



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
333 MARKET STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94105-2197

SEP 26 2005

Regulatory Branch

SUBJECT: File Number 28786S

Ms. Mandy Allen
Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute
7700 Sandholt Road
Moss Landing, California 95039-9644

Dear Ms. Allen:

This letter is written in response to your submittal of June 6, 2005, concerning Department of the Army authorization to impact Corps jurisdictional waters with the installation of an advanced undersea cabled observatory in Monterey Bay that would utilize new power and communication technologies to provide a remote, continuous, high-power, large-bandwidth infrastructure of multidisciplinary, in situ exploration, observation and experimentation in the deep sea. The project would also serve as the engineering test bed for future cabled observatories. The project consists of a single submarine cable that would be laid (plow burial typically consists of a 7-foot wide area of disturbance, with simultaneous lay and bury operations) between a shore station in Moss Landing and the science node that would be located on the seabed at the end of the cable route and housed within a trawl-resistant bottom mount frame (measures approximately 15-feet long, 12-feet wide and 4-feet high) to secure it to the seabed. The project has onshore and offshore segments and consists of a single submarine cable that would be laid between the onshore cable-landing site in Moss Landing, Monterey County, CA extending from Moss Landing to the northwest, north of the submarine Monterey Canyon and along the continental margin to the southeastern part of Smooth Ridge, terminating on the seabed of Smooth Ridge at a depth of 2,923 feet, approximately 31.7 miles west of Moss Landing within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The Moss Landing cable landing is located at 36°48'38"N, 121°47'33"W; the offshore cable terminus is located at approximately 36° 43'13"N, 122°11'25"W.

Based on a review of the information you submitted, your project qualifies for authorization under Department of the Army Nationwide Permit (NWP) 12, Utility Line Activities, (67 Fed. Reg. 2020, January 15, 2002), pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Section 1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. Section 403). See Enclosure 1. The project must be undertaken as described in the permit application dated June 6, 2005 with associated plans and drawings dated May 31, 2005 titled "MARS Advanced Undersea Cabled Observatory, Figure 1-7".

The project must be in compliance with the General Conditions cited in Enclosure 2 for this Nationwide Permit authorization to remain valid. Non-compliance with any condition could result in the suspension, modification or revocation of the authorization for your project, thereby requiring you to obtain an Individual Permit from the Corps. This Nationwide Permit authorization does not obviate the need to obtain other State or local approvals required by law.

This authorization will remain valid until March 18, 2007, unless the Nationwide Permit is suspended, modified or revoked. If you have commenced work or are under contract to commence work prior to the suspension, or revocation of the Nationwide Permit and the project would not comply with the resulting Nationwide Permit authorization, you have twelve (12) months from that date to complete the project under the present terms and conditions of the Nationwide Permit. Upon completion of the project and all associated mitigation requirements, you shall sign and return the Certification of Compliance, Enclosure 3, verifying that you have complied with the terms and conditions of the permit.

This authorization will not be effective until you have obtained a Section 401 water quality certification from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and a concurrence from the California Coastal Commission that your project will comply with California's Coastal Zone Management Act. If the RWQCB fails to act on a valid request for certification within two (2) months after receipt of a complete application, the Corps will presume a waiver of water quality certification has been obtained. If the Commission fails to act on a valid request for concurrence with your certification within six (6) months after receipt, the Corps will presume a concurrence has been obtained. You shall submit a copy of the certification and the concurrence to the Corps prior to the commencement of work.

To ensure compliance with this Nationwide Permit authorization, the following special condition shall be implemented:

1) To reduce and/or avoid adverse impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), NMFS has offered the following two EFH Conservation Recommendations:

*To avoid degradation of hard bottom communities, during the pre-lay grapnel run, MBARI should avoid areas where rock outcrops, escarpments, carbonated substrate or other hard-bottom habitats are present and

*Should inspections of high risk areas indicate that cable movement is disturbing hard bottom biotic communities, MBARI should implement measures to reduce these impacts and notify NMFS in writing of measures being implemented. Possible measures may include adjusting cable slack or anchoring the cable to the seafloor.

The Corps concurs with the EFH Conservation Recommendations and has therefore incorporated both as a special condition to the permit authorization for the project. A description of how the EFH Conservation Recommendations will be implemented and any other measures that will be required to avoid, mitigate or offset the adverse impacts of the activity are listed:

1. To avoid hard bottom communities, during the pre-lay grapnel run, MBARI shall avoid areas where rock outcrops, escarpments, carbonated substrates, or other hard bottom habitats are present. Surveys of the seafloor and proposed cable route indicate that unavoidable hard bottom habitats may exist along 5.7 miles of the proposed cable route. In addition to existing seafloor surveys, MBARI will be conducting further surveys in October to refine the cable route to avoid such areas during the pre-lay grapnel run to the extent possible. The grapnel will be raised above these areas and then lowered to the seafloor again once past the hard bottom areas.

2. Should inspections of high risk area indicate that cable movement is disturbing hard bottom biotic communities, MBARI shall implement measures to reduce these impacts and notify NMFS in writing of measures being implemented. Specific measures implemented will depend on the location and specific situation of the disturbance. Possible measures may include adjusting the cable slack, or anchoring the cable to the seafloor. The California Coastal Commission's Staff Report for the Coastal Development Permit and Federal Consistency Certification (dated August 9, 2005), requires several special conditions that also address this issue. Special Condition 7 requires a survey of the cable route within 18-24 months of installation, and another survey 18-24 months after the first survey to assess any evidence of cable movement. Special Condition 13 requires the use of "best available technology" to control cable slack

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Bob Quebedeaux of our Regulatory Branch at 415-977-8446. Please address all correspondence to the Regulatory Branch and refer to the File Number at the head of this letter. If you would like to provide comments on our permit review process, please complete the Customer Survey Form available through the Forms and Contacts Block on our website: www.spn.usace.army.mil/regulatory/

Sincerely,



Mark D'Avignon
Acting Chief, South Section
Regulatory Branch

Enclosures

2002 Nationwide Permits

(effective 18 March 2002)

12. **Utility Line Activities.** Activities required for the construction, maintenance and repair of utility lines and associated facilities in waters of the U.S. as follows:

(i) **Utility lines:** The construction, maintenance, or repair of utility lines, including outfall and intake structures and the associated excavation, backfill, or bedding for the utility lines, in all waters of the U.S., provided there is no change in preconstruction contours. A "utility line" is defined as any pipe or pipeline for the transportation of any gaseous, liquid, liquescent, or slurry substance, for any purpose, and any cable, line, or wire for the transmission for any purpose of electrical energy, telephone, and telegraph messages, and radio and television communication. (See Note 1 below.) Material resulting from trench excavation may be temporarily sidecast (up to three months) into waters of the U.S., provided that the material is not placed in such a manner that it is dispersed by currents or other forces. The District Engineer may extend the period of temporary side casting not to exceed a total of 180 days, where appropriate. In wetlands, the top 6" to 12" of the trench should normally be backfilled with topsoil from the trench. Furthermore, the trench cannot be constructed in such a manner as to drain waters of the U.S. (e.g., backfilling with extensive gravel layers, creating a french drain effect). For example, utility line trenches can be backfilled with clay blocks to ensure that the trench does not drain the waters of the U.S. through which the utility line is installed. Any exposed slopes and stream banks must be stabilized immediately upon completion of the utility line crossing of each waterbody.

(ii) **Utility line substations:** The construction, maintenance, or expansion of a substation facility associated with a power line or utility line in non-tidal waters of the U.S., excluding non-tidal wetlands adjacent to tidal waters, provided the activity does not result in the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of non-tidal waters of the U.S.

(iii) **Foundations for overhead utility line towers, poles, and anchors:** The construction or maintenance of foundations for overhead utility line towers, poles, and anchors in all waters of the U.S., provided the foundations are the minimum size necessary and separate footings for each tower leg (rather than a larger single pad) are used where feasible.

(iv) **Access roads:** The construction of access roads for the construction and maintenance of utility lines, including overhead power lines and utility line substations, in non-tidal

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waters of the U.S., excluding non-tidal wetlands adjacent to tidal waters, provided the discharges do not cause the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of non-tidal waters of the U.S. Access roads shall be the minimum width necessary. (See Note 2 below.) Access roads must be constructed so that the length of the road minimizes the adverse effects on waters of the U.S. and as near as possible to preconstruction contours and elevations (e.g., at grade corduroy roads or geotextile/gravel roads). Access roads constructed above preconstruction contours and elevations in waters of the U.S. must be properly bridged or culverted to maintain surface flows.

The term "utility line" does not include activities which drain a water of the U.S., such as drainage tile, or french drains; however, it does apply to pipes conveying drainage from another area. For the purposes of this NWP, the loss of waters of the U.S. includes the filled area plus waters of the U.S. that are adversely affected by flooding, excavation, or drainage as a result of the project. Activities authorized by Paragraphs (i) through (iv) may not exceed a total of 1/2 acre loss of waters of the U.S. Waters of the U.S. temporarily affected by filling, flooding, excavation, or drainage, where the project area is restored to preconstruction contours and elevation, is not included in the calculation of permanent loss of waters of the U.S. This includes temporary construction mats (e.g., timber, steel, geotextile) used during construction and removed upon completion of the work. Where certain functions and values of waters of the U.S. are permanently adversely affected, such as the conversion of a forested wetland to a herbaceous wetland in the permanently maintained utility line right-of-way, mitigation will be required to reduce the adverse effects of the project to the minimal level.

Mechanized land clearing necessary for the construction, maintenance, or repair of utility lines and the construction, maintenance and expansion of utility line substations, foundations for overhead utility lines, and access roads is authorized, provided the cleared area is kept to the minimum necessary and preconstruction contours are maintained as near as possible. The area of waters of the U.S. that is filled, excavated, or flooded must be limited to the minimum necessary to construct the utility line, substations, foundations, and access roads. Excess material must be removed to upland areas immediately upon completion of construction. This NWP may authorize utility lines in or affecting navigable waters of the U.S. even if there is no associated discharge of dredged or fill material. (See 33 CFR Part 322.)

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Notification: The permittee must notify the District Engineer in accordance with General Condition 13, if any of the following criteria are met:

- (a) Mechanized land clearing in a forested wetland for the utility line right-of-way;
- (b) A Section 10 permit is required;
- (c) The utility line in waters of the U.S., excluding overhead lines, exceeds 500 feet;
- (d) The utility line is placed within a jurisdictional area (i.e., water of the U.S.), and it runs parallel to a stream bed that is within that jurisdictional area;
- (e) Discharges associated with the construction of utility line substations that result in the loss of greater than 1/10 acre of waters of the U.S.;
- (f) Permanent access roads constructed above grade in waters of the U.S. for a distance of more than 500 feet; or
- (g) Permanent access roads constructed in waters of the U.S. with impervious materials. (Sections 10 and 404)

Note 1: Overhead utility lines constructed over Section 10 waters and utility lines that are routed in or under Section 10 waters without a discharge of dredged or fill material require a Section 10 permit; except for pipes or pipelines used to transport gaseous, liquid, liquescent, or slurry substances over navigable waters of the U.S., which are considered to be bridges, not utility lines, and may require a permit from the USCG pursuant to Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. However, any discharges of dredged or fill material associated with such pipelines will require a Corps permit under Section 404.

Note 2: Access roads used for both construction and maintenance may be authorized, provided they meet the terms and conditions of this NWP. Access roads used solely for construction of the utility line must be removed upon completion of the work and the area restored to preconstruction contours, elevations, and wetland conditions. Temporary access roads for construction may be authorized by NWP 33.

Note 3: Where the proposed utility line is constructed or installed in navigable waters of the U.S. (i.e., Section 10 waters), copies of the PCN and NWP verification will be sent by the Corps to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Ocean Service (NOS), for charting the utility line to protect navigation.

Nationwide Permit General Conditions - March 18, 2002

The following General Conditions must be followed in order for any authorization by an NWP to be valid:

1. Navigation. No activity may cause more than a minimal adverse effect on navigation.
2. Proper Maintenance. Any structure or fill authorized shall be properly maintained, including maintenance to ensure public safety.
3. Soil Erosion and Sediment Controls. Appropriate soil erosion and sediment controls must be used and maintained in effective operating condition during construction, and all exposed soil and other fills, as well as any work below the ordinary high water mark or high tide line, must be permanently stabilized at the earliest practicable date. Permittees are encouraged to perform work within waters of the United States during periods of low-flow or no-flow.
4. Aquatic Life Movements. No activity may substantially disrupt the necessary life-cycle movements of those species of aquatic life indigenous to the waterbody, including those species that normally migrate through the area, unless the activity's primary purpose is to impound water. Culverts placed in streams must be installed to maintain low flow conditions.
5. Equipment. Heavy equipment working in wetlands must be placed on mats, or other measures must be taken to minimize soil disturbance.
6. Regional and Case-By-Case Conditions. The activity must comply with any regional conditions that may have been added by the Division Engineer (See 33 CFR Part 330.4(e).) and with any case specific conditions added by the Corps or by the State or tribe in its Section 401 Water Quality Certification or Coastal Zone Management Act consistency determination.
7. Wild and Scenic Rivers. No activity may occur in a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System; or in a river officially designated by Congress as a "study river" for possible inclusion in the system, while the river is in an official study status; unless the appropriate Federal agency, with direct management responsibility for such river, has determined in writing that the proposed activity will not adversely affect the Wild and Scenic River designation, or study status. Information on Wild and Scenic Rivers may be obtained from the appropriate Federal land management agency in the area (e.g., National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).
8. Tribal Rights. No activity or its operation may impair reserved tribal rights, including, but not limited to, reserved water rights and treaty fishing and hunting rights.
9. Water Quality.
 - (a) In certain states and tribal lands an individual Section 401 Water Quality Certification must be obtained or waived. (See 33 CFR Part 330.4(c).)
 - (b) For NWPs 12, 14, 17, 18, 32, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44, where the state or tribal Section 401 certification (either generically or individually) does not require or approve water quality management measures, the permittee must provide water quality management measures that will ensure that the authorized work does not result in more than minimal degradation of water quality (or the Corps determines that compliance with state or local standards, where applicable, will ensure no more than minimal adverse effect on water quality). An important component of water quality management includes stormwater management that minimizes degradation of the downstream aquatic system, including water quality. (Refer to General Condition 21 for stormwater management requirements.) Another important component of water quality management is the establishment and maintenance of vegetated buffers next to open waters, including streams. (Refer to General Condition 19 for vegetated buffer requirements for the NWPs.)

