



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Avenue South

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

October 15, 2014

F/SER47:JAR/pw

(Sent via Electronic Mail)

Colonel Allan M. Dodd, Commander
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
Antilles Office
400 Fernandez Juncos Avenue
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901-3299

Attention: Carmen G. Román,

Dear Colonel Dodd:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed public notice SAJ-2014-01586 (SP-CGR) dated September 16, 2014. The Municipality of Humacao requests authorization from the Department of the Army to maintenance dredging approximately 10.92 acres of the Candelero River for a period of ten years. The volume of material to be initially dredged is approximately 70,904 cubic yards. The dredged material would be side casted into the grassed floodplain, dewatered, and hauled away by truck. Temporary impacts would occur to an additional 3.6 acres along the river from project machinery and the side-casted spoil. The Jacksonville District's initial determination is the proposed maintenance dredging would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or federally managed fisheries in the Caribbean. As the nation's federal trustee for the conservation and management of marine, estuarine, and anadromous fishery resources, the following comments and recommendations are provided pursuant to authorities of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson- Stevens Act).

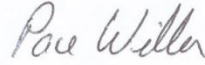
The river flood plain is no longer in a natural state due to development and frequent mowing, and the lower portion of the river has been significantly altered by dredging for flood control. Sediments and debris have accumulated in the river, in some areas the applicant reports as much as 2.5 meters. NMFS has no objection to the maintenance dredging provided all practicable measures are taken to limit turbidity, generated by the dredge and by the dewatering of the side-casted spoil, from entering coastal waters. NMFS requests the Jacksonville District closely evaluate the terms of the Water Quality Certification and augment if needed with permit conditions to ensure turbidity is as low as practicable.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Related questions or comments should be directed to the attention of Mr. José A. Rivera at NOAA HCD, c/o US Army Corps of



Engineers, 400 Fernandez Juncos Avenue, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00901-3299. He may be reached by telephone at 787-729-6860 x 3038 or by e-mail at Jose.A.Rivera@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pau Willa". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

/ for

Virginia M. Fay
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

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