

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Wenatchee Field Office  
915 North Walla Walla Avenue  
Wenatchee, Washington 98801

**DECISION RECORD**

*For Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization  
DOI-BLM-OR-134-2012-0007*

**1. Background**

Over the past few years Watmough Bay has experienced significant shoreline erosion events caused by winter storm surges. These events and continued erosion have and will continue to damage and cause loss of cultural and other sensitive resources. The Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization project includes stabilizing portions of the Watmough Bay shoreline with ballasted logs and plantings. Concrete benchmarks will also be installed to facilitate the monitoring of shoreline erosion at the site.

Watmough Bay is located approximately 9 miles south of Lopez Village, along Watmough Head Road, in the southeastern corner of Lopez Island, within San Juan County. The public lands at Watmough Bay are administered by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Spokane District, Wenatchee Field Office as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to preserve its natural values. In addition, a recent designation of the San Juan Islands as a National Monument, specifically for cultural and biological resources, further highlights the importance of the natural values of the ACEC.

**2. Decision**

It is my decision to implement the Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization project as outlined in the Environmental Assessment for Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization. Implementation will include a combination of engineered hard and soft barriers on and along the northern beach margin.

Hard barriers consist of two ballasted logs approximately 30 feet long with a minimum diameter of 30 inches restrained from movement by four imported boulders, 3- 4 inches in diameter. The ballasted logs will be placed adjacent to and on the seaward side of the drift logs currently located along the beach edge. The imported boulders will be unfractured, very angular, and nearly indistinguishable from the existing onsite boulders. The logs will be chained together and chained to the boulders with both the chain and attachments located below grade such that they will not be visible.

Soft barriers include planting of a variety of native vegetation to increase sediment stability and reduce erosion. All excavation work will be performed by hand and will be monitored by a BLM archeologist.

The southern beach stabilization area will also be repaired by raking rounded beach

gravels over the exposed geo-fabrics to prevent further degradation from sun exposure and recreation until long-term stabilization measures can be designed for this portion of the beach.

The project also includes the installation of small concrete monuments for erosion monitoring purposes. The fixed monuments will allow hand measurements to be made from consistent locations to provide basic and repeatable data to assess erosion and accretion trends.

### **3. Authority**

The following sources provide direct authority for the BLM to improve, treat, and/or protect resources on lands it manages:

- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1739)
- The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (1966), as amended
- Executive Order 11593
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-47; 83 Stat. 852; P.L. 91-190).

### **4. Rationale**

The purpose of implementing the Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization project is to prevent further damage to, and loss of cultural and other sensitive resources from shoreline erosion at Watmough Bay. The need for this action, as provided for in the National Historic Preservation Act and Executive Order 11593, is to protect cultural resources from natural and human caused deterioration ensuring cultural resources are safe guarded from improper use and maintained for the public interest.

As described in the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization, this project does not constitute a major Federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively when combined with other actions in the general area. Because of this, I have concluded that there will be no significant effect on the human environment and that no significant irreversible or irretrievable resource commitments have been made in order to meet the project objectives.

### **5. Public Involvement**

In May 2011, the BLM notified approximately 180 entities representing Federal, local and state agencies, non-profit organizations, private companies, and individual stakeholders via U.S. Mail. Each entity on the mailing list received a scoping information package notifying them of the proposed project. The scoping information package was also posted to the BLM Spokane District website. The scoping information package provided preliminary information on the proposed action, purpose and need for the action, as well as issues identified to date. The public was given approximately one

month to respond with comments. The only comments received were requests to review the final plans when available.

## **6. Consultation and Coordination**

Consultation regarding the project was initiated in June 2011 and again in March 2012 with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Lummi Nation, the Samish Nation, and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. The DAHP concurred in April 2012 with a determination of No Adverse Effect to cultural resources.

A copy of the Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization EA was sent to the Washington Department of Ecology, SEPA Unit. San Juan County commissioners were notified of the availability of the environmental assessment. Other parties coordinated with on the proposed project include San Juan County and the San Juan County Land Bank.

## **7. Protest and Appeal**

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4. To appeal you must file a notice of appeal at the BLM Wenatchee Field Office, 915 N. Walla Walla Ave., Wenatchee, Washington 98801, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appeal must be in writing and delivered in person, via the United States Postal Service mail system, or other common carrier, to the Wenatchee Field Office as noted above. *The BLM does not accept appeals by facsimile or email.* The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993) for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (a) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (b) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits, (c) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and (d) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413); Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, Lloyd 500 Building, Suite 607, 500 N.E. Multnomah Street, Portland, OR 97232; at the same time the original documents are filed with this office.

/s/ Linda Coates-Markle

May 1, 2013

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Linda Coates-Markle  
Field Manager

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Date

**United States Department of the Interior**  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Wenatchee Field Office  
915 North Walla Walla Avenue  
Wenatchee, Washington 98801

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**  
**For**  
**Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization**  
**Environmental Assessment**  
**DOI-BLM-OR-134-2012-0007**

**PROPOSED ACTION**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to stabilize portions of the Watmough Bay shoreline with ballasted logs and plantings. Concrete benchmarks would also be installed to facilitate the monitoring of shoreline erosion at the site.

Watmough Bay is located about 9 miles south of Lopez Village, along Watmough Head Road, in the southeasterly area of Lopez Island, within San Juan County. The public lands at Watmough Bay are administered by the BLM's Spokane District, Wenatchee Field Office as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, (ACEC) to preserve its natural values. Also, a recent designation of the San Juan Islands as a National Monument, specifically for cultural and biological resources, further highlights the importance of the natural values of the ACEC.

See the Environmental Assessment (EA) for additional background on the proposed project.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS (FONSI)**

Based on the effects identified in the Watmough Bay Shoreline Stabilization Environmental Assessment, I have determined that the Proposed Action Alternative does not constitute a major federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively when combined with other actions in the general area.

None of the environmental effects identified for this alternative meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on a review of the following Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) criteria, consistent with 40 CFR 1508.27. Pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.13 and 1508.27, the potential "significance" of all reasonable alternatives has been evaluated. I have concluded that there will be no significant effect on the human environment (including the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment). No significant irreversible or irretrievable resource commitments have been made, and long-term productivity has not been sacrificed in order to meet the project objectives. This determination is based on *Context* and *Intensity*, defined and examined below.

*Context:* This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant. The disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions to be limited in context. The Proposed Action and its effects are limited to a one mile radius surrounding the project area. Because the project area is limited in size, the proposed construction activities are limited in duration, and the effects are local in nature, this alternative's effects are not likely to significantly affect regional or national resources.

*Intensity:* This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following ten factors have been considered in evaluating the intensity of this action:

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that, on balance, the effects will be beneficial**

Impacts associated with the project are discussed in the Affected Environment and Environmental Effects Sections of the EA. The project will result in both beneficial and adverse effects to resources in the Project Area. The proposed action will stabilize the shoreline and protect sensitive resources. Construction noise disturbance could affect some species short-term, but these effects would be temporary and any displaced species would be expected to return once construction activities cease. Therefore, none of the anticipated effects, beneficial or adverse, are expected to be significant.

**2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety**

The Proposed Action is not expected to have any impacts related to public health.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

The Proposed Action would occur in proximity to historic or cultural resources, however, no adverse impacts to these cultural resources is expected (EA p. 10). Consultation with the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred with the Agency's determination of no adverse effect.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

The Proposed Action is not expected to have any effects on the quality of the human environment.

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

The Proposed Action does not contain any unique or unknown risks to the human environment.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The Proposed Action does not set a precedent or alter existing management direction for the analysis area. The BLM will continue to manage this area as part of the San Juan National Monument to preserve the cultural and natural values for which it was designated.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.**

A review of the cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions found there would be no significant cumulative effects on the environment. Due to the current designation of the San Juan National Monument, no large scale development, road construction and/or other actions which would deter from the natural character of the area are planned.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

There would be no adverse impacts to cultural resources identified in the analysis area (EA p. 11).

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.**

The environmental assessment considered the potential effects of the proposed action on all federally listed and proposed endangered and threatened species and designated critical habitat known or suspected to occur in the analysis area (EA p. 8-10) and determined that no adverse effects would result from implementation of the proposed project.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The Proposed Action does not violate any Federal, State, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

/s/ Linda Coates-Markle

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Linda Coates-Markle  
Field Manager

May 1, 2013

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Date