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

JAN 20 2011

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: Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Federal Financial Assistance and Special Permits

LOCATION: St. Petersburg, Florida

SUMMARY: The PEA was initiated in August 2009 to streamline the NOAA grants and special permitting processes in the NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region (SER). The SER has received submittals from states and other entities for 20 types of grants and 22 special permits, all were determined to have no significant impact. All those actions have been determined to be categorically excluded actions per NAO 216-6, with the exception of three construction projects that required environmental assessments.

Proposed actions have been grouped in the PEA into three categories for analytical purposes: Category A: Special permits and grants that have no potential for environmental impacts; Category B: Special permits and grants that have little to no potential for environmental effects; and Category C: Special permits and grants that have the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Proposed actions in Category A would be analyzed and tracked under the PEA using a new reporting form. Proposed actions in Category B and Category C would undergo tracking and case-by-case analysis, and would not be approved without further NEPA analysis as appropriate

Using the process summarized above, the PEA will substantially reduce the time and effort spent on preparing redundant documentation for actions in Category A, without potential for significant environmental impacts. This proposed action will also optimize use of scarce agency resources for more effective analysis of future actions with the potential for significant environmental effects (Categories B and C).

Printed on Recycled Paper

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Roy Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue S.
St. Petersburg, FL. 33701
727-824-5301

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the FONSI, including the 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,

Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosures