DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Docket No. [000202024–0024–01; I.D. No. 011000C]

RIN: [0648–ZA79]

Announcement of Funding Opportunity for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Prediction and Modeling Program and the South Florida Living Marine Resources Program

AGENCIES: Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research/Coastal Ocean Program (CSCOR/COP), the National Ocean Service (NOS); the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Announcement of Funding Opportunity for financial assistance for project grants.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that CSCOR and SEFSC are soliciting 1 to 2-year proposals for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Prediction and Modeling Program (SFERPM) and South Florida Living Marine Resources Program (SFLMR) to begin in FY 2000, contingent on the availability of funds.

These programs are two of a number of Federal and state programs that together comprise the Interagency Florida Bay (IFB) and Adjacent Marine Waters Science Program. The overall goal of this interagency effort is to develop the information and policies necessary for restoring the Everglades, Florida Bay, and adjacent marine ecosystems.

DATES: The deadline for receipt of proposals at the COP office is 3:00 p.m., EST. April 19, 2000. It is anticipated that projects funded under this announcement will have a July 1, 2000 start date.

ADDRESSES: Submit the original and 19 copies of your proposal to Coastal Ocean Program Office (SFERPM 2000), SSMC#3, 9th Floor, Station 9700, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. NOAA Standard Form Applications with instructions are accessible on the following COP Internet Site: http://www.cop.noaa.gov under the COP Grants Support Section, Part D, Application Forms for Initial Proposal Submission.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Technical Information:

Larry Pugh, SFERPM 2000 Program Manager, COP Office, 301–713–3338/ext 117, Internet: Larry.Pugh@noaa.gov; or Dr. Nancy Thompson, SFLMR 2000 Program Manager, SEFSC, 305–361–4284, Internet: Nancy.Thompson@noaa.gov; Business Management Information: Leslie McDonald, COP Grants Administrator, 301–713–3338/ext 137, Internet: Leslie.McDonald@noaa.gov.

Specific information about the ongoing SFERPM program, including descriptions of presently funded projects and the data management policy can be obtained from htttp://www.aoml.noaa.gov/ocd/sferpm. Reference is made to SFERPM Data Policy requirements later in this document under Part II: Further supplementary Information, paragraph (14) Other Requirements, subsection (b).

For complete information about the Interagency Florida Bay web sites and Adjacent Marine Systems Science Program Management Committee (PMC) (discussed later in this document under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**); its Scientific Oversight Panel; copies of the Abstracts of its Annual Conferences; reports from its numerous topical workshops and research team meetings as well as the most recent overall Strategic Science Plan, consult http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/flbay/; or contact the IFB Program's Executive Officer: William Nuttle, Executive Officer, Interagency Science Center, 98630 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037.

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) resources trusteeship and management activities discussed later in this document under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** can be viewed on http://www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov. The geographic scope and the subregions encompassed referred to later in this document under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** can be found at: http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/ocd/sferpm/sub.html.

Detailed information regarding South Florida Ecosystem Restoration discussed later in this document under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**, subparagraph, the Research Program, can be viewed at http://www.sfrestore.org.

To view Important Documents including the Florida Bay Interagency Program Management Committee (PMC) comments on the RESTUDY Draft Feasibility Report and the Feasibility report referenced later in this document under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**, subparagraph, The Research Program, see the COP or SFERPM websites listed earlier in this section.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Program Description

For complete Program Description and Other Requirements criteria for the Coastal Ocean Program, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual notification in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999) and at the COP home page.

The SFERPM and SFLMR programs are two of a number of Federal and state programs that together comprise the IFB Program. The interagency program supports monitoring, research and modeling activities designed to understand the effects of South Florida Ecosystem Restoration upon coastal ecosystems including the FKNMS.

It is intended to provide some of the information required by an iterative restoration process through which management alternatives are developed and selected, alternatives implemented and physical and biological responses assessed. It is further anticipated that this evaluation process will be repeated as restoration proceeds since decisions will be driven by the best available scientific information.

The activities conducted to restore the South Florida ecosystem occur predominately upstream of Florida Bay and the restoration impacts may not be direct or immediate. Therefore, improving our capability to predict these impacts is the ultimate goal of the IFB Science Program. Attaining this predictive capability implies a better understanding of the physics and ecology of Florida Bay and the larger coastal ecosystem.

The SFLMR program focuses upon research on fishery resources, protected resources, and higher trophic level organisms and the interactions with living marine resources. Living marine resources include: fishery resources, both recreational and commercial, and protected resources—including endangered species, marine mammals, corals, and species that are candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and their habitats. Research results will allow for the projection of the impacts of changes in freshwater delivery on living marine resources.

The Florida Bay Science Program was initially based upon the 1994 Florida Bay Science Plan developed for the Florida Bay Interagency Working group, as specifically suggested by a scientific panel convened at the request of the Secretary of the Interior. That Science Plan identified research deficiencies and unanswered questions concerning the condition and ecological history of Florida Bay and established the Florida

Bay PMC and its formal administrative process.

The PMC, explicitly linked to and sanctioned by the South Florida Restoration Task Force through its Working Group and Science Coordination Team, consists of designated representatives of the state and Federal agencies conducting or funding research in this part of the South Florida coastal marine ecosystem. The PMC is charged with providing policy makers reliable scientific information and science-based recommendations, including timely evaluation of the effects that different upstream management alternatives might have upon the ecosystem within Florida Bay and the adjacent coastal marine ecosystem.

To accomplish its objectives the PMC:

(1) Developed a Strategic Science Plan in March 1997 for Florida Bay to guide individual agency implementation plans and to prioritize allocation of resources;

(2) Evaluates individual agency implementation plans to avoid redundancy and assures research efforts are complementary; and together, to make the best use of the technical and financial resources being made available for South Florida coastal ecosystem restoration science;

(3) Sponsors an Annual Science Conference to which all funded investigator teams in all the various agencies are required to participate;

(4) Sponsors topical workshops on critical scientific issues;

(5) Established a Scientific Oversight Panel composed of distinguished, knowledgeable, but financially disinterested, scientists from outside this region. This panel is asked to attend the Annual Science Conference; to chair or participate in topical workshops that require technical panel input; and to recommend to the PMC any changes in the science program to assure it is meeting the requirements of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Process;

(6) Established research teams consisting of funded investigators and interested experts to review and integrate plans and sampling protocols of related projects including data management; and

(7) Established an administrative infrastructure consisting of an Executive Officer, a Florida Bay Research Coordinator, and an Outreach/Education Office.

Additional Program Description

SFERPM's contribution to the Interagency Science Program has been to focus upon the larger oceanographic, atmospheric, geological and fisheries context within which Bay restoration will proceed. This has implied studying the Bay's interaction and exchange with the adjacent Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal marine ecosystems and its regulation by large scale atmospheric and meteorological processes that so intimately link the coastal marine to the coastal terrestrial systems in South Florida.

The SFLMR Program began in 1996 with funding through the NMFS. Funding of research projects beginning in FY 2000 will result from this competitive process. The focus of this program is on living marine resources, especially those that are commercially and recreationally important, or are protected, and their habitats.

SFERPM directly addresses the linkage between Florida Bay and the Florida Keys, thus complementing other NOAA South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Initiative related activities such as the NMFS-lead Protection of Living Marine Resources/Threatened and Endangered Species studies, NOS-led Integrated Florida Bay and Florida Keys Ecosystem Monitoring programs, FKNMS resources trusteeship and management activities. Detailed information including the most recent SFERPM Implementation Plan for the program and other program documents can be obtained from the address/homepage address listed earlier in this document under **FURTHER INFORMATION.**

Program Goals

The overall goals of the Interagency Program were outlined as five management related central questions in the Strategic Science Plan for Florida Bay. These are:

(1) How, and at what rates, do storms, changing freshwater flows, sea level rise, and local evaporation/precipitation influence circulation and salinity patterns within Florida bay and outflows from the Bay to adjacent waters?

(2) What is the relative importance of the influx of external nutrients and of internal nutrient cycling in determining the nutrient budget of Florida Bay? What mechanisms control the sources and sinks of the Bay's nutrients?

(3) What regulates the onset, persistence and fate of planktonic algal blooms in Florida Bay?

(4) What are the causes and mechanisms for the observed changes in the sea grass community of Florida Bay? What is the effect of changing salinity, light, and nutrient regimes on these communities?

(5) What is the relationship between environmental and habitat change and the recruitment, growth, and survivorship of animals in Florida Bay?

The NOAA role has been to focus on the larger oceanographic, atmospheric, geological, and biological aspects of these questions. As noted earlier, detailed descriptions of past projects supported and their findings to date can be found on the SFERPM website under Funded Projects. The geographic scope and the subregions encompassed can be found at the address/homepage listed earlier in this document under **FURTHER INFORMATION.** Where essential to describe the linkages between Florida Bay and the adjacent waters, some projects have had a still wider geographic scope.

The Research Program

The Interagency Science Program has been underway for several years and is now entering an Implementation Phase at which it is being asked to deliver information directly to the Restoration Management Community concerning minimum flow levels to Florida Bay; restoration performance measures; and ecological success criteria. See the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Website for additional details at the address/homepage listed earlier in this document under **FURTHER INFORMATION.**

Moreover, water quality and physical modeling efforts are relatively mature but require validation and verification. Using these models to evaluate restoration scenarios will require continued data assimilation. Ecological models of upper and lower trophic levels are also in development and will have similar data requirements.

To date, restoration targets relative to Florida Bay have been posed purely in terms of flow delivery to points well upstream of Florida Bay. These are deemed by the PMC to be good first steps but ultimately inadequate. See the CSCOR or SFERPM websites listed earlier in this document under **FURTHER INFORMATION** to view Important Documents including PMC Comments on the RESTUDY Draft Feasibility Report and the Feasibility report itself.

In its review of the Restudy, the PMC committed itself to providing ecologically based restoration targets and performance measures for use in evaluating restoration scenarios and actions. Given the advice and recommendations of the PMC and Florida Bay Science Oversight Panel (FBSOP), NOAA's trustee and other management responsibilities in the region, and the likely funding of our Federal and state agency partners, CSCOR and NMFS/SEFSC anticipate funding SFERPM projects in the following research areas:

(1) *Nutrient Dynamics*: Includes phosphorous and nitrogen cycles within

the water column, exchange between the water column and benthos, and governing biogeochemical processes;

(2) *Water Column Biology*: Includes trophic linkages, benthic-pelagic coupling, and the potential impact of Bay water quality upon living marine resources and the FKNMS;

(3) *Physical Science*: Includes circulation within the Bay, improving estimates of critical processes (i.e., evaporation, precipitation and wind stress), and providing data assimilation

model based boundary conditions to bay circulation and hydrological models;

(4) *Ecosystem Modeling Studies*: Includes modeling of trophic relationships of recruitment pathways;

(5) *Higher trophic levels*: Monitoring and research are needed to provide answers to question 5 in the Strategic Science Plan. Results obtained should be directed at determination of the effects of changes in water quality and quantity and patterns on higher trophic level organisms especially important commercial and recreational fishery resources and mass protected resources, such as sea turtles, marine mammals and species listed as candidates for listing under the ESA.

Research Areas

(1) Nutrients

The growth of both sea grasses and planktonic algae blooms depends upon the supply of plant nutrients. In Florida Bay these are introduced by freshwater runoff, groundwater seepage, atmospheric deposition, resuspension of bottom sediments and exchange with the Southwest Florida shelf. A quantitative understanding of the relative importance of these various processes and how they effect algal blooms has been the goal of SFERPM Nutrient Chemistry projects. Proposals are now solicited that refine our understanding of phosphorous and nitrogen cycles within the water column as well as between the water column and benthos and biogeochemical processes governing nutrient availability including atmospheric flux and the microbial loop.

(2) Water Column Biology

Florida Bay is both a nursery ground and primary habitat for numerous commercially and recreationally significant fisheries species. The principal food of the young of many of these species is zooplankton that, in turn, consume planktonic algae. Moreover, many fisheries species have early stages living in the plankton. Planktonic animals are very sensitive to changes in water quality. Predicting the consequences of Restoration upon this ecosystem has been a goal of SFERPM Water Column Biology projects.

The health of the coral reef community of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) depends upon the water quality (temperature, salinity, nutrients, and chemical contaminants) of the waters that flow over them. With Restoration, not just water quantity but water quality throughout South Florida coastal waters will be changed. Proposals are now solicited that address trophic relationships between biological communities, ecosystem changes directly or indirectly related to Bay habitat changes, algal bloom causation and fate, benthic-pelagic coupling, and the impact of Bay water quality upon living marine resources and the FKNMS.

(3) Physical Science

Unless we have a detailed understanding of circulation, temperature, and salinity within the Bay and how the Bay is linked to the surrounding waters of the South West Florida shelf and the FKNMS, we will be unable to predict the physical effects of Restoration i.e., what parts of the Bay will be affected by altered water flows and how they will be changed.

Similarly, unless we have a detailed understanding of the wind field over the Bay, and the rainfall and evaporation distribution over the entire Peninsula, we will be unable to predict which parts of the Bay will be affected by altered water flows and what the resultant changes will be. Providing estimates of these critical parameters and how they will be locally and regionally altered by the major land use changes implicit in Restoration has been a goal of the SFERPM physical oceanography and atmospheric science projects. Proposals are now solicited characterizing circulation and flow within the Bay (including improving estimates of basin residence and turnover times), improving estimates of critical physical processes (especially evaporation and precipitation) and providing the meteorological boundary conditions required by circulation and hydrological models.

(4) Ecosystem Modeling Studies

Over the past several decades we have seen fundamental changes in the Bay ecosystem; and with Restoration, we can expect the rate of change to accelerate. The goal of SFERPM Ecological Modeling has been to use the physical, chemical and biological information being generated by SFERPM and other projects to predict how the underlying ecology of Florida Bay will change with restoration.

Proposals are now solicited that contribute to the Interagency Upper Trophic Level modeling program including the modeling of recruitment pathways within the FKNMS and/or between the FKNMS and Florida Bay. The PMC website should be consulted for the results of PMC sponsored workshops entitled: Higher Trophic Level Initiative for the Florida Bay Program and Progress Review of Florida Bay Models: Report of the Model Evaluation Group.

(5) Higher Trophic Level Research and Monitoring

The success of restoration is measured in part by the sustainability of fishery and protected resources. It is imperative that models be developed which will provide information on how changes in water quality, including salinity levels and contaminants, will effect the population and trophic dynamics of living marine resources and their habitats. These models require data.

Proposals are now solicited to conduct research and monitoring to define both qualitatively and quantitatively the mechanisms controlling growth, reproduction, recruitment and age/stage specific survivorship of commercially and recreationally important species and protected resources, such as sea turtles and bottle nosed dolphins are encouraged.

For protected resources in particular, proposals which provide population estimates and the relative importance of South Florida coastal waters to recovery are encouraged. Information generated by research projects directed at the other four questions in the Strategic Science Plan is expected to be integrated with the proposed research in so far as it effects the dynamics of individual species and protected resources and their habitats.

Part I: Schedule and Proposal Submission

The guidelines for proposal preparation provided here are mandatory. Proposals received after the published deadline or proposals that deviate from the prescribed format will be returned to the sender without further consideration. This announcement and additional background information will be made available on the COP home page.

Full Proposals

Applications submitted in response to this announcement require an original

proposal and 19 proposal copies at time of submission. This includes color or high-resolution graphics, unusually-sized materials (not 8.5'' x 11'' or 21.6 cm x 28 cm), or otherwise unusual materials submitted as part of the proposal. For color graphics, submit either color originals or color copies. The stated requirements for the number of original proposal copies provide for a timely review process because of the large number of technical reviewers. Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of full proposals will not be accepted.

