



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, MOBILE DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 2288
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001

March 21, 2014

South Mississippi Branch
Regulatory Division

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE SAM-2014-00063-MJF
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
DMR-140197

PROPOSED IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE
GEOTECHNICAL PILOT STUDY HANCOCK COUNTY MARSH RESTORATION
ACTIVITIES, HANCOCK COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This District has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Please communicate this information to interested parties.

APPLICANT: Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Mr. Richard Harrell
P.O. Box 2261
Jackson, Mississippi 39225

AGENT: Adaptive Management Services, LLC
Attention: Mr. Stephen Parker
2510 14th Street, Suite 1010
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

LOCATION: Mississippi Sound located offshore east of Heron Bay and west of St. Josephs Point, Section 13, Township 10 South, Range 15 West, Hancock County, Mississippi (Latitude 30.17806 North, Longitude -89.45728 West).

WORK: The applicant proposes to complete a Pilot Study intended to provide data for potential future restoration projects in Hancock County regarding the stability of the substrate and the efficacy of using "marine mattresses" in lieu of "non contained" riprap placement to act as a simulated breakwater structure. The project would include the construction and placement of two marine mattress structures, each measuring 25-foot by 25-foot for a total 1,250 square feet. There would be a 26-foot gap between the two structures. A total of 0.03 acres of open water bottom would be impacted by the two structures. The marine mattresses would be filled with riprap consisting of 2- to 6-

inch diameter rocks. The marine mattresses would be assembled on land then transported to the site location by barge and installed by crane. Placement of the marine mattresses would be monitored to ensure the proper dimensions, slopes, and crest elevations of placement are achieved. Geotextiles fabric would be attached to the underside of the mattresses. Each structure would include two 3-feet by 3-feet one-inch steel plates with a 2-inch by 6-feet tall rebar riser. The volume of placed material would be approximately 80 cubic yards. The target depth for deployment is approximately -3.5 feet MLLW, but could be between -3.0 and -5.0 feet. The attached plans show the approximate proposed locations of the structures, but slight shifting may be necessary depending on site characteristics. The structures would be approximately 3-feet in height with a base width of 25-feet and a crest width of 15-feet. The placement of the mattresses would be temporary in nature. Upon completion of the study the mattresses would be removed. The construction phase would take approximately two days to one week to complete and would occur between May and July, 2014. The structures would remain in place through October 2014 and would then be removed. PVC pipe, floats and signage would be placed to alert boaters to the presence of the Pilot Study structures. The risers for the settlement plates would be painted to increase visibility to boaters. All signage would be removed when the structures are removed.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The project area is located in open water habitats within the Mississippi Sound in Hancock County, Mississippi. The Pilot Study is proposed in a shallow water area at approximately -3.5 feet MLLW. The marine environment in the project area is a shallow system increasing in depth to over 12-feet toward St. Joseph's Pass. The project area is located within the Gulf Coastal Plain and the Mississippi Alluvial Plain physiographic regions. Landforms are generally comprised of Holocene sediments. These sediments are composed of sand, silt and clay with comparatively high organic matter content. Recent geotechnical sampling within the project footprint observed primarily soft silty clays.

PROJECT PURPOSE: As stated by the applicant, "the purpose of the Pilot Study is to confirm that the in water soils have adequate bearing pressure to support rip rap filled "marine mattresses" and to identify potential constructability issues." "This project will serve a higher public purpose by investigating the efficacy of construction methods that will inform future coastal restoration efforts near St. Joseph's Point. The project intent is to gather data to facilitate restoration projects including but not limited to protecting shorelines, restore marsh/coastal wetland habitats, restoring oysters and other restoration and management activities." "This mattress design, in lieu of the standard "non contained" riprap placement, is being contemplated due to the extremely poor soil conditions located in and around St. Joseph's Point." The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) initially determined the basic project purpose is for a pilot study to determine the suitability of using marine mattress breakwaters in place of non-confined riprap on substrates typically located at St. Joseph's Point and surrounding areas and would be considered a water dependent activity. Additional review will be performed by the Corps and cooperating agencies.

ALTERNATIVES: The applicant chose this site due to the proximity of St. Joseph's Point and geotechnical data that shows the area having softer substrate than other sites. Using this location would provide the best data to determine the feasibility of the

construction methods that could be used in future restoration projects. Additional review of alternatives will be performed by the Corps and cooperating agencies.

The applicant has applied for certification from the State of Mississippi in accordance with Section 401(a)(1) of the Clean Water Act and upon completion of the required advertising; a determination relative to certification will be made.

The applicant has applied for coastal zone consistency from the State of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources in accordance with Section 57-15-6 of the Mississippi Code Annotated, by January 17, 2014 letter (DMR-140197).

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts on which a decision by the Corps can be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources.

The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, protected species, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held for consideration of this application. Requests for public hearings shall state with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Evaluation of the probable impacts involving deposits of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States will include the application of guidelines established by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists thirteen endangered or threatened species as occurring or potentially occurring in Hancock County, Mississippi. These are the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) listed as threatened (T), the Louisiana quillwort (*Isoetes louisianensis*) listed as endangered (E), the Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser*) listed as threatened with critical habitat (TCH), the Green sea turtle (*Chelonia*) (T), the Kemp's ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) (E), the Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) (E), the Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) (T), the Ringed Map turtle (*Graptemys oculifer*), the Louisiana black bear *Ursus a. luteolus*(T), the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) (TCH), the Alabama heelsplitter (*Potamilus inflatus*) (T), The West India manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) (E), and the Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) (E). Based upon preliminary review of this application, and the U.S. Department of the Interior's list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants, a preliminary determination has been made that these activities designated for the project site **may affect but are not likely to adversely affect**, listed or endangered species or their critical habitat. Of the species listed above, only the Gulf sturgeon, the West Indian manatee and the sea turtles are likely to occur in or near the project area.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Appendix C of 33 CFR 325, the undertaking defined in this notice is being considered for the potential to effect cultural and historic properties within the permit area. Although the extent of federal control and responsibility for these considerations are confined to the limits of the permit area for this particular project, the potential indirect effects that may occur to historic properties as a result of this undertaking are also being considered. We are seeking comment from the State Historic Preservation Officer (MDAH), Federally-recognized American Indian tribes, local historical societies, museums, universities, the National Park Service and concerned citizens regarding the existence or the potential for existence of significant cultural and historic properties within the permit area.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The proposal would impact approximately 0.03 acres of marine substrate utilized by various life stages of red drum, shrimp, coastal migratory pelagic and highly migratory species. Our initial determination is that the proposed action **may affect but not likely to adversely affect** on EFH or federally managed fisheries. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Correspondence concerning this Public Notice should refer to Public Notice Number **SAM-2014-00063-MJF** and should be directed to the District Engineer, Corps, Mobile District, **Attention: Ms. Maryellen Farmer**, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 501, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530, Attention: USACE Biloxi Field Office, with a copy to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control, **Attention: Ms. Florance Watson, P.E.**, Post Office Box 2261, Jackson, Mississippi 39225 and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, **Attention: Mr. Greg Christodoulou**, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 501, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530, in time to be received within **21 days** of the date of this public notice.

If you have any questions concerning this publication, you may contact the project manager for this application, Ms. Maryellen Farmer (maryellen.j.farmer@usace.army.mil), phone (228) 523-4116. Please refer to the above Public Notice number.

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For additional information about our Regulatory Program, please visit our web site at:
www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx.

MOBILE DISTRICT
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Enclosures

Geotechnical Pilot Study
to Evaluate Substrate Stability
near St. Joseph's Point

Legend



Pilot Study



Pilot Study Structure #1 (approx. location)



Pilot Study Structure #2 (approx. location)

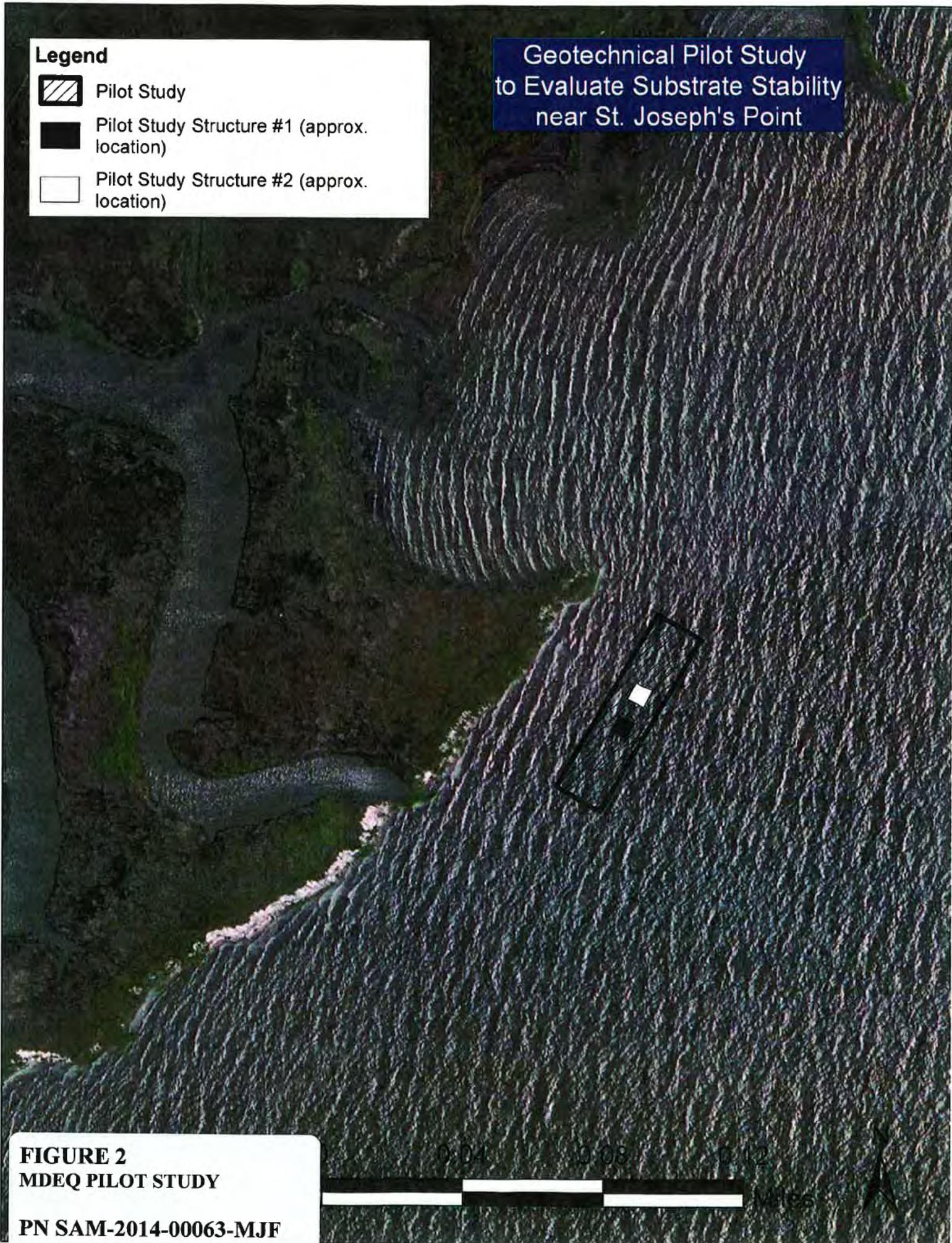


FIGURE 2
MDEQ PILOT STUDY

PN SAM-2014-00063-MJF



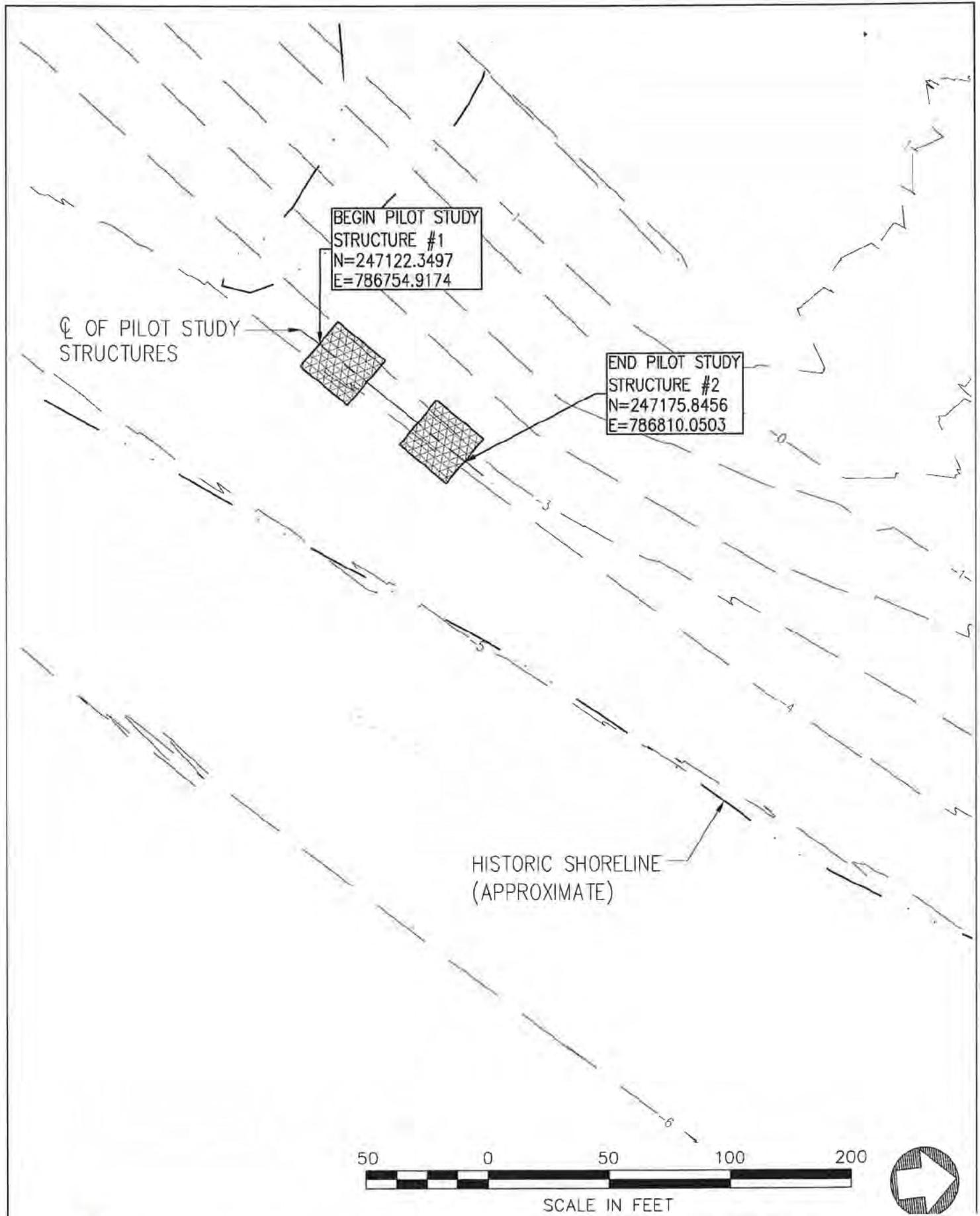




Figure 2.1-2: Hand assembly of marine mattress.



Figure 2.1-3: Deployment of marine mattress.