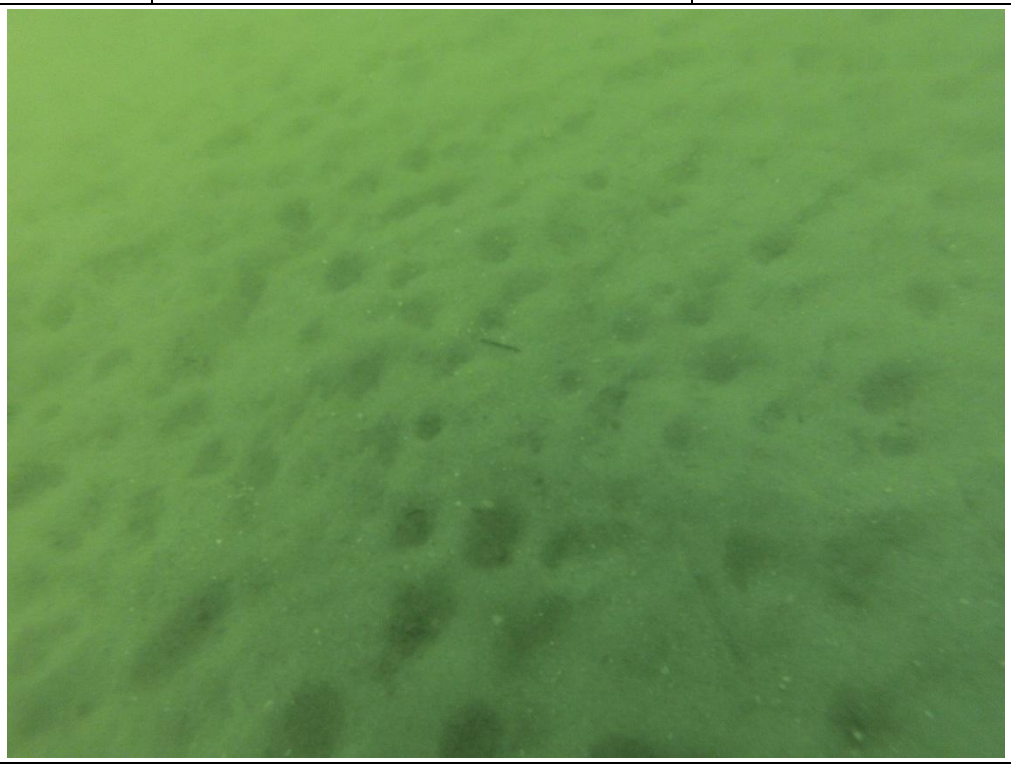
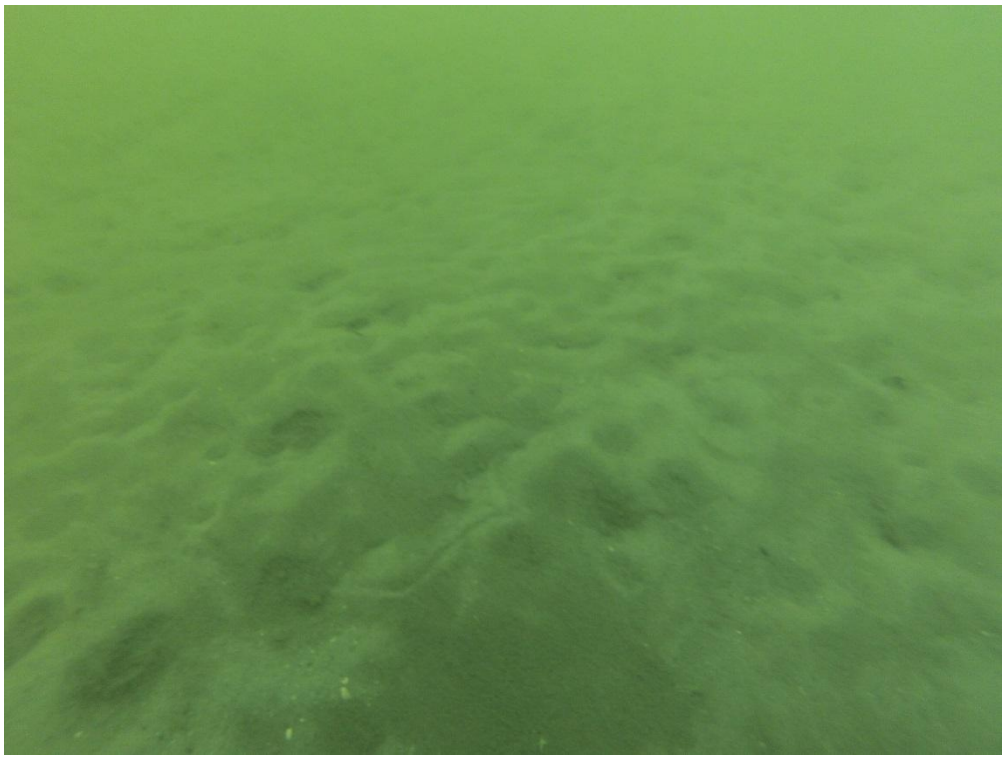


Photo No.	Date:
10	6/15/2016

Photo Location:

Transect: ET-110 at 55’

Description:
Representative photo of seafloor east of the primary transect. The substrate throughout the entire survey area was observed to be very consistent, being composed of silty sand. The seafloor consisted of barren silty sand, void of benthic resources. It was apparent that sediments are being deposited beneath the dock and against the shore where scouring beneath the boat docks where the USCG vessels are docked was observed.



Appendix C.

Coastal Zone Federal Consistency Determination

Coastal Management
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

ROY COOPER
Governor

WILLIAM G. ROSS, JR.
Interim Secretary

BRAXTON DAVIS
Director

January 4, 2017

Mr. Gregory O. Carpenter
Chief, Environmental Compliance
United States Coast Guard
1240 East Ninth Street
Room 2179
Cleveland, Ohio 44199-2060

SUBJECT: **CD17-0001** Consistency Concurrence Regarding the proposal to permanently relocate a Coastal Patrol Boat to an existing mooring at U.S. Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina (DCM#20170003)

Dear Mr. Carpenter:

We received your consistency submission on November 10, 2016, concerning the proposal to permanently relocate a Coastal Patrol Boat to an existing mooring at the U.S. Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina.

North Carolina's coastal zone management program consists of, but is not limited to, the Coastal Area Management Act, the State's Dredge and Fill Law, Chapter 7 of Title 15A of North Carolina's Administrative Code, and the land use plan of the County and/or local municipality in which the proposed project is located. It is the objective of the Division of Coastal Management (DCM) to manage the State's coastal resources to ensure that proposed activities requiring a federal permit would be compatible with safeguarding and perpetuating the biological, social, economic, and aesthetic values of the State's coastal waters.

DCM has reviewed the submitted information pursuant to the management objectives and enforceable policies of Subchapters 7H and 7M of Chapter 7 in Title 15A of the North Carolina Administrative Code and concurs that the proposed Federal activity by the United States Coast Guard is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with North Carolina's certified coastal management program.

Should the proposed action be modified, a revised consistency determination could be necessary. This might take the form of either a supplemental consistency determination pursuant to 15 CFR 930.46, or a new consistency determination pursuant to 15 CFR 930.36. Likewise, if further project assessments reveal environmental effects not previously considered by the proposed development, a supplemental consistency certification may be required. If you have any questions, please contact me at (252) 808-2808. Thank you for your consideration of the North Carolina Coastal Management Program.

Sincerely,

Daniel Govoni
Policy Analyst

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

United States Coast Guard

Commanding Officer
United States Coast Guard
Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland

1240 East Ninth Street
Room 2179
Cleveland Ohio 44199-2060
Staff Symbol: ER
Phone: (216) 902-6219
Fax: (216) 902-6277
Email: Gregory.O.Carpenter@uscg.mil

8 November 2016

Daniel Govoni
Federal Consistency Coordinator
North Carolina Division of Coastal Management
400 Commerce Avenue
Morehead City, NC 28557-3421

Dear Mr. Govoni:

In accordance with the federal consistency requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 USC § 1456, and applicable regulations, 15 CFR § 930.36, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) is submitting this correspondence to fulfill State agency coordination requirements. The USCG proposes to permanently relocate an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to an existing mooring location at USCG Station Wrightsville Beach located at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The geographic location of the dock and moorings is latitude 34°11'21.76" north and longitude 77°48'46.41" west.

The USCG, Civil Engineering Unit (CEU) Cleveland, Environmental Section conducted a coastal zone management Federal consistency review of the proposed project and determined that the activities would be undertaken in a manner consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of North Carolina's approved coastal management program.

This correspondence provides your office with a proposed project description provided in Enclosure (1). The basis of the coastal zone determination is summarized in Enclosure (2). The Proposed Project Area Map, Site Location Map, and other supporting figures are presented in Enclosure (3).

The USCG requests your written concurrence with our consistency determination. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Tanner Dunlap of my staff at (216) 902-6268. Alternatively, you may contact Ms. Jennifer Jones with our design firm (AECOM) at (919) 461-1442.

Sincerely,

Gregory O. Carpenter
Chief, Environmental Compliance
By direction of the Commanding Officer

Enclosures:

(1) Proposed Project Description
(2) Basis of Determination
(3) Figures 1-10

Cc: Mr. Tanner Dunlap, Project Engineer, USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland
Ms. Jennifer Jones, Environmental Project Manager, AECOM

ENCLOSURE (1)

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Enclosure (1)

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) proposes to permanently relocate an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to an existing mooring location at USCG Station Wrightsville Beach located approximately 1.6 miles southwest of Wrightsville Beach at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The site location is shown on the Site Location Map in Enclosure (3) Figure (1). The Proposed Project Area Map, which depicts the proposed mooring location and orientation, is provided in Enclosure (3) Figure (2).

The station is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet. The docks and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the station. The main pier is a partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked pier that extends approximately 150 feet from the concrete bulkhead. One concrete-surfaced floating pier is located parallel to the main pier on the southern side. One concrete-surfaced floating pier and one wood-decked pier are located perpendicular to the main pier on the northern side. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the western side of the concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The wood-decked pier extends approximately 95 feet from the main pier. The wood-decked pier is fronted along the western, eastern and northern sides by a timber-pile fender system. Foam-filled marine fenders and mooring cleats are located along the western side of the wood-decked pier. The Project Area is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the USCG station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is the public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach. Immediately outside the Project Area is a small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) adjacent to the concrete bulkhead. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The pier crosses over the beach and access to the beach is provided via stairs.

The purpose of this project is to permanently relocate an 87-foot WPB to an existing mooring location at Station Wrightsville Beach, which would serve as homeport to the WPB and its crew. Station Wrightsville Beach currently hosts two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. Station Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting North Carolina's coastline in the station's Area of Responsibility (AOR) from pollution and marine accidents, conducting search and rescue missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. There are currently 27 active duty personnel and approximately 40 reserve personnel. As a result of the proposed homeporting, the number of personnel would increase by an additional 11 crew members. There is a boat crew available 24 hours a day and the station responds to numerous calls for assistance annually. The station's AOR extends north to Surf City, south to Kure Beach, along the Intra-Coastal Waterway south to Snows Cut, and ocean side to Smith Island.

Due to operational changes within the USCG's Fifth District, which will result in reallocating resources and relocating the cutters currently in Sector North Carolina's AOR, Sector North Carolina would be without a coastal patrol boat and unable to execute their operational missions within their AOR unless this vessel is homeported at this location. STA Wrightsville Beach was chosen as the location for the new homeport of an existing 87-foot coastal patrol boat because it is in a preferred geographic location near the middle of Sector North Carolina's AOR, suitable mooring is available, and no waterfront or dock improvements would be needed.

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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The principal characteristics of the 87-foot WPB include an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. In the past, other USCG 87-foot WPBs have periodically moored at Station Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time. The proposed vessel relocation project will involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored 87-foot WPBs.

The Project Area, which includes a 100-foot buffer from the sides of the boat in the proposed mooring location, measures approximately 285 feet by 220 feet (approximately 1.4 acres). The Project Area is located adjacent to the federally maintained Banks Channel. Review of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE's) Hydrographic Survey of Wrightsville Beach Banks Channel dated April 2016, indicates that the depth at the proposed mooring location (i.e., along the western side of the wood-decked pier) is approximately 18 feet below mean lower low water (MLLW). The Proposed Project Area Map illustrates the mooring location, orientation, boat dimensions, and the 100-foot buffer for this proposed vessel relocation project (Enclosure (3) Figure (2)).

In June 2016, the USCG conducted an in-water marine resource survey in the Project Area. The survey revealed that benthic resources are sparse, likely due to a high rate of sediment deposition and a dynamic tidal environment. In general, the seafloor within the marine survey limits consists of a barren, silty sand environment. No protected or listed marine species or resources were observed during the marine resource survey.

The USCG boat basin was dredged approximately 2.5 years ago to a depth of 12 feet (10 feet at MLW with 2 feet of allowable over-depth). The USACE conducted site investigations and prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Station Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. A Federal Consistency Determination was prepared for the proposed dredging activities at Station Wrightsville Beach and submitted to the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (NC DCM). The NC DCM concurred with the determination stating "Based upon this review and analysis, DCM concurs that the proposed Federal activity by the USCG (Applicant) is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with North Carolina's certified coastal management program…"

The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would be involved in the proposed relocation project. The proposed project would take place in areas designated as areas of environmental concern (AECs) under the North Carolina Coastal Management Program. Activities would occur in Estuarine Shorelines, Estuarine Waters, and Public Trust Areas.

The USCG is currently preparing an EA to evaluate the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the proposed project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts

1500-1508), and USCG Commandment Instruction (COMDTINST) M16475.1D (*Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*).

ENCLOSURE (2)

BASIS OF DETERMINATION

BASIS OF DETERMINATION

North Carolina Administrative Code
Title 15a, Chapter 7, Coastal Management
Subchapter 7H – State Guidelines for Areas of Environmental Concern

Management Objectives

1. Section .0203 Management Objective of the Estuarine and Ocean System

The proposed project will not result in the loss of coastal uses. The proposed project will not impact coastal resources or prohibit access to coastal resources by the public. The proposed vessel relocation to the existing dock at Station Wrightsville Beach will enhance USCG mission response in the station's AOR.

2. Section .0205 Coastal Wetlands

The USCG reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory Map which did not identify wetlands in the Project Area. However, the Banks Channel and the Project Area are classified as Estuarine and Marine Deepwater (E1UBL), as shown in Enclosure (3) Figure (3). The nearshore area located adjacent to the south and southeast of the Project Area is classified as Estuarine and Marine Wetland (E2US2P), as shown in Enclosure (3) Figure (3). The USCG also reviewed the North Carolina Coastal Wetlands Map, which indicates that there are no coastal wetlands in or near the Project Area, as shown in Enclosure (3) Figure (4). The proposed project will not have an effect on coastal wetlands, and is therefore consistent with this management objective.

3. Section .0206 Estuarine Waters

The Project Area is located entirely within the estuarine waters of the Banks Channel in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County. The proposed project is consistent with the management objective and use standards for estuarine waters because the vessel relocation will allow the USCG to meet their operational mission requirements including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting North Carolina's coastline in the station's AOR from pollution and marine accidents, conducting search and rescue missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act, and will thereby perpetuate biological, social, recreational, and economic values.

4. Section .0207 Public Trust Areas

The proposed project will not be detrimental to the public trust rights and the biological and physical functions of the estuary or open coastal waters. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project would involve permanent homeporting of a USCG vessel to an existing, suitable mooring location at Station Wrightsville Beach. Station Wrightsville Beach is located along a coastal shoreline that is already heavily used for recreational and navigational purposes by commercial companies and Wrightsville Beach residents. Public and commercial use of the Banks Channel would not be disrupted as a result of the proposed project and the proposed project would not interfere with navigational or recreational use of the channel. The proposed project would enhance the capabilities of the USCG to accomplish their mandated mission, which improves the safe use of area waterways.

In the past, other USCG 87-foot WPBs have periodically moored at Station Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time. The proposed vessel relocation project will involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored 87-foot WPBs. The maximum draft of the WPB is 5 feet 7 inches, and based on review of the USACE's Hydrographic Survey of Wrightsville Beach - Banks Channel dated April 2016, the depth at the proposed mooring location (i.e., along the western side of the existing wood-decked pier) is approximately 18 feet below MLLW. Therefore, the space between the vessel draft and channel bottom depth is sufficient to allow for water circulation. In addition, the stern, bow and starboard side of the boat will be surrounded by open water allowing for water circulation.

The proposed project will not require dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel. The WPB will not extend into the federal navigation channel (or channel setbacks) and will not directly or indirectly block or impair the existing navigation channel.

The proposed project will not result in the loss of coastal uses, impact coastal resources, or prohibit access to coastal resources by the public. The proposed project is consistent with the management objective and use standards of public trust areas.

5. Section .0208 Use Standards

The proposed project involves relocating the permanent homeport of a USCG vessel to an existing, frequently used mooring location at Station Wrightsville Beach. Station Wrightsville Beach is located in an area that is already used heavily for residential, recreational and commercial purposes. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project will not require dredging of the proposed mooring location or the adjacent navigation channel. The proposed project is in conformance with the general and specific use standards of this section, and is therefore consistent with this management objective.

6. Section .0209 Coastal Shorelines

The Project Area is located adjacent to the estuarine shoreline and entirely within the estuarine waters of the Banks Channel. The estuarine shoreline consists of a sediment bank, approximately 50 feet to the southeast of the Project Area, and a modified shoreline, located approximately 90 feet to the east, as shown in Enclosure (3) Figure (5). The proposed project will not increase shoreline erosion.