Required Elements

All recipients are to closely follow the instructions and guidelines in the preparation of the standard NOAA Application Forms and Kit requirements listed in Part II: Further Supplementary Information, paragraph (10) of this document. Each proposal must also include the following seven elements:

(1) *Signed Summary title page*: The title page should be signed by the Principal Investigator (PI) and the institutional representative. The Summary Title page identifies the project's title starting with the acronym SFERPM 2000, a short title (<50 characters), and the lead PI's name and affiliation, complete address, phone, FAX, and E-mail information. The requested budget for each fiscal year should be included on the Summary Title page. Multi-institution proposals must include signed Summary Title pages from each institution.

(2) *One-page abstract/project summary*: The Project Summary (Abstract) Form, which is to be submitted at time of application, shall include an introduction of the problem, rationale, scientific objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed. The prescribed COP format for the Project Summary Form can be found on the COP Internet site under the COP Grants Support Section, Part D.

The summary should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost, and budget period. These should be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words.

(3) *Statement of work/project description:* The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, relevance to the goals of the SFERPM Program, and its scientific priorities. The project description section (including Relevant Results from Prior Support) should not exceed 15 pages.

Project management should be clearly identified with a description of the functions of each PI within a team. It is important to provide a full scientific justification for the research; do not simply reiterate justifications presented in this document. Both page limits are inclusive of figures and other visual materials, but exclusive of references and milestone chart. This section should also include:

(a) The objective for the period of proposed work and its expected significance;

(b) The relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and relation to previous work and work in progress by the proposing principal investigator(s);

(c) A discussion of how the proposed project lends value to the program goals, and

(d) Potential coordination with other investigators.

NOAA has specific requirements that environmental data be submitted to the National Oceanographic Data Center.

(e) References cited: Reference information is required. Each reference must include the name(s) of all authors in the same sequence in which they appear in the publications, the article title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 15–page project description.

(4) *Milestone chart*: Time lines of major tasks covering the 12 to 24-month duration of the proposed project.

(5) *Budget*: At time of proposal submission, all applicants shall submit the Standard Form, SF–424 (Rev 7–97), Application for Federal Assistance, to indicate the total amount of funding proposed for the whole project period. In lieu of the Standard Form 424A, Budget Information (Non-Construction), at time of original application, all proposers are required to submit a COP Summary Proposal Budget Form for each fiscal year increment (i.e., 2000, 2001). Multi-institution proposals must include budget forms from each institution.

Use of this budget form will provide for a detailed annual budget and the level of detail required by the COP program staff to evaluate the effort to be invested by investigators and staff on a specific project. The COP budget form is compatible with forms in use by other agencies that participate in joint projects with COP, and can be found on the COP home page under COP Grants Support, Part D.

All applicants shall include a budget narrative/justification that supports all proposed budget object class categories. The program office will review the proposed budgets to determine the necessity and adequacy of proposed costs for accomplishing the objectives of the proposed grant. Ship time needs must be identified in the proposed budget. The SF–424A, Budget Information (Non-Construction) Form, shall be requested from only those recipients subsequently recommended for award.

(6) *Biographical sketch*: Abbreviated curriculum vitae, two pages per investigator, are sought with each proposal. Include a list of up to five publications most closely related to the proposed project and up to five other significant publications. A list of all persons (including their organizational affiliation), in alphabetical order, who have collaborated on a project, book, article, or paper within the last 48 months should be included. If there are no collaborators, this should be so indicated. Students, post-doctoral associates, and graduate and postgraduate advisors of the PI should also be disclosed. This information is used to help identify potential conflicts of interest or bias in the selection of reviewers.

(7) *Proposal format and assembly*: Clamp the proposal in the upper left-hand corner, but leave it unbound. Use one inch (2.5 cm) margins at the top, bottom, left and right of each page. Use a clear and easily legible type face in standard 12 points size.

Part II: Further Supplementary Information

(1) *Program authorities*: For a list of all program authorities for the Coastal Ocean Program, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual document in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999) and at the COP home page. Specific authority cited for this announcement is 33 U.S.C. 1442 *et seq*.

