



United States Department of the Interior



FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Boqueron Field Office

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P.O. Box 491

Boqueron, PR 00622

DEC 17 2007

Mr. Kevin Cloe
Environmental Programs Branch
Department of the Navy
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic
6506 Hampton Blvd
Norfolk VA 23508-1278

Re: Amendment 1 to Biological
Assessment: Eastern
Conservation Area, Vieques,
PR

Dear Mr. Cloe:

Thank you for your letter of December 12, 2007, requesting our concurrence with your determination that the above mentioned action will not affect threatened and endangered species. Our comments are provided under the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 United States Code 1531 et seq.). Our office has assigned an identification number for this action; please refer to identification number FWS-72147-128, in future correspondence regarding this project.

Based on the description of the project, the habitat characteristics, and the conservation measures described in the Amendment 1: Eastern Conservation Area, we concur with the determination that the proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect the brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*), roseate tern (*Sterna dougalii*) and federally-listed plant species. Should additional information on listed or proposed species become available, this determination may be reconsidered. The above-reference document mentions that a separate amendment will be developed for sea turtles surveys, nesting, and restriction zones. Once we receive the separate amendment, we would review your determination of effects.

Based on the information provided in the Amendment 1, the eastern corner of the former Vieques Naval Training Range (VNTR) supports a good representation of subtropical dry forest and four not previously documented plant species from the island of Vieques are found in the area. We recommend that vegetation removal activities be closely coordinated with the refuge manager for Vieques Mr. Matt Connolly.

Mr. Cloe

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We also received copy of the site description and map set for the Former VNTR and SWMU 4 turtle nesting areas. We concur with the determination of zones and proposed set backs for the beaches.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional comments. If you have any questions, please call Marelisa Rivera at 787-851-7297 extension 231.

Sincerely yours,



Edwin E. Muñiz
Field Supervisor
Caribbean Field Office

cc:

Daniel Rodríguez, EPA Vieques
Richard Henry, FWS, NY
Matt Connolly, FWS, Vieques
EQB, SJ
Robert Matos, DNER