Review of the North Carolina Coastal Wetlands Map indicates that there are no coastal wetlands located in or near the Project Area, as shown in Enclosure (3) Figure (4). The Project Area is located within the Banks Channel and by definition is in the coastal floodplain.

The Project Area is not located in an Outstanding Resource Water Management Zone. However, the Project Area is located in an area designated as Class SA – "Market Shellfishing, Salt Water" as shown in Enclosure (3) Figure (6). All "SA" waters are High Quality Waters by supplemental classification. The proposed project will not cause degradation of shellfish beds and will not directly or indirectly impair water quality standards based on the fact that the past and current use, which is consistent with the proposed project use, has not had these impacts.

The proposed project does not involve development or construction within the coastal shoreline. The proposed project will not interfere with existing public rights of access to, or use of, navigable waters or public resources. The permanent relocation of the WPB will enhance the

USCG's mission response in area waters and will thereby perpetuate biological, social, recreational, and economic values. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the management objective of coastal shorelines.

7. Section .0300 Ocean Hazard Areas

The Project Area is not located along the Atlantic Ocean shoreline and contains no ocean hazard areas. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with this management objective.

8. Section .0400 Public Water Supplies

The Project Area is located in the Cape Fear River Basin (sub basin 03030005). The portion of the Banks Channel where the Project Area is located (Index #: 18-87-10-1) is classified as "SA; HQW", which is described as "Market Shellfishing, Salt Water" and "High Quality Waters". The Project Area is not located within a small surface water supply watershed or public water supply field. The proposed project will not have an effect on public water supplies, and is therefore consistent with this management objective.

9. Section .0505 Coastal Areas that Sustain Remnant Species

As shown on the NC OneMap Natural Heritage Area/Habitat Map in Enclosure (3) Figure (7), the Project Area is not located in a significant natural heritage natural area or in a designated submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) area. Reviews of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NC DMF) Anadromous Fish Spawning Areas (AFSA) Map for the Cape Fear River Area (Enclosure (3) Figure (8)) and the NC DMF Fishery Nursery Areas Map for the Wrightsville Beach Area (Enclosure (3) Figure (9)) indicate that the Project Area is not located within AFSA waters or a Primary Nursery Area.

As identified in the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Plan Amendments, the Project Area is located in an area of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and the following EFH may be found in the Project Area: estuarine water column, marine water column, estuarine soft bottom/subtidal, and marine soft bottom. Designated EFH for coastal pelagic species (all life stages of cobia and Spanish mackerel), penaeid shrimp (larvae, juvenile), summer flounder (larvae, juvenile, adult), red drum (all life stages), and bluefish (juvenile and adult) may also be present in the Project Area. Additionally, the Project Area is considered a coastal inlet, which is an EFH Habitat Area of Particular Concern for penaeid shrimp and red drum.

The USCG conducted a USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) database query on July 19, 2016 for the Project Area. A total of nine endangered, seven threatened, one threatened due to similarity of appearance, and one candidate species were identified under USFWS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area. No species proposed for listing were identified. Further, no designated or proposed critical habitat is known to occur in the Project Area. Based on review of the IPaC database query generated for the Project Area and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office website, the USCG identified 11 endangered, two threatened, and three candidate species under NMFS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area. Additionally, review of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NC NHP) listed species for the Wrightsville Beach Quadrangle along with their habitat requirements was performed. Review of the NC NHP database search indicates that 58 species/communities are identified within the Wrightsville Beach topographic quadrangle, including the18 Federally listed and candidate

species under USFWS jurisdiction. The USCG has concluded that no effects to state and/or Federally-listed species would occur as a result of the proposed project based on the lack of suitable habitat and limited resources in the Project Area and nearby surrounding area, high degree of development and disturbance in the Project Area and the nearby surrounding area, presence and use of the existing mooring locations in the Project Area, and/or boat traffic in the adjacent navigational channel.

The proposed project would only relocate the permanent homeport of the WPB to an existing, suitable mooring location; it would not involve in-water construction or dock improvements and no onshore construction or activities would occur as a result of the proposed project. There would be no change in the mission or use of the waterfront by personnel at Station Wrightsville Beach as a result of the proposed project. Station Wrightsville Beach is located in a coastal area that is already used heavily for residential, recreational and commercial purposes. In addition, the USCG conducted a site visit in May 2016 and an in-water marine resource survey in June 2016 of the Project Area. The site visit and marine resource survey revealed that benthic resources and beach areas are sparse. No protected or listed marine species or resources were observed during the marine resource survey.

Overall, no changes to the marine environment are expected as a result of the proposed project. The presence of the WPB could lead to minor variations in water temperature and available light due to the WPB's shadow. However, minor variations in these characteristics are already common in the Project Area. Further, there is no SAV present in the Project Area that would require light for photosynthesis, and all managed species potentially present in the Project Area are mobile, so they are capable of occupying the nearby habitats that they find most favorable.

The USCG has concluded that the proposed project would have no adverse effect on threatened and endangered species or on any unique habitat conditions that would impact the continued survival of threatened and endangered native plants and animals. The proposed project is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with this management objective.

The USCG is in the process of preparing an EA for this project, and pursuant to the requirements of the NEPA, the USCG will be consulting with the USFWS, NMFS, NC NHP, and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission regarding the presence of natural resources that may be potentially affected by the proposed project.

10. Section .0506 Coastal Complex Natural Areas

The proposed project should not have an effect on:

a. Natural conditions or the sites that function as key or unique components of coastal systems.
b. The interactions of various life forms including sites that are necessary for the completion of life cycles, areas that function as links to other wildlife areas (wildlife corridors), and localities where the links between biological and physical environments are most fragile.
c. Designated coastal complex natural areas.

As shown on the NC OneMap Habitat Map in Enclosure (3) Figure (7), the Project Area is not located in a natural heritage natural area or in a designated SAV area. The Project Area is identified in a shellfish growing area; however, review of the NC DMF Shellfish Harvesting

Area Closure Map (Enclosure (3) Figure (10)) indicates that the Project Area is located in a portion of the Banks Channel (Wrightsville Beach Area) where shellfish harvesting is prohibited. Additionally, there are no state parks, state natural areas, or state recreation areas in the Project Area. There are no national wildlife refuges, forests, historic properties, historic landmarks, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, or other fragile areas in the Project Area. Review of the habitat map indicates that portions of the Project Area are located in a Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat Assessment Area with a Conservation Planning Tool Rating of 1.

The proposed project will not have an effect on any designated coastal complex natural areas, and is therefore consistent with the management objectives.

11. Section .0507 Unique Coastal Geologic Formations

The proposed project will not have an effect on any unique geologic formations, and is therefore consistent with this management objective.

12. Section .0509 Significant Coastal Archaeological Resources

The USCG completed background research and records review using the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Web GIS application, the online files of the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, and the National Register of Historic Places. Based on the USCG's review, there have been no prior archaeological investigations completed for the Project Area. There are no National Register-listed or -eligible, or potentially eligible (according to the SHPO Study List) terrestrial or underwater archaeological sites located within or immediately adjacent to the Project Area. No shipwrecks have been recorded in the Project Area or within one mile of the Project Area.

The proposed vessel relocation activities will not create any subsurface disturbance that could affect terrestrial archaeological resources, if present. The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities would be involved in the proposed relocation project. In addition, the USCG conducted an in-water marine resource survey within the Project Area on June 15, 2016. During the survey, the scientific divers did not observe any evidence of shipwrecks or other underwater archaeological resources on the substrate floor.

Further, the USACE conducted site investigations and prepared an EA and a FONSI for Station Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the site investigations; regulations and requirements review; and coordination with Federal, State and local agencies during the EA did not reveal any vessel remains or other underwater archaeological resources within the boat basin and moorings. In 2014, maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach. No evidence of vessel remains or other underwater archaeological resources were encountered during the previous dredging activities.

The USCG submitted a letter requesting project review to the NC SHPO on August 25, 2016. A response was received on September 29, 2016 stating that the NC SHPO "conducted a review of the project and are aware of no historic resources which would be affected by the project. Therefore, we have no comment on the project as proposed."

The proposed project will not have an effect on any significant coastal archaeological resources, and is therefore consistent with the management objectives.

13. Section .0510 Significant Coastal Historic Architectural Resources

The USCG completed background research and records review using the SHPO Web GIS application, the online files of the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, and the National Register of Historic Places. Based on the USCG's review, there have been no historic architectural surveys completed for the Project Area. There are no National Register-listed or -eligible, or potentially eligible (according to the SHPO Study List) historic architectural resources located within or immediately adjacent to the Project Area. Eleven historic architectural resources have been identified within one mile of the Project Area, including seven Surveyed Only sites, one Surveyed Only Local Landmark site, two Blockface-Multiple Properties sites, and one Surveyed Only, Gone Local Landmark site. The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities would be involved in the proposed project.

The USCG submitted a letter requesting project review to the NC SHPO on August 25, 2016. A response was received on September 29, 2016 stating that the NC SHPO "conducted a review of the project and are aware of no historic resources which would be affected by the project. Therefore, we have no comment on the project as proposed."

The proposed project will not have an effect on any significant coastal historic architectural resources, and is therefore consistent with the management objectives.

14. Section .0600 - Development Standards Applicable to All AECs

The proposed project will not contravene or violate any Federal, State of North Carolina, and local rules, regulations, laws, or requirements. The proposed project will not cause pollution to the state shellfish waters, and will not have an effect on airspace activity or noise pollution associated with airspace activity. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the management objectives of development standards applicable to all AECs.

Subchapter 7M - General Policy Guidelines for the Coastal Area

Policies for Projects Outside Areas of Environmental Concern

1. Section .0200 - Shoreline Erosion Policies

The proposed project will not have an adverse impact to shoreline erosion in the area, and is therefore consistent with the shoreline erosion policies.

2. Section .0300 - Shorefront Access Policies

The USCG Station Wrightsville Beach facility is a fenced and gated Federal facility that restricts public access. Since public access is already restricted, the proposed project will not have an adverse impact on the accessibility of the facility's shorefront to the public. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the shorefront access policies.

3. Section .0400 - Coastal Energy Policies

The USCG facility and the proposed project are not associated with the development of energy facilities and energy resources. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the coastal energy policies.

4. Section .0500 - Post-Disaster Policies

The proposed project does not involve construction; therefore, pre-disaster planning is not required. This proposed project is therefore consistent with the post-disaster policies.

5. Section .0600 - Floating Structure Policies

The proposed project will involve permanent homeporting of a USCG vessel; however, the boat is not considered a "floating structure" as defined in Section .0602 since it will not be inhabited or used for commercial purposes for more than 30 days in any one location. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the floating structure policies.

6. Section .0700 - Mitigation Policy

The proposed project will not have an adverse impact to coastal lands or waters which would require mitigation, and is therefore consistent with the mitigation policy.

7. Section .0800 - Coastal Water Quality Policies

The proposed project will not cause the degradation of water quality so as to impair traditional uses of the coastal waters. No hazardous materials or petroleum products are expected to be discharged at the project location. Public and commercial use of the Banks Channel would not be disrupted as a result of the proposed project and the proposed project would not interfere with navigational or recreational use of the channel. The proposed project would not directly or indirectly block or impair existing the navigation channel, cause adverse water circulation patterns, violate water quality standards, or cause degradation of shellfish waters. Therefore, this proposed project is consistent with the coastal water quality policies.

8. Section .0900 - Policies on Use of Coastal Airspace

The proposed project does not involve aviation or coastal airspace resources, and is therefore consistent with the coastal airspace policies.

9. Section .1000 - Policies on Water and Wetland Based Target Areas for Military Training Activities

The proposed project is not involved with military training activities, and is therefore consistent with this coastal policy.

10. Section .1100 - Policies on Beneficial Use and Availability of Materials Resulting from the Excavation or Maintenance of Navigational Channels

The proposed project does not involve dredging of the proposed mooring location or the navigation channel. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with this coastal policy.

11. Section .1200 - Policies on Ocean Mining

The proposed project does not include any mining activities, and is therefore consistent with the ocean mining policies.

Conclusion

The USCG conducted a coastal zone management Federal consistency review of the proposed project and determined that the proposed project will not have any significant impacts to the coastal resources. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of North Carolina's federally approved coastal management program.

ENCLOSURE (3)

FIGURES 1 – 10

Figure (1): Topographic Map – 1983
Wrightsville Beach, NC Topographic Quadrangle

Enclosure (3)

Figure (2): Proposed Project Area Map – 2016

Enclosure (3)

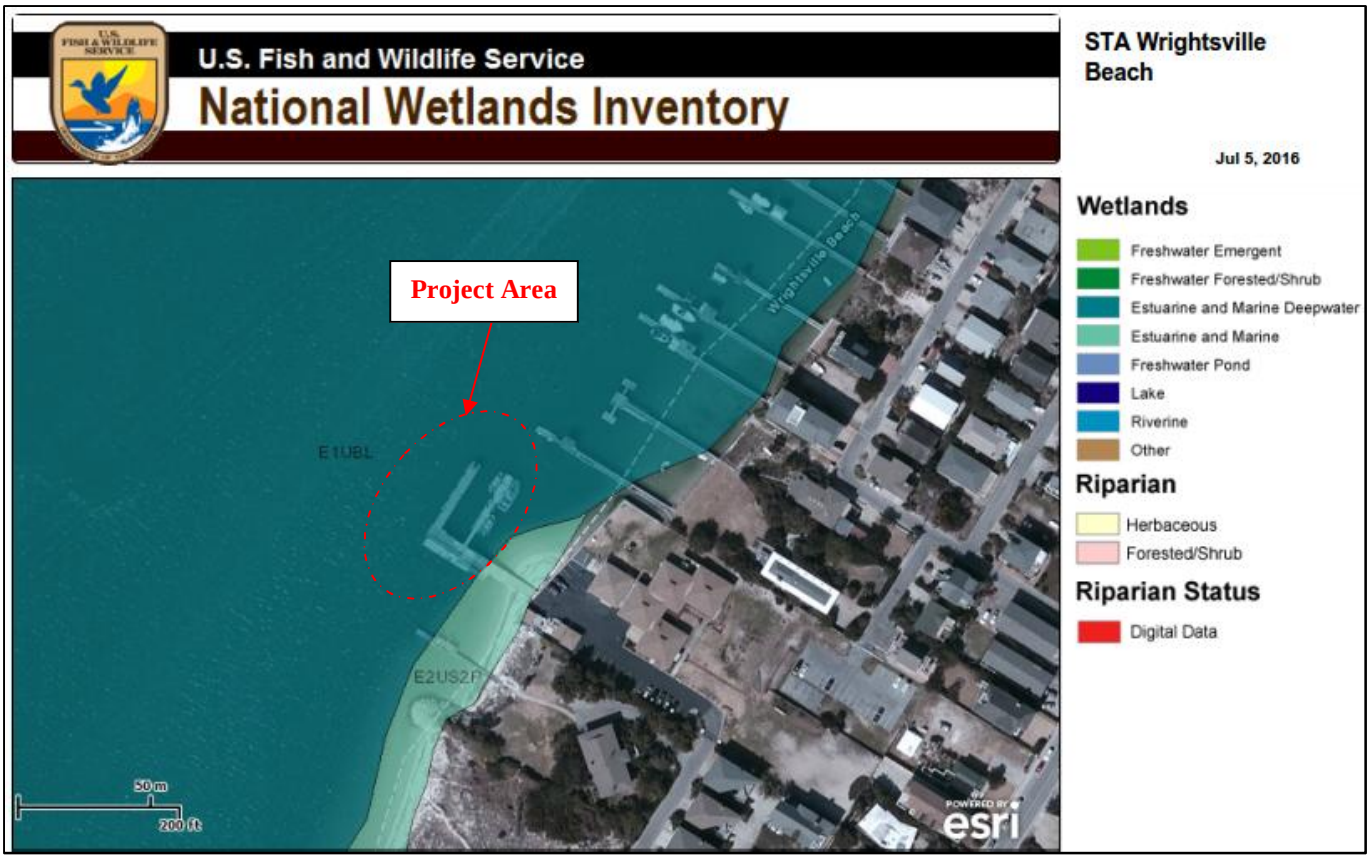


Figure (3): USFWS Wetlands Map

Enclosure (3)

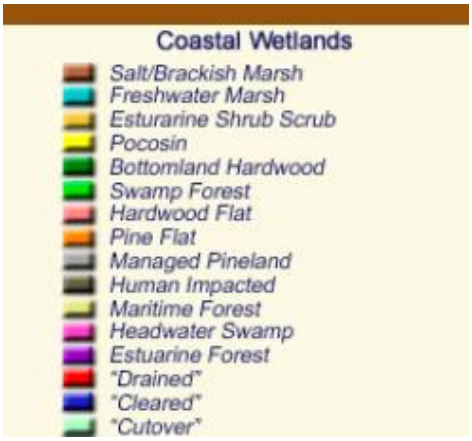


Figure (4): NC DCM Coastal Wetlands Map

Enclosure (3)

Figure (5): NC DCM Coastal Shorelines Map

Enclosure (3)

Figure (6): NC OneMap Water Quality Map

Enclosure (3)

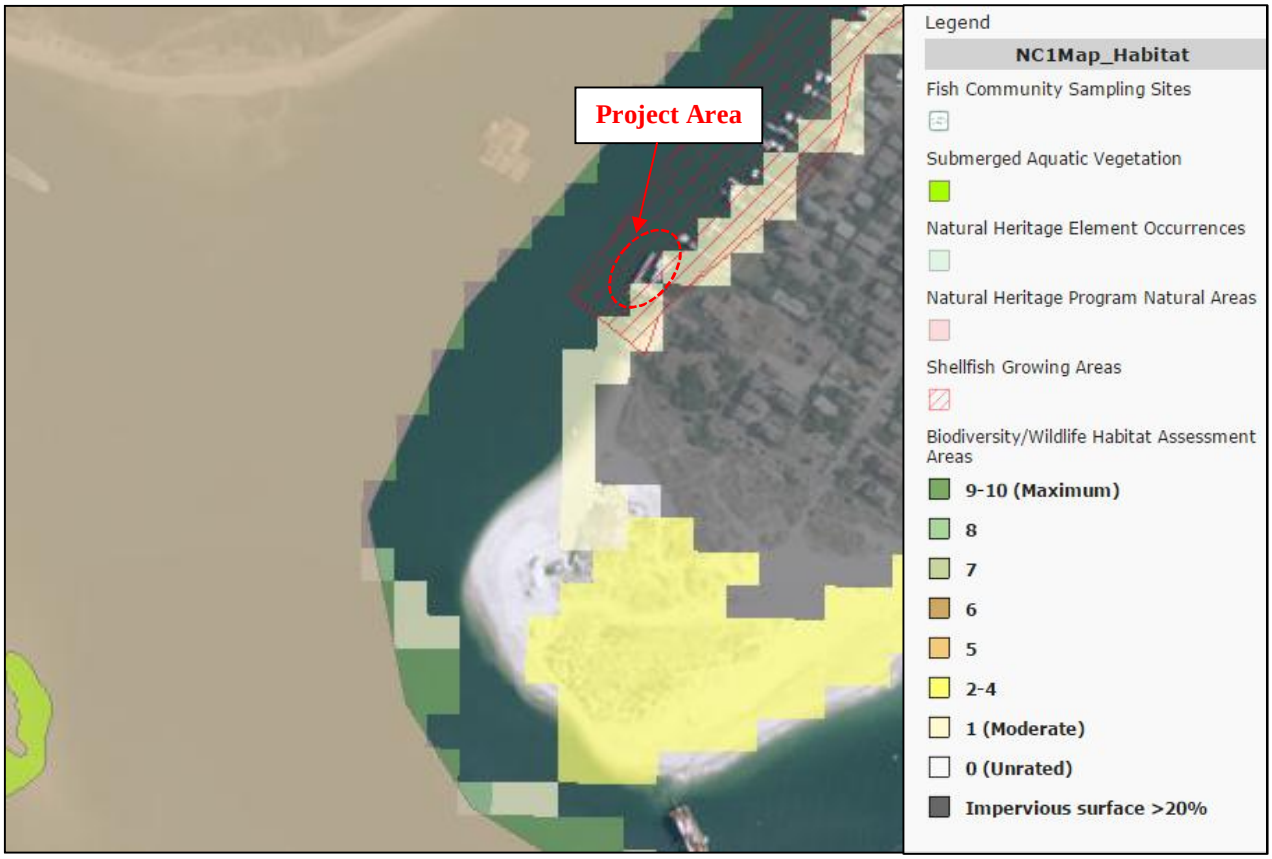


Figure (7): NC OneMap Natural Heritage Area/Habitat Map

Enclosure (3)

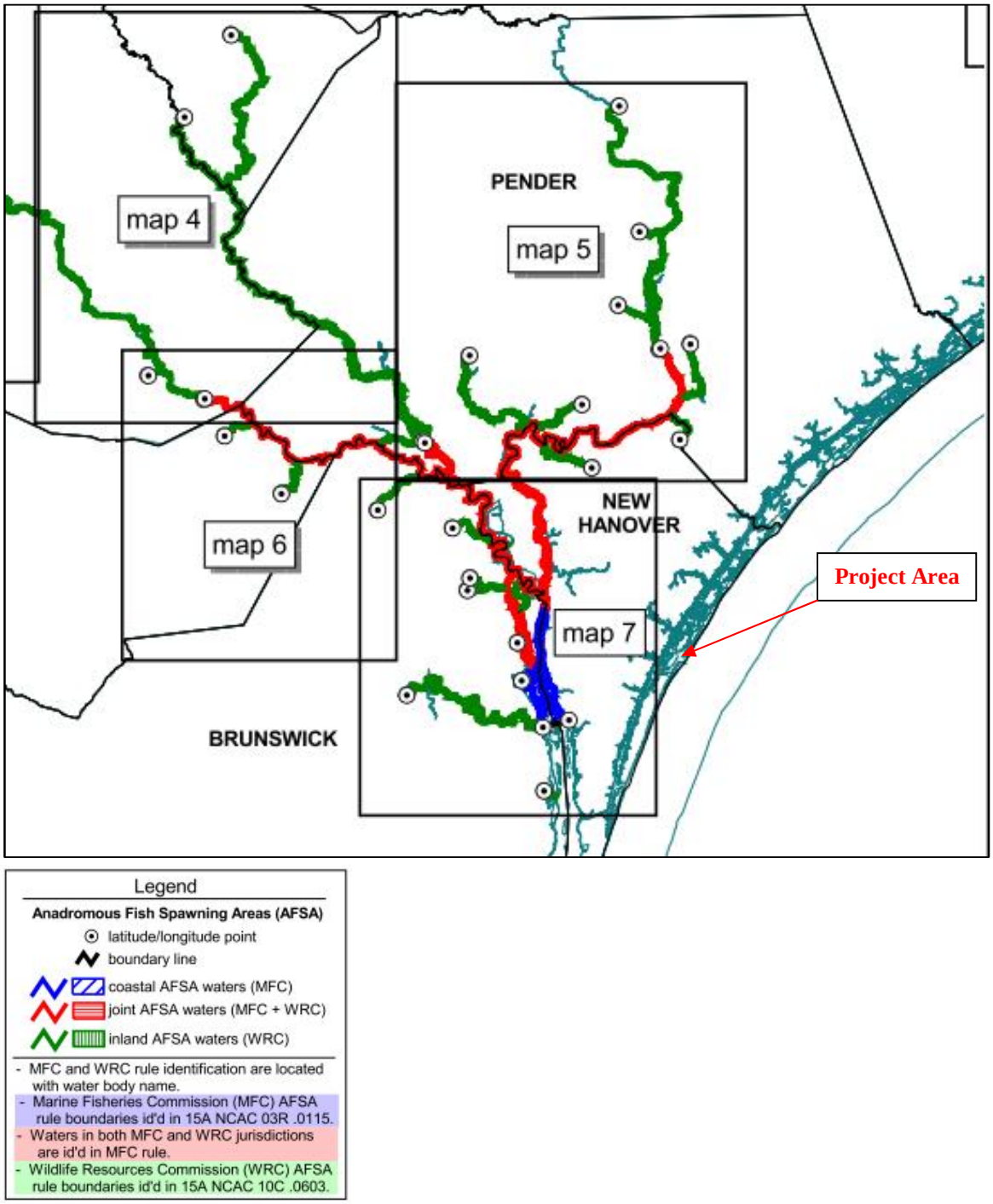


Figure (8): NC DMF Anadromous Fish Spawning Areas Map

Enclosure (3)

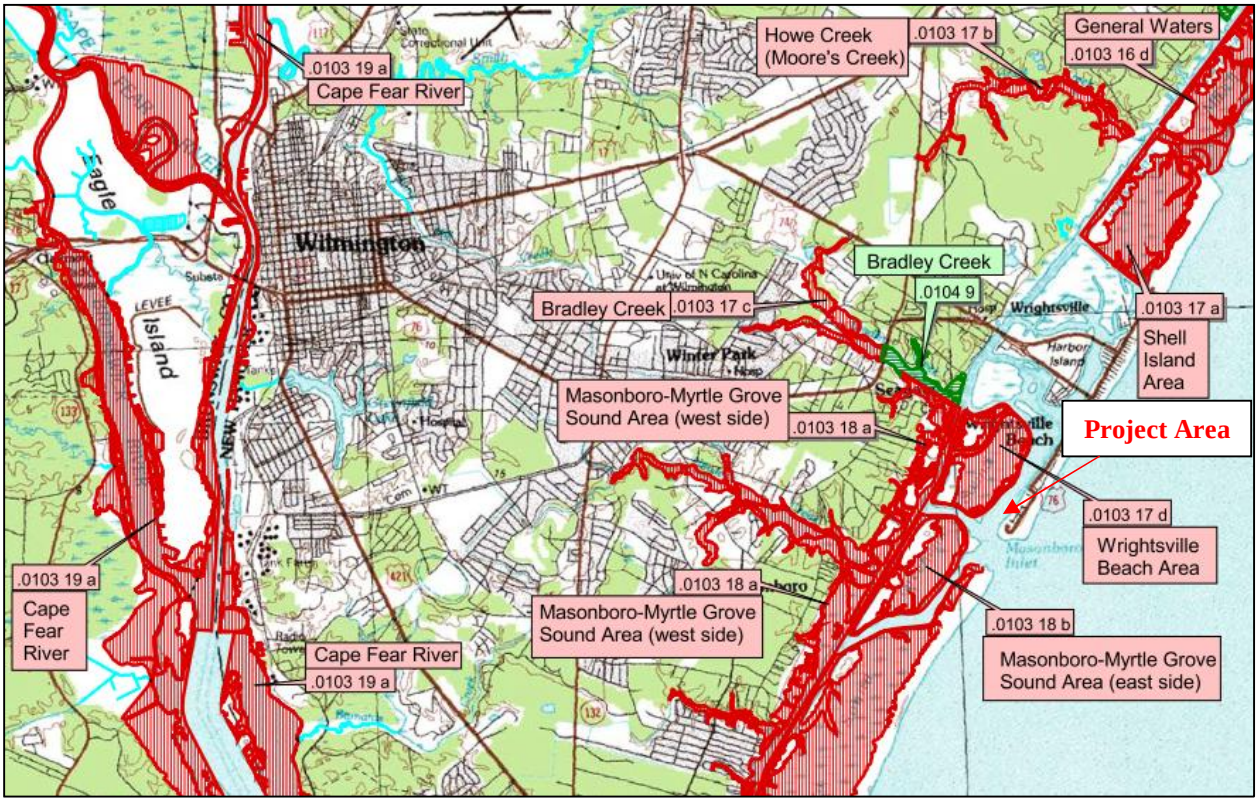


Figure (9): NC DMF Fishery Nursery Areas Map

Enclosure (3)

Figure (10): NC DMF Shellfish Harvesting Area Closure Map

Enclosure (3)

Appendix D.

Consultations with State and Federal Agencies

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Raleigh ES Field Office
Post Office Box 33726
Raleigh, North Carolina 27636-3726

October 7, 2016

Gregory O. Carpenter
Chief, Environmental Compliance
United States Coast Guard
1240 East Ninth Street
Cleveland, OH 44199-2060

Dear Mr. Carpenter:

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your August 31, 2016 letter and enclosures regarding the proposed relocation of an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. WPB patrol boats have been moored at Station Wrightsville Beach temporarily in the past. The proposed action is the permanent relocation of a WPB to Station Wrightsville Beach. Our comments are provided in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531 et seq.).

The West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), a federally endangered species, is known to occur seasonally within the coastal waters of New Hanover County, including Masonboro Inlet. We have attached information to assist the Coast Guard in avoiding impacts to manatees while conducting any in-water projects.

Based on a review of the information provided, the Service believes that the proposed permanent basing of a WPB patrol Boat at Station Wrightsville Beach is not likely to adversely affect the West Indian manatee and will have no effect on any other federally listed species under jurisdiction of the Service. We believe that the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the Act have been satisfied. We remind you that obligations under section 7 consultation must be reconsidered if: (1) new information reveals impacts of this identified action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered; (2) this action is subsequently modified in a manner that was not considered in this review; or, (3) a new species is listed or critical habitat determined that may be affected by the identified action.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Mr. John Hammond at 919-856-4520 (Ext. 28). Thank you for your cooperation with our agency in protecting federally listed species.

Sincerely,

John D. Hammond

Pete Benjamin
Field Supervisor

Attachment

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Raleigh Field Office
Post Office Box 33726
Raleigh, North Carolina 27636-3726

GUIDELINES FOR AVOIDING IMPACTS TO THE WEST INDIAN MANATEE
Precautionary Measures for Construction Activities in North Carolina Waters

The West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), also known as the Florida manatee, is a Federally-listed endangered aquatic mammal protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C 1461 *et seq.*). The manatee is also listed as endangered under the North Carolina Endangered Species Act of 1987 (Article 25 of Chapter 113 of the General Statutes). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the lead Federal agency responsible for the protection and recovery of the West Indian manatee under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

Adult manatees average 10 feet long and weigh about 2,200 pounds, although some individuals have been recorded at lengths greater than 13 feet and weighing as much as 3,500 pounds. Manatees are commonly found in fresh, brackish, or marine water habitats, including shallow coastal bays, lagoons, estuaries, and inland rivers of varying salinity extremes. Manatees spend much of their time underwater or partly submerged, making them difficult to detect even in shallow water. While the manatee's principal stronghold in the United States is Florida, the species is considered a seasonal inhabitant of North Carolina with most occurrences reported from June through October.

To protect manatees in North Carolina, the Service's Raleigh Field Office has prepared precautionary measures for general construction activities in waters used by the species. Implementation of these measure will allow in-water projects which do not require blasting to proceed without adverse impacts to manatees. In addition, inclusion of these guidelines as conservation measures in a Biological Assessment or Biological Evaluation, or as part of the determination of impacts on the manatee in an environmental document prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, will expedite the Service's review of the document for the fulfillment of requirements under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. These measures include:

1. The project manager and/or contractor will inform all personnel associated with the project that manatees may be present in the project area, and the need to avoid any harm to these endangered mammals. The project manager will ensure that all construction personnel know the general appearance of the species and their habit of moving about completely or partially submerged in shallow water. All construction personnel will be informed that they are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of manatees.

2. The project manager and/or the contractor will advise all construction personnel that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees which are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.

3. If a manatee is seen within 100 yards of the active construction and/or dredging operation or vessel movement, all appropriate precautions will be implemented to ensure protection of the manatee. These precautions will include the immediate shutdown of moving equipment if a manatee comes within 50 feet of the operational area of the equipment. Activities will not resume until the manatee has departed the project area on its own volition (i.e., it may not be herded or harassed from the area).

4. Any collision with and/or injury to a manatee will be reported immediately. The report must be made to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (ph. 919.856.4520 ext. 28), the National Marine Fisheries Service (ph. 252.728.8762), and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (ph. 252.448.1546).

5. A sign will be posted in all vessels associated with the project where it is clearly visible to the vessel operator. The sign should state:

> CAUTION: The endangered manatee may occur in these waters during the warmer months, primarily from June through October. Idle speed is required if operating this vessel in shallow water during these months. All equipment must be shut down if a manatee comes within 50 feet of the vessel or operating equipment. A collision with and/or injury to the manatee must be reported immediately to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (919-856-4520 ext. 28), the National Marine Fisheries Service (252.728.8762), and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (252.448.1546).

6. The contractor will maintain a log detailing sightings, collisions, and/or injuries to manatees during project activities. Upon completion of the action, the project manager will prepare a report which summarizes all information on manatees encountered and submit the report to the Service's Raleigh Field Office.

7. All vessels associated with the construction project will operate at "no wake/idle" speeds at all times while in water where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four foot clearance from the bottom. All vessels will follow routes of deep water whenever possible.

8. If siltation barriers must be placed in shallow water, these barriers will be: (a) made of material in which manatees cannot become entangled; (b) secured in a manner that they cannot break free and entangle manatees; and, (c) regularly monitored to ensure that manatees have not become entangled. Barriers will be placed in a manner to allow manatees entry to or exit from essential habitat.

Prepared by (rev. 01/2015):
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Raleigh Field Office
Post Office Box 33726
Raleigh, North Carolina 27636-3726
919/856-4520

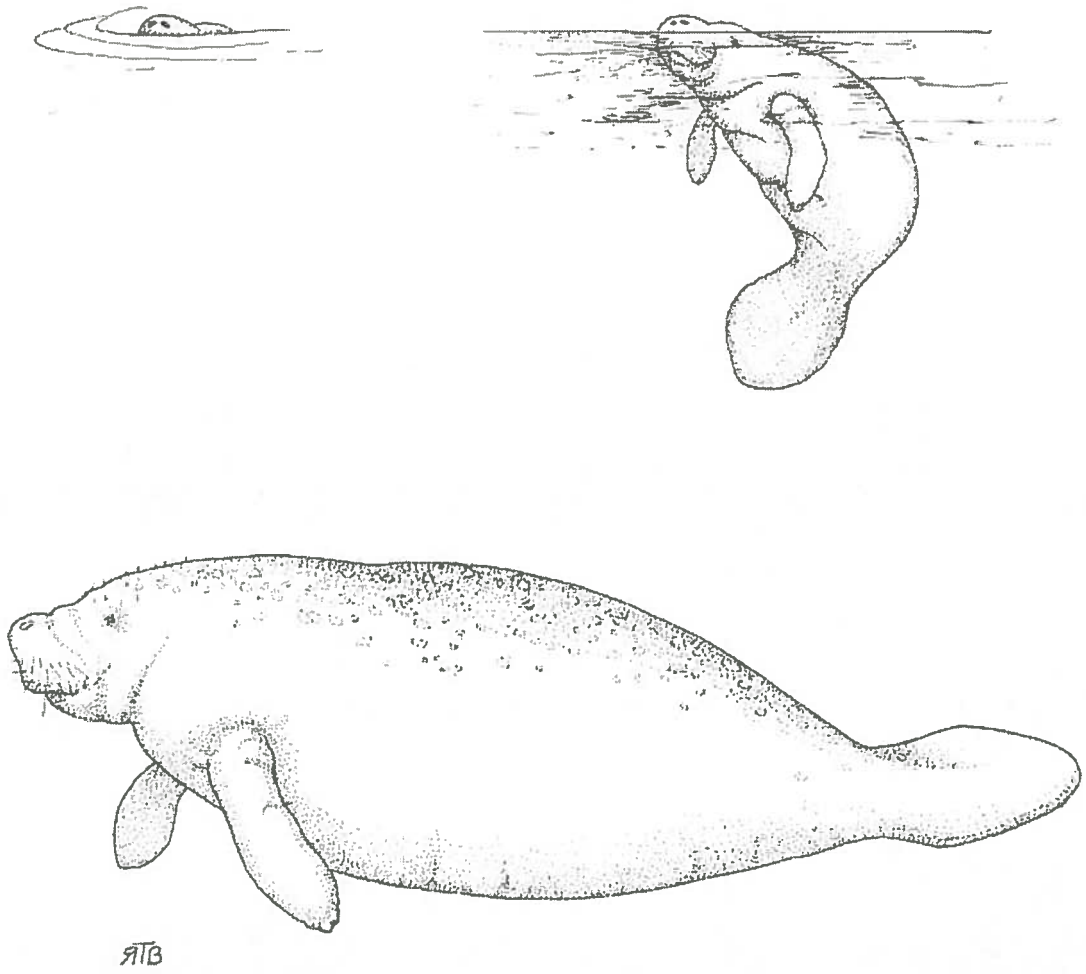


Figure 1. The whole body of the West Indian manatee may be visible in clear water; but in the dark and muddy waters of coastal North Carolina, one normally sees only a small part of the head when the manatee raises its nose to breathe.

Illustration used with the permission of the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences. Source: Clark, M. K. 1987. Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Fauna of North Carolina: Part I. A re-evaluation of the mammals. Occasional Papers of the North Carolina Biological Survey 1987-3. North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences. Raleigh, NC. pp. 52.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

United States Coast Guard

Commanding Officer
United States Coast Guard
Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland

1240 East Ninth Street
Room 2179
Cleveland Ohio 44199-2060
Staff Symbol: ER
Phone: (216) 902-6219
Fax: (216) 902-6277
Email: Gregory.O.Carpenter@uscg.mil

31 August 2016

USFWS
Raleigh Ecological Field Service Office
Attn: Pete Benjamin
PO Box 33726
Raleigh, NC 27636-3726

Re: Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation
Environmental Assessment for the Relocation of a 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat to U.S. Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Benjamin,

The purpose of this letter is to solicit comments regarding the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) intent to relocate an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The USCG is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the Proposed Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and USCG Commandment Instruction (COMDTINST M16475.1D (*Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*).

Proposed Project

The USCG proposes to permanently relocate an existing 87-foot WPB to USCG Station Wrightsville Beach located approximately 1.6 miles southwest of Wrightsville Beach at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina.

The principal characteristics of the 87-foot WPB include an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. In the past, other USCG 87-foot WPBs have periodically moored at Station Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time. The proposed vessel relocation project would involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored 87-foot WPBs. According to station personnel, the depth at the proposed mooring location is approximately 16 feet below mean low water (MLW). Station Wrightsville Beach currently homeports two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. There are currently 27 active duty personnel and approximately 40 reserve personnel. As a result of the proposed home porting, the number of

personnel will increase by an additional 11 crew members. A boat crew is available 24 hours a day and the station responds to numerous calls for assistance annually.

Station Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting North Carolina's coastline in the station's Area of Responsibility (AOR) from pollution and marine accidents, conducting search and rescue missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. Due to operational changes within the USCG's Fifth District resulting in relocation of other WPBs, Station Wrightsville Beach will be without a patrol boat and unable to execute their operational missions within their AOR. The station's AOR extends north to Surf City, south to Kure Beach, along the Intra-Coastal Waterway south to Snows Cut, and ocean side to Smith Island.

Operation and maintenance of the WPB would take place according to existing USCG protocols, and thus are out of scope for this proposed project.

Description of the Project Area

The USCG Station Wrightsville Beach is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet (see **Attachment A**). The geographic location of Station Wrightsville Beach is latitude 34°11'21.76" north and longitude 77°48'46.41" west.

The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities will be involved in the proposed relocation project. The docks and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the station. The main pier is a partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked pier that extends approximately 150 feet from the concrete bulkhead. One concrete-surfaced floating pier is located parallel to the main pier on the southern side. One concrete-surfaced floating pier and one wood-decked pier are located perpendicular to the main pier on the northern side. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the western side of the concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The wood-decked pier extends approximately 95 feet from the main pier. The wood-decked pier is fronted along the western, eastern and northern sides by a timber-pile fender system. The Project Area (see **Attachment B**) is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the USCG station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is the public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach. A small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) is immediately adjacent to the concrete bulkhead. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The pier crosses over the beach and access to the beach is provided via stairs. Photographs of the Project Area can be found in **Attachment C**.

The USCG boat basin was dredged approximately 2.5 years ago to a depth of 12 feet (10 feet at MLW with 2 feet of allowable over-depth). The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducted site investigations and prepared an EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Station Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the site investigations; regulations and requirements review; and coordination with Federal, State, and local agencies during the EA found that listed species

would not likely be adversely affected. In 2014, the maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach. No listed species were encountered during the previous dredging activities.

A marine resource survey was conducted in the Project Area on June 15, 2016 (see **Attachment D**). The survey revealed that benthic resources are sparse, likely due to a high rate of sediment deposition and a dynamic tidal environment. In general, the seafloor within the marine survey limits consists of a barren, silty sand environment. No protected or listed marine species or resources were observed during the marine resource survey.

USFWS Listed Species (and Critical Habitat)

The USCG conducted a US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) database query on July 17, 2016 for the Project Area (see **Attachment E**). A total of nine endangered, seven threatened, one threatened due to similarity of appearance, and one candidate species were identified. No species proposed for listing were identified. Further, no designated or proposed critical habitat is known to occur in the Project Area. The Federally listed and candidate species under USFWS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area are as follows:

- Atlantic Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*), Carolina Distinct Population Segment (DPS) – Endangered
- Cooley's Meadowrue (*Thalictrum cooleyi*) - Endangered
- Golden Sedge (*Carex lutea*) - Endangered
- Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) – Endangered
- Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) – Endangered
- Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) – Endangered
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) – Endangered
- Rough-leaved Loosestrife (*Lysimachia asperulaefolia*) - Endangered
- Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) – Endangered
- Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), North Atlantic DPS – Threatened
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Northwest Atlantic Ocean DPS – Threatened
- Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) – Threatened
- Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) – Threatened
- Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) – Threatened
- Seabeach Amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*) – Threatened
- West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) – Threatened
- American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) – Threatened due to Similarity of Appearance
- Magnificent Ramshorn (*Planorbella magnifica*) – Candidate

The USCG has concluded that no effects to Federally-listed species would occur as a result of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would only relocate the permanent home port of the WPB to an existing, suitable mooring location; it would not include construction or dock improvements, maintenance of the WPB, or operations of the WPB. No onshore construction or

activities would occur as a result of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would occur in a marine porting area that is already heavily used for docking, mooring, and recreation by commercial companies and Wrightsville Beach residents. The marine resource survey in June 2016 and site visit in May 2016 revealed that benthic resources and beach areas are sparse. There would be no change in the mission or use of the waterfront by personnel at Station Wrightsville Beach as a result of the Proposed Project. A more detailed analysis is provided below for the 18 species with the potential to occur in the Project Area or its vicinity.

Piping Plover and Red Knot: Wintering critical habitat for the piping plover occurs on the Estuarine Reserve Dedicated Nature Preserve on Masonboro Island and on Wrightsville Beach Island (beginning at Salisbury Street and continuing north) approximately 0.5 miles southwest and 2.5 miles northeast, respectively, of Station Wrightsville Beach (USFWS, 2016a). The piping plover and red knot are both shorebirds that prefer foraging for food on sandy beaches or in shallow wetlands. Due to the limited nature of the beach area at the Station Wrightsville Beach pier (see **Attachment C**), and the existing foot traffic and disturbance on the pier, Station Wrightsville Beach is not anticipated to provide suitable habitat for the piping plover and red knot. It is unlikely that these species would utilize this small beach as stop-over or foraging habitat. Therefore, USCG concludes that the Proposed Project would have no effect on the piping plover and red knot.

Atlantic Sturgeon: The Atlantic sturgeon spends most of its adult life in the marine environment, but travels inland to spawn in freshwater. The Atlantic sturgeon is known to spawn in three locations in North Carolina: Albemarle Sound (Roanoke and Chowan/Nottoway Rivers), Pamlico Sound (Tar and Neuse Rivers), and Cape Fear River. There are no suitable or known spawning areas for the Atlantic sturgeon on Wrightsville Beach Island, but the adult Atlantic sturgeon could be found in the nearshore marine waters around Wrightsville Beach when not spawning (Atlantic Sturgeon Status Review Team, 2007). However, it is unlikely that the existing marine environment provides suitable habitat for the Atlantic Sturgeon as the marine habitat in the proposed Project Area already provides limited benthic resources (see **Attachment D**) and is already surrounded by existing mooring locations. Therefore, because the Proposed Project is not anticipated to change the marine environment, the USCG concludes that the Proposed Project would have no effect on the Atlantic sturgeon.

Green Sea Turtle, Hawksbill Sea Turtle, Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle, Leatherback Sea Turtle, and Loggerhead Sea: According to nesting data collected by the North Carolina Sea Turtle Project managed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, there were 1,296 sea turtle nests counted on North Carolina beaches in 2015. Loggerhead sea turtles account for 1,255 of those nests, making them the most common nesting sea turtle species in North Carolina. Four of those loggerhead nests were found on Wrightsville Beach Island (North Carolina Sea Turtle Project, 2015). The loggerhead sea turtle is also the only sea turtle species with critical habitat units in North Carolina, with the closest units to Wrightsville Beach occurring to the northeast in Pender County (between Figure Eight Island and Topsail Beach) and to the southwest on Carolina Beach, past Masonboro Island State Park (USFWS, 2016a) (NOAA, 2014). No sea turtle nests are known to have been documented on the small beach at Station Wrightsville Beach. It is unlikely that any sea turtles would nest on this beach, due to its small size and the high degree of development and disruption. The USCG concludes that due to the sparse benthic resources (see **Attachment D**), presence of existing mooring locations, and high

use of Banks Channel by commercial and recreational vessels, it is unlikely that the existing marine environment provides suitable habitat for sea turtles. Therefore, the USCG concludes that the Proposed Project would have no effect on the green sea turtle, hawksbill sea turtle, Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, or loggerhead sea turtle.

West Indian Manatee: Although the West Indian manatee prefers warmer, coastal waters, the species has been sighted before in New Hanover County during its summer migration. Because the marine environment in the proposed Project Area is limited in resources (see **Attachment D**), and because the waters of Banks Channel are already disturbed by commercial and recreational marine activities, it is unlikely that the West Indian manatee would inhabit the proposed Project Area. Therefore, USCG concludes that the Proposed Project would have no effect on the West Indian manatee.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker: Based on a review of current aerial imagery and a site visit conducted on May 24, 2016, no suitable habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker is present in the Project Area. No trees occur in the proposed Project Area, and trees that are present in the densely developed Wrightsville Beach are sparse. This species' preferred nesting and roosting trees (e.g., mature pines) were not observed in the vicinity of the Project Area. Therefore, the USCG has concluded the Proposed Project would have no effect on the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Shortnose Sturgeon: The USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (USFWS, 2016b) shows that there are no freshwater rivers or suitable freshwater spawning areas on Wrightsville Beach. Because this species does not typically venture into the ocean, it is very unlikely that shortnose sturgeons would be present in the marine waters of Banks Channel. Therefore, the USCG has concluded the Proposed Project would have no effect on the shortnose sturgeon.

Northern Long-eared Bat: Based on a review of aerial imagery and a site visit conducted on May 24, 2016, no suitable habitat for the northern long-eared bat is present in the Project Area. No trees occur in the proposed Project Area, and trees that are present in the densely developed Wrightsville Beach are sparse. Caves or mines that the bat could use for hibernating were not observed and are not known to be present in the vicinity of the Project Area. Therefore, the USCG has concluded the Proposed Project would have no effect on the northern long-eared bat.

American Alligator and Magnificent Ramshorn: A review of the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (USFWS, 2016b) revealed that suitable habitat for the American alligator and magnificent ramshorn is not present. The National Wetlands Inventory shows that there are no freshwater rivers or wetlands on Wrightsville Beach. Because these species cannot survive in saltwater, it is very unlikely that American alligators and magnificent ramshorn would be present in the marine waters of Banks Channel. Therefore, the USCG has concluded the Proposed Project would have no effect on the American alligator and magnificent ramshorn.

Cooley's Meadowrue; Golden Sedge; Rough-leaved Loosestrife; Seabeach Amaranth: The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities will be involved in the proposed relocation project. Therefore, the USCG has concluded the Proposed Project would have no effect on the four Federally listed terrestrial plants

The USCG requests the USFWS' review and concurrence with the effects determinations stated in this letter. If there is anything that the USCG needs to do to complete the Proposed Project without negatively impacting Federally listed species that is not mentioned in this letter, please let us know. Please contact Mr. Tanner Dunlap of my staff at (216) 902-6268 or Tanner.M.Dunlap@uscg.mil if you have any questions regarding the Proposed Project. Alternatively, you may contact Ms. Jennifer Jones with our design firm (AECOM) at (919) 461-1442 or jennifer.jones@aecom.com.

Sincerely,

Gregory O. Carpenter
Chief, Environmental Compliance
By direction of the Commanding Officer

Enclosures:

Attachment A – Site Location Map
Attachment B – Proposed Project Area
Attachment C – Photographs of Project Area
Attachment D – Marine Survey Report
Attachment E – IPaC Report of Project Area

Cc: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
nmfs.ser.esa.consultations@noaa.gov

Works Cited

Atlantic Sturgeon Status Review Team. (2007, February 23). *Status Review of Atlantic Sturgeon (Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus).* National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office.

NOAA. (2014, September 18). *Loggerhead Sea Turtle Critical Habitat in Northwest Atlantic Ocean.* Retrieved July 6, 2016, from NOAA Fisheries: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/criticalhabitat_loggerhead.htm

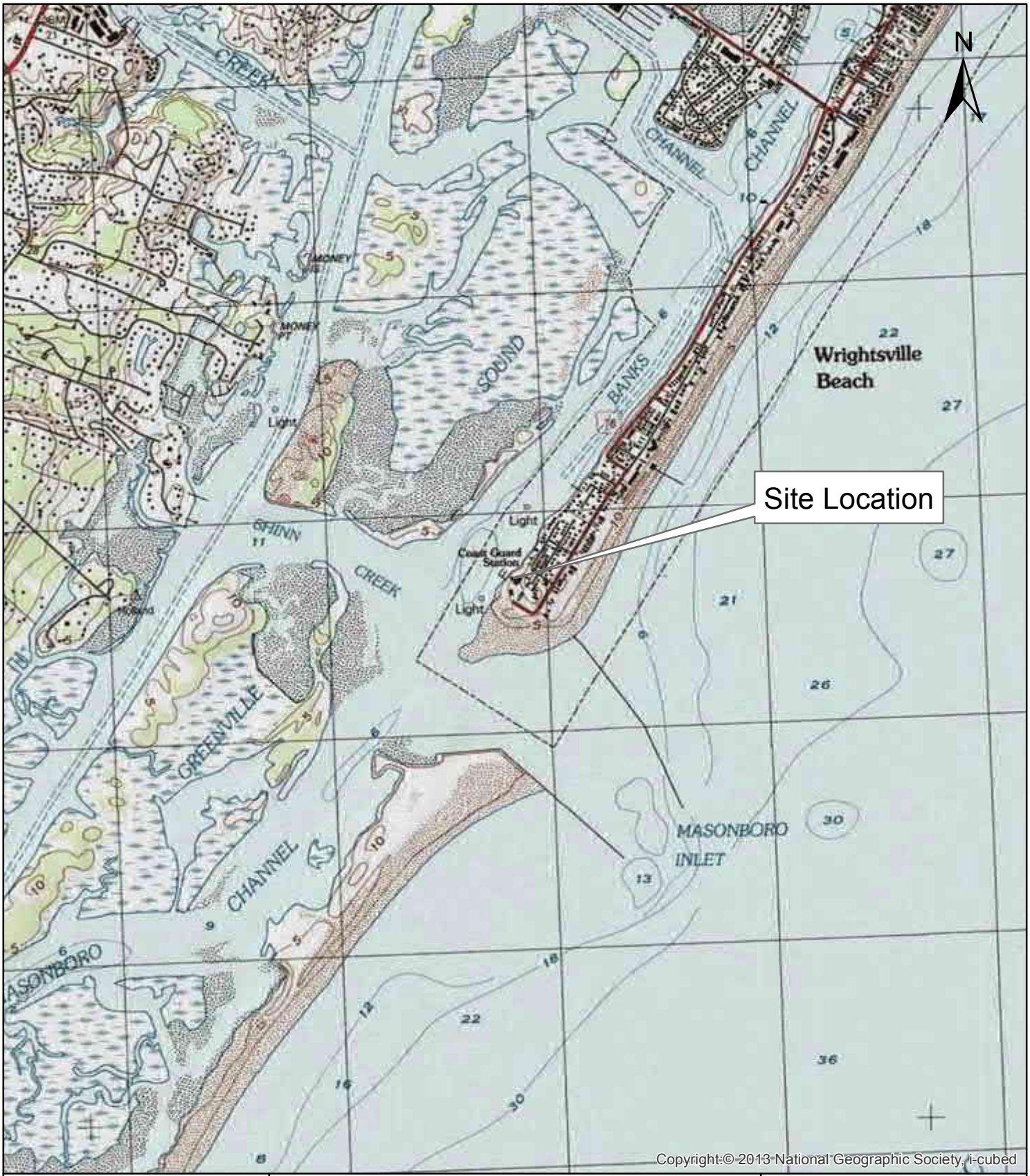
North Carolina Sea Turtle Project. (2015). *North Carolina WRC Sea Turtle Project.* Retrieved July 6, 2016, from Sea Turtle Nest Monitoring System: http://www.seaturtle.org/nestdb/index.shtml?view=1&year=2015

USFWS. (2016a). *Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species.* Retrieved July 6, 2016, from USFWS Critical Habitat Mapper:

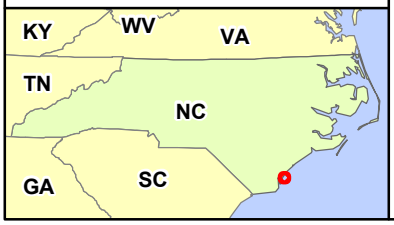
http://fws.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=9d8de5e265ad4fe0989
3cf75b8dbfb77
USFWS. (2016b). *Wetlands Mapper*. Retrieved May 25, 2016, from National Wetlands
Inventory: http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html

Attachment A

Site Location Map



Map Location



Site Location Map

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach
912 Water Street
Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, NC
Wrightsville Beach NC Topographic Quadrangle (1983)

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

July 2016

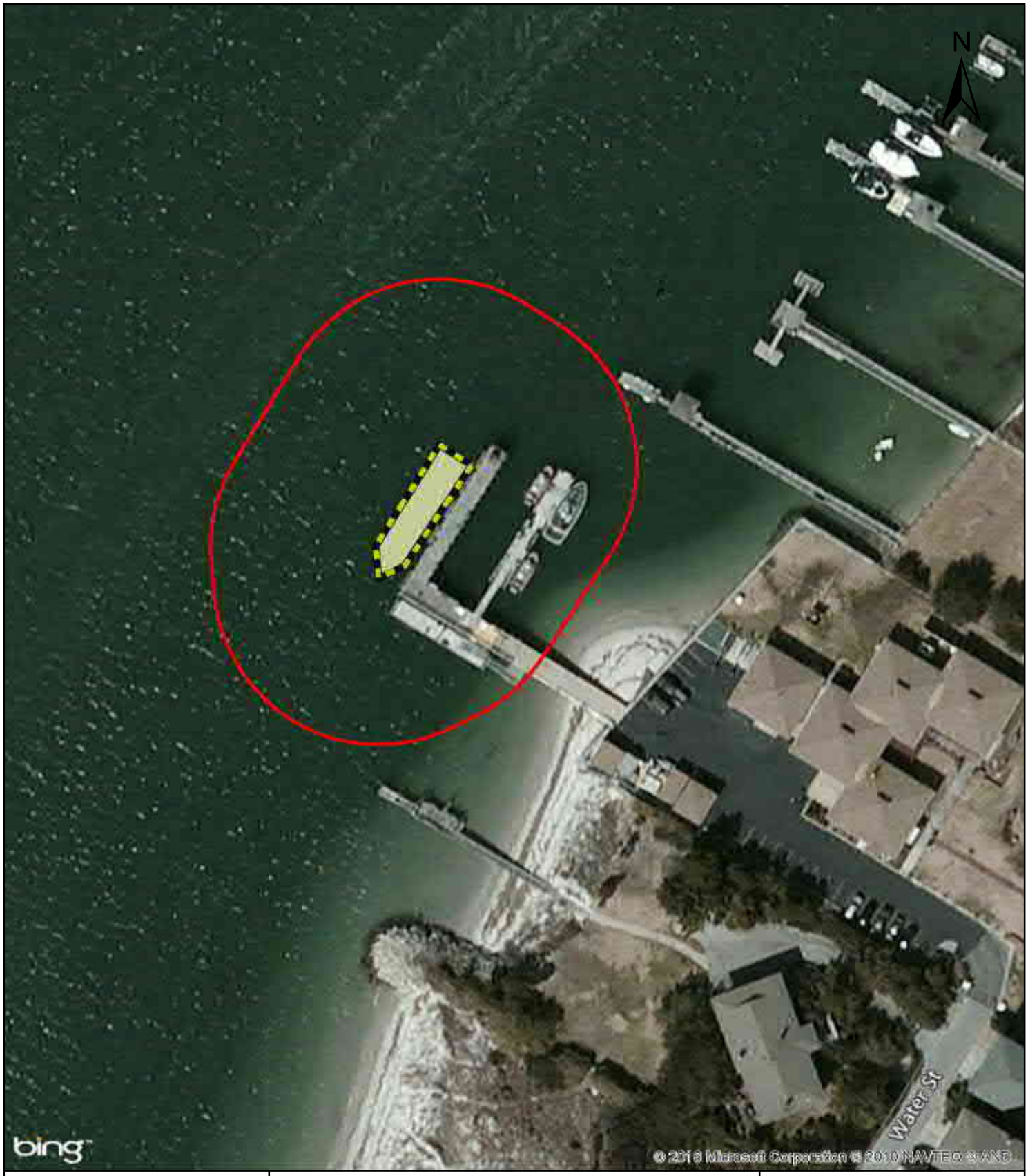
60503777

Attachment A

AECOM

AECOM Environment
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, USA
Phone: (919) 461-1100
Web: http://www.aecom.com

Attachment B
Proposed Project Area



Legend

100-foot Buffer

87-foot Boat

Proposed Project Area

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach
912 Water Street
Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, NC
Wrightsville Beach NC Topographic Quadrangle (1983)

0 40 80
Feet

1 inch = 80 feet

July 2016

60503777

Attachment B

AECOM Environment
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, USA
Phone: (919) 461-1100
Web: http://www.aecom.com

Attachment C
Photographs of Project Area

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 1	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View from the main pier looking south along the western shoreline. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the south of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach.

Photo No. 2	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View from the main pier looking northeast along the western shoreline. The concrete bulkhead visible on the right side of the photo is located along the USCG property. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the northeast of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 3	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View of the boat basin and dock and moorings located on the west side of the station. The main pier is visible on the left side of the photo and the floating pier and wood-decked pier are visible in the background.

Photo No. 4	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View looking northeast along Banks Channel from the southern end of the wood-decked pier. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is portside along the west side of the pier (left side of the photo).

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No. 5	Date: 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

North

Description:

View of the timber-pile fender system along the eastern side of the wood-decked pier.

Photo No. 6	Date: 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View along the west side of the wood-decked pier where the 87-foot WPB would be moored portside. A timber-pile fender system, foam-filled marine fenders, and mooring cleats are located along the west side of the wood-decked pier.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 7	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Southwest

Description:

View of Banks Channel looking southwest along the wood-decked pier.

Photo No. 8	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

East-Southeast

Description:

View from the wood-decked pier of the boat basin and dock and moorings located on the west side of the station. Station Wrightsville Beach is visible in the background.

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
9	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View of the private docks and residential housing located to the northeast of the project area.

Photo No.	Date:
10	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View from the southern boundary of the project area. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the south of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach. The public beach located at the south end of Wrightsville Beach is visible in the background (left side of the photo), beyond which is the Masonboro Inlet.

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No. 11	Date: 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View of the entry to the Station Wrightsville Beach boat basin. USCG response boats are visible on the left side of the photo, Banks Channel is visible in the background, and the dock on the right side of the photo is associated with the private residence located to the northeast of the project area.

Photo No. 12	Date: 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View of the communications tower, garage, and main multi-purpose building located at Station Wrightsville Beach.

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
13	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

East-Southeast

Description:

View of USCG Cutter (CGC) *Beluga*, an 87-foot WPB, which was temporarily moored at Station Wrightsville Beach on 5/26/16 and 5/27/16. The proposed vessel relocation project will involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the 87-foot WPB shown in the photo. *Note: This photo was provided by station personnel.*

Attachment D
Marine Survey Report

Attachment E
IPaC Report of the Project Area

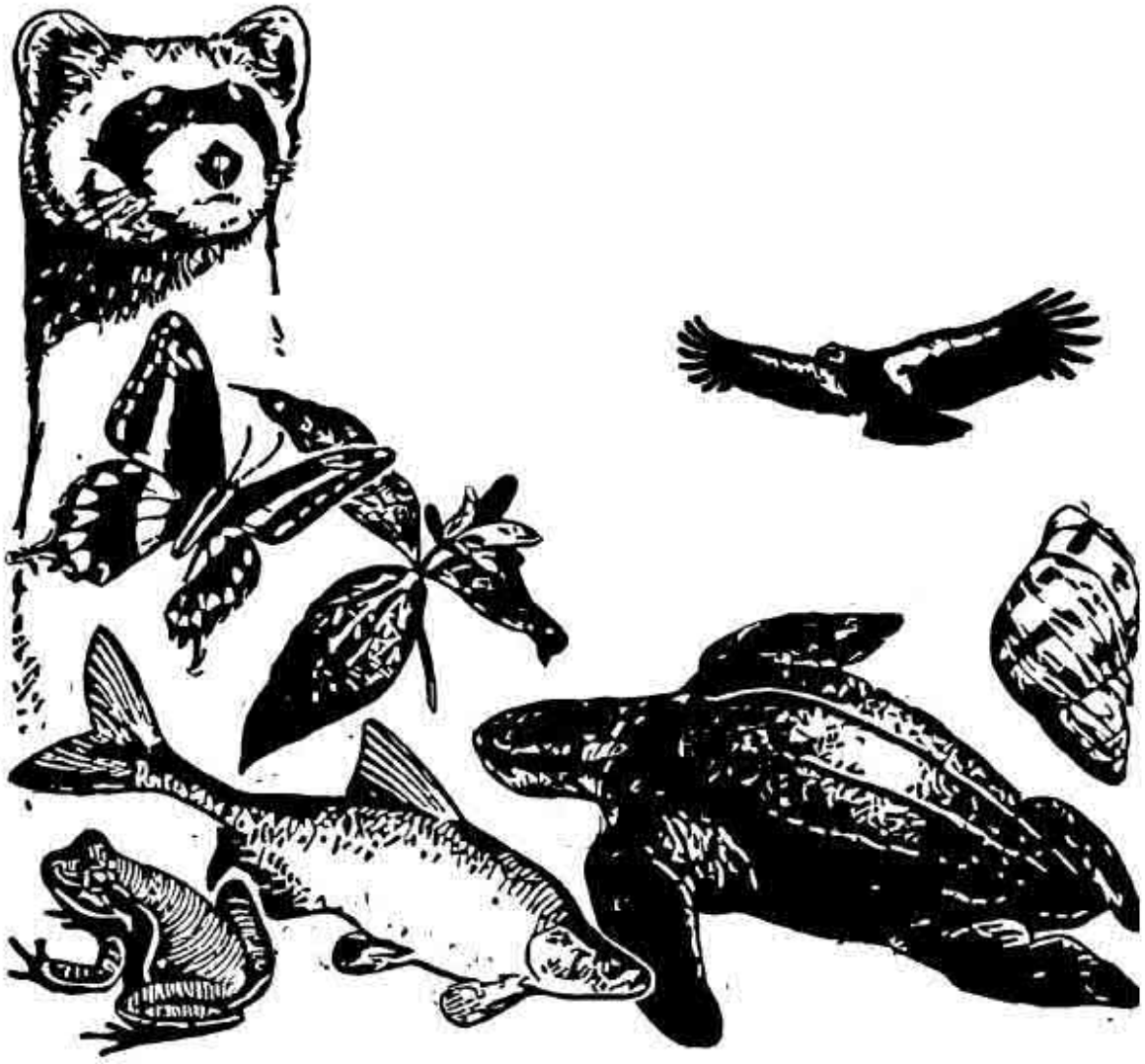
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach

IPaC Trust Resources Report

Generated July 19, 2016 05:38 AM MDT, IPaC v3.0.8

This report is for informational purposes only and should not be used for planning or analyzing project level impacts. For project reviews that require U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service review or concurrence, please return to the IPaC website and request an official species list from the Regulatory Documents page.



IPaC - Information for Planning and Conservation (https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/): A project planning tool to help streamline the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service environmental review process.

Table of Contents

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

IPaC Trust Resources Report

NAME

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach

LOCATION

New Hanover County, North Carolina

DESCRIPTION

USCG seeks to designate Station Wrightsville Beach as the new permanent home port for an 87' Coastal Patrol Boat.

IPAC LINK

https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/project/JHUOG-ZZF3V-BNNOG-MSDLI-IOZK34

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Contact Information

Trust resources in this location are managed by:

Raleigh Ecological Services Field Office
Post Office Box 33726
Raleigh, NC 27636-3726
(919) 856-4520

Endangered Species

Proposed, candidate, threatened, and endangered species are managed by the Endangered Species Program of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

This USFWS trust resource report is for informational purposes only and should not be used for planning or analyzing project level impacts.

For project evaluations that require USFWS concurrence/review, please return to the IPaC website and request an official species list from the Regulatory Documents section.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act **requires** Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of such proposed action" for any project that is conducted, permitted, funded, or licensed by any Federal agency.

A letter from the local office and a species list which fulfills this requirement can only be obtained by requesting an official species list either from the Regulatory Documents section in IPaC or from the local field office directly.

The list of species below are those that may occur or could potentially be affected by activities in this location:

Birds

Piping Plover Charadrius melodus — Threatened

CRITICAL HABITAT

There is **final** critical habitat designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B079

Red Knot Calidris canutus rufa — Threatened

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B0DM

Red-cockaded Woodpecker Picoides borealis — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B04F

Fishes

Atlantic Sturgeon Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=E0A7

Shortnose Sturgeon Acipenser brevirostrum — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=E00B

Flowering Plants

Cooley's Meadowrue Thalictrum cooleyi — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q231

Golden Sedge Carex lutea — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

There is **final** critical habitat designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q3HD

Rough-leaved Loosestrife Lysimachia asperulaefolia — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q2DF

Seabeach Amaranth Amaranthus pumilus — Threatened

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q2MZ

Mammals

Northern Long-eared Bat Myotis septentrionalis — Threatened

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=A0JE

West Indian Manatee Trichechus manatus — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

There is **final** critical habitat designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=A007

Reptiles

American Alligator Alligator mississippiensis — Similarity of Appearance (Threatened)

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=C000

Hawksbill Sea Turtle Eretmochelys imbricata — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

There is **final** critical habitat designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=C00E

Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Lepidochelys kempii — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=C00O

Leatherback Sea Turtle Dermochelys coriacea — Endangered

CRITICAL HABITAT

There is **final** critical habitat designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=C00F

Loggerhead Sea Turtle Caretta caretta — Threatened

CRITICAL HABITAT

There are both **final** and **proposed** critical habitat designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=C00U

Snails

Magnificent Ramshorn Planorbella magnifica — Candidate

CRITICAL HABITAT

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=G02R

Critical Habitats

There are no critical habitats in this location

Migratory Birds

Birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Any activity that results in the take of migratory birds or eagles is prohibited unless authorized by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.[1] There are no provisions for allowing the take of migratory birds that are unintentionally killed or injured.

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in the take of migratory birds is responsible for complying with the appropriate regulations and implementing appropriate conservation measures.

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1. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Birds of Conservation Concern
  http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/birds-of-conservation-concern.php
- Conservation measures for birds
  http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/project-assessment-tools-and-guidance/conservation-measures.php
- Year-round bird occurrence data
  http://www.birdscanada.org/birdmon/default/datasummaries.jsp

The following species of migratory birds could potentially be affected by activities in this location:

Least Tern Sterna antillarum — Bird of conservation concern
Season: Breeding

Lesser Yellowlegs Tringa flavipes — Bird of conservation concern
Season: Wintering
http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B0MD

Purple Sandpiper Calidris maritima — Bird of conservation concern
Season: Wintering

Short-billed Dowitcher Limnodromus griseus — Bird of conservation concern
Season: Wintering
http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B0JK

Short-eared Owl Asio flammeus — Bird of conservation concern
Season: Wintering
http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B0HD

Swainson's Warbler Limnothlypis swainsonii — Bird of conservation concern

Season: Breeding

Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus — Bird of conservation concern

Season: Wintering

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B0JN

Yellow Rail Coturnicops noveboracensis — Bird of conservation concern

Season: Wintering

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=B0JG

Wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries

There are no refuges or fish hatcheries in this location

Wetlands in the National Wetlands Inventory

Impacts to NWI wetlands and other aquatic habitats may be subject to regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or other State/Federal statutes.

For more information please contact the Regulatory Program of the local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District.

DATA LIMITATIONS

The Service's objective of mapping wetlands and deepwater habitats is to produce reconnaissance level information on the location, type and size of these resources. The maps are prepared from the analysis of high altitude imagery. Wetlands are identified based on vegetation, visible hydrology and geography. A margin of error is inherent in the use of imagery; thus, detailed on-the-ground inspection of any particular site may result in revision of the wetland boundaries or classification established through image analysis.

The accuracy of image interpretation depends on the quality of the imagery, the experience of the image analysts, the amount and quality of the collateral data and the amount of ground truth verification work conducted. Metadata should be consulted to determine the date of the source imagery used and any mapping problems.

Wetlands or other mapped features may have changed since the date of the imagery or field work. There may be occasional differences in polygon boundaries or classifications between the information depicted on the map and the actual conditions on site.

DATA EXCLUSIONS

Certain wetland habitats are excluded from the National mapping program because of the limitations of aerial imagery as the primary data source used to detect wetlands. These habitats include seagrasses or submerged aquatic vegetation that are found in the intertidal and subtidal zones of estuaries and nearshore coastal waters. Some deepwater reef communities (coral or tuberficid worm reefs) have also been excluded from the inventory. These habitats, because of their depth, go undetected by aerial imagery.

DATA PRECAUTIONS

Federal, state, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands in a different manner than that used in this inventory. There is no attempt, in either the design or products of this inventory, to define the limits of proprietary jurisdiction of any Federal, state, or local government or to establish the geographical scope of the regulatory programs of government agencies. Persons intending to engage in activities involving modifications within or adjacent to wetland areas should seek the advice of appropriate federal, state, or local agencies concerning specified agency regulatory programs and proprietary jurisdictions that may affect such activities.

This location overlaps all or part of the following wetlands:

Estuarine And Marine Deepwater

E1UBL

Estuarine And Marine Wetland

E2US2P

A full description for each wetland code can be found at the National Wetlands Inventory website: http://107.20.228.18/decoders/wetlands.aspx

Jones, Jennifer (Raleigh)

From:	Karla Reece - NOAA Federal <karla.reece@noaa.gov>
Sent:	Thursday, September 08, 2016 5:14 PM
To:	Jones, Jennifer (Raleigh)
Cc:	nmfs ser esa consultations - NOAA Service Account; tanner.m.dunlap@uscg.mil
Subject:	Fwd: ESA Section 7 Consultation Request
Attachments:	NMFS_ESA & EFH Ltr_USCG Station Wrightsville Beach EA_31AUG16.pdf
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged
Categories:	Red Category

Hello,

You recently requested ESA Section 7 consultation for the Environmental Assessment for the Relocation of a 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat to USCG Station Wrightsville Beach located at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina.

In the document you sent you determined "No Effect" to listed species under NMFS' jurisdiction. NMFS does not provide concurrence on an action agency's no effect determination. It is prudent to document in project records the rationale behind your 'no effect' decisions as it will act as the official ESA consultation Agency's no-effect determination.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Thank you.
Karla

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Karla Reece
Section 7 Team Lead
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources
263 13th Ave. S.
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
phone: 727/824-5348
fax: 727/824-5309
email: karla.reece@noaa.gov

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Jones, Jennifer (Raleigh)** <Jennifer.Jones@aecom.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 6, 2016 at 3:07 PM
Subject: ESA Section 7 Consultation Request
To: "nmfs.ser.esa.consultations@noaa.gov" <nmfs.ser.esa.consultations@noaa.gov>

Hello,

On behalf of the US Coast Guard, please find attached an ESA Section 7 consultation request/package for the Environmental Assessment for the Relocation of a 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat to USCG Station Wrightsville Beach located at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina.

Thank you,

Please note my updated phone number and address, effective November 9, 2015

Jennifer Jones
Project Manager, Environment
D +1-919-461-1442
M +1-919-809-4017
jennifer.jones@aecom.com

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Built to deliver a better world

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security

United States Coast Guard

Commanding Officer
United States Coast Guard
Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland

1240 East Ninth Street
Room 2179
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31 August 2016

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

Re: Endangered Species Act Section 7 and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Consultation
Environmental Assessment for the Relocation of a 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat to U.S. Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina

Dear Sir or Madam,

The purpose of this letter is to solicit comments regarding the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) intent to relocate an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The USCG is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the Proposed Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and USCG Commandment Instruction (COMDTINST) M16475.1D (*Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*).

Proposed Project

The USCG proposes to permanently relocate an existing 87-foot WPB to USCG Station Wrightsville Beach located approximately 1.6 miles southwest of Wrightsville Beach at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina.

The principal characteristics of the 87-foot WPB include an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. In the past, other USCG 87-foot WPBs have periodically moored at Station Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time. The proposed vessel relocation project would involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored 87-foot WPBs. According to station personnel, the depth at the proposed mooring location is approximately 16 feet below mean low water (MLW). Station Wrightsville Beach currently home ports two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. There are currently 27 active duty personnel and

approximately 40 reserve personnel. As a result of the proposed home porting, the number of personnel will increase by an additional 11 crew members. There is a boat crew available 24 hours a day and the station responds to numerous calls for assistance annually.

Station Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting North Carolina's coastline in the station's Area of Responsibility (AOR) from pollution and marine accidents, conducting search and rescue missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. Due to operational changes within the USCG's Fifth District resulting in relocation of other WPBs, Station Wrightsville Beach will be without a patrol boat and unable to execute their operational missions. The station's AOR extends north to Surf City, south to Kure Beach, along the Intra-Coastal Waterway south to Snows Cut, and ocean side to Smith Island.

Operation and maintenance of the WPB would take place according to existing USCG protocols, and thus are out of scope for this Proposed Project.

Description of the Project Area

The USCG Station Wrightsville Beach is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet (see **Attachment A**). The geographic location of Station Wrightsville Beach is latitude 34°11'21.76" north and longitude 77°48'46.41" west.

The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities will be involved in the proposed relocation project. The docks and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the station. The main pier is a partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked pier that extends approximately 150 feet from the concrete bulkhead. One concrete-surfaced floating pier is located parallel to the main pier on the southern side. One concrete-surfaced floating pier and one wood-decked pier are located perpendicular to the main pier on the northern side. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the western side of the concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The wood-decked pier extends approximately 95 feet from the main pier. The wood-decked pier is fronted along the western, eastern and northern sides by a timber-pile fender system. The Project Area (see **Attachment B**) is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the USCG station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is the public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach. Immediately outside the Project Area is a small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) adjacent to the concrete bulkhead. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The pier crosses over the beach and access to the beach is provided via stairs. Photographs of the Project Area can be found in **Attachment C**.

The USCG boat basin was dredged approximately 2.5 years ago to a depth of 12 feet (10 feet at MLW with 2 feet of allowable over-depth). The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducted site investigations and prepared an EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Station Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the site investigations; regulations and requirements review; and

coordination with Federal, State, and local agencies during the EA found that listed species and essential fish habitat (EFH) would not likely be adversely affected.

A marine resource survey (see **Attachment D**) was conducted in the Project Area on June 15, 2016. The survey revealed that benthic resources are sparse, likely due to a high rate of sediment deposition and a dynamic tidal environment. In general, the seafloor within the marine survey limits consists of a barren, silty sand environment. No protected or listed marine species or resources were observed during the marine resource survey.

NMFS Listed Species and Critical Habitats

Based on a query of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) database on 19 July 2016 (see **Attachment E**) and the NMFS Southeast Regional Office website, the USCG identified 11 endangered, 2 threatened, and 3 candidate species under NFMS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area. No species proposed for listing were identified. Further, no designated or proposed critical habitat is known to occur in the Project Area.

The Federally listed and candidate species under NMFS jurisdiction with potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area are identified below. The USCG has included an effect determination for each.

- Atlantic Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*), Carolina Distinct Population Segment (DPS) – Endangered
- Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) – Endangered
- Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) – Endangered
- Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) – Endangered
- Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) – Endangered
- Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) – Endangered
- Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) – Endangered
- North Atlantic Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) – Endangered
- Sei Whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*) – Endangered
- Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) - Endangered
- Sperm Whale (*Physeter microcephalus*) – Endangered
- Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), North Atlantic DPS – Threatened
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Northwest Atlantic Ocean DPS – Threatened
- Giant Manta Ray (*Manta birostris*) – Candidate
- Porbeagle Shark (*Lamna nasus*) – Candidate
- Thorny Skate (*Amblyraja radiate*), Northwest Atlantic DPS – Candidate

The USCG concludes that no effect to Federally listed species would result from the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would only relocate the permanent home port of the WPB to an existing, suitable mooring location; it would not include construction or dock improvements, maintenance of the WPB, or operations of the WPB. No onshore construction or activities would occur as a result of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would occur in a marine

porting area that is already heavily used for docking, mooring, and recreation by commercial companies and Wrightsville Beach residents. The marine resource survey in June 2016 and site visit in May 2016 revealed that benthic resources and beach areas are sparse. There would be no change in the mission or use of the waterfront by personnel at Station Wrightsville Beach as a result of the Proposed Project. A more detailed analysis is provided below for the 16 species with the potential to occur in the Project Area or its vicinity.

Atlantic Sturgeon – The Atlantic sturgeon spends most of its adult life in the marine environment, but travels inland to spawn in freshwater. In the marine environment, the Atlantic sturgeon is often found in nearshore waters with sand or gravel substrate. The Atlantic sturgeon is known to spawn in three locations in North Carolina: Albemarle Sound (Roanoke and Chowan/Nottoway Rivers), Pamlico Sound (Tar and Neuse Rivers), and Cape Fear River. There are no suitable or known spawning areas for the Atlantic sturgeon on Wrightsville Beach Island, but the adult Atlantic sturgeon could be found in the nearshore marine waters around Wrightsville Beach when not spawning (Atlantic Sturgeon Status Review Team, 2007). It is unlikely that the existing marine environment provides suitable habitat for the Atlantic sturgeon as it provides limited benthic resources (see **Attachment D**) and is surrounded by existing mooring locations. Therefore, because the Proposed Project is not anticipated to change the marine environment, the USCG concludes the Proposed Project would have no effect on the Atlantic Sturgeon.

Shortnose Sturgeon – The shortnose sturgeon rarely ventures into the ocean. The USFWS National Wetlands Inventory shows that there are no freshwater rivers or suitable freshwater spawning areas for the shortnose sturgeon on Wrightsville Beach. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the shortnose sturgeon would be present in the marine waters surrounding Wrightsville Beach. Due to lack of suitable habitat, the USCG concludes the Proposed Project would have no effect on shortnose sturgeon.

Blue Whale, Fin Whale, Humpback Whale, North Atlantic Right Whale, Sei Whale, Sperm Whale – These six whale species inhabit offshore waters, which are usually at least several hundred feet deep. Banks Channel is a coastal inlet that is less than 20 feet deep. Due to a lack of suitable habitat, the USCG concludes the Proposed Project would have no effect on the blue whale, fin whale, humpback whale, North Atlantic right whale, sei whale, or sperm whale.

Green Sea Turtle, Hawksbill Sea Turtle, Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle, Leatherback Sea Turtle, Loggerhead Sea Turtle – According to nesting data collected by the North Carolina Sea Turtle Project managed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, there were 1,296 sea turtle nests counted on North Carolina beaches in 2015. Loggerhead sea turtles account for 1,255 of those nests, making them the most common nesting sea turtle species in North Carolina. Four of those loggerhead nests were found on Wrightsville Beach Island (North Carolina Sea Turtle Project, 2015). The loggerhead sea turtle is also the only sea turtle species with critical habitat units in North Carolina, with the closest units to Wrightsville Beach occurring to the northeast in Pender County (between Figure Eight Island and Topsail Beach) and to the southwest on Carolina Beach, past Masonboro Island State Park (USFWS, 2016) (NOAA, 2014). No sea turtle nests are known to have been documented on the small beach at Station Wrightsville Beach. Further, it is unlikely any sea turtles would nest on this beach, due to its small size and the high degree of development and disruption. The USCG concludes that

due to the sparse benthic resources (see **Attachment D**), presence of existing mooring locations, and high use of Banks Channel by commercial and recreational vessels, it is unlikely that the existing marine environment provides suitable habitat for sea turtles. Therefore, the USCG concludes the Proposed Project would have no effect on the green sea turtle, hawksbill sea turtle, Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, or loggerhead sea turtle.

Giant Manta Ray – The giant manta ray generally inhabits deeper offshore marine waters, but may migrate seasonally to productive coastal areas. It has been observed feeding at the surface both nearshore and offshore, and in sandy bottom areas. Because no change to the marine environment is anticipated as a result of the Proposed Project, the USCG concludes the Proposed Project would have no effect on the giant manta ray.

Porbeagle Shark – The porbeagle shark primarily inhabits the upper pelagic zone from the surface to 650 feet, and is most often reported on continental shelves and slopes from close inshore (especially in summer) to far offshore. Because no change to the marine environment is anticipated as a result of the Proposed Project, the USCG concludes the Proposed Project would have no effect on the porbeagle shark.

Thorny Skate – The Northwest Atlantic DPS of the thorny skate is found from Greenland south to South Carolina. In the southern portion of its range, it is limited to the continental slope, and is most often found in offshore waters several hundred feet deep. Banks Channel is a shallow coastal inlet that is less than 20 feet deep; therefore, it is unlikely to be inhabited by the thorny skate. The USCG concludes the Proposed Project would have no effect on the thorny skate.

Essential Fish Habitat

As identified in the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Plan Amendments, the following EFH may be found in the Project Area: estuarine water column, marine water column, estuarine soft bottom/subtidal, and marine soft bottom. Designated EFH for coastal pelagic species (all life stages of cobia and Spanish mackerel), penaeid shrimp (larvae, juvenile), summer flounder (larvae, juvenile, adult), red drum (all life stages), and bluefish (juvenile and adult) may also be present in the Project Area. Finally, the Project Area is considered a coastal inlet, which is an EFH Habitat of Particular Concern for penaeid shrimp and red drum.

Table 1 below displays species with the potential to inhabit the Project Area. This list was developed from the Estuarine Living Marine Resources Database. Species were included if they were present (rare, common, abundant, or highly abundant) during any time of year in the portion of the Cape Fear River estuary classified as seawater (>25 ppt salinity).

Table 1. Species Potentially Found in Project Area
Source: (NCCOS, 2012)

Species	Egg	Larvae	Juvenile	Adult
Alewife			x	x
American Eel		x	x	x
American Shad			x	x
Atlantic Croaker		x	x	x
Atlantic Menhaden		x	x	x

Species	Egg	Larvae	Juvenile	Adult
Atlantic Sturgeon			x	x
Bay Anchovy	x	x	x	x
Bay Scallop	x	x		x
Black Drum		x	x	x
Blue Crab	x	x	x	x
Blue Mussel		x	x	
Blueback Herring			x	x
Bluefish			x	x
Brown Shrimp		x	x	
Cobia			x	x
Daggerblade Grass Shrimp			x	x
Eastern Oyster	x	x	x	x
Gray Snapper			x	
Gulf Flounder		x	x	x
Ladyfish		x	x	x
Mummichog	x	x	x	x
Pinfish		x	x	x
Pink Shrimp		x	x	
Quahog	x	x	x	x
Red Drum	x	x	x	x
Sheepshead		x	x	x
Sheepshead Minnow	x	x	x	x
Silversides	x	x	x	x
Southern Flounder		x	x	x
Southern Kingfish		x	x	x
Spanish Mackerel			x	x
Spot		x	x	x
Spotted Seatrout	x	x	x	x
Striped Bass				x
Striped Mullet		x	x	x
Summer Flounder		x	x	x
Weakfish	x	x	x	x
White Shrimp		x	x	

As discussed above, the Proposed Project includes no new construction, or any maintenance or operations of the WPB. It only includes changing the permanent home port of the WPB to an existing, frequently used mooring location at Station Wrightsville Beach, which is located in an area that is used heavily for recreational and commercial purposes. Overall, no changes to the marine environment are expected as a result of the Proposed Project. The presence of the WPB could lead to minor variations in water temperature and available light due to the WPB's shadow. However, minor variations in these characteristics are already common in the Project Area. Further, there is no submerged aquatic vegetation present in the Project Area that would require light for photosynthesis, and all managed species in the Project Area are mobile, so they are capable of occupying the nearby habitats that they find most favorable. Therefore, the USCG concludes that there would be no adverse effects to EFH as a result of the Proposed Project.

Conclusion

The USCG requests NMFS review and concurrence with the effects determinations stated in this letter. Please advise if there are any further actions needed to facilitate the implementation of the Proposed Project in a manner that avoids or minimizes adverse effects to Federally listed species. Please contact Mr. Tanner Dunlap of my staff at (216) 902-6268 or Tanner.M.Dunlap@uscg.mil if you have any questions regarding the proposed project. Alternatively, you may contact Ms. Jennifer Jones with our design firm (AECOM) at (919) 461-1442 or jennifer.jones@aecom.com.

Sincerely,

Gregory G. Carpenter
Chief, Environmental Compliance
By direction of the Commanding Officer

Enclosure:

Attachment A: Site Location Map
Attachment B: Proposed Project Area
Attachment C: Photographs of Project Area
Attachment D: Marine Resource Survey
Attachment E: IPaC Trust Resources Report

Cc: USFWS Raleigh Ecological Field Service Office
Attn: Pete Benjamin
PO Box 33726
Raleigh, NC 27636-3726

Works Cited

Atlantic Sturgeon Status Review Team. (2007, February 23). *Status Review of Atlantic Sturgeon (Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus).* National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office.

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Jones, Jennifer (Raleigh)

From: Dunn, Maria T. <maria.dunn@ncwildlife.org>
Sent: Friday, December 02, 2016 8:14 AM
To: Jones, Jennifer (Raleigh)
Subject: USCG Wrightsville Beach, NC

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Red Category

Ms. Jones,

Thank you for the information you provided to assess the relocation of an USCG vessel to Wrightsville Beach, NC. The proposal presented includes relocating an 87' Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to Banks Channel, within an area of the USCG Station that has previously moored vessels. No onshore or in-water work is associated with the relocation of this vessel.

Staff with the NCWRC have reviewed the information within the 11-10-2016 correspondence and do not feel the project will significantly impact terrestrial or aquatic wildlife species or habitats and continue as proposed.