This condition is only applicable to projects that have the potential to affect water quality. While appropriate measures must be taken, in most cases it is not necessary to conduct detailed studies to identify such measures or to require monitoring.
10. Coastal Zone Management. In certain states, an individual state coastal zone management consistency concurrence must be obtained or waived. (See 33 CFR Part 330.4(d).)
11. Endangered Species.
 - (a) No activity is authorized under any NWP which is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species or a species proposed for such designation, as identified under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), or which will destroy or adversely modify the critical habitat of such species. Non-federal permittees shall notify the District Engineer if any listed species or designated critical habitat might be affected or is in the vicinity of the project, or is located in the designated critical habitat and shall not begin work on the activity until notified by the District Engineer that the requirements of the ESA have been satisfied and that the activity is authorized. For activities that may affect Federally-listed endangered or threatened species or designated critical habitat, the notification must include the name(s) of the endangered or

threatened species that may be affected by the proposed work or that utilize the designated critical habitat that may be affected by the proposed work. As a result of formal or informal consultation with the FWS or NMFS, the District Engineer may add species-specific regional endangered species conditions to the NWP's.

(b) Authorization of an activity by a NWP does not authorize the "take" of a threatened or endangered species as defined under the ESA. In the absence of separate authorization (e.g., an ESA Section 10 Permit, a Biological Opinion with "incidental take" provisions, etc.) from the FWS or the NMFS, both lethal and non-lethal "takes" of protected species are in violation of the ESA. Information on the location of threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat can be obtained directly from the offices of the FWS and NMFS or their world wide web pages at <http://www.fws.gov/r9endspp/endspp.html> and <http://www.nfms.gov/prot res/overview/es.html> respectively.

12. Historic Properties. No activity which may affect historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places is authorized, until the District Engineer has complied with the provisions of 33 CFR Part 325, Appendix C. The prospective permittee must notify the District Engineer if the authorized activity may affect any historic properties listed, determined to be eligible, or which the prospective permittee has reason to believe may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and shall not begin the activity until notified by the District Engineer that the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act have been satisfied and that the activity is authorized. Information on the location and existence of historic resources can be obtained from the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Register of Historic Places. (See 33 CFR Part 330.4(g).) For activities that may affect historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, the notification must state which historic property may be affected by the proposed work or include a vicinity map indicating the location of the historic property.

13. Notification.

(a) Timing: Where required by the terms of the NWP, the prospective permittee must notify the District Engineer with a preconstruction notification (PCN) as early as possible. The District Engineer must determine if the notification is complete within 30 days of the date of receipt and can request additional information necessary to make the PCN complete only once. However, if the prospective permittee does not provide all of the requested information, then the District Engineer will notify the prospective permittee that the notification is still incomplete and the PCN review process will not commence until all of the requested information has been received by the District Engineer. The prospective permittee shall not begin the activity:

(1) Until notified in writing by the District Engineer that the activity may proceed under the NWP with any special conditions imposed by the District or Division Engineer; or

(2) If notified in writing by the District or Division Engineer that an Individual Permit is required; or

(3) Unless 45 days have passed from the District Engineer's receipt of the complete notification and the prospective permittee has not received written notice from the District or Division Engineer. Subsequently, the permittee's right to proceed under the NWP may be modified, suspended, or revoked only in accordance with the procedure set forth in 33 CFR Part 330.5(d) (2).

(b) Contents of Notification: The notification must be in writing and include the following information:

(1) Name, address and telephone numbers of the prospective permittee;

(2) Location of the proposed project;

(3) Brief description of the proposed project; the project's purpose; direct and indirect adverse environmental effects the project would cause; any other NWP(s), Regional General Permit(s), or Individual Permit(s) used or intended to be used to authorize any part of the proposed project or any related activity. Sketches should be provided when necessary to show that the activity complies with the terms of the NWP. (Sketches usually clarify the project and when provided result in a quicker decision.);

(4) For NWPs 7, 12, 14, 18, 21, 29, 31, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43, the PCN must include a delineation of affected special aquatic sites, including wetlands, vegetated shallows (e.g., submerged aquatic vegetation, seagrass beds), and riffle and pool complexes (See Paragraph 13(f) below.);

