

SECTION 5

OTHER REQUIRED NEPA ANALYSES

This chapter addresses other considerations required by NEPA, including the following:

- Unavoidable significant adverse impacts;
- The relationship between short-term uses and long-term productivity;
- Any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources;
- Environmental health and safety risks to children; and
- Impacts found to be not significant.

Each of these impacts is discussed below.

5.1 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS

An EIS must describe any significant unavoidable impacts for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible. The environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives are described in Chapter 3 and are summarized in Section 4. No unavoidable significant adverse impacts were identified for the Proposed Action or the Alternative Regulatory Actions.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES AND MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

NEPA requires that an EIS consider the relationship between short-term uses of the environment and the impacts that such uses may have on the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity of the affected environment (40 CFR 1502.16). The proposed regulatory actions would have long-term effects, rather than short-term ones. Benefits of the Proposed Action include enhancing long-term productivity of the natural environment of the sanctuaries. As described in Chapters 1 and 2, the regulatory changes are designed to protect Sanctuary resources and to improve management of the area. Therefore, any minor short-term effects incurred from these regulatory updates would be minimal when compared to the long-term benefits under both the Proposed Action and alternatives.

5.3 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

NEPA (40 CFR 1502.16) requires that an EIS analyze the extent to which the proposed project's primary and secondary effects would commit nonrenewable resources to uses that future generations would be unable to reverse. No irreversible or irretrievable commitment of sanctuary resources would occur with the implementation of the proposed regulatory changes under the Proposed Action or alternatives. The primary focus of these regulations is to enhance and improve management of the sanctuaries and their natural resources, thereby preventing irreversible or irretrievable resource use.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS TO CHILDREN

None of the proposed or alternative regulations would result in adverse environmental health or safety risks to humans. Proposed regulations related to prohibiting vessel discharges would benefit marine water quality and would provide beneficial effects for sanctuary users who come into contact with the water, such as when swimming, windsurfing, or diving.

5.5 IMPACTS FOUND TO BE NOT SIGNIFICANT

Review of the analysis in Chapter 3 and summary in Chapter 4 indicates that the majority of potential impacts associated with the proposed regulatory changes would not be significant. In addition to the resource areas evaluated in Chapter 3, NOAA determined that the following environmental topics would not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts and, therefore, are not evaluated in detail in this EIS:

- Agriculture – Proposed regulations would not affect agriculture in the counties adjacent to the three sanctuaries.
- Public Safety – None of the proposed regulations would cause public safety risks.
- Military Uses – None of the proposed regulations would prohibit current military activities.
- Public Services and Utilities - None of the proposed regulations would cause adverse effects on public services or public service/utility providers in the study area.
- Population and Housing – Proposed regulations would not impact population and housing.
- Growth-inducing Effects – None of the proposed regulations would result in direct or indirect effects that would induce changes in population density or growth rate.
- Noise - The sanctuaries are not proposing any new noise regulations at this time. The proposed Management Plans include provisions in the wildlife disturbance action plans for addressing noise. None of the proposed changes in the sanctuary regulations would result in significant increased noise impacts on wildlife in the sanctuaries.