



MAR 04 2013

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 (EA) for Emergency Action to Establish Recreational Closure Authority Specific to Federal Waters off Individual States for the Red Snapper Component of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery [RIN: 0648-BD00]

LOCATION: Exclusive economic zone off the Gulf of Mexico states

SUMMARY: At their February 2013 meeting, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) requested an emergency rule that gives NOAA Fisheries the authority to set the closure date of the recreational red snapper season in federal waters off individual Gulf states based on if the state regulations are consistent with federal regulations for the recreational red snapper season length or bag limit. Emergency action is needed because NOAA Fisheries has received new information, i.e. that states other than Texas intend to implement recreational red snapper regulations in state waters that are not compatible with federal regulations. The authority granted through this emergency rule will help NOAA Fisheries to constrain recreational red snapper harvest within the quota while ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of fishing restrictions.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
727-824-5301

The environmental review process led us to conclude that these actions will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the environmental assessment, 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia A. Montanio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "M".

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure