

residents of the territory totalled \$3,623,965.

There are no producers in Guam, American Samoa or the Northern Mariana Islands.

The calendar year 1997 Virgin Islands annual allocations set forth below are based on the data verified by the Departments in the Virgin Islands. The allocations reflect adjustments made in data supplied on the producers' annual application forms (ITA-334P) as a result of the Departments' verification.

The duty-exemption allocations for calendar year 1997 in the Virgin Islands are as follows:

Name of firm	Annual allocation
Belair Quartz, Inc.	500,000
Hampden Watch Co., Inc.	200,000
Progress Watch Co., Inc.	500,000
Unitime Industries, Inc.	500,000
Tropex, Inc.	400,000

Robert S. LaRussa,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Import Administration, Department of Commerce.

Danny Aranza,

Acting Director, Office of Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

[Docket No. 960322092-7041-05; I.D. 122696A]

RIN 0648-ZA19

Gulf of Mexico Sustainable Fisheries Program

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final notice of availability of Federal assistance.

SUMMARY: NMFS establishes a Gulf of Mexico Sustainable Fisheries Program that provides \$10 million in fishery disaster assistance to the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf). NMFS will allocate the \$10 million to the five Gulf states' fisheries resource agencies for projects or other measures designed to alleviate the long-term effects of the fishery resource disasters on the Gulf's fishery resources and associated habitat.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Buck Sutter, at (813) 570-5324.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Background.

Pursuant to his authority under section 308(d) of the Interjurisdictional

Fisheries Act (16 U.S.C. 4107(d)) (IFA), the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) declared fishery resource disasters on August 2, 1995, in the Pacific Northwest, New England, and the Gulf. With respect to the Gulf, the Secretary's disaster declaration (Declaration) cited multiple impacts. Nonpoint source nutrients and debris entering the Gulf as a result of the Mississippi River floods in 1993 and 1994 caused severe hypoxia, a condition where the excess nutrients react to deplete the water of necessary oxygen, which spread to massive areas in the Gulf and threatened marine life and coastal resources. The flood debris created underwater hazards for commercial fishermen who suffered damaged or lost gear and vessels. In addition, the Secretary cited hurricanes that harmed fisheries habitat and engendered substantial economic damage and social disruption. Because of these impacts, the Secretary made \$15 million available for the Gulf of Mexico for disaster relief.

On June 10, 1996, NMFS published a final notice (61 FR 29350) describing the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Disaster Program (FDP), which committed up to \$5 million of the available \$15 million for direct grants to commercial fishermen who suffered uninsured fishing vessel or gear damage or loss caused by the hurricanes, floods, or their aftereffects. Subsequently, on October 24, 1996, a notice was published (61 FR 55132) to expand eligibility under the FDP.

Section 308(d) of the IFA allows the Secretary to help persons engaged in commercial fisheries by providing assistance indirectly through state and local government agencies. Therefore, the remaining \$10 million in Gulf disaster assistance will go toward projects or other measures to alleviate the long-term impacts on Gulf fishery resources and associated habitat from conditions cited in the August 2, 1995, Declaration. Because the impacts varied from state to state, this assistance is provided through the five Gulf state fisheries resource agencies, as they are in the best position to determine how the funds can be used.

This notice establishes the criteria that will be used by NOAA to evaluate and fund state disaster assistance proposals. NOAA has been in consultation with the eligible state fishery resource agencies, and plans to invite proposals via letter. At that time, applicants will be provided additional details on applicable Federal assistance requirements. Once NMFS determines that a state's proposal(s) complies with all applicable terms, limitations, and conditions, NMFS will enter into a

financial assistance agreement with that state for the administration of each project.

After consultations with appropriate state officials and review of available information regarding the impacts of disasters that occurred from August 23, 1992, through December 31, 1995, NMFS has decided upon the following apportionment of funds: Alabama—\$1 million; Florida—\$2.25 million; Louisiana—\$4.5 million; Mississippi—\$1 million; and Texas—\$1.25 million.

On behalf of the Secretary, NMFS published a Notice of Proposed Program on January 2, 1997 (62 FR 94), to solicit public comments. One written comment was received, from a Gulf state fishery resource agency. The comment expressed support for the proposed program, stating that the criteria established in the notice will allow states to design and implement projects that will benefit fishery resources and habitats in the long term. NMFS agrees and has therefore made no changes to the program.

Criteria

In order to be considered for funding, a state proposal must adhere to the following criteria:

1. The proposed project(s) must be consistent with the original intent of the Secretary's disaster declaration and the IFA (i.e., each project must address conditions resulting from nutrients and debris entering the Gulf as a result of floods, and/or hurricanes or hurricane-strength storms, from August 23, 1992 through December 31, 1995); and

2. Projects must address the long-term benefit of the fishery resource and associated habitat and must seek to create healthy, sustainable fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico; and

3. Projects must not duplicate existing Federal, state, or local projects. However, they may augment or allow the maintenance of effort of existing projects, provided that those projects are consistent with all other criteria. In other words, separate projects may not be created if such projects already exist, but funds may be used to maintain existing projects; and

4. Projects that primarily involve new data collection must show a clear relationship between that project and long-term benefits to the fishery resource that are attainable without additional funding. A new data collection project would not qualify under this program if the project would not provide sufficient useful information without future funding.