I hope this satisfies your request. Please do not hesitate to call if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,
Maria Dunn

Maria T. Dunn
Coastal Coordinator

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November 10, 2016

Ms. Shannon Deaton
Habitat Conservation Program Manager
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
1701 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1701

SUBJECT: U.S. Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach – Relocate 87' Coastal Patrol Boat, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

Dear Ms. Deaton:

The purpose of this letter is to solicit comments regarding the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) intent to permanently relocate an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to an existing mooring location at USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the proposed project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and USCG Commandment Instruction (COMDTINST) M16475.1D (*Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*).

This letter provides the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NC WRC) with information on the project area, existing environment, and proposed action in advance of issuance of the EA for this project. The USCG would appreciate any comments the NC WRC may have for consideration in preparation of the EA.

The purpose of this project is to permanently relocate an 87-foot WPB to an existing mooring location at Station Wrightsville Beach, which would serve as homeport to the WPB and its 11 crew members. Station Wrightsville Beach is located approximately 1.6 miles southwest of Wrightsville Beach at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The station is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet (**Attachment A**). The geographic location of Station Wrightsville Beach is latitude 34°11'21.76" north and longitude 77°48'46.41" west.

Station Wrightsville Beach currently hosts two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. Station Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting North Carolina's coastline in the station's Area of Responsibility (AOR) from pollution and marine accidents, conducting search and rescue missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. The station's AOR extends north to Surf City, south to Kure Beach, along the Intra-Coastal Waterway south to Snows Cut, and ocean side to Smith Island.

Due to operational changes within the USCG's Fifth District, which will result in reallocating resources and relocating the cutters currently in Sector North Carolina's AOR, Sector North Carolina would be without a coastal patrol boat and unable to execute their operational missions within their AOR unless this vessel is homeported at this location. STA Wrightsville Beach was chosen as the location for the new homeport of an existing 87-foot coastal patrol boat because it is in a preferred geographic location near the middle of Sector North Carolina's AOR, suitable mooring is available, and no waterfront or dock improvements would be needed.

The principal characteristics of the 87-foot WPB include an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. In the past, other USCG 87-foot WPBs have periodically moored at Station Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time. The proposed vessel relocation project would involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored 87-foot WPBs.

The docks and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the station. The main pier is a partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked pier that extends approximately 150 feet from the concrete bulkhead. One concrete-surfaced floating pier is located parallel to the main pier on the southern side. One concrete-surfaced floating pier and one wood-decked pier are located perpendicular to the main pier on the northern side. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the western side of the concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The wood-decked pier extends approximately 95 feet from the main pier.

The Project Area, which includes a 100-foot buffer from the sides of the boat in the proposed mooring location, measures approximately 285 feet by 220 feet (approximately 1.4 acres). The Project Area is located adjacent to the federally maintained Banks Channel. Review of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE's) Hydrographic Survey of Wrightsville Beach Banks Channel dated April 2016, indicates that the depth at the proposed mooring location (i.e., along the western side of the wood-decked pier) is approximately 18 feet below mean lower low water (MLLW). The Proposed Project Area Map illustrates the mooring location, the boat dimensions, and the 100-foot buffer for this proposed vessel relocation project (**Attachment B**).

The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities would be involved in the proposed relocation project. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur as a result of the proposed project. The Project Area is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the USCG station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is the public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach. Immediately outside the Project Area is a small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) adjacent to the concrete bulkhead. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The pier crosses over the beach and access to the beach is provided via stairs. Photographs of the Project Area can be found in **Attachment C**.

The USCG has completed background research and records review using various maps and available online sources for the Project Area including, but not limited to: the North Carolina OneMap (NC OneMap) Habitat Map; the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) Anadromous Fish Spawning Areas (AFSA) map for the Cape Fear River area; the NC DMF Fishery Nursery Areas map for the Wrightsville Beach Area; the NC DMF Mapped Fish Habitats in Coastal North Carolina; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Environmental Sensitivity Map for Wrightsville Beach; and the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Plan Amendments. Based on the USCG's review, the Project Area is not located in a significant natural heritage natural area, conservation/managed area, designated submerged aquatic vegetation area, Primary Nursery Area, or within AFSA waters.

As identified in the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Plan Amendments, the Project Area is located in an area of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and the following EFH may be found in the Project Area: estuarine water column, marine water column, estuarine soft bottom/subtidal, and marine soft bottom. Designated EFH for coastal pelagic species (all life stages of cobia and Spanish mackerel), penaeid shrimp (larvae, juvenile), summer flounder (larvae, juvenile, adult), red drum (all life stages), and bluefish (juvenile and adult) may also be present in the Project Area. Additionally, the Project Area is considered a coastal inlet, which is an EFH Habitat Area of Particular Concern for penaeid shrimp and red drum.

In June 2016, the USCG conducted an in-water marine resource survey in the Project Area (**Attachment D)**. The survey revealed that benthic resources are sparse, likely due to a high rate of sediment deposition and a dynamic tidal environment. In general, the seafloor within the marine survey limits consists of a barren, silty sand environment. No protected or listed marine species or resources were observed during the marine resource survey.

Further, the USACE conducted site investigations and prepared an EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Station Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the site investigations; regulations and requirements review; and coordination with Federal, State, and local agencies during the EA found that aquatic and terrestrial wildlife resources and EFH would not likely be adversely affected. Mitigation of secondary and cumulative impacts to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife resources and water quality was deemed not applicable to the project. In 2014, the maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach. No listed species were encountered during the previous dredging activities.

The USCG requests that the NC WRC provide any additional information or potential concerns regarding the presence of wildlife resources that may be potentially affected by the permanent relocation of the 87-foot WPB to Station Wrightsville Beach. The USCG would appreciate any comments the NC WRC may have for consideration in preparation of the EA.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Jones (AECOM) at (919) 461-1442 or Tanner Dunlap (USCG) at (216) 902-6268.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Jones
Project Manager

Michelle Freimund, P.G.
Project Manager

Attachments: (A) Site Location Map
(B) Proposed Project Area
(C) Ground-Level Photographs
(D) Marine Resource Survey
(E) References Cited

Cc: Mr. Tanner Dunlap, Project Engineer, USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland
Mr. Greg Carpenter, Environmental Project Manager, USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland

ATTACHMENT (A)

SITE LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT (B)

PROPOSED PROJECT AREA

ATTACHMENT (C)

GROUND-LEVEL PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT (D)

MARINE SURVEY REPORT

ATTACHMENT (E)

REFERENCES CITED

References Cited

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AECOM
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Morrisville, North Carolina 27560

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November 10, 2016

Ms. Misty Buchanan
NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
NC Natural Heritage Program
1651 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1651

SUBJECT: U.S. Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach – Relocate 87' Coastal Patrol Boat, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

Dear Ms. Buchanan:

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland is initiating consultation with your office concerning the proposed action to permanently relocate an 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to an existing mooring location at USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The USCG is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the proposed project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and USCG Commandment Instruction (COMDTINST M16475.1D (*Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*).

This letter provides the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NC NHP) with information on the project area, existing environment, and proposed action in advance of issuance of the EA for this project. The USCG would appreciate any comments the NC NHP may have for consideration in preparation of the EA.

The purpose of this project is to permanently relocate an 87-foot WPB to an existing mooring location at Station Wrightsville Beach, which would serve as homeport to the WPB and its 11 crew members. Station Wrightsville Beach is located approximately 1.6 miles southwest of Wrightsville Beach at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The station is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet (**Attachment A**). The geographic location of Station Wrightsville Beach is latitude 34°11'21.76" north and longitude 77°48'46.41" west.

Station Wrightsville Beach currently hosts two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. Station Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting North Carolina's coastline in the station's Area of Responsibility (AOR) from pollution and marine accidents, conducting search and rescue missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. The station's AOR extends north to Surf City, south to Kure Beach, along the Intra-Coastal Waterway south to Snows Cut, and ocean side to Smith Island.

Due to operational changes within the USCG's Fifth District, which will result in reallocating resources and relocating the cutters currently in Sector North Carolina's AOR, Sector North Carolina would be without a coastal patrol boat and unable to execute their operational missions within their AOR unless this vessel is homeported at this location. STA Wrightsville Beach was chosen as the location for the new homeport of an existing 87' coastal patrol boat because it is in a

preferred geographic location near the middle of Sector North Carolina's AOR, suitable mooring is available, and no waterfront or dock improvements would be needed.

The principal characteristics of the 87-foot WPB include an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. In the past, other USCG 87-foot WPBs have periodically moored at Station Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time. The proposed vessel relocation project would involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored 87-foot WPBs.

The docks and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the station. The main pier is a partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked pier that extends approximately 150 feet from the concrete bulkhead. One concrete-surfaced floating pier is located parallel to the main pier on the southern side. One concrete-surfaced floating pier and one wood-decked pier are located perpendicular to the main pier on the northern side. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the western side of the concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The wood-decked pier extends approximately 95 feet from the main pier.

The Project Area, which includes a 100-foot buffer from the sides of the boat in the proposed mooring location, measures approximately 285 feet by 220 feet (approximately 1.4 acres). The Project Area is located adjacent to the federally maintained Banks Channel. Review of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE's) Hydrographic Survey of Wrightsville Beach Banks Channel dated April 2016, indicates that the depth at the proposed mooring location (i.e., along the western side of the wood-decked pier) is approximately 18 feet below mean lower low water (MLLW). The Proposed Project Area Map illustrates the mooring location, orientation, boat dimensions, and the 100-foot buffer for this proposed vessel relocation project (**Attachment B**).

The Project Area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities would be be involved in the proposed relocation project. No in-water or onshore construction or dock improvements would occur as a result of the proposed project. The Project Area is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the USCG station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is the public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach. Immediately outside the Project Area is a small beach area (approximately 310 square feet) adjacent to the concrete bulkhead. It consists of bare sand and drift material, and is devoid of plants. The pier crosses over the beach and access to the beach is provided via stairs. Photographs of the Project Area can be found in **Attachment C**.

The USCG has completed background research and records review using various maps and available online sources for the Project Area including, but not limited to: the North Carolina OneMap (NC OneMap) Habitat Map; the NC NHP Natural Areas Map; a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) database query for the Project Area; the USFWS Critical Habitat Mapper; and the NC NHP listed species/community search for the Wrightsville Beach Quadrangle along with their habitat requirements. Based on the USCG's review, the Project Area is not located in a significant natural heritage natural area or a conservation/managed area (**Attachment D**). The closest significant natural heritage natural area is Masonboro Island located over 1,000 feet from the Project Area, across Banks Channel and the Masonboro Inlet. Masonboro Island is an undeveloped barrier island, which has been classified as having an "Exceptional" representational rating and a collective value rating of "C2 (Very High)". Review of the habitat map indicates that portions of the Project Area are located in a Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat Assessment Area with a Conservation Planning Tool Rating of 1.

Review of the NC NHP database search indicates that 58 species/communities are identified within the Wrightsville Beach topographic quadrangle, including 18 Federally listed and candidate species

under USFWS jurisdiction. No species proposed for listing were identified and no designated or proposed critical habitat is known to occur in the Project Area. Reviews of the habitat requirements for the species/communities identified with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Area were performed. Based on the records review, the USCG has concluded that no effects to state or Federally-listed species would occur as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project would only relocate the permanent homeport of the WPB to an existing, suitable mooring location; it would not involve in-water construction or dock improvements and no onshore construction or activities would occur as a result of the proposed project. There would be no change in the mission or use of the waterfront by personnel at Station Wrightsville Beach as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project would occur in a coastal area that is already used heavily for residential, recreational and commercial purposes. In addition, the USCG conducted a site visit in May 2016 and an in-water marine resource survey in June 2016 of the Project Area. The site visit and marine resource survey revealed that benthic resources and beach areas are sparse. No protected or listed marine species or resources were observed during the marine resource survey.

The USACE conducted site investigations and prepared an EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Station Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the site investigations; regulations and requirements review; and coordination with Federal, State, and local agencies during the EA found that significant natural heritage areas would not be adversely affected. In 2014, the maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach. No listed species were encountered during the previous dredging activities.

The USCG requests that the NC NHP provide any additional information or potential concerns regarding the presence of threatened and endangered species or other significant natural resources that may be potentially affected by the permanent relocation of the 87-foot WPB to Station Wrightsville Beach. The USCG would appreciate any comments the NC NHP may have for consideration in preparation of the EA.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Jones (AECOM) at (919) 461-1442 or Tanner Dunlap (USCG) at (216) 902-6268.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Jones
Project Manager

Michelle Freimund, P.G.
Project Manager

Attachments: (A) Site Location Map
(B) Proposed Project Area
(C) Ground-Level Photographs
(D) NC NHP Natural Areas Map
(E) References Cited

Cc: Mr. Tanner Dunlap, Project Engineer, USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland
Mr. Greg Carpenter, Environmental Project Manager, USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland

ATTACHMENT (A)

SITE LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT (B)

PROPOSED PROJECT AREA

ATTACHMENT (C)

GROUND-LEVEL PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT (D)

NC NHP NATURAL AREAS MAP

ATTACHMENT (E)

REFERENCES CITED

References Cited

North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, Heritage Data Search, 2016. Accessed online July 2016 and October 2016 at http://ncnhp.org/data/species-community-search

North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, Natural Areas Map, 2016. Accessed online October 2016 at https://ncnhde.natureserve.org/

North Carolina OneMap, Geospatial Portal, 2016. Accessed online June 2016 and October 2016 at http://data.nconemap.gov/geoportal/catalog/main/home.page

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Critical Habitat Mapper, 2016. Accessed online July 2016 at http://fws.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=9d8de5e265ad4fe09893cf75b8dbfb77

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Information, Planning, and Conservation System, 2016. Accessed online July 2016 at http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/

Appendix E.

State Historic Preservation Office Consultation

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

September 29, 2016

Jennifer Jones
AECOM
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, NC 27560

Re: Relocate 87' Coastal Patrol Boat, US Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, ER 16-1565

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for your letter of August 25, 2016, concerning the above project.

We have conducted a review of the project and are aware of no historic resources which would be affected by the project. Therefore, we have no comment on the project as proposed.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-807-6579 or environmental.review@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,

Renee Gledhill-Earley

for Ramona M. Bartos

AECOM
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560

919.461.1100 tel
919.461.1415 fax

August 25, 2016

Ms. Renee Gledhill-Earley
State Historic Preservation Office
4617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4617

SUBJECT: U.S. Coast Guard Station Wrightsville Beach – Relocate 87' Coastal Patrol Boat, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

Dear Ms. Gledhill-Earley:

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland is initiating consultation with your office concerning the proposed action to permanently relocate an existing 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boat (WPB) to USCG Station Wrightsville Beach located approximately 1.6 miles southwest of Wrightsville Beach at 912 Water Street, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The USCG is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the Proposed Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and USCG Commandment Instruction (COMDTINST M16475.1D (*Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts*). This letter provides the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC SHPO) with information on the project area, existing environment, and proposed action in advance of issuance of the EA for this project. The USCG has approved this consultation packet pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(a)(3).

The USCG Station Wrightsville Beach is located along the west side and on the south end of Wrightsville Beach, in Banks Channel at Masonboro Inlet (**Attachment A**). The geographic location of Station Wrightsville Beach is latitude 34°11'21.76" north and longitude 77°48'46.41" west. Station Wrightsville Beach was established on Water Street in 1969 and was originally designed to house a crew of 18. The station occupies 2.11 acres and consists of one main multi-purpose building, a garage, and several small ancillary outbuildings. The station can be accessed either from the main gate off Water Street on the southern side of the station. Station Wrightsville Beach can be approached by water from the northeast, west or southwest (**Attachment B**).

The docks and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach are located on the west side of the station. The main pier is a partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked pier that extends approximately 150 feet from the concrete bulkhead. One concrete-surfaced floating pier is located parallel to the main pier on the southern side. One concrete-surfaced floating pier and one wood-decked pier are located perpendicular to the main pier on the northern side. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is along the western side of the concrete-pile, wood-decked pier. The wood-decked pier extends approximately 95 feet from the main pier. The wood-decked pier is fronted along the western, eastern and northern sides by a timber-pile fender system. The project area is bounded by Banks Channel to the north and west, by private docks and residential housing to the northeast and east, by the

USCG station to the southeast, and by the shoreline and a private dock and residence to the south, beyond which is the public beach at the south end of Wrightsville Beach (**Attachment C**).

The purpose of this project is to permanently relocate and serve as home port to an existing 87-foot WPB. Station Wrightsville Beach currently serves two 45-foot response boats-medium and two 29-foot response boats-small. Station Wrightsville Beach is a multi-mission unit, including the safeguarding of navigational interests (government, commercial, and private), protecting North Carolina's coastline in the station's Area of Responsibility (AOR) from pollution and marine accidents, conducting search and rescue missions, and maritime law enforcement under the Homeland Security Act. There are currently 27 active duty personnel and approximately 40 reserve personnel. As a result of the proposed home porting, the number of personnel will increase by an additional 11 crew members. There is a boat crew available 24 hours a day and the station responds to numerous calls for assistance annually. The station's AOR extends north to Surf City, south to Kure Beach, along the Intra-Coastal Waterway south to Snows Cut, and ocean side to Smith Island.

Due to operational changes within the USCG's Fifth District resulting in relocation of other WPBs, Station Wrightsville Beach will be without a patrol boat and unable to execute their operational missions within their AOR. The principal characteristics of the 87-foot WPB include an overall length of 87 feet, a waterline length of 81 feet 6 inches, a beam of 19 feet 4 inches, and a maximum draft of 5 feet 7 inches. In the past, other USCG 87-foot WPBs have periodically moored at Station Wrightsville Beach for short periods of time. The proposed vessel relocation project will involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the previously moored 87-foot WPBs. For Station Wrightsville Beach, the USCG Area of Potential Effects (APE) includes an area consisting of a 100-foot buffer from the sides of the boat in the proposed mooring location (totaling approximately 1.49 acres). According to station personnel, the depth at the proposed mooring location is approximately 16 feet below mean low water. The Proposed Project Area illustrates the mooring location, the boat dimensions, and the 100-foot buffer for this proposed vessel relocation project (**Attachment D**).

The USCG completed background research and records review using the SHPO Web GIS application, the online files of the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, and the National Register of Historic Places. Based on the USCG's review, there have been no prior archaeological investigations and no historic architectural surveys completed for the APE. There are no National Register-listed or -eligible, or potentially eligible (according to the SHPO Study List) terrestrial or underwater archaeological sites or historic architectural resources located within or immediately adjacent to the APE. Eleven historic architectural resources have been identified within one mile of the APE, including seven Surveyed Only sites, one Surveyed Only Local Landmark site, two Blockface-Multiple Properties sites, and one Surveyed Only, Gone Local Landmark site. No shipwrecks have been recorded in the docks and moorings APE or within one mile of the APE.

The Dosher Cottage (NH2689), the Carolina Temple Apartments (NH0673), the Venters Cottage (NH0672), the McClammey-Anderson Cottage (NH0670), the Gwathmey Cottage (NH0669), the Noell Cottage (NH0668), and the Emerson Cottage (NH0667) are all sites that have been Surveyed Only (but unevaluated) and are located inland from the dock and moorings APE, approximately 0.30 mile to 0.90 mile to the northeast. The Glenn Hotel (NH2691), located approximately 0.50 mile to the northeast of the APE, is a site that was Surveyed Only (but unevaluated) and given a Local Landmark status in 1999. The Glenn Hotel last appeared in a 2006 aerial photograph and is currently listed as Gone. The Denny Cottage (NJ0671), located approximately 0.80 mile to the northeast of the APE, is a site that has been Surveyed Only (but unevaluated) and given a Local Landmark status in 2006. The Streetscape (NH0705) is a Blockface site (an area where multiple resources were surveyed as a group) and consists of the 500 block of South Lumina Avenue. The center point for the Streetscape (NH0705) site is located approximately 0.75 mile to the northeast of the APE. A second Blockface site identified as Streetscape (NH0704) consists of the 400 block of South Lumina Avenue. The center point for the Streetscape (NH0704) site is located approximately 0.99 mile to the northeast of the APE (**Attachment E**).

The proposed vessel relocation activities will not create any subsurface disturbance that could affect terrestrial archaeological resources, if present. The project area is located entirely within the waters of the Banks Channel and no onshore activities will be involved in the proposed relocation project. No previously identified shipwrecks or other underwater archaeological resources have been recorded for the docks and moorings APE or for the immediate vicinity of the APE. In addition, the USCG conducted an in-water marine resource survey of a 200-foot by 200-foot grid within the project area on June 15, 2016. During the survey, the scientific divers did not observe any evidence of shipwrecks or other underwater archaeological resources on the substrate floor within the survey grid.

Further, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducted site investigations and prepared an EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Station Wrightsville Beach in April 2013 in advance of proposed dredging activities. Results of the site investigations; regulations and requirements review; and coordination with Federal, State and local agencies during the EA did not reveal any vessel remains or other underwater archaeological resources within the boat basin and moorings. In 2014, maintenance dredging was completed within the boat basin and moorings at Station Wrightsville Beach. No evidence of vessel remains or other underwater archaeological resources were encountered during the previous dredging activities. The USCG would appreciate any comments the NC SHPO may have for consideration in preparation of the EA.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Jones (AECOM) at (919) 461-1442 or Tanner Dunlap (USCG) at (216) 902-6268.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Jones
Project Manager

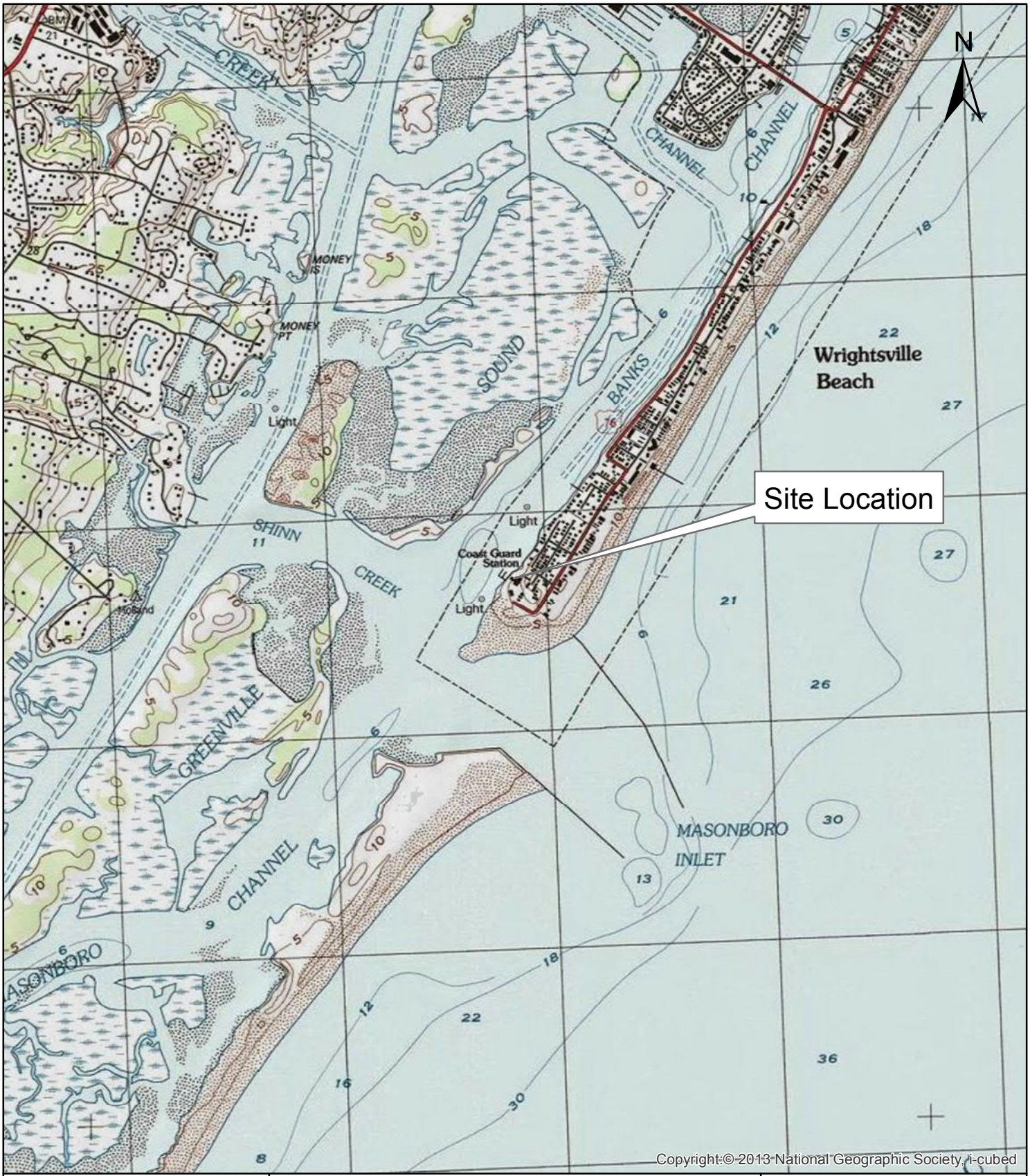
Nancy Stehling, RPA
Senior Archaeologist

Attachments:
(A) Site Location Map
(B) Aerial Overview of Site Location
(C) Ground-Level Photographs
(D) Proposed Project Area
(E) Historic Preservation Office – Web GIS Map
(F) References Cited

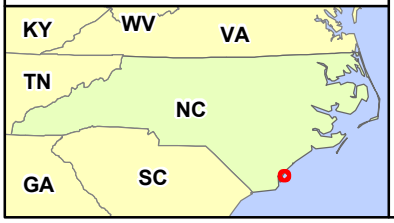
CC: Mr. Tanner Dunlap, Project Engineer, USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland
Mr. Greg Carpenter, Environmental Project Manager, USCG Civil Engineering Unit Cleveland

ATTACHMENT (A)

SITE LOCATION MAP



Map Location



Site Location Map

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach
912 Water Street
Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, NC
Wrightsville Beach NC Topographic Quadrangle (1983)

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

July 2016

60503777

Attachment A

AECOM Environment
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, USA
Phone: (919) 461-1100
Web: http://www.aecom.com

ATTACHMENT (B)

AERIAL OVERVIEW OF SITE LOCATION

Legend

- 100-foot Buffer
- 87-foot Boat

Aerial Overview of Site Location

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach
912 Water Street
Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, NC
Wrightsville Beach NC Topographic Quadrangle (1983)

0 250 500 Feet

1 inch = 500 feet

July 2016

60503777

Attachment B

AECOM Environment
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, USA
Phone: (919) 461-1100
Web: http://www.aecom.com

ATTACHMENT (C)

GROUND-LEVEL PHOTOGRAPHS

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 1	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View from the western side of the shore of the partially concrete-pile, concrete-decked and timber-pile, wood-decked main pier.

Photo No. 2	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View from the main pier looking south along the western shoreline. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the south of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 3	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View from the main pier looking northeast along the western shoreline. The concrete bulkhead visible on the right side of the photo is located along the USCG property. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the northeast of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach.

Photo No. 4	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

East

Description:

View of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach from the center of the main pier.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 5	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View of the boat basin and dock and moorings located on the west side of the station. The main pier is visible on the left side of the photo and the floating pier and wood-decked pier are visible in the background.

Photo No. 6	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View looking northeast along Banks Channel from the southern end of the wood-decked pier. The proposed mooring location for the 87-foot WPB is portside along the west side of the pier (left side of the photo).

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 7	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

North

Description:

View of the timber-pile fender system along the eastern side of the wood-decked pier.

Photo No. 8	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View near the corner of the main pier and the wood-decked pier. The 87-foot WPB would be moored portside. The Banks Channel is visible in the background.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. 9	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View along the west side of the wood-decked pier where the 87-foot WPB would be moored portside. A timber-pile fender system, foam-filled marine fenders, and mooring cleats are located along the west side of the wood-decked pier.

Photo No. 10	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Southwest

Description:

View of Banks Channel looking southwest along the wood-decked pier.

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name:	Site Location:	Project No.
United States Coast Guard	USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	60503777

Photo No.	Date:
11	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

East-Southeast

Description:

View from the wood-decked pier of the boat basin and dock and moorings located on the west side of the station. Station Wrightsville Beach is visible in the background.

Photo No.	Date:
12	05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northeast

Description:

View of the private docks and residential housing located to the northeast of the project area.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. **13**	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View from the southern boundary of the project area. The pier in the background is associated with the private residence located to the south of USCG Station Wrightsville Beach. The public beach located at the south end of Wrightsville Beach is visible in the background (left side of the photo), beyond which is the Masonboro Inlet.

Photo No. **14**	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

Northwest

Description:

View of the entry to the Station Wrightsville Beach boat basin. USCG response boats are visible on the left side of the photo, Banks Channel is visible in the background, and the dock on the right side of the photo is associated with the private residence located to the northeast of the project area.

AECOM

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Facility Name: United States Coast Guard	**Site Location:** USCG Station Wrightsville Beach, Wrightsville Beach, NC	**Project No.** 60503777

Photo No. **15**	**Date:** 05/24/16

Direction Photo Taken:

South

Description:

View of the communications tower, garage, and main multi-purpose building located at Station Wrightsville Beach.

Photo No. **16**	**Date:** 05/27/16

Direction Photo Taken:

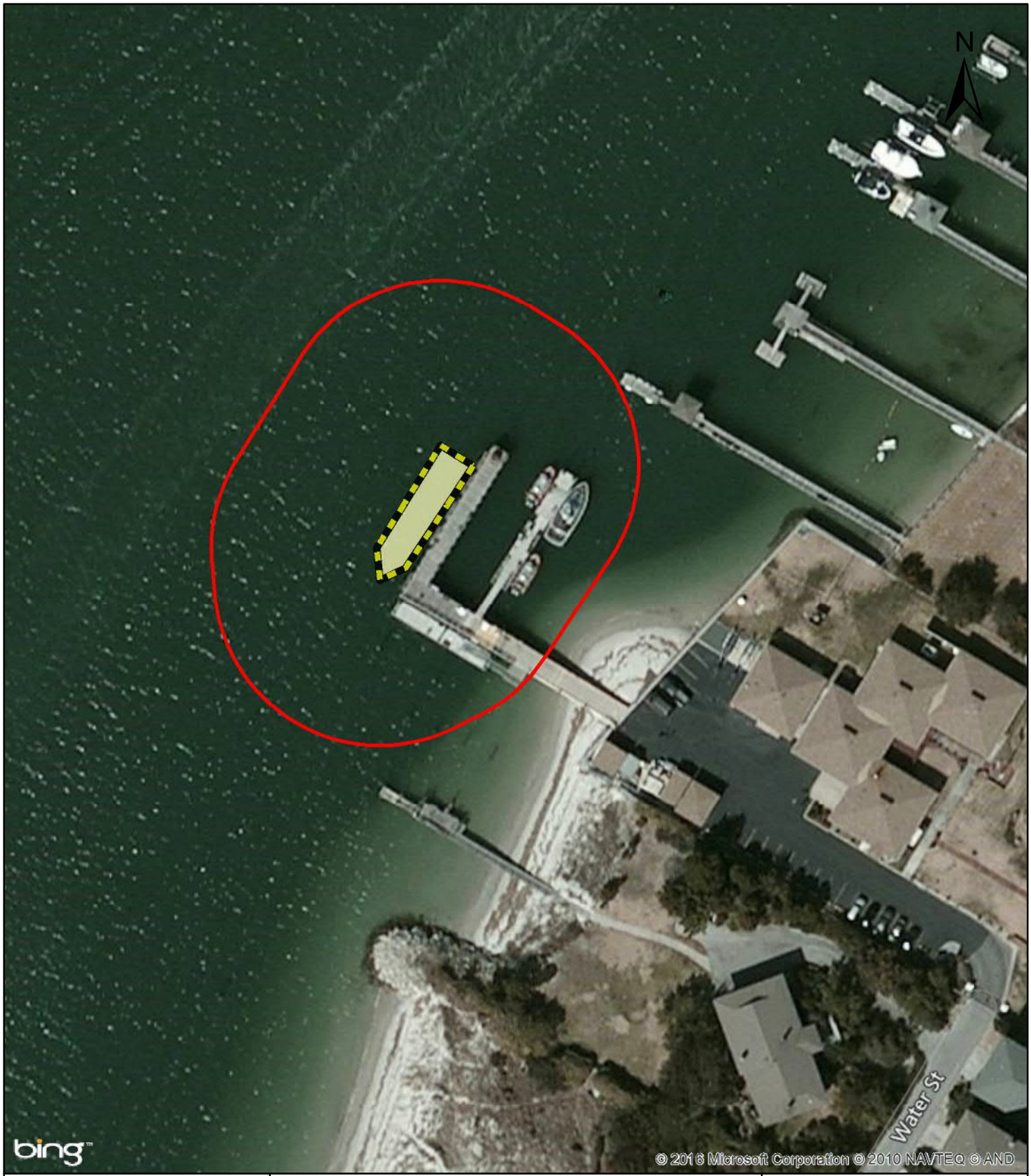
East-Southeast

Description:

View of USCG Cutter (CGC) *Beluga*, an 87-foot WPB, which was temporarily moored at Station Wrightsville Beach on 5/26/16 and 5/27/16. The proposed vessel relocation project will involve mooring the boat in the same location and orientation as the 87-foot WPB shown in the photo. *Note: This photo was provided by station personnel.*

ATTACHMENT (D)

PROPOSED PROJECT AREA



Legend

100-foot Buffer

87-foot Boat

Proposed Project Area

USCG Station Wrightsville Beach
912 Water Street
Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County, NC
Wrightsville Beach NC Topographic Quadrangle (1983)

0 40 80
Feet

1 inch = 80 feet

July 2016

60503777

Attachment D

AECOM Environment
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, USA
Phone: (919) 461-1100
Web: http://www.aecom.com

ATTACHMENT (E)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE –
WEB GIS MAP

Station Wrightsville Beach

July 11, 2016

NR Points

- NR Individual Listing
- NR Listing, Gone
- NRHD Center Point

NR Boundaries

- National Register Boundary
- Boundary of Destroyed/Removed NR Listing

DOE Points

- Determined Eligible
- DOE, Gone
- SL and DOE
- SL and DOE, Gone
- DOEHD Center Point
- SLDOEHD Center Point

Surveyed Points

- Surveyed Only
- Surveyed in NRHD
- Surveyed Only, Gone
- Surveyed in NRHD, Gone
- Blockface- Multiple properties
- Blockface in NRHD
- Surveyed Area, No designation

Local Landmark/District Points

- Local Landmark
- Local Landmark, Gone
- Local HD Center Point

NR Boundaries

- NR
- NRD
- County Boundaries

1:25,000

0 0.3 0.6 1.2 mi

0 0.5 1 2 km

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

ATTACHMENT (F)

REFERENCES CITED

References Cited

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North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, 2016. Accessed online July 2016 at http://archaeology.ncdcr.gov/

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