(5) For NWP 7 (Outfall Structures and Maintenance), the PCN must include information regarding the original design capacities and configurations of those areas of the facility where maintenance dredging or excavation is proposed;

(6) For NWP 14 (Linear Transportation Projects), the PCN must include a compensatory mitigation proposal to offset permanent losses of waters of the U.S. and a statement describing how temporary losses of waters of the U.S. will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable;

(7) For NWP 21 (Surface Coal Mining Activities), the PCN must include an Office of Surface Mining (OSM) or state-approved mitigation plan, if applicable. To be authorized by this NWP, the District Engineer must determine that the activity complies with the terms and conditions of the NWP and that the adverse environmental effects are minimal both individually and cumulatively and must notify the project sponsor of this determination in writing;

(8) For NWP 27 (Stream and Wetland Restoration Activities), the PCN must include documentation of the prior condition of the site that will be reverted by the permittee;

(9) For NWP 29 (Single-family Housing), the PCN must include:

(i) Any past use of this NWP by the prospective permittee and/or the permittee's spouse;

(ii) A statement that the single-family housing activity is for a personal residence of the permittee;

(iii) A description of the entire parcel, including its size, and a delineation of wetlands. For the purpose of this NWP, parcels of land measuring 1/4 acre or less will not require a formal on-site delineation. However, the applicant shall provide an indication of where the wetlands

are and the amount of wetlands that exists on the property. For parcels greater than 1/4 acre in size, formal wetland delineation must be prepared in accordance with the current method required by the Corps. (See Paragraph 13(f) below.);

(iv) A written description of all land (including, if available, legal descriptions) owned by the prospective permittee and/or the prospective permittee's spouse, within a one mile radius of the parcel, in any form of ownership (including any land owned as a partner, corporation, joint tenant, co-tenant, or as a tenant-by-the-entirety) and any land on which a purchase and sale agreement or other contract for sale or purchase has been executed;

(10) For NWP 31 (Maintenance of Existing Flood Control Facilities), the prospective permittee must either notify the District Engineer with a PCN prior to each maintenance activity or submit a five year (or less) maintenance plan. In addition, the PCN must include all of the following:

(i) Sufficient baseline information identifying the approved channel depths and configurations and existing facilities. Minor deviations are authorized, provided the approved flood control protection or drainage is not increased;

(ii) A delineation of any affected special aquatic sites, including wetlands; and

(iii) Location of the dredged material disposal site;

(11) For NWP 33 (Temporary Construction, Access, and Dewatering), the PCN must include a restoration plan of reasonable measures to avoid and minimize adverse effects to aquatic resources;

(12) For NWPs 39, 43, and 44, the PCN must also include a written statement to the District Engineer explaining how avoidance and minimization for losses of waters of the US were achieved on the project site;

(13) For NWP 39 and NWP 42, the PCN must include a compensatory mitigation proposal to offset losses of waters of the US or justification explaining why compensatory mitigation should not be required. For discharges that cause the loss of greater than 300 linear feet of an intermittent stream bed, to be authorized, the District Engineer must determine that the activity complies with the other terms and conditions of the NWP, determine adverse environmental effects are minimal both individually and cumulatively, and waive the limitation on stream impacts in writing before the permittee may proceed;

(14) For NWP 40 (Agricultural Activities), the PCN must include a compensatory mitigation proposal to offset losses of waters of the U.S. This NWP does not authorize the relocation of greater than 300 linear feet of existing serviceable drainage ditches constructed in non-tidal streams unless, for drainage ditches constructed in intermittent non-tidal streams, the District Engineer waives this criterion in writing, and the District Engineer has determined that the project complies with all terms and conditions of this NWP, and that any adverse impacts of the project on the aquatic environment are minimal, both individually and cumulatively;

(15) For NWP 43 (Stormwater Management Facilities), the PCN must include, for the construction of new stormwater management facilities, a maintenance plan (in accordance with state and local requirements, if applicable) and a compensatory mitigation proposal to offset losses of waters of the U.S. For discharges that cause the loss of greater than 300 linear feet of an intermittent stream bed, to be authorized, the District Engineer must determine that the activity complies with the other terms and conditions of the NWP, determine adverse environmental effects are minimal both individually and cumulatively, and waive the limitation on stream impacts in writing before the permittee may proceed;

(16) For NWP 44 (Mining Activities), the PCN must include a description of all waters of the U.S. adversely affected by the project, a description of measures taken to minimize adverse effects to waters of the U.S., a description of measures taken to comply with the criteria of the NWP, and a reclamation plan (for all aggregate mining activities in isolated waters and non-tidal wetlands adjacent to headwaters and any hard rock/mineral mining activities);

(17) For activities that may adversely affect Federally-listed endangered or threatened species, the PCN must include the name(s) of those endangered or threatened species that may be affected by the proposed work or utilize the designated critical habitat that may be affected by the proposed work; and

(18) For activities that may affect historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, the PCN must state which historic property may be affected by the proposed work or include a vicinity map indicating the location of the historic property.

(c) Form of Notification: The standard Individual Permit application form (ENG FORM 4345) may be used as the notification but must clearly indicate that it is a PCN and must include all of the information required in Paragraphs (b) (1)-(18) of General Condition 13. A letter containing the requisite information may also be used.

(d) District Engineer's Decision: In reviewing the PCN for the proposed activity, the District Engineer will determine whether the activity authorized by the NWP will result in more than minimal individual or cumulative adverse environmental effects or may be contrary to the public interest. The prospective permittee may submit a proposed mitigation plan with the PCN to expedite the process. The District Engineer will consider any proposed compensatory mitigation the applicant has included in the proposal in determining whether the net adverse environmental effects to the aquatic environment of the proposed work are minimal. If the District Engineer determines that the activity complies with the terms and conditions of the NWP and that the adverse effects on the aquatic environment are minimal, after considering mitigation, the District Engineer will notify the permittee and include any conditions the District Engineer deems necessary. The District Engineer must approve any compensatory mitigation proposal before the permittee commences work. If the prospective permittee is required to submit a compensatory mitigation proposal with the PCN, the proposal may be either conceptual or detailed. If the prospective permittee elects to submit a compensatory mitigation plan with the PCN, the District Engineer will expeditiously review the proposed compensatory mitigation plan. The District Engineer must review the plan within 45 days of receiving a complete PCN and determine whether the conceptual or specific proposed mitigation would ensure no more than minimal adverse effects on the aquatic environment. If the net adverse effects of the project on the aquatic environment (after consideration of the compensatory mitigation proposal) are determined by the

District Engineer to be minimal, the District Engineer will provide a timely written response to the applicant. The response will state that the project can proceed under the terms and conditions of the NWP.

If the District Engineer determines that the adverse effects of the proposed work are more than minimal, then the District Engineer will notify the applicant either:

- (1) that the project does not qualify for authorization under the NWP and instruct the applicant on the procedures to seek authorization under an Individual Permit;
- (2) that the project is authorized under the NWP subject to the applicant's submission of a mitigation proposal that would reduce the adverse effects on the aquatic environment to the minimal level; or
- (3) that the project is authorized under the NWP with specific modifications or conditions.

Where the District Engineer determines that mitigation is required to ensure no more than minimal adverse effects occur to the aquatic environment, the activity will be authorized within the 45-day PCN period. The authorization will include the necessary conceptual or specific mitigation or a requirement that the applicant submit a mitigation proposal that would reduce the adverse effects on the aquatic environment to the minimal level. When conceptual mitigation is included, or a mitigation plan is required under item (2) above, no work in waters of the U.S. will occur until the District Engineer has approved a specific mitigation plan.

(e) Agency Coordination: The District Engineer will consider any comments from Federal and state agencies concerning the proposed activity's compliance with the terms and conditions of the NWPs and the need for mitigation to reduce the project's adverse environmental effects to a minimal level.

For activities requiring notification to the District Engineer that result in the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of waters of the U.S., the District Engineer will provide immediately (e.g., via facsimile transmission, overnight mail, or other expeditious manner) a copy to the appropriate Federal or state offices (FWS, state natural resource or water quality agency, EPA, State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and, if appropriate, NMFS). With the exception of NWP 37, these agencies will then have 10 calendar days from the date the material is transmitted to telephone or fax the District Engineer notice that they intend to provide substantive, site-specific comments. If so contacted by an agency, the District Engineer will wait an additional 15 calendar days before making a decision on the notification. The District Engineer will fully consider agency comments received within the specified time frame, but will provide no response to the resource agency, except as provided below. The District Engineer will indicate in the administrative record associated with each notification that the resource agencies' concerns were considered. As required by Section 305(b)(4)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the District Engineer will provide a response to NMFS within 30 days of receipt of any Essential Fish Habitat conservation recommendations. Applicants are encouraged to provide the Corps multiple copies of notifications to expedite agency notification.

(f) Wetland Delineations: Wetland delineations must be prepared in accordance with the current method required by the Corps. (For NWP 29 see Paragraph (b)(9)(iii) for parcels less than 1/4 acre in size.) The permittee may ask the Corps to delineate the special aquatic site. There may be some delay if the Corps does the delineation. Furthermore, the 45-day period will not start until the wetland delineation has been completed and submitted to the Corps, where appropriate.

14. Compliance Certification. Every permittee who has received NWP verification from the Corps will submit a signed certification regarding the completed work and any required mitigation. The certification will be forwarded by the Corps with the authorization letter and will include:

- (a) A statement that the authorized work was done in accordance with the Corps authorization, including any general or specific conditions;
- (b) A statement that any required mitigation was completed in accordance with the permit conditions; and
- (c) The signature of the permittee certifying the completion of the work and mitigation.

15. Use of Multiple Nationwide Permits. The use of more than one NWP for a single and complete project is prohibited, except when the acreage loss of waters of the U.S. authorized by the NWPs does not exceed the acreage limit of the NWP with the highest specified acreage limit (e.g. if a road crossing over tidal waters is constructed under NWP 14, with associated bank stabilization authorized by NWP 13, the maximum acreage loss of waters of the U.S. for the total project cannot exceed 1/3 acre).

16. Water Supply Intakes. No activity, including structures and work in navigable waters of the U.S. or discharges of dredged or fill material, may occur in the proximity of a public water supply intake except where the activity is for repair of the public water supply intake structures or adjacent bank stabilization.

17. Shellfish Beds. No activity, including structures and work in navigable waters of the U.S. or discharges of dredged or fill material, may occur in areas of concentrated shellfish populations, unless the activity is directly related to a shellfish harvesting activity authorized by NWP 4.

18. Suitable Material. No activity, including structures and work in navigable waters of the U.S. or discharges of dredged or fill material, may consist of unsuitable material (e.g., trash, debris, car bodies, asphalt, etc.) and material used for construction or discharged must be free from toxic pollutants in toxic amounts. (See Section 307 of the CWA.)

19. Mitigation. The District Engineer will consider the factors discussed below when determining the acceptability of appropriate and practicable mitigation necessary to offset adverse effects on the aquatic environment that are more than minimal.

(a) The project must be designed and constructed to avoid and minimize adverse effects to waters of the U.S. to the maximum extent practicable at the project site (i.e., on site).

(b) Mitigation in all its forms (avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing or compensating) will be required to the extent necessary to ensure that the adverse effects to the aquatic environment are minimal.

(c) Compensatory mitigation at a minimum one-for-one ratio will be required for all wetland impacts requiring a PCM, unless the District Engineer determines in writing that some other form of mitigation would be more environmentally appropriate and provides a project-specific waiver of this requirement. Consistent with National policy, the District Engineer will establish a preference for restoration of wetlands as compensatory mitigation, with preservation used only in exceptional circumstances.

(d) Compensatory mitigation (i.e., replacement or substitution of aquatic resources for those impacted) will not be used to increase the acreage losses allowed by the acreage limits of some of the NWP's. For example, 1/4 acre of wetlands cannot be created to change a 3/4 acre loss of wetlands to a 1/2 acre loss associated with NWP 39 verification. However, 1/2 acre of created wetlands can be used to reduce the impacts of a 1/2 acre loss of wetlands to the minimum impact level in order to meet the minimal impact requirement associated with NWP's.

(e) To be practicable, the mitigation must be available and capable of being done considering costs, existing technology, and logistics in light of the overall project purposes. Examples of mitigation that may be appropriate and practicable include, but are not limited to: reducing the size of the project; establishing and maintaining wetland or upland vegetated buffers to protect open waters such as streams; and replacing losses of aquatic resource functions and values by creating, restoring, enhancing, or preserving similar functions and values, preferably in the same watershed.

(f) Compensatory mitigation plans for projects in or near streams or other open waters will normally include a requirement for the establishment, maintenance, and legal protection (e.g., easements, deed restrictions) of vegetated buffers to open waters. In many cases, vegetated buffers will be the only compensatory mitigation required. Vegetated buffers should consist of native species. The width of the vegetated buffers required will address documented water quality or aquatic habitat loss concerns. Normally, the vegetated buffer will be 25 to 50 feet wide on each side of the stream, but the District Engineer may require slightly wider vegetated buffers to address documented water quality or habitat loss concerns. Where both wetlands and open waters exist on the project site, the Corps will determine the appropriate compensatory mitigation (e.g., stream buffers or wetlands compensation) based on what is best for the aquatic environment on a watershed basis. In cases where vegetated buffers are determined to be the most appropriate form of compensatory mitigation, the District Engineer may waive or reduce the requirement to provide wetland compensatory mitigation for wetland impacts.

(g) Compensatory mitigation proposals submitted with the "notification" may be either conceptual or detailed. If conceptual plans are approved under the verification, then the Corps will condition the verification to require detailed plans be submitted and approved by the Corps prior to construction of the authorized activity in waters of the U.S.

(h) Permittees may propose the use of mitigation banks, in-lieu fee arrangements or separate activity-specific compensatory mitigation. In all cases that require compensatory mitigation, the mitigation provisions will specify the party responsible for accomplishing and/or complying with the mitigation plan.

20. Spawning Areas. Activities, including structures and work in navigable waters of the U.S. or discharges of dredged or fill material, in spawning areas during spawning seasons must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Activities that result in the physical destruction (e.g., excavate, fill, or smother downstream by substantial turbidity) of an important spawning area are not authorized.

21. Management of Water Flows. To the maximum extent practicable, the activity must be designed to maintain preconstruction downstream flow conditions (e.g., location, capacity, and flow rates). Furthermore, the activity must not permanently restrict or impede the passage of normal or expected high flows (unless the primary purpose of the fill is to impound waters) and the structure or discharge of dredged or fill material must withstand expected high flows. The activity must, to the maximum extent practicable, provide for retaining excess flows from the site, provide for maintaining surface flow rates from the site similar to preconstruction conditions, and provide for not increasing water flows from the project site, relocating water, or redirecting water flow beyond preconstruction conditions. Stream channelizing will be reduced to the minimal amount necessary, and the activity must, to the maximum extent practicable, reduce adverse effects such as flooding or erosion downstream and upstream of the project site, unless the activity is part of a larger system designed to manage water flows. In most cases, it will not be a requirement to conduct detailed studies and monitoring of water flow.

This condition is only applicable to projects that have the potential to affect waterflows. While appropriate measures must be taken, it is not necessary to conduct detailed studies to identify such measures or require monitoring to ensure their effectiveness. Normally, the Corps will defer to state and local authorities regarding management of water flow.

22. Adverse Effects From Impoundments. If the activity creates an impoundment of water, adverse effects to the aquatic system due to the acceleration of the passage of water, and/or the restricting of its flow shall be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. This includes structures and work in navigable waters of the U.S., or discharges of dredged or fill material.

23. Waterfowl Breeding Areas. Activities, including structures and work in navigable waters of the U.S. or discharges of dredged or fill material, into breeding areas for migratory waterfowl must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable.

24. Removal of Temporary Fills. Any temporary fills must be removed in their entirety and the affected areas returned to their preexisting elevation.

25. Designated Critical Resource Waters. Critical resource waters include, NOAA-designated marine sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, critical habitat for Federally listed threatened and endangered species, coral reefs, state natural heritage sites, and outstanding national resource waters or other waters officially designated by a state as having particular environmental or ecological significance and identified by the District Engineer after notice and opportunity for public comment. The District Engineer may also designate additional critical resource waters after notice and opportunity for comment.

(a) Except as noted below, discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. are not authorized by NWP's 7, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 29, 31, 35, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44 for any activity within, or directly affecting, critical resource waters, including wetlands adjacent to such waters. Discharges of dredged or fill materials into waters of the U.S. may be authorized by the above NWP's in National Wild and Scenic Rivers if the activity complies with General Condition 7. Further, such discharges may be authorized in designated critical habitat for Federally listed threatened or endangered species if the activity complies with General Condition 11 and the FWS or the NMFS has concurred in a determination of compliance with this condition.

(b) For NWP's 3, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, and 38, notification is required in accordance with General Condition 13, for any activity proposed in the designated critical resource waters including wetlands adjacent to those waters. The District Engineer may authorize activities under these NWP's only after it is determined that the impacts to the critical resource waters will be no more than minimal.

26. Fills Within 100-Year Floodplains. For purposes of this General Condition, 100-year floodplains will be identified through the existing Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or FEMA-approved local floodplain maps.

(a) Discharges in Floodplain; Below Headwaters. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. within the mapped 100-year floodplain, below headwaters (i.e. five cfs), resulting in permanent above-grade fills, are not authorized by NWP's 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44.

(b) Discharges in Floodway; Above Headwaters. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. within the FEMA or locally mapped floodway, resulting in permanent above-grade fills, are not authorized by NWP's 39, 40, 42, and 44.

(c) The permittee must comply with any applicable FEMA-approved state or local floodplain management requirements.

27. Construction Period. For activities that have not been verified by the Corps and the project was commenced or under contract to commence by the expiration date of the NWP (or modification or revocation date), the work must be completed within 12 months after such date (including any modification that affects the project).

For activities that have been verified and the project was commenced or under contract to commence within the verification period, the work must be completed by the date determined by the Corps.

For projects that have been verified by the Corps, an extension of a Corps approved completion date maybe requested. This request must be submitted at least one month before the previously approved completion date.

Enclosure 3

Permittee: Mandy Allen, Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute

File Number: 28786S

**Certification of Compliance
for
Nationwide Permit**

"I hereby certify that the work authorized by the above referenced File Number and all required mitigation have been completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Nationwide Permit authorization."

(Permittee)

(Date)

Return to:

Bob Quebedeaux
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers
San Francisco District
Regulatory Branch, CESP-N-OR-R
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San Francisco, CA 94105-2197