(2) *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers*: 11.478 for the Coastal Ocean Program and 11.472 for the National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

(3) *Program description*: For complete COP program descriptions, see the annual COP General Document (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999).

(4) *Funding availability*: Funding is contingent upon receipt of fiscal years 2000–2001 Federal appropriations. The anticipated maximum annual funding

for SFERPM and SFLMR activities is $1.9 million.

If an application is selected for funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance based on satisfactory performance and is at the total discretion of the funding agency.

Publication of this document does not obligate NOAA to any specific award or to any part of the entire amount of funds available. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

(5) *Matching requirements*: None.

(6) *Type of funding instrument*: Project grants

(7) *Eligibility criteria*: For complete eligibility criteria for the Coastal Ocean Program, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual document in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999) and at the COP home page under General Announcement.

Federal researchers in successful multi-investigator proposals will be funded through NOAA. Proposals deemed acceptable from Federal researchers will be funded through a mechanism other than a grant or cooperative agreement, where legal authority allows for such funding. Non-NOAA Federal applicants are required to submit certification or documentation which clearly shows that they can receive funds from the Department of Commerce (DoC) for research (i.e., legal authority exists allowing the transfer of funds from DoC to the non-NOAA Federal applicant's agency).

(8) *Award period*: Full Proposals should cover a project period of 1 to 2 years, from FY 2000–01 to FY 2001–02.

(9) *Indirect costs*: If indirect costs are proposed, the following statement applies: The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in an application must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant Federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award.

(10) *Application forms*: For complete information on application forms for the Coastal Ocean Program, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual document in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999); the COP home page; and the information given earlier in this document under Required Elements, paragraph (5) Budget.

(11) *Project funding priorities*: For description of project funding priorities, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual document in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999) and at the COP home page.

(12) *Evaluation criteria*: For complete information on evaluation criteria, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual document in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999) and at the COP home page.

(13) *Selection procedures*: For complete information on selection procedures, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual document in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999) and at the COP home page.

(14) *Other requirements*: As participants in the Interagency Science Program, funded principal investigators will be expected to:

(a) Participate in meetings for planning and coordination of the Interagency Program. This includes attending and contributing to the Annual Interagency Florida Bay Science Program Conference, Research Team Meetings, and other relevant technical workshops sponsored by the PMC at the request of the SFERPM Coordinating Office.

(b) Promptly quality control their data and make them readily available through the SFERPM Data Management Office in accordance with the SFERPM Data Policy, which is referenced earlier in this document under **FURTHER INFORMATION.**

(c) Assist the SFERPM Coordinating Office and the Interagency PMC in the synthesis and interpretation of research results and the development of products of value to restoration and resource managers. For a complete description of other requirements, see COP's General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions annual document in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 49162, September 10, 1999) and at the COP home page.

(15) Applicants are hereby notified that they are encouraged, to the greatest practicable extent, to purchase American-made equipment and products with funding provided under this program.

(16) Pursuant to Executive Orders 12876, 12900 and 13021, the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions and Tribal Colleges and Universities in its educational and research programs. The DOC/NOAA vision, mission and goals are to achieve full participation by Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) in order to advance the development of human potential, to strengthen the nation's capacity to provide high-quality education, and to increase opportunities for MSIs to participate in, and benefit from, Federal Financial Assistance programs. DOC/NOAA encourages all applicants to include meaningful participation of MSIs.

(17) This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348–0043, 0348–0044, 0348–0040 and 0348–0046.

The COP Grants Application Package has been approved by OMB under control number 0648–0384 and includes the following information collections: a Summary Proposal Budget Form, a Project Summary Form, standardized formats for the Annual Performance Report and the Final Report, and the submission of up to 20 copies of proposals. Copies of these forms and formats can be found on the COP Home Page.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Dated: March 13, 2000.

Ted I. Lillestolen,

Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Dated: March 3, 2000.

Gary C. Matlock,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 00–6852 Filed 3–17–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 031400A]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.