

RECEIVED SEP - 8 2011

CFRF-JANE DICKINSON



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Ms. Peg Petruny-Parker, Executive Director
Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation
P.O. Box 278
Saunderstown, Rhode Island 02874

SEP 2 2011

Dear Ms. Petruny-Parker:

We have reviewed the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation's (CFR Foundation) final Completion Report (final report) for the period October 1, 2009, through July 31, 2011, for the project entitled, "Groundline Exchange/Conversion Plan - 2009," under NOAA Award NA09NMF4520423. We conclude that a satisfactory level of project performance has been demonstrated and we have approved your final report.

This report demonstrates that CFR Foundation successfully developed and implemented a program that achieved the project's goals, namely to reduce entanglement risk to large whales from trap/pot fishing gear by providing financial assistance to lobster trap/pot fishermen in Lobster Management Areas 2 and 3 for converting from floating to sinking groundline. This included completing a number of tasks, including (but not limited to): coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association to develop criteria for eligible participants, notification of eligible participants, development of a website and online voucher system (used by both fishermen and rope dealers), development of a process for approving applications from fishermen, implementation of both Area 2 and Area 3 voucher disbursements, tracking transactions and expenditures, and circulating surveys to program participants to learn more about recycling used rope. For Lobster Management Area 3, 48 individual participants (64 permits) received vouchers, totaling \$2,258,452, and 1,044,448 pounds of sinking groundline were purchased. For Lobster Management Area 2, 108 individual participants (113 permits) received vouchers, totaling \$412,601, and 179,502 pounds of sinking groundline were purchased. While floating groundline was not exchanged for vouchers in this program, participants were encouraged to recycle their floating groundline within available rope recycling bins. For the program as a total and based on returned surveys, 166,219 pounds of floating groundline were recycled. Minor setbacks occurred during the course of the award; these were handled swiftly and efficiently, and you did an excellent job of keeping us informed.

Similar to your other progress report reviews, the technical reviewer comments received on your report were positive and found it impressive that over 90% of the funds CFR Foundation received to implement this program were provided directly to fishing industry participants in the form of financial assistance. The online voucher system was highly successful for keeping track of transactions and ensuring accountability. The weakest part of this program was the recycling portion, but a variety of valid reasons were provided as to why collecting floating groundline would be extremely difficult for this project.

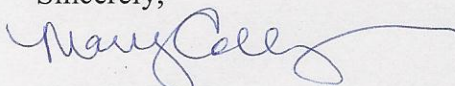


We appreciate your efforts over the duration of this award to implement a successful floating groundline exchange project in furtherance of large whale conservation efforts for Lobster Management Area