

*12th Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
December 1-4, 2004
Miami, Florida*

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4 **Resolution 12-2: Establish Interagency Working Groups to Increase Effectiveness of**
5 **Compensatory Mitigation Measures In Coral Reef Ecosystems**

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7 **Background:**

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9 In 2001, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection
10 Agency (EPA) jointly funded a review of how compensatory mitigation measures for impacts on
11 coral reefs had been applied to projects implemented in the Pacific region. Preliminary results
12 were presented by the FWS at the October 2002 meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force
13 (CRTF) in Puerto Rico. Based on this presentation, the CRTF passed Resolution 4, which
14 strongly encouraged the FWS, EPA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
15 (NOAA), the U.S. Army Corps (ACOE), and local jurisdictions in the Pacific to:

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17 (1) gather data on the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation on federally funded and
18 permitted activities;
19 (2) identify mitigation actions which are most successful;
20 (3) make recommendations for improving the process of identifying, implementing and
21 evaluating successful mitigation efforts within coral reef ecosystems; and
22 (4) conduct a similar effort with appropriate partners in the Atlantic/Caribbean region.

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24 At the October 2003 CRTF meeting in the Mariana Islands, the FWS summarized the final
25 results of the Pacific region review in a report entitled *Compensatory Mitigation for Coral Reef*
26 *Impacts in the Pacific Islands* (Pacific Mitigation Report)
27 (http://pacificislands.fws.gov/worg/orghc_envrev.html). The Pacific Mitigation Report included
28 recommendations for identifying successful mitigation and improving the overall mitigation
29 process. In addition, the FWS presented preliminary information on a similar effort being
30 conducted in the Atlantic/Caribbean.

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32 At the February 2004 CRTF meeting in Washington D.C., the FWS presented pre-final results of
33 the Atlantic/Caribbean review in a draft report entitled *Investigations of Compensatory*
34 *Mitigation for Coral Reef Impacts in the U.S. Western Atlantic: Florida and the Caribbean*
35 (Atlantic/Caribbean Mitigation Report). These results indicated the existence of a situation
36 similar to that seen in the Pacific. The CRTF expressed a strong desire to reduce the impacts of
37 Federal actions on coral reef ecosystems and strongly urged the relevant agencies to collaborate
38 in achieving better performance when implementing mitigation.

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40 At the December 2004 CRTF meeting in Florida, the FWS will present the combined final
41 results and joint recommendations of both the Pacific and the Atlantic/Caribbean Mitigation
42 Reports. Based on the outcome of the interagency effort so far, the following resolution is
43 proposed for consideration by the CRTF to help develop and implement responses to the findings
44 and recommendations of the two reports.

1 **Proposed Resolution:**

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3 The CRTF recommends that relevant Federal, State, Territory, Commonwealth and Freely
4 Associated State members of the CRTF (and other partners as appropriate) collaborate to
5 develop and implement improved policies and practices regarding compensatory mitigation
6 related to coral reef ecosystems. Relevant CRTF member participants include those
7 organizations with responsibilities for the implementation, permitting/authorization,
8 consultation/review of activities that may involve compensatory mitigation actions within coral
9 reef ecosystems.

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11 The goal of this effort is to use the recent CRTF-sponsored reviews of this topic (e.g., Pacific
12 Mitigation Report, Atlantic/Caribbean Mitigation Report) and other appropriate resources to
13 assess and improve mitigation policies and practices applied to coral reef ecosystems, consistent
14 with applicable and appropriate authorities, regulations and guidance.

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16 To complete this task, CRTF member agencies agree to assist and participate in the following
17 actions:

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19 1. Establish interagency working groups to include local agencies in each jurisdiction (or other
20 means of interagency coordination) to increase communication and cooperatively address action
21 items and recommendations identified in the *Compensatory Mitigation for Coral Reef Impacts in*
22 *the Pacific Islands* (Pacific Mitigation Report) as well as the recommendations in the
23 *Investigations of Compensatory Mitigation for Coral Reef Impacts in the U.S. Western Atlantic:*
24 *Florida and the Caribbean* (Atlantic/Caribbean Mitigation Report) after the final document has
25 been reviewed and adopted. Target completion date: March 2005

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27 2. Identify participants, funding and other resources available to help support efforts of the
28 Interagency Working Groups and fulfillment of actions called for in this resolution. Target
29 completion date: May 2005

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31 3. Develop through these interagency working groups or other means, an integrated, multi-
32 agency strategy to improve local effectiveness and efficiency of coral reef mitigation efforts in
33 each jurisdiction. In addition to guidance on standard mitigation protocols and best management
34 practices, the strategy should include an outline of (1) existing gaps/needs in information,
35 capacity, or other areas for improved mitigation practices, and (2) actions required to address
36 these needs. Target completion date: December 2005

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38 4. Report to the CRTF on the progress made by the Interagency Working Groups and relevant
39 agencies on fulfilling this resolution including progress to increase interagency coordination and
40 improve mitigation processes for coral reef ecosystems in the respective jurisdictions. Target
41 completion date: Biannual reports