

authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to identify and designate certain areas of the marine environment which are of special national significance as National Marine Sanctuaries, and provides authority for comprehensive and coordinated conservation and management of these marine areas, and activities affecting them, in a manner that complements existing regulatory authorities. Further, section 312 of the NMSA (16 U.S.C. 1443) provides that any person who destroys, causes the loss of, or injures any Sanctuary resource is liable to the United States for response costs and damages. Monies received are used to reimburse the Secretary for response actions and damage assessments and to fund the restoration, replacement, or acquisition of the equivalent of injured, destroyed, or lost Sanctuary resources.

To help protect and manage the ecological, historical, educational, recreational, and aesthetic qualities of the National Marine Sanctuaries, the National Marine Sanctuaries Program (NMSP) and OR&R will prepare a seagrass restoration PEIS for Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) and a coral reef restoration PEIS for the FKNMS and Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. The PEISs, among other objectives, will set forth methodologies and guidelines for restoration actions arising out of injuries to Sanctuary resources. It is NMSP's intent to prepare these PEISs such that a tiered process can be used in the preparation of future environmental documents concerning restoration actions within National Marine Sanctuaries. Accordingly, the PEISs will facilitate the development of both subsequent environmental assessments (EAs) and individual restoration plans designed to restore Sanctuary resources.

Public scoping meetings were held in Marathon, FL, on March 6, 2003. Extensive local media and notification through targeted electronic mail listings are being used prior to the preparation of the Draft PEISs for those persons, agencies, and/or organizations interested in contributing comments for the development of the Draft PEISs. Public meetings will also be held concurrent with the public comment period to accept comments on the Draft PEIS. Notice of these subsequent meetings will be published in the **Federal Register**. All substantive comments provided during the public comment period, both written and oral, will be considered in the preparation of the Final PEIS and will become part of the public record (*i.e.*, names, addresses, letters of comment, comment provided during public meetings). Comments and

suggestions are invited from all interested parties to ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action and all significant issues are identified. Comments and/or questions concerning the preparation of these PEISs should be directed to Harriet Sopher at the address or phone listed above.

The following draft outlines will form the basis for the scoping discussion.

Proposed draft outline for the Coral Reef Restoration PEIS:

1. Executive Summary
 1. Overview
 - 1.1.1 Introduction
 - 1.1.2 Background
 - 1.1.3 Purpose and need for action
 - 1.1.4 Summary and scope of programmatic environmental impact statement
2. Restoration Alternatives
 - 2.1 No Action
 - 2.2 Physical Restoration
 - 2.2.1 Debris, Sediment and Rubble Removal
 - 2.2.2 Emergency Stabilization
 - 2.2.3 Framework and Rubble Stabilization
 - 2.2.3.1 Limestone boulders and tremie concrete
 - 2.2.3.2 Preformed concrete/limestone units
 - 2.2.3.3 In situ formation of semi-artificial substrate
 - 2.2.3.4 Concrete pillows, geotextile mattresses, tubes filled with concrete
 - 2.2.3.5 Gabions, prefabricated steel or tensor grid cages containing loose rubble
 - 2.3 Revetment mats
 - 2.3 Biological Restoration
 - 2.3.1 Emergency Triage
 - 2.3.2 Transplantation
 - 2.3.3 Enhancement of Recruitment
 - 2.3.4 Community Modification
 - 2.4 Acquisition of Equivalent Natural Resources and Services
 - 2.5 Criteria for Determining Environmentally Appropriate Alternative(s)
 - 2.5.1 Recovery Time Horizons
 - 2.5.2 Potential for Collateral Injury
 - 2.5.3 Susceptibility to additional injury from natural disturbance events
 - 2.5.4 Susceptibility to additional injury from human-caused disturbances
 - 2.5.5 Technical feasibility
 - 2.5.6 Likelihood of success
 - 2.5.7 Significance of the injured resource
3. Affected Environment
 - 3.1 Habitat Types
 - 3.2 Florida Keys, Florida
 - 3.2.1 Physical Environment
 - 3.2.2 Biological Resources
 - 3.2.3 Cultural Resources
 - 3.2.4 Social and Economic Environment
 - 3.2.5 Existing Jurisdictional Responsibilities and Institutional Arrangements
 - 3.3 Flower Gardens and Stetson Bank, Gulf of Mexico
 - 3.3.1 Physical Environment
 - 3.3.2 Biological Resources
 - 3.3.3 Cultural Resources
 - 3.3.4 Social and Economic Environment
 - 3.3.5 Existing Jurisdictional Responsibilities and Institutional Arrangements

4. Environmental Consequences
 - 4.1 Environmental Impacts
 - 4.2 Cumulative Effects
 - 4.3 Mitigation Measures
- Proposed draft outline for the Seagrass Restoration PEIS:

1. Purpose of and Need for Action
 - 1.1 Purpose
 - 1.2 Need for Proposed Action
2. Seagrass Restoration Alternatives
 - 2.1 Seagrass Restoration Selection Alternatives
 - 2.2 Seagrass Restoration Options
 - 2.2.1 No-Action
 - 2.2.2 Seagrass Transplants
 - 2.2.3 Bird Stakes
 - 2.2.4 Fertilizer Spikes
 - 2.2.5 Sediment Fill
 - 2.2.6 Sediment Tubes
 - 2.2.7 Berm Redistribution
 - 2.2.8 Channel Markers
 - 2.3 Proposed Actions
3. Affected Environment
 - 3.1 Location and Area Uses
 - 3.2 Surrounding Land Use
 - 3.3 Climate
 - 3.4 Air Quality
 - 3.5 Noise
 - 3.6 Geology
 - 3.7 Water Quality
 - 3.8 Physical Parameters
 - 3.9 Biological Resources
 - 3.10 Cultural Resources
 - 3.11 Hazardous and Toxic Substances
 - 3.12 Socioeconomics
 - 3.13 Quality of Life
4. Environmental and Socioeconomic Consequences
 - 4.1 Introduction
 - 4.2 No Action Alternative
 - 4.3 Seagrass Transplant Alternative
 - 4.4 Bird Stakes Alternative
 - 4.5 Fertilizer Spikes
 - 4.6 Sediment Fill Alternative
 - 4.7 Sediment Tubes
 - 4.8 Berm Redistribution Alternative
 - 4.9 Channel Markers
 - 4.10 Cumulative Effects
 - 4.11 Mitigation Measures
 - 4.12 Conclusions
5. Implementation of the Regional Restoration Plan
6. Relationship to Other Laws and Programs

Dated: March 3, 2003.

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[FR Doc. 03-6878 Filed 3-21-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-08-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 031403E]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Amendment 21; Public Hearings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and