U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-4700
(808) 944-2200 • Fax (808) 973-2941

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Fishing Vessel Fuel Storage Project
Manu'a Islands, American Samoa

Sustainable Fisheries Fund
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

December 9, 2011

Introduction
This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared according to the guidelines established in National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Instruction 30-124-1 (July 22, 2005) and the requirements set forth in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrative Order 216-6 (NAO 216-6, May 20, 1999), concerning compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This FONSI is supported by the environmental impact analysis prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA and documented in the attached environmental assessment (EA).

Background

The establishment of fishing vessel fuel storage capacity in the Manu'a Islands, American Samoa was identified in the American Samoa Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) and will be implemented by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council under the Sustainable Fisheries Fund and pursuant to the Magnuson-Steven Fishery Conservation and Management Act Section 204(e)(7) and NOAA Cooperative Grant NA10NMF441067.

The Manu'a Islands (Ofu, Olosega, Ta'u) currently lack fuel storage to support local vessels, which restricts fleet range and participation in offshore fisheries. Currently, some Manu'a Islands fishermen transport their own fuel in drums or other small containers on the inter-island ferry from Tutuila and to the Manu'a Islands, which can be dangerous and burdensome. The proposed action would be the procurement of four transportable 500 gallon fuel tanks to be securely housed near the main harbor areas of Ofu and Ta'u. After procurement and delivery of the fuel tanks to Tutuila, the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources will administer the fueling and transportation of the tanks to and from the Manu'a Islands. The tanks will be stored in fenced, open air shelters owned by the American Samoa government. Fuel dispensation will be conducted by trained DMWR personnel and available only to the fishing community in the Manu'a Islands for vessel fuel only.

Agencies Consulted, Approvals and Authorizations

The Council has been working in close coordination with the American Samoa government's Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR), Department of Public Works, and other government agencies such as the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency. Approval has been provided by American Samoa's Project Notification Review System board which membership includes the following;

a. American Samoa Coastal Management Program;
b. American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency;
c. American Samoa Historic Preservation Office;
d. American Samoa Power Authority;
e. American Samoa Department of Health;
f. American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources;
g. American Samoa Department of Parks and Recreation; and
h. American Samoa Department of Public Works

Significance Analysis

NAO 216-6 contains criteria for determining the significance of the environmental impacts of a proposed action. In addition, the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations at 40 CFR 1508.27 state that the significance of an action should be analyzed both in terms of "context" and "intensity." Each criterion listed below is relevant in making a finding of no significant impact and has been considered individually, as well as in combination with the others. The significance of this action is analyzed based on the NAO 216-6 criteria and CEQ's context and intensity criteria for the selected alternative.

1) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to jeopardize the sustainability of any target and non-target species that may be affected by the action?

No. No adverse impacts to target and non-target species are expected to occur. Fish stocks are considered healthy around the Manu'a Islands. While the fuel storage tanks may allow consistent access to fuel by vessel owners, it is not expected to significantly increase fishing pressure on bottomfish and pelagic fish stocks. If anything, the minimal amount of potential increases in bottomfish and pelagic fishing may help take pressure off nearshore stocks fished from shore.

2) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to cause substantial damage to the ocean and coastal habitats and/or essential fish habitat as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and identified in Fishery Management Plans?

No. This project does not involve any physical alteration to any ocean or coastal habitat, therefore no potential damage to EFH. Continue operation of the project in terms of transporting fuel and back fort on the ferry from Tutuila and Manu'a Islands poses threats to EFH only if the tanks are lost at sea. All practicable precautions and best management practices will be employed to ensure that the tanks are transported in the safest and secured manner.

4) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse impact on public health or safety?

No. This project will utilize tanks made to specific requirements that minimize danger from fuel leakage and best management practices during operation will be utilized. Furthermore, having vessel fuel storage near the main harbors in the Manu'a Islands may provide added resources in the event of emergency response.

5) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to adversely affect endangered or threatened species, marine mammals, or critical habitat of these species?

