



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
701 SAN MARCO BOULEVARD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207

15 December 2023

Planning Division
Environmental Branch

Ms. Rose A. Ortiz Diaz
Coastal Zone Management
Consistency Office
Puerto Rico Planning Board
P.O. Box 41119, Minillas Station
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00940
Sent via email: ortiz_r@jp.pr.gov;
comentariosjp@jp.pr.gov

Dear Ms. Ortiz Díaz:

Please receive this application for Certification of Consistency with the Puerto Rico Coastal Management Program for the Puerto Rico Coastal Storm Risk Management Project. This project involves reducing damages to infrastructure as a result of coastal flooding and erosion from surge and waves generated by storms and hurricanes. The project consists of structural features at two locations at Ocean Park, San Juan, and non-structural measures at Stella, Rincón to reduce the risk of storm induced damages.

The features and actions proposed for Barbosa Park consist of a sea wall and toe-stone (1,600 LF), and acquiring 1.1 acres of vulnerable parcels/structures. These parcels would be covered with beach quality sand and planted with native vegetation to maintain beach aesthetics and habitat. The Skate Park location includes sea wall and toe-stone (1,200 LF). Landward would be covered with beach quality sand to maintain grade, aesthetics, and habitat. At Stella, Rincón, the proposed activities include acquiring vulnerable parcels/structures to create about 17-acres of shoreline habitat and recreation space.

Compensatory mitigation (40 C.F.R. § 230.93) would not be implemented for this action with regards to Clean Water Act compliance presented in the companion 404(b)(1) Analysis. As well, the effects under NEPA are considered less than significant by the application of conservation measures and monitoring for sea turtles within the beach zone of the work limits. The following additional information on this project is available on the internet at www.saj.usace.army.mil/PuertoRicoCSRMEasibilityStudy/: The Notice of Availability of the Draft Finding of No Significant Impact. The Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment. Maps, drawings, and other information.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined that the Tentatively Selected Plan as proposed in the draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the Puerto Rico Coastal Management Program. If you have any questions, please contact Marielys Ramos-Villanueva via phone at 787-3797146 or via email at Marielys.ramos-villanueva@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Gretchen S. Ehlinger, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosures

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Office of the Governor
Puerto Rico Planning Board Physical Planning Area Land Use Planning Bureau

Application for Certification of Consistency with the Puerto Rico Coastal Management Program

General Instructions:

- A. Attach a 1:20,000 scale, U.S. Geological Survey topographic quadrangular base map of the site.
- A. Attach a reasonably scaled plan or schematic design of the proposed object, indicating the following:
 - 1. Peripheral areas
 - 2. Bodies of water, tidal limit and natural systems.
- B. You may attach any further information you consider necessary for proper evaluation of the proposal.
- C. If any information requested in the questionnaire does not apply in your case, indicate by writing "N/A" (not applicable).
- D. Submit a minimum of seven (7) copies of this application.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS BOX

Type of application:Application Number:

Date received:Date of Certification:

Evaluation result:☐ Objection☐ Acceptance☐ Negotiation

Technician:Supervisor:

Comments:

1. Name of Federal Agency: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
2. Federal Program Catalog Number: 12.106 Flood Control Projects CFDA
3. Type of Action:

☒ Federal Activity

☐ License of Permit

☐ Federal Assistance
4. Name of Applicant: Gretchen S. Ehlinger, Environmental Branch Chief for US Army Corps of Engineers

Postal Address: 701 San Marco Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32207-8175

Telephone: 904-232-2336Fax: 904-232-3442
5. Project name: Puerto Rico Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) Project, Puerto Rico
6. Physical Description of Project Location (area, facilities such as vehicular access, drainage, storm and sanitary sewer placement, etc.):

The general location of the three (3) project sites are two (2) in the San Juan area (Figure 1) and one (1) in the Rincón area (Figure 2). The recommended plan includes structural measures for prevention/reduction of inundation by wave induced floodwaters at Barbosa Park and the Skate Park, Ocean Park; and non-structural measures for the elimination of erosion damages at Stella, Rincón. Figures 3, 4 & 5 respectively show the vicinity, feasibility level work limits and feature locations, and general assessment area of each action location.

