

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Aquatic Resources
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

March 9, 2018

Board of Land
and Natural Resources
Honolulu, Hawaii

SUBJECT: Request Approval for a FY 19 Federally Funded Project Agreement between the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) for the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) Research Project entitled "Statewide Marine Resources Assessment."

Submitted herewith for your consideration is a request to enter into a new Project Agreement between the DLNR and RCUH. The Project Agreement entitled "Statewide Marine Resources Assessment" is scheduled to run from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. The Project Agreement provides \$600,000 in Federal funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Program. The State match component is comprised of funds from DAR in-kind match, and community-based volunteer services as available. The DLNR/RCUH Project Agreement allows DAR to secure assistance from RCUH to meet project goals and objectives in a timely manner.

The purpose of this research project is to conduct marine fish and habitat surveys to determine the impact of fishing pressure and management actions on finfish and their associated habitat. The focus of the research is to assess and monitor the status and trends of fisheries resources statewide. In addition, the information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of statewide-managed areas, as well as current fisheries regulations.

In FY19, the primary objectives include, but are not limited to the following: survey the diversity and abundance of marine fish species targeted by recreational fishers in 9 managed areas and 14 unprotected control locations; collect and analyze data to determine changes in fish populations; conducting detailed habitat and environmental monitoring surveys at select coral reef sites on Maui and Kauai in order to measure changes in coral reef habitat health and their effects on finfish populations; survey the diversity and abundance of marine fish species and habitat quality in select areas where lay gillnet restrictions were imposed (effective March 2007) and at suitable control sites; conduct comprehensive surveys of fish and habitat resources to evaluate fish resources and associated habitat trends statewide in relation to the lay gillnet ban in Maui waters; conduct assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the lay gillnet ban and Kahekili Herbivore FMA on Maui and the Haena Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area on the north coast of Kauai; perform habitat recovery monitoring surveys at Pilaa on the north coast of Kauai; and conduct fishing activity surveys to increase knowledge of factors influencing trends in fish populations, fishing effort, and success at specific fishing sites around Oahu.

Approval to enter into the Project Agreement is being requested concurrently from the Governor, through the Department of Budget and Finance. Also, the Project Agreement is being prepared for submission to the Attorney General's Office for preliminary approval as to form. DAR is aware

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that implementation of this Project Agreement is dependent upon receipt of all required approvals and the availability of funds and that funding restrictions may occur at any time.

Chapter 343 - Compliance with Environmental Law:

This Project Agreement involves the use of state lands (submerged lands zoned in the Conservation District, Resource subzone) and use of state funds. The Department has determined that the actions undertaken by this project will have little or no significant effect on the environment and are exempt from the preparation of an environmental assessment. See Agency's Determination of Exemption (attached) from preparation of an environmental assessment.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the above discussion, The Division of Aquatic Resources requests:

1. That the Board, based on the attached proposed declaration of exemption prepared by the department after consultation with and advice of those having jurisdiction and expertise for the proposed actions under the Project Agreement, declare that the actions which are anticipated to be undertaken under this Project Agreement will have little or no significant effect on the environment and is therefore exempt from the preparation of an environmental assessment.
2. Upon the finding and adoption of the department's analysis by the Board, that the Board delegate and authorize the Chairperson to sign the declaration of exemption for purposes of recordkeeping requirements of Chapter 343, HRS, and Chapter 11-200, HAR.
3. Subject to necessary approvals as indicated above, that the Board authorizes the Chairperson to negotiate and approve the Division of Aquatic Resources Project Agreement entitled "Statewide Marine Resources Assessment" with The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii.
4. That the Board further authorize the Chairperson to amend the aforesaid Project Agreement, including any extensions, as necessary.

Respectfully submitted,



BRUCE S. ANDERSON, Ph.D.
Administrator

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Attachment