



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: Environmental Assessment, Florida State University and University of Alaska-Fairbanks, School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, Seaward Marine Center, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM), Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

LOCATION: Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, Hawai‘i

SUMMARY: This environmental assessment (EA) evaluates the impacts of issuing permits to access PMNM to conduct research on select areas within PMNM to characterize the sea floor in efforts to better understand deep sea resources and their recovery rates from the effects of trawling. One research permit would be issued to Florida State University (FSU) for research using the autonomous unmanned vehicle (AUV) *Sentry* within PMNM, and one conservation and management permit would be issued to the University of Alaska – Fairbanks (UAF) for operation of the Research Vessel *Sikuliaq* to allow vessel support operations for the aforementioned research activities within PMNM. Both permits would be jointly issued by NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Hawai‘i, as co-trustees of the monument. The assessment finds that the individual and cumulative impacts of this action are not significant. Accordingly, the environmental assessment has resulted in a finding of no significant impact.

RESPONSIBLE

OFFICIAL:

Daniel J. Basta, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
National Ocean Service, NOAA
1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor
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(301) 713-3125

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 supporting environmental assessment including the finding of no significant impact (FONSI) 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,

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

for