Lambert Coordinates:

- Ocean Park

X = 66.0523947°W

Y = 18.4544986°N
- Rincón

X = 67.2490924°W

Y = 18.3245289°N

Barbosa Park, Ocean Park – The site type within the proposed work limits is a recreational beach and public road (Photo 1& Photo 2). There is an old sea wall running between the road and the beach (Photo 2), which would generally be the alignment for the new sea wall. There is old infrastructure, old shoreline protection debris, and natural bed rock beneath the long shore drift and beach sands. The site is heavily used for recreational purposes. The beach here is naturally dynamic in size but is persistent overtime. There are currently 16 public beach access points to this area.



PHOTO 1: BARBOSA PARK BEACH LOOKING WEST (PHOTO BY NMFS 2022)

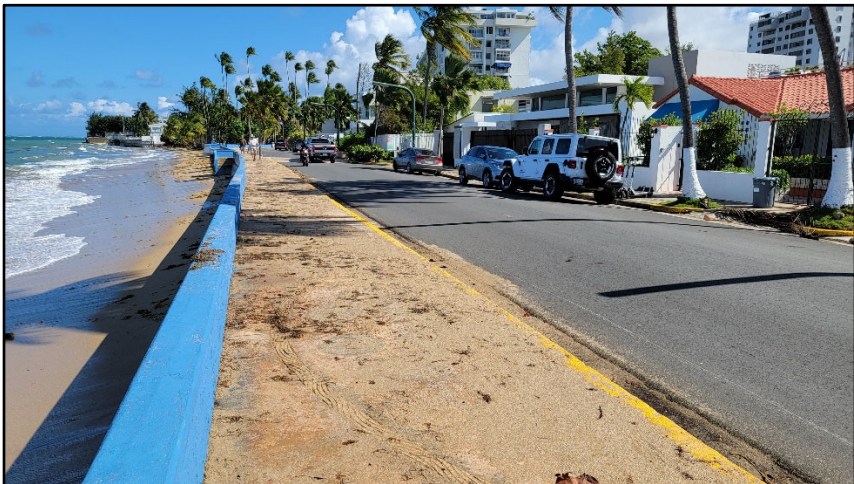


PHOTO 2: BARBOSA PARK BEACH LOOKING EAST (PHOTO BY NMFS 2022)

Skate Park, Ocean Park – The site type within the proposed work limits is a public skate park inland, and an old revetment/shoreline protection in-water along the shoreline (Photo 1, Photo 3 & Photo 4). The old revetment would generally be the alignment for the new sea wall and toe stone. There is old infrastructure, old shoreline protection debris, and natural bed rock exposed along the shorelines. There is a breakwater and jetties to the southeast (Photo 5). The site is moderately used for recreational purposes. There is no beach here.



PHOTO 3: SKATE PARK LOOKING WEST (PHOTO BY NMFS 2022)



PHOTO 4: SKATE PARK LOOKING EAST (PHOTO BY NMFS 2022)



PHOTO 5: SKATE PARK LOOKING EAST AT OLD SHORELINE PROTECTION FEATURES (PHOTO BY NMFS 2022)

Stella, Rincón – The site type within the proposed work limits is residential with minimal to no dry recreational beach (Photo 6). This area is a mixture of single-family homes, condominiums, commercial structures, and hotels. Some of the homes/structures are abandoned as they have fallen into the water (Photo 7). The shoreline is riddled with infrastructure and shoreline protection of different conditions. Seawalls, revetments, and non-engineered armoring protection in front of homes and hotels represent most of the coastal protection structures already in place. Natural bed rock is exposed at the shoreline and is intermittently/ephemerally covered with longshore drift and beach sands. There are currently ten (10) public beach access points to this area.



PHOTO 6: STELLA, RINCON EXAMPLE OF SHORELINE VULNERABLE SHORELINE STRUCTURE & LIMITED BEACH ZONE



PHOTO 7: STELLA, RINCON EXAMPLE OF FAILED STRUCTURE IN BEACH ZONE

7. Type of construction or other work proposed:

- ☐ drainage
- ☐ channeling
- ☐ landfill
- ☐ sand extraction
- ☐ pier
- ☐ bridge
- ☐ residential
- ☐ tourist

others (specify and explain): Structural: Sea Wall & Toe Stone for Flood Protection; Non-structural: Acquisition for Damage Reduction.