No. This project does not involve an alternation to critical habitat for any ESA-listed species nor will impact any marine mammal species. The tanks will be stored in secure facility with access only by authorized personnel. Vessel-based fishing in the Manu's Islands use hook and line gear for bottomfish and pelagic trolling. Interactions with protected species with this type of gear are rare. There is no documentation of interactions with protected species and Manua Islands fishermen. shing operations in the Manua Island. It is not believed that any protected species will affected by the proposed action.

6) Can the proposed action be expected to have a substantial impact on biodiversity and/or ecosystem function within the affected area (e.g., benthic productivity, predator-prey relationships, etc.)?

No. This project will not alter any physical habitat nor will any organisms be removed or harvested from this project. Spilled gasoline can impact the environment through evaporation into the air, diffusion into the soil and releases into drainage. The environmental impacts of improper handling, storage and disposal of gasoline largely stem from sloppy filling of small engines, using inappropriate containers, overfilling containers, storing gasoline in open containers or disposing of excess gasoline improperly. Improperly stored gasoline can cause an explosion and, if anything other than an approved gasoline container is used to store gasoline, leakage is more likely. The users of the proposed Ofu and Ta`u facilities would be required to use proper containers with closed caps. The proposed action is the procurement of four 500-gallon gasoline storage tanks for Ofu and Ta'u that will be secured on cemented areas, with no drainage channels nearby that empty into any water source. Furthermore, the US Environmental Protection Agency requires a Spill Prevention, Control, Countermeasure (SPCC) plan which has been approved by the local American Samoa EPA office (details of the plan are listed in Section 2.2 and Appendix 1 of the EA).

7) Are the effects on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?

No. The Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure plan is approved and there are no controversial aspects to this project.

9) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in substantial impacts to unique areas, such as historic or cultural resources, park land, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas?

No. The project has been approved by the American Samoa PNRS board and found that there will be no impacts to unique areas, cultural resources, park land, or any other ecologically important areas.

10) Are the effects on the human environment likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks?

No. The project involves fuel tanks that are manufactured to specific standards for proper use, transpiration, and storage. Transportable fuel tanks are not novel, but used all over the world for multiple purposes.

11) Is the proposed action related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts?

No. The proposed project does not result in cumulative adverse impacts when added to existing conditions facing target stocks, protected species, and fishery participants in the Manu'a Islands. The locations of where the fuel storage tanks will be located are not pristine areas, and have been subject to use by local residents. However, the fuel tanks facilities will not involve any new excavation or expansion of the current developed footprint within Ofu and Ta'u harbors.

12) Is the proposed action likely to adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources?

No. Neither of the fuel tank storage locations affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The American Samoa government's Project Notification Review System board reviewed and approved the land use permits for these areas. In that review and approval, historic places were considered and none were found at the project site.

13) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in the introduction or spread of a nonindigenous species?

No. It is believed that the project will not lead to increase inter-island ferry trips between Manu'a Islands and Tutuila, therefore the potential for the transportation of the fuel storage tanks to result in the spread of nonidigenous is negligible.

14) Is the proposed action likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration?

No. The fuel storage tanks will not result in automatic approval of future storage tanks as these projects are evaluated on a case by case basis and on the needs identified by the American Samoa government and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

15) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment?

No. The proposed action complies with requirements of Federal and local American Samoa law. Approvals have been American Samoa PNRS board which includes several local American Samoa government agencies with regulatory authority.

Other Findings
NMFS also considered the effects of the project on climate change and climate change impacts on the feasibility of the project. Sea level is expected to rise approximately 1 meter by 2100, however, the locations where the fuel tanks will be stored is above the area potentially affected by sea level rise. Furthermore, because the tanks will be transportable and not fixed to the ground, moving the tanks in the event of sea level rise or flooding is not difficult.

Determination
In view of the information presented in this document and the analysis contained in the supporting Environmental Assessment, I have determined that the proposed action will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment as described above and in the supporting EA. In addition, all beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action have been addressed to reach the conclusion of no significant impacts. Accordingly, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for this action is not necessary.

Michael D. Tosatto Regional Administrator	1 · 3 · 2012 Date