

**Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for Construction of a Remote Fixed Facility (RFF) Buxton, Dare County, North Carolina**

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has prepared a Final Environmental Assessment (EA) that evaluated the potential environmental impacts resulting from the construction of a remote fixed facility (RFF) communications tower and associated equipment on Coast Guard-administered property on Cape Hatteras in Dare County, North Carolina. The Final EA has been prepared to describe the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative, and two Alternative Actions; describe the natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources located in the project area; evaluate the potential impacts of the alternatives on natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources; and address agency and public comments received on the project. Based on the FEA, the USCG concluded that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment and has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The USCG proposes to replace an existing USCG-owned 425-foot-tall guyed communications tower with a new 525-foot-tall guyed tower. The tower would be constructed near the former Coast Guard Station Cape Hatteras offices and maintenance buildings, which were transferred to the National Park Service in 2004. The USCG has identified the need to modernize and replace its antiquated maritime search and rescue communications system in North Carolina as part of a nationwide mandate. The new communications system known as "Rescue 21" has repeatedly demonstrated its ability in helping the USCG save lives and will improve maritime safety within surrounding waters.

The Final EA and FONSI have been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321, 4331, 4332), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Management Directive (MD) 023-01, Environmental Planning Program, and the U.S. Coast Guard's policy guidelines for implementing NEPA, COMDTINST M16475.1D, National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts. The EA also addresses potential effects of the proposed action relative to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA). This EA also fulfills the requirements of Executive Orders 11514 (Environmental Quality) and 11988 (Floodplain Management).

This notice announces the availability of the Final EA and FONSI. The Final EA and FONSI can be reviewed beginning December 1, 2009 at the Hatteras Public Library, Hatteras Community Center, 56658 NC 12 HWY, Hatteras, NC 27943 or on the USCG Rescue 21 website: <http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/rescue21/links.asp>. Persons wishing to receive a printed copy of the Final EA should contact Mr. Thomas A. Tansey, Environmental Program Manager, Rescue 21 Project at the address below.

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