Description of proposed work: This project involves reducing damages to infrastructure caused by coastal flooding and erosion from storm surge and waves generated by storms and hurricanes. The project consists of structural features at two locations at Ocean Park, San Juan, and non-structural measures at Stella, Rincón and Barbosa Park to reduce the risk of storm induced damages.

The structural and non-structural features would consist of:

- Barbosa Park, Ocean Park, San Juan: Sea Wall and Toe-Stone (1,600 LF) with acquiring 1.1 acres of vulnerable parcels/structures; Would be covered with beach quality sand and planted with native vegetation to maintain beach aesthetics and habitat.
- the Skate Park, Ocean Park, San Juan: Sea Wall and Toe-Stone (1,200 LF); Landward would be covered with beach quality sand to maintain grade, aesthetics, and habitat.
- Stella, Rincón: Acquiring vulnerable parcels/structures. Overtime would create about 17-acres of shoreline habitat and recreational opportunities.

The recommended plan for Barbosa Park is Alternative 5 Sea Wall & Acquisition, which would effectively stop or reduce upland inundation caused by waves (Figure 3 & Figure 6). This alternative had the least impact to natural resources and the greatest avoidance/reduction in materials placed into Waters of the US. The sea wall alignment and construction work limits are almost entirely above the Mean High Watermark (MHW). There may be a small square footage of toe stone needed at the ends of the sea wall placed below the MHW. Old stone and materials from defunct infrastructure and shoreline protection would be excavated and properly reused, recycled, or disposed. Toe stone placed above the MHW would be sufficiently covered with sand to maintain beach aesthetics, recreational uses, and nesting sea turtle habitat. The acquisition of 1.1 acres would allow for additional sea turtle nesting habitat and recreational opportunities.

The recommended plan for the Skate Park is Alternative 5 Sea Wall, which would effectively stop or reduce upland inundation caused by waves (Figure 4 & Figure 7). This alternative had the least impact to natural resources and the greatest avoidance/reduction in materials placed into Waters of the US. The sea wall alignment and construction zone are within the MHW and below normal water levels. Old stone, sheet piles, wood piles, and materials from defunct infrastructure and shoreline protection may be excavated and properly reused, recycled, or disposed. Most of the material placed would be upon the infrastructure/shoreline protection footprint, with potentially a small square footage on unconsolidated sands. Areas of unconsolidated sands are currently affected by old stone groins/jetties and a breakwater just to the southeast. Void areas created landward of the seawall would be backfilled with clean stone and/or sand materials to maintain aesthetics, recreational uses, and habitat.

The recommended plan for the Stella reach of Rincón is Alternative 4 Acquisition, which would effectively stop erosive damage to structures caused by waves (Figure 5). This alternative not only had the least impact to natural resources and the greatest avoidance/reduction in materials placed into Waters of the US, but also would eventually provide 17-acres of beach habitat and recreation. Demolition would take care by using techniques, sequencing, and appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid demolition debris from falling into Waters of the US. All materials generated from demolishing structures and defunct shoreline protection would be properly reused, recycled, or disposed. Void areas created by the removal of structures would be backfilled with clean/inert recycled materials, stone, and/or sand materials. Final surficial grades above and to the MHW would be sufficiently covered with sand to provide new beach aesthetics, recreational uses, and nesting sea turtle habitat. Sand fill is not anticipated to be placed below the MHW.

8. **Natural, artificial, historic or cultural systems likely to be affected by the project (Place an X opposite any of the systems indicated below that are in the project area or its surroundings, which are likely to be affected by that activity. Indicate the distance from the project to any outside system that would likely be affected):**

| System | Within Project | Outside Project | Distance (meters) | Local name of affected system |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| beach, dunes | X | | | Barbosa Park (1.5 acres). Temporary effects during construction. Restored to existing condition post construction. Additional 1.1 acres of open spaces gain via acquisition and demolition. Stella (+17 acres). New beach and dune gained via removal of structures and parcel acquisition. |
| mangroves, wetlands | | | | |
| coral, reefs | X | | | |
| river, estuary | | | | |
| bird sanctuary | | | | |
| pond, lake, lagoon | | | | |
| agricultural unit | | | | |
| forest, wood | | | | |
| cliff, breakwater | | | | |
| cultural or tourist area | X | | | |
| other (explain) | | | | Ocean Park Beach & Rincón. |
| unconsolidated sands | X | | | |
| | | | | Skate Park (1.1 acres). Minor/temporary effects to sandy habitat. Would recover soon after construction as stone would be covered by drifting sands. |

See Figure 8 & Figure 9 for detailed habitat mapping for San Juan & Rincón. Detailed survey results are included in report format in Appendix G, Attachment 5.

Describe the likely impact of the project on the identified system (s).

Positive ☒

Negative ☐

Explain: Overall, positive effects were determined to outweigh the minor and temporary effects associated with the construction of structural features.

Long-term, significant adverse effects are not anticipated. Biological assessments for EFH and ESA Species are included in the companion report and consultation with NMFS and USFWS was completed as part of the agency and public review. Effects under NEPA for aquatic and terrestrial resources are included in the companion Integrated Environmental Assessment. To guide alternative design in terms of avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts, a comprehensive benthic habitat and species survey was completed in 2022 for the San Juan and Rincón study areas. Temporary impacts to recreational activities during construction and a temporary reduction in the aesthetic appeal during construction are expected. No significant adverse effects on recreational, aesthetic, and economic values are anticipated. Economic and recreational benefits are anticipated for Barbosa Park and the Skate Park, Ocean Park, San Juan. Economic, recreational, and ecosystem benefits are anticipated for Stella, Rincón.

Refinements to the recommended plan made during the design phase could further reduce overall minor and temporary effects. All appropriate and practicable measures shall be taken to minimize impacts during construction. Turbidity monitoring, and species monitoring and conservation measures as described in main report would be written into contract documents. Standard and unique BMPs would be utilized to protect Waters of the US and achieve compliance with commonwealth water quality protection requirements.

Barbosa Park, Ocean Park, San Juan, Alternative 5 Sea Wall & Acquisition – It was determined that compensatory mitigation (40 C.F.R. § 230.93) would not be implemented for this action with regards to Clean Water Act compliance presented in the 404(b)(1) Analysis. As well, the effects under NEPA are considered less than significant by the application of conservation measures and monitoring for sea turtles within the beach zone of the work limits. Effects for potentially impacting **0.1 acre** of low diversity/low coral abundance colonized bedrock is considered temporary since stone placement would be fully colonized by the same species several years after construction. The acquisition of 1.1 acres would allow for additional sea turtle nesting habitat and recreational opportunities.

the Skate Park, Ocean Park, San Juan, Alternative 5 Sea Wall – It was determined that compensatory mitigation (40 C.F.R. § 230.93) would not be implemented for this action with regards to Clean Water Act compliance presented in the 404(b)(1) Analysis. As well, the effects under NEPA are considered less than significant since feature materials would be placed within the old revetment footprint (**0.7 acres**) and **1.1 acres** on unconsolidated sediment (sands) that would eventually recover.

9. **Indicate permits, approvals and endorsements of the proposal by Federal and Puerto Rican government agencies. Evidence of such support should be attached to the proposal.**

| | Yes | No | Pending | Application Number |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Planning Board | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |
| b. Regulation and Permits Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |
| c. Environmental Quality Board | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |
| d. Department of Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |
| e. State Historic Preservation Office | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |
| f. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |
| g. U.S. Coast Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |
| h. Other (s) (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> |

CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY THAT the Puerto Rico CSRM Project is consistent with the Puerto Rico Coastal Zone Management Program, and that to the best of my knowledge the above information is true.

Gretchen S. Ehlinger, Ph.D.

Name (legible)

Signature

Chief, Environmental Branch

Position

Date

FIGURE 1: PUERTO RICO COASTAL STORM RISK MANAGEMENT, SAN JUAN AREA, 1:20,000 SCALE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP.



FIGURE 2: PUERTO RICO COASTAL STORM RISK MANAGEMENT, RINCÓN AREA, 1:20,000 SCALE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP.

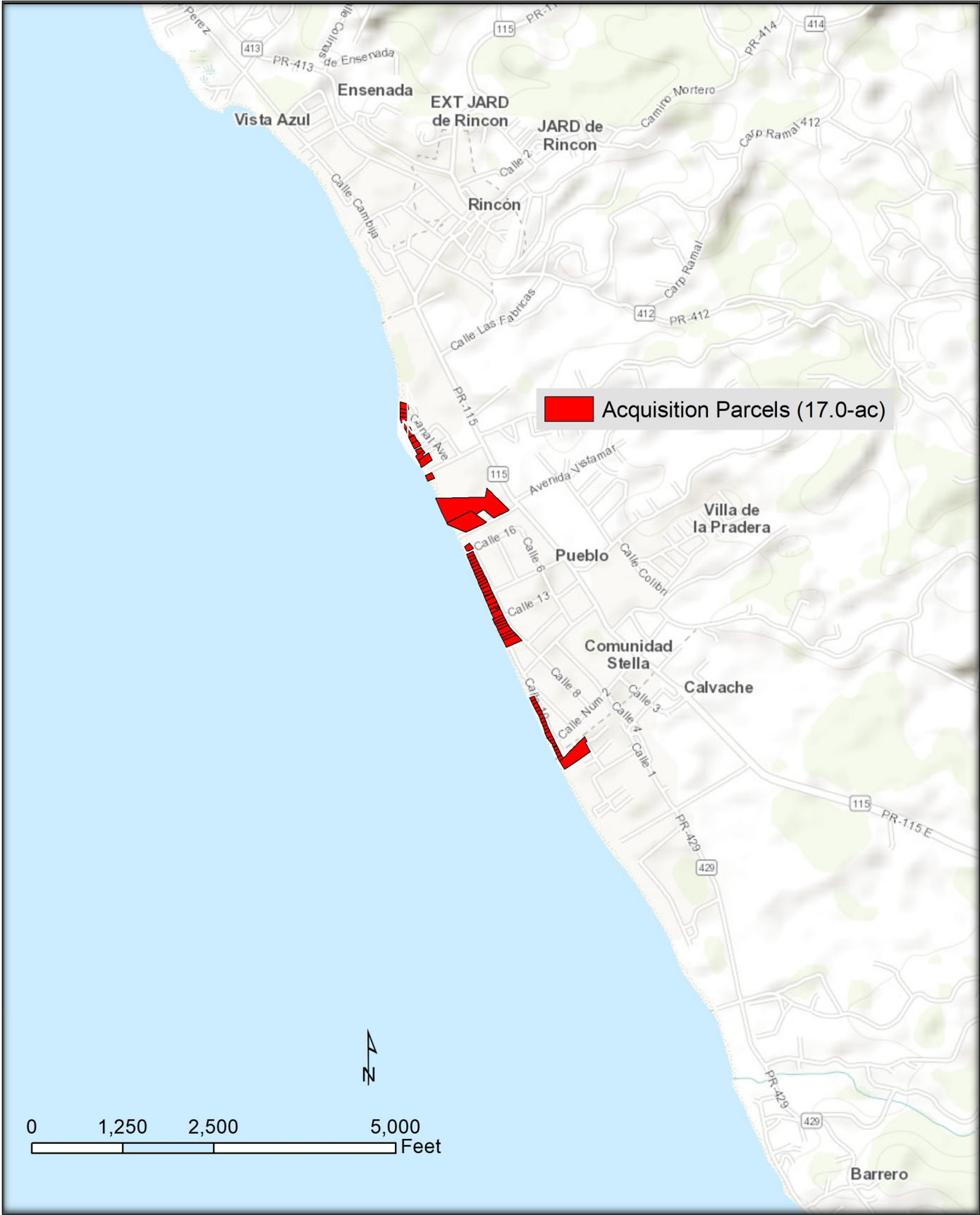


FIGURE 3: BARBOSA PARK SEA WALL, TOE STONE, SAND PLACEMENT & ACQUISITION ZONE

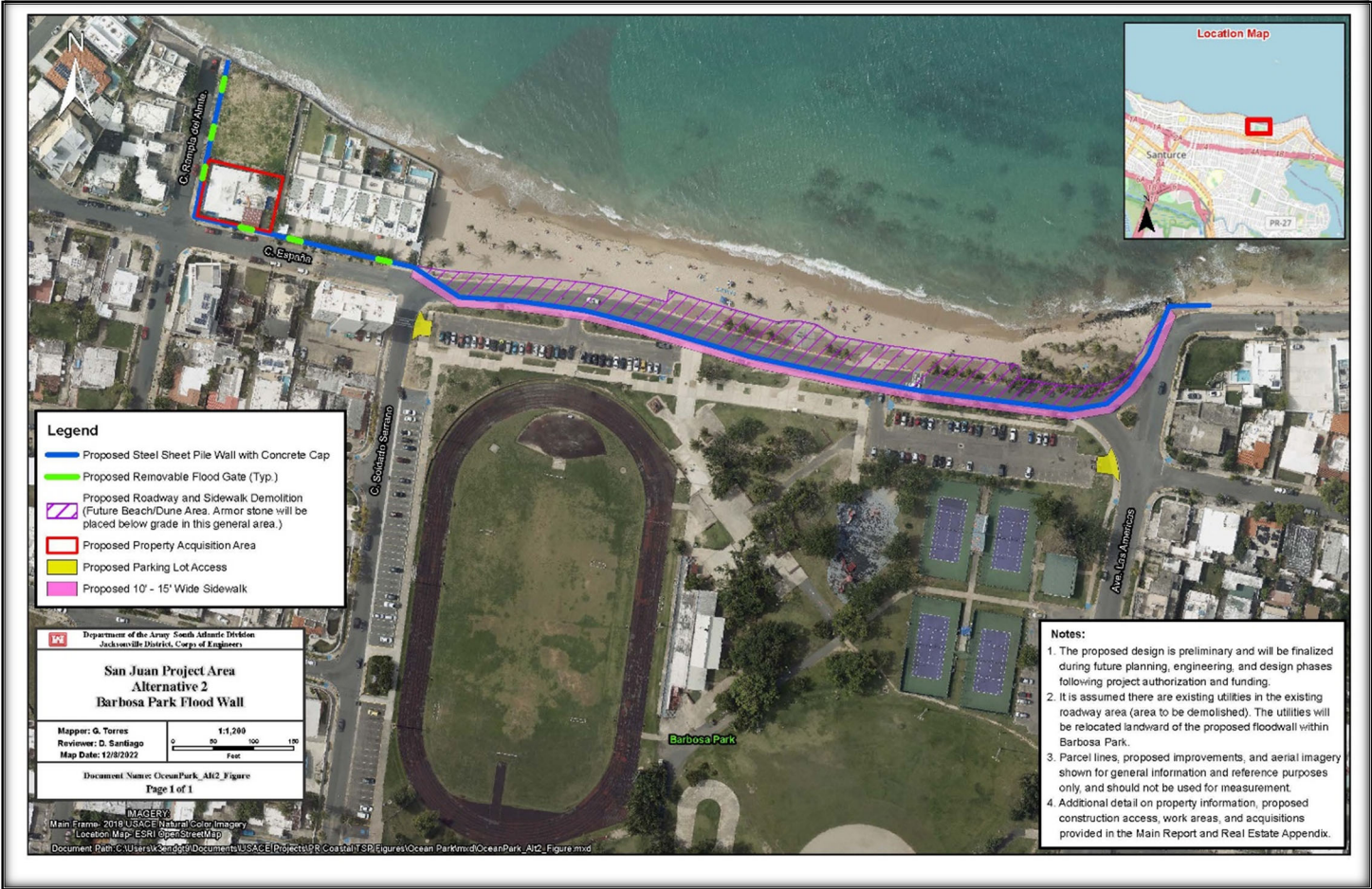


FIGURE 4: SKATE PARK SEA WALL, TOE STONE & MARINE MATTRESS PLACEMENT ZONE



FIGURE 5: STELLA DEMOLITION ZONE



FIGURE 6: BARBOSA PARK TYPICAL CROSS SECTION OF SEA WALL, TOE STONE PROTECTION & SAND COVER

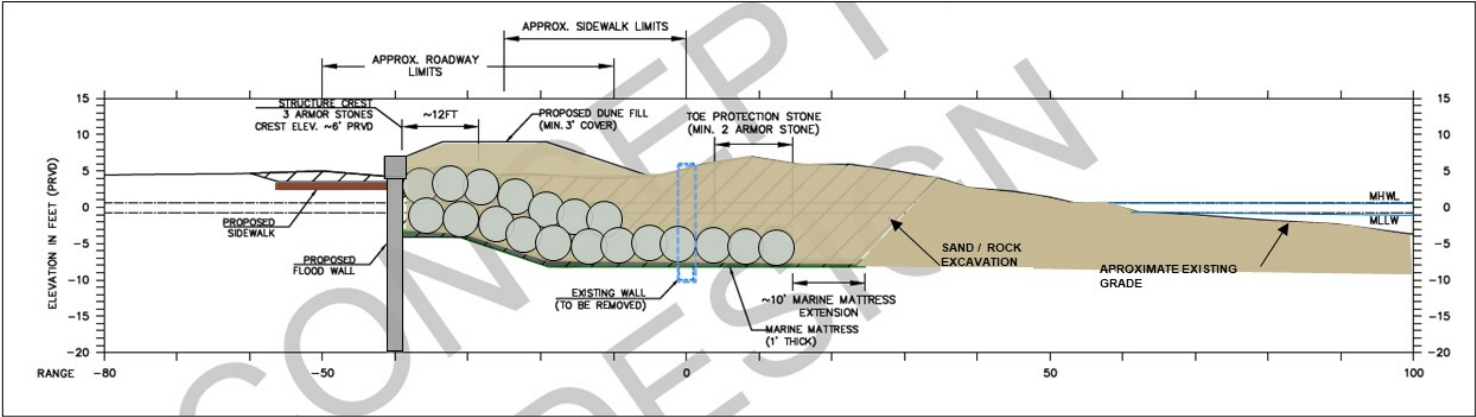


FIGURE 7: SKATE PARK TYPICAL CROSS SECTION OF SEA WALL, MARINE MATTRESS & TOE STONE

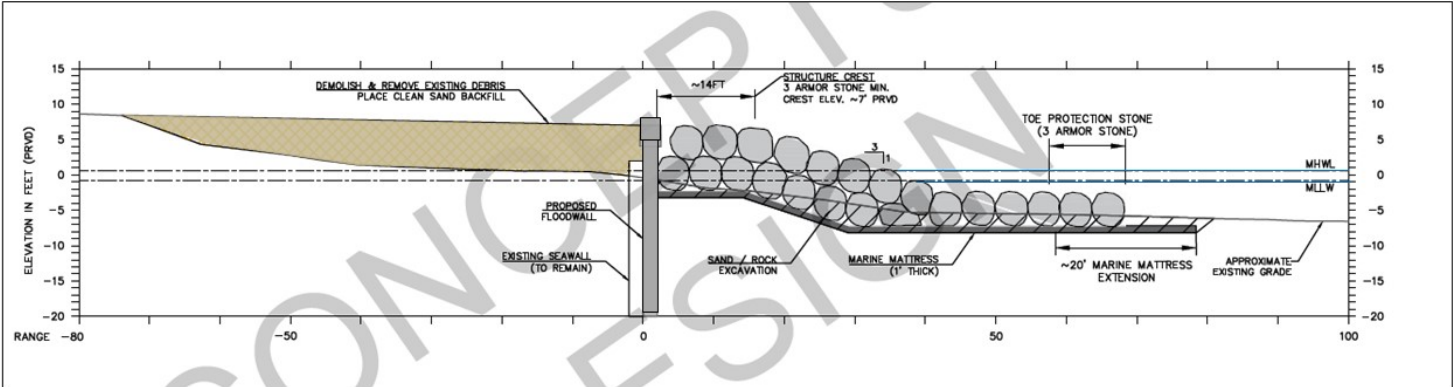


FIGURE 8: DETAILED BENTHIC SURVEY MAPPING FOR SAN JUAN

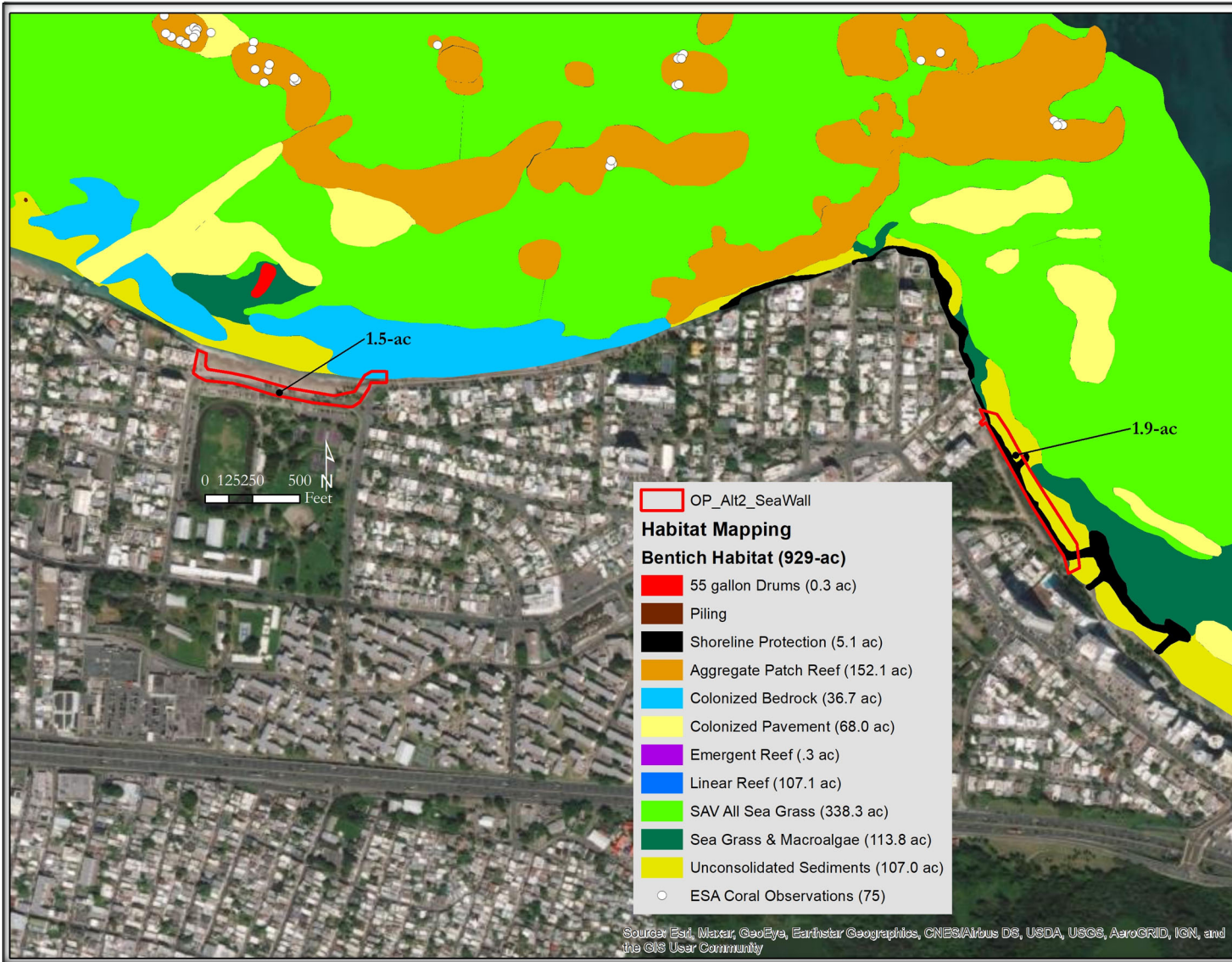


FIGURE 9: DETAILED BENTHIC SURVEY MAPPING FOR RINCÓN.

