

Results from monitoring programs associated other Eglin AFB activities have shown the absence of marine mammals within the EGTTR during maritime operations. Avoidance varies among individuals and depends on their activities or reasons for being in the area.

While animals may be impacted in the immediate vicinity of the activity, because of the short duration of the actual individual explosions themselves (versus continual sound source operation) combined with the short duration of the Maritime WSEP operations, NMFS has determined that there will not be a substantial impact on marine mammals or on the normal functioning of the nearshore or offshore Gulf of Mexico ecosystems. The proposed activity is not expected to impact rates of recruitment or survival of marine mammals since neither mortality (which would remove individuals from the population) nor serious injury are anticipated to occur. In addition, the proposed activity would not occur in areas (and/or times) of significance for the marine mammal populations potentially affected by the exercises (e.g., feeding or resting areas, reproductive areas), and the activities would only occur in a small part of their overall range, so the impact of any potential temporary displacement would be negligible and animals would be expected to return to the area after the cessations of activities. Although the proposed activity could result in Level A (PTS only, not slight lung injury or gastrointestinal tract injury) and Level B (behavioral disturbance and TTS) harassment of marine mammals, the level of harassment is not anticipated to impact rates of recruitment or survival of marine mammals because the number of exposed animals is expected to be low due to the short-term (i.e., four hours a day) and site-specific nature of the activity, and the severity of effect would not be detrimental to rates of recruitment and survival.

Moreover, the mitigation and monitoring measures required by the Authorization (described earlier in this document) are expected to further minimize the potential for harassment. The protected species surveys would require Eglin AFB to search the area for marine mammals, and if any are found in the live fire area, then the exercise would be suspended until the animal(s) has left the area or relocated. Moreover, marine species observers located in the Eglin control tower would monitor the high-definition video feed from cameras located on the instrument barge anchored on-site for the presence of protected species. Furthermore, Maritime WSEP missions would be

delayed or rescheduled if the sea state is greater than a 4 on the Beaufort Scale at the time of the test. In addition, Maritime WSEP missions would occur no earlier than two hours after sunrise and no later than two hours prior to sunset to ensure adequate daylight for pre- and post-mission monitoring.

Based on the analysis contained herein of the likely effects of the specified activity on marine mammals and their habitat, and taking into consideration the implementation of the mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS finds that Eglin AFB's Maritime WSEP operations will result in the incidental take of marine mammals, by Level A and Level B harassment only, and that the taking from the Maritime WSEP exercises will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks.

#### **Impact on Availability of Affected Species or Stock for Taking for Subsistence Uses**

There are no relevant subsistence uses of marine mammals implicated by this action. Therefore, NMFS has preliminarily determined that the total taking of affected species or stocks would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for subsistence purposes.

#### **Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

Eglin AFB initiated consultation with the Southeast Region, NMFS, under section 7 of the ESA regarding the effects of this action on ESA-listed species and critical habitat under the jurisdiction of NMFS. The consultation will be completed and a biological opinion issued prior to any final determinations on the Authorization. Due to the location of the activity, no ESA-listed marine mammal species are likely to be affected; therefore, NMFS has determined that this Authorization would have no effect on ESA-listed marine mammal species. Therefore, NMFS has determined that a section 7 consultation under the ESA is not required.

#### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

Eglin AFB provided NMFS with an Environmental Assessment titled, Maritime Weapon Systems Evaluation Program (WSEP) Operational Testing In The Eglin Gulf Testing And Training Range (EGTTR), Florida. The EA analyzes the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the specified activities on marine mammals. NMFS, after review and evaluation of the Eglin AFB EA for consistency with the regulations

published by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) and NOAA Administrative Order 216-6, Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, adopted the EA. After considering the EA, the information in the IHA application, and the **Federal Register** notice, as well as public comments, NMFS has determined that the issuance of an Authorization is not likely to result in significant impacts on the human environment and has prepared a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). An Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared for the action.

#### **Authorization**

NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization to Eglin AFB for conducting Maritime WSEP operations in the EGTTR, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: March 23, 2015.

