

APPENDIX C
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS JOINT PERMIT APPLICATION
(ENG FORM 4345)
INFORMATION FOR BLOCK 23
SJU-RUNWAY 8-26 OBJECT FREE AREA IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

BLOCK 23. DESCRIPTION OF AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION, AND COMPENSATION

A Wetlands Jurisdictional Determination and Delineation Study (the Study) was performed for the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) during October 2020 (see **Appendix F**). This Study delineated all wetlands that are located within the LMMIA limits, including Channel A, which is to the north of Runway 8-26.

The Study results were superimposed on aerial images and drawings to analyze impacts on wetlands and Waters of the U.S. (see **Appendix A, Drawings C003 to C305, C401 to 405, C501 to C510 and CF0 to CF3**). This analysis concluded that approximately 10.49 acres of wetland (mangrove fringe along Channel A) would be under clearing and grubbing (wetland cut) activities. Also, approximately 13.19 acres of wetland will be filled to reach the required elevation contours to return the trapezoidal configuration to Channel A and to cover a section of the ROFA on the eastern end. In some sections, clearing and grubbing of wetlands will occur before filling them to reach the appropriate elevations (see **Drawings C301 to C305 and Cross Sections 87+80.00, 94+00.00, 100+20.00 and 106+40.00 on Drawing CF-3, Appendix A** for some examples of areas where clearing and grubbing will take place and filling wetlands will also occur).

To compensate for impacts on wetlands and waters of the United States, a mitigation area of approximately 40.0 acres is proposed, located in the premises of Hacienda Campo Rico, Carolina (**Figure 4, Appendix A**). The proposed mitigation area will comprise a 3.0 feet deep open water pond of 20 acres and mangrove islands that vary from .5 acres to 2.5 acres each in area (approximately 13.5 acres total) within such open water. A conservation area of approximately 25 acres will be established to the northwest of the

pond. In addition, two observation towers will be constructed for bird watching and other educational and scientific research purposes. All these elements will be included in a conservation easement of 45.0 acres that will be constituted to protect and conserve the proposed mitigation area. The conceptual mitigation plan is shown in **Figure 5 (Appendix A)**.

The mangrove islands will have an elevation of approximately 0.5 meters above mean sea level. They will be populated with mangrove species, such as red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) and white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*). This conceptual mitigation plan will also compensate for the essential fish habitat (EFH) that will be lost due to project development. As stated in previous studies and analysis from Federal agencies, the quality of the existing habitat within Channel A, north of Runway 8-26 that will be impacted is poor.

The proposed project has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and surface waters to the maximum extent practicable. As it is acknowledged that there will be impacts to jurisdictional areas associated with constructing the proposed project, the mitigation plan was designed to offset these impacts by providing a cumulative benefit to the San Juan Bay Estuary system. Implementation of the proposed mitigation plan will not only offset any effects incurred by this project but will provide a benefit beyond what is required to compensate for the loss. The proposed mitigation plan was designed to provide benefits to wetlands, uplands, and open water habitat, specifically EFH, within the impact basin. The compensatory mitigation plan is proposed to offset all impacts associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed mitigation plan will enhance the EFH within the region.