

April 15, 2002

Bargerhuff/sa/029

Engineering/Planning Division
Evaluation Branch

Mr. Michael Bartlett, Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-5087

Dear Mr. Bartlett:

This office is preparing an Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to support the Federal government's efforts for addressing the coastal erosion of the Camp Ellis shoreline in Saco, Maine. This letter is to obtain your comments on this project pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended, and to request a list of endangered and threatened species for the project area pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. A location map is enclosed to aid you in your work.

The proposed project will involve several interrelated actions to alleviate shore damages along the Camp Ellis Beach. These actions include (1) minor modifications to the existing north jetty (breakwater) to prevent or impede the coastal wave and current processes that contribute to beach erosion, (2) beach nourishment to restore lost sand along the Camp Ellis shore, and (3) maintenance dredging of the adjacent Federal navigation channel for the Saco River, and also potentially the Scarborough River, as source material for beach nourishment.

The required volume of sand for beach fill is estimated at about 275,000 to 300,000 cubic yards. We are evaluating several locations as sources of sand for beach nourishment other than the Federal channels that are economically practical, engineeringly feasible, and environmentally acceptable. This includes one upland and three offshore locations. The upland location is a sand and gravel quarry located about 7 miles from the Camp Ellis Beach. The offshore sources of sand for the project include areas at the mouth of the Federal navigation channel in the Saco River and areas offshore of the Saco jetties. We are evaluating the suitability of the material from these sites as sources of acceptable sand for use as beach nourishment under the Inland Testing Manual as required by our Clean Water Act Section 404 (b)(1) authority. The structural solutions to prevent future erosion includes modifying the existing north jetty (breakwater) by roughening the landward end of its outer (north) face, by creating a spur that extends about 750 feet from the existing breakwater towards Seal Rock, or by adding a series of two or more smaller stone spurs. The goal of these modifications would be to reduce the transmission of

wave energy and rip currents along the structure and onto the beach; effects that researchers have concluded is a principal source of beach erosion at Camp Ellis.

The coastal erosion of Camp Ellis is the focus of an interagency and local interest group, the Saco Bay Implementation Team, that has been meeting once per month to discuss feasible solutions to the coastal erosion at Camp Ellis. This proposed project and alternatives have been extensively coordinated with federal, state, and local agencies and regional and local interests. This Environmental Assessment will evaluate impacts to the existing resources in the project area from the proposed actions and identify measures to reduce the impacts of project construction on these resources.

If you require additional information or have any questions, please contact the Project Manager, Mr. Mark Mirabella at (978) 318-8708 (or by e-mail, Mark.A.Mirabella@usace.army.mil), or the Biologist, Mr. Kirk Bargerhuff at (978) 318-8029 (or by e-mail, Kirk.E.Bargerhuff@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

John R. Kennelly
Chief, Planning Branch

Enclosure

CF:

✓ Mr. Bargerhuff – Eval Br
Mr. Hubbard – Eval Br
Mr. Mirabella – Planning Br
W. Mahaney – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Eng/Plan Div Files