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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
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Ms. Pam Rooney
United States Department of the Interior
Fisheries and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, Massachusetts 01035-9583

Nomans Land Island
RTN 4-13390
Chilmark, Massachusetts

June 14, 1999

Dear Ms. Rooney:

The Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup appreciates the opportunity you have provided to all stakeholders to help in the development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the National Wildlife Refuges in Massachusetts. The Bureau's comments are focused on Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuge which is a former U.S. Navy bombing range, has outstanding safety and remediation issues. The Island is currently being assessed and remediated by the Navy, with state under M.G.L. Ch.21E, the "Massachusetts Superfund Law", and the Massachusetts Contingency Plan.

Determining the future use of Nomans Land Island is a critical factor in making habitat protection, risk management, and remediation decisions. In order to assure an appropriate level of protection for both wildlife and humans, coordination of both your long-term management plans and the remediation plans must be a goal for all stakeholders. Public forums on the remediation of Nomans Land Island have shown the public's interest in the restoration of the Island to meet the needs for safe public access and wildlife protection.

The management and remediation of the Island is feasible to a level that is protective to both the current (unauthorized) public access and future authorized access. Developing plans that identify and select compatible uses is clearly in keeping with both the mission of your Refuge System and the wildlife-dependant public uses stipulated in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. Identifying foreseeable uses, selecting compatible future activities and uses, and remediating accordingly, are also important aspects of the Massachusetts Contingency Plan. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has an opportunity to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan that includes both short term and long term plans for Nomans Land Island. Long-term plans could consider a post remediation future use scenario, which is closer to the compatible use plans currently being developed for Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, in Chatham. The desire to use open space in coastal areas and beaches is currently an issues both Monomoy and Nantucket

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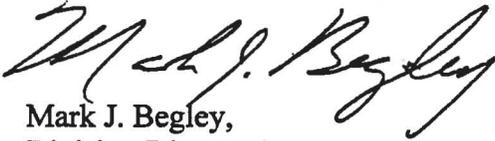
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National Wildlife Refuges. Future public use opportunities in similar coastal areas and beaches such as at Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuges make long term planning key to both a safe and well planned future for the Island. The steps leading to a well designed Comprehensive Conservation Plan could also provide guidance to the remediation planning that can assure the health and safety of the refuge, its environment, and the public. The public should ultimately be allowed to enjoy the Island, consistent with the wildlife-dependent public uses stipulated in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, once the Navy has fulfilled its requirement to remediate the island in accordance with the desired future uses.

We are pleased to be able to share our ideas with you, thanks to your outreach to local residents, Tribes and State officials. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (617) 556-1071 or Anne Malewicz, Federal Facilities Section Chief at 617 292-5659. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Very truly yours,



Mark J. Begley,
Division Director
Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup

Cc: ✓Chilmark, Chairman, Board of Selectmen
MCZM, Stephen McKenna
✓SERO, Leonard Pinaud
Dept. of Navy, Al Haring
✓US Fisheries and Wildlife, Bud Oliveria
✓MA, Fisheries and Wildlife, Tom French