**Donna S. Wieting,**

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council: Public Meeting**

**AGENCY:** Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

**ACTION:** Notice of open meeting.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council (Council). The meeting is open to the public, and participants may provide comments at the appropriate time during the meeting.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held Wednesday, April 22, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Thursday, April 23, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. EDT. An opportunity for public comment will be provided on April 23, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. EDT. These times and the agenda topics described below are subject to change.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held in the Hubbard Hall Board Room of the National Geographic Society, 1146 16th Street NW., Washington, DC 20036.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Gonzalo Cid, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, 1305 East West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. (Phone: 301-713-7278, Fax: 301-713-0404; email: [gonzalo.cid@noaa.gov](mailto:gonzalo.cid@noaa.gov)).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** ONMS

serves as the trustee for 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 170,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters from the Hawaiian Islands to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries protect our Nation's most vital coastal and marine natural and cultural resources, and through active research, management, and public engagement, sustain healthy environments that are the foundation for thriving communities and stable economies. One of the many ways ONMS ensures public participation in the designation and management of national marine sanctuaries is through the formation of advisory councils. The Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council (Council) has been formed to provide advice and recommendations to the Director regarding the relationship of the ONMS with the business community. Additional information on the Council can be found at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/bac/welcome.html>.

*Matters To Be Considered:* The meeting will provide an opportunity for council representatives to hear how national marine sanctuaries are connected to users, communities, corporations, and economies and the avenues being pursued to enhance these connections. Advisory council representatives will be asked to provide advice on how ONMS can enhance its connections, programming, and marketing to expand its reach beyond a subset of communities. The agenda is subject to change. The latest version will be posted at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/bac/welcome.html>.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. Sections 1431, *et seq.* (Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog Number 11.429 Marine Sanctuary Program)

Dated: February 27, 2015.

**Daniel J. Basta,**

*Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****Census Bureau****Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; 2016 Government Units Survey**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, written comments must be submitted on or before June 1, 2015.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at [jjessup@doc.gov](mailto:jjessup@doc.gov)).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Joy P. Pierson by email at [Joy.P.Pierson@census.gov](mailto:Joy.P.Pierson@census.gov) and Elizabeth Accetta at [Elizabeth.Accetta@census.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Accetta@census.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****I. Abstract**

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

Title 13, Section 161 of the United States Code requires the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a Census of Governments every five years, in years ending in "2" and "7". Section 193 provides for the collection of preliminary and supplementary statistics as related to the main topic of the census. The Census of Governments publishes unit counts and legal descriptions as well as employment and finance data for all county, municipal, township, school district, and special district governments in the United States. Prior to conducting the Census of Governments it is necessary to ensure that the universe of all governments is as accurate and up to date as possible. The Government Units Survey (GUS) is conducted the year prior to the Census of Governments, and is used to evaluate and update the universe of all local and special district governments. The 2016 Government Units Survey (GUS) is the

instrument for collecting current information to update the universe of all county, municipal, township, and special district governments for the 2017 Census of Governments. The 2016 GUS provides critical information needed to maintain the frame from which all public sector surveys are drawn. The GUS is particularly beneficial for identifying smaller units that have not been included in surveys in between census years and identifying changes to the universe of special district governments that experience substantial change in a five-year period. The GUS contributes to the quality and timely releases of the other components of the Census of Governments.

The 2016 GUS will differ slightly from the former version of the Government Units Survey. The 2016 GUS is significantly shorter than the past version of the GUS. The 2016 GUS estimated time to respond is 15 minutes, compared to the 2011 GUS which had an estimated time to respond of 45 minutes. The 2016 GUS is designed to diminish unnecessary burden to respondents, and to collect information essential to maintaining the government universe.

The 2016 GUS will collect basic background information on all local, general purpose, and special district governments. The most basic information collected will include whether a government is still in existence. As previously noted, there are a number of governments, particularly special district governments, which have not been part of any survey or collection since the 2012 Census of Governments. It is necessary to determine if such governments are still in existence. The 2016 GUS asks a follow-up question for those governments no longer in existence to provide, if applicable, contact information for a newly created or existing entity that may be providing the services or functions of the former government. It is necessary to verify and update all this information in the universe prior to the 2017 Census of Governments.

The 2016 GUS asks all existing governments for contact information, including a mailing address and, if applicable, Web site address. This information is used to verify what currently exists in the universe and update any discrepancies. The contact information will be used when mailing the 2017 Census of Governments as well as for any public sector surveys conducted over the next five years.

The 2016 GUS also asks questions on employment and defined-contribution plans, defined-benefit, and post-