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

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups: JUL 3 2012

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

TITLE: Environmental Assessment on the Effects of Issuing Permit No. 16598 for Scientific Research on Protected Sea Turtles in Florida Waters

LOCATION: Florida Keys and Big Bend region of Florida

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue Permit No. 16598 to Inwater Research Group, Inc. The purpose of the research is to characterize movement patterns, track prevalence of fibropapilomatosis, examine genetic origin and feeding habits, and gather key life history information for green, loggerhead, hawksbill, and Kemp's ridley sea turtles. Researchers would conduct vessel surveys to count and observe sea turtles and capture sea turtles by hand or dip net. Captured animals would have a suite of research procedures performed including biological sampling and tagging. Effects to sea turtles would be short-term and minimal.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:
Helen M. Golde
Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13821
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(301) 427-8400

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

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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