Projects that would qualify under these criteria might include restoration/development of hurricane or flood-

damaged habitat, enhancement of stocks that declined due to hypoxia or habitat loss, or fishing capacity reduction projects to alleviate the excess capacity targeting the depleted stocks and to mitigate the financial harm suffered by fishermen who targeted these stocks.

Determinations and Administration

All state grant proposals will be reviewed by the Department of Commerce, NOAA, and NMFS. Final project selections will be made by NMFS ensuring that there is no duplication with other projects funded by NOAA or other Federal organizations. If a proposal is accepted, NOAA will enter into a financial assistance agreement with the submitting state.

NMFS may require states to submit semiannual project status reports on the use of funds and progress of the project to NMFS within 30 days after the end of each 6-month period. These reports would be submitted to the individual specified as the NMFS Program Officer in the funding agreement. NMFS may also require states to submit a final report within 90 days after completion of each project to the NMFS Program Officer. The final report would describe the project and include an evaluation of the work performed and the results and benefits in sufficient detail to enable NMFS to assess the success of the completed project.

NMFS is committed to using available technology to achieve the timely and wide distribution of final reports to those who would benefit from this information. Therefore, recipients may be required to submit final reports in electronic format, in accordance with the award terms and conditions, for publication on the NMFS Home Page.

Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance

The Program is listed in the "Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance" under No. 11.452, Unallied Industry Projects.

Classification

This program has been determined to be not significant for the purposes of E.O. 12866. The Assistant General Counsel for Legislation and Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration that this notice would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. No comments were received regarding this certification. As a result, no regulatory flexibility analysis was prepared. Because there are less than 10

applicants, the Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply.

Authority: Public Law 99-659 (16 U.S.C. 4101 *et seq.*); Public Law 102-396; Public Law 104-134.

Dated: March 5, 1997.

Nancy Foster, Ph.D.,
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030597A]

Endangered Species; Permits

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Receipt of applications for two scientific research permits (P45X, P45Y) and modification 2 to scientific research permit 956 (P45S).

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Columbia River Research Laboratory of the U.S. Geological Service in Cook, WA (USGS), formerly the National Biological Service, has applied in due form for two permits and a modification to a permit authorizing takes of endangered and threatened species for scientific research purposes.

DATES: Written comments or requests for a public hearing on any of these applications must be received on or before April 10, 1997.

ADDRESSES: The applications and related documents are available for review in the following offices, by appointment:

Office of Protected Resources, F/PR3, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226 (301-713-1401); and

Environmental and Technical Services Division, 525 NE Oregon Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97232-4169 (503-230-5400).

Written comments or requests for a public hearing should be submitted to the Chief, Environmental and Technical Services Division, Portland.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: USGS requests two permits and a modification to a permit under the authority of section 10 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) and the NMFS regulations governing ESA-listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 217-227).

USGS (P45X) requests a five-year permit for annual takes of adult and juvenile, threatened, Snake River fall

chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and adult and juvenile, threatened, Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) associated with a study designed to determine the post-release attributes and survival of hatchery and natural fall chinook salmon in the Snake River. The study consists of eight assessment tasks for which ESA-listed fish are proposed to be taken: 1) Life cycle, 2) redd counts, 3) food and growth, 4) habitat use, 5) predation, 6) temperature response, 7) migratory behavior, and 8) race and residualism. ESA-listed fish will be observed; captured, handled, and released; captured, anesthetized, tagged with passive integrated transponders or radio transmitters, allowed to recover from the anesthetic, and released; or taken lethally. Indirect mortalities associated with the research activities are also requested.

USGS (P45Y) requests a three-year permit for an annual take of juvenile, threatened, artificially-propagated, Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) associated with a study designed to determine the vertical and horizontal distribution of juvenile salmonids exposed to high levels of total dissolved gas during their seaward migration in the Snake and Columbia Rivers. The vertical and horizontal distribution of juvenile salmonids exposed to high levels of total dissolved gas must be further defined to assess the risk of mortality from gas bubble disease. ESA-listed fish will be acquired from the Smolt Monitoring Program under the authority of permit 822 at Lower Monumental, Ice Harbor, or McNary Dams; transported as necessary to Ice Harbor Dam; anesthetized; surgically implanted with radio transmitters; allowed to recover from the anesthetic and the surgical procedure; released at Ice Harbor Dam; and tracked electronically between Ice Harbor and McNary Dams. Indirect mortalities of ESA-listed fish associated with the research activities are also requested.

USGS (P45S) requests modification 2 to scientific research permit 956 for authorization to take juvenile, threatened, Snake River fall chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) associated with annual research activities. Permit 956 currently authorizes USGS an annual take of juvenile, threatened, naturally-produced and artificially-propagated, Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) associated with a study designed to obtain data on the distribution, abundance, movement, and habitat preferences of the