UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

SEP 15 2010

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment for Two Proposed Temporary Rules: An Emergency Action to Authorize the Re-opening of the Recreational Red Snapper Season in the Gulf of Mexico – RIN 0648-BA06 – and a Temporary Rule Re-opening of the Recreational Red Snapper Fishing Season in Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico – RIN 0648-XY73

LOCATION: Gulf of Mexico

SUMMARY: The recreational red snapper fishing season opened on June 1, 2010, and closed July 24, 2010. This was the date the 3.403-million pound quota was projected to be met. However, the Deepwater Horizon MC252 oil spill resulted in large area closures where a substantial recreational red snapper harvest traditionally occurs. Therefore, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) requested NOAA Fisheries Service publish an emergency rule allowing the Regional Administrator to re-open the recreational red snapper season after the September 30, 2010, end of the fishing season. Subsequently, the Council requested that NOAA Fisheries Service re-open the recreational red snapper fishing season for eight consecutive weekends (Friday through Sunday) beginning October 1, 2010.

The environmental assessment analyzes the impacts of the two proposed actions. The proposed actions are intended to provide an opportunity to harvest the full recreational red snapper quota and provide flexibility in achieving the Council's designated optimum yield for the fishery, thus enhancing social and economic benefits to the fishery.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D., Regional Administrator, Southeast Regional Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701, (727) 824-5305, FAX (727) 824-5308.

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI) including the supporting environmental assessment (EA) is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the responsible official named above.

Sincerely,

for Paul N. Doremus
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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