



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

DEC 17 2012

Michael D. Arendt
Wildlife Biologist III
SCDNR/MRD/MRRI
217 Fort Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29412

Dear Dr. Arendt:

Thank you for agreeing to participate as a peer reviewer of the Draft Biological Report on the Designation of Marine Critical Habitat for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle, *Caretta caretta*. We appreciate your willingness to help with this important effort to prepare a proposed rule associated with this document, especially over the holidays.

Please note specific requirements below. In addition to conducting the peer review, we do need you to fill out a conflict of interest disclosure form (attached) and attach a CV for our files.

General Directives:

1. Please provide comments on the scientific information and data contained within the biological report.
2. If you believe that justification is lacking or specific information was applied incorrectly in reaching conclusions, please be specific in your comments.
3. Please provide your comments no later than January 18, 2013.

Requirements for the Peer Review:

1. The President's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a Peer Review Bulletin (December 2004) that requires online posting of this peer review as it has been determined to be "influential." To ensure that we have a transparent process for public disclosure, names and affiliations of each peer reviewer is posted online as well as comments. We are required to identify peer reviewers by name and affiliation, but NMFS has the ability to post a compilation of reviewer comments. Therefore, we will not associate individual comments with reviewer name; rather we will compile the unabridged comments and organize by a reviewer number. Previously submitted Peer Reviews are available at http://www.cio.noaa.gov/Policy_Programs/prplans/PRsummaries.html
2. The Peer Review Bulletin further requires that non-Federal peer reviewers complete a "Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure" form – I attached the form and request that it return with your review. Please note that you are required to submit a CV with the signed form. Peer reviewers who are federal employees do not need to sign the conflict of interest form; rather they must comply with applicable federal ethics requirements such as those at: www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_07/5cfr2635_07.html.



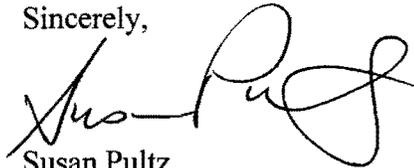
3. Notably, if NMFS receives a FOIA request, anonymity of peer reviewers or comments cannot be guaranteed.

Logistics:

1. You may get comments to me in any form you wish -- mark directly on the draft and return it to me in hard copy, or submit comments electronically to me in whatever format you wish.
2. Make sure that you return a signed conflict of interest form with the peer review and attach a CV.
3. Note that the draft biological report is in a pre-decisional/pre-dissemination status; as such, please keep this document confidential.
4. Please forward your comments by January 18, 2013.

The Office of Protected Resources appreciates your time and effort in completing this review. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Susan Pultz, Office of Protected Resources by phone at (301) 427-8472 or by email at susan.pultz@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Pultz", written in a cursive style.

Susan Pultz
Endangered Species Biologist

Enclosures