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

SEP 2 2010

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

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

TITLE: Environmental Assessment on the Effects of the Issuance of Scientific Research Permits to Llewellyn Ehrhart (File No. 14506) and Blair Witherington (File No. 14726)

LOCATION: Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico waters off Florida

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue two scientific research permits for takes under the authority of the Endangered Species Act. The purpose of File No. 14506 is to assess sea turtle population structure, trends in relative abundance, habitat utilization, sex ratios, physiology, genetics, zoogeography, and epidemiology in three habitats along Florida's Atlantic coast. The purpose of File No. 14726 is to locate and describe areas of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico that serve as developmental habitat for pelagic-stage neonate and juvenile sea turtles, quantify threats to pelagic sea turtles, and gather information on their life history, genetics, movements, behavior and diet. The preferred alternative is not expected to have more than short-term effects on sea turtles and will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: James H. Lecky
Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13821
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 713-2332

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.

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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, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure