



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND, ATLANTIC
6506 HAMPTON BLVD
NORFOLK VA 23508-1278

5090 IN REPLY REFER TO:
Ser EV31DH/00014
24 JAN 2014

Mr. Richard Henry
Environmental Response Team
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2890 Woodbridge Avenue
Edison, NJ 08837

Dear Mr. Henry:

The U.S. Navy is pleased to submit one hardcopy and one compact disc of the Final Biological Assessment for Potential Area of Concern (PAOC) Engineering Evaluation (EE) within unexploded ordnance (UXO) 17, Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area - Vieques, Former Vieques Naval Training Range, Vieques, Puerto Rico. Additional copies are available upon request.

With this submittal the U.S. Navy is requesting to enter into a formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under 50 CFR 402.14. This consultation will be related to the effects findings contained within the Final Biological Assessment for PAOC EE within UXO 17.

The Final Biological Assessment for PAOC EE within UXO 17 has been prepared in support of the Time Critical Removal Action (TCRA) for PAOC EE. Work conducted as part of this TCRA will include the clearance of vegetation necessary to effectively conduct the removal of munitions-related items identified on the surface and within approximately the first 1 foot of the subsurface. Whenever possible, only vegetation less than 3 inches in diameter base height (DBH) will be cut. This activity may impact Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species potentially found in this area, which include the following plants: Thomas' Lidflower, Jamaican broom, Beautiful Gotzea, Cobana Negra, Island Peacock Orchid, Woodbury's Stopper and Puerto Rican Manjack, as well as the following animals: Yellow Shouldered Blackbird, Caribbean Roseate Tern, Piping Plover, Hawksbill Sea Turtle and Puerto Rican Boa. The removal of vegetation as part of the TCRA and the potential impact to and conservation measures for these species are discussed in this BA.

The U.S. Navy is requesting the following for the formal consultation:

- Completion of the consultation and biological opinion within 90 calendar days, or sooner, of receipt of this letter to allow for implementation of the TCRA in accordance with the current proposed schedule. Work is slated to begin in May 2014 and be completed within approximately 4 months.
- Formulation of a biological opinion

- Discussion with USFWS regarding information review, species status and effects of the action.
- Any reasonable and prudent alternatives
- Formulation of any discretionary conservation recommendations
- Formulation of a statement concerning incidental takes

As the schedule to complete this TCRA has been designed to allow for the continued public use of this area and has been deemed a high priority for all affected parties, the U.S. Navy is offering to take any reasonable steps necessary to expedite the completion of this consultation with USFWS.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Daniel Hood at (757) 322-4630 or email: daniel.r.hood@navy.mil.

Sincerely,


CHERRYL F. BARNETT
Environmental Business Line Manager
By direction of the Commander

Enclosure: Final Biological Assessment for PAOC EE within UXO 17