

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 30-127

November 17, 2005

Administration and Operations

MANAGING THE PROVISIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

Introduction. NOAA has recognized in adopting its December 1, 2004, *Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information* ("NOAA Partnership Policy") that the public interest is served by the ability of private sector entities and the academic and research community to help provide diverse services to meet the varied needs of specific individuals and organizations. The nation's economy benefits from the dissemination of environmental information by Federal agencies and by diverse non-federal parties, including commercial and not-for-profit entities. In implementing this policy, NMFS will take advantage of existing capabilities and services of non-federal parties. By giving due consideration to these abilities, and considering the effects of its decisions on the activities of these entities, NMFS will fulfill its responsibilities as an agency of the U.S. Government to serve the public interest and help advance the nation's environmental information enterprise as a whole.

Objective. The purpose of this policy directive is to establish guidance for documenting and seeking public comments on changes in NMFS' provision of environmental information subject to the NOAA Partnership Policy, as amended, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-130. This policy does not apply to NMFS' acquisition, use or provision of information in connection with performing its regulatory responsibilities carried out under applicable law (statute or international treaty).

Authorities and Responsibilities. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

Public Comment and Consideration of Affected Parties: Each NMFS Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters office that proposes to initiate, substantially modify, alter the method of providing, or terminate a *significant information product or service* shall seek comments from the public and affected parties, for a comment period of at least 30 days, in accordance with NMFSI 30-127-0 I. Prior to making a final decision on proposed changes, the NMFS Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters office will consider comments received and give particular emphasis to:

- whether the significant information product or service is considered helpful to the public or necessary;
- those who may be seriously affected (positively or negatively) by the proposed action;
- ability of private sector entities and the academic and research communities to provide diverse services to serve the public interest;
- applicable legal authorities and mandates; and
- the effect on NMFS resources.

Open information dissemination: Each NMFS Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters office recognizes that open and unrestricted dissemination of high quality, publicly funded information should be provided as appropriate within resource constraints.

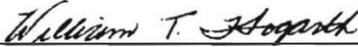
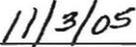
Recognition of roles of others: When faced with requests for information services, NMFS will explain existing NMFS services, including their uses, and inform the requester that others in the environmental information enterprise may be able to meet the requester's needs.

Notifying users: Each NMFS Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters office will provide public notice of its decisions regarding initiating, substantially modifying, altering the method of providing, or terminating a significant information product or service, in accordance with NMFSI 30-127-01.

Inventory of information products and services: The NMFS Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) shall maintain a current list of all NMFS environmental information products and services subject to this policy.

Measuring Effectiveness. The Assistant Administrator (AA) for NMFS is responsible for implementation of the NOAA Partnership Policy. Persons who believe NMFS information services are being provided in a manner contrary to the NOAA Partnership Policy may bring the matter to the attention of the AA for NMFS, who will ascertain the facts and advise the complainant of the AA's conclusions.

References. This policy directive is supported by the references and definitions listed in Attachment 1.


Signed: William T. Hogarth, Ph.D. 
Date
NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

Attachment 1

References

NOAA Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-130. *Management of Federal Information Resources.*

Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information, 70 Fed. Reg. 44913 (August 4, 2005).

Procedures for Managing the Provision of Environmental Information. NMFSI 30-127-01.

Definitions

Information- Any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts, data, or opinions in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms.

Environmental Information- Any information that changes as environmental conditions change (e.g. weather, water, climate).

Provision – Refers to the means of disseminating information and its content.

Information Product or Service- Any product, dissemination system, or other service that provides environmental information to NMFS' users that does not involve the acquisition, use or provision of information in connection with NOAA/NMFS performing its regulatory responsibilities carried out under applicable law (statute or international treaty).

Significant information Product or Service- Any information product or service that does not involve the acquisition, use or provision of information in connection with NOAA performing its regulatory responsibilities carried out under applicable law (statute or international treaty), and that meets any of the following conditions:

- involves substantial expenditure of funds, which is any expenditure greater than \$50,000;
- by reason of the nature of the service, is a matter of continuing public interest; or
- by reason of the time value of the service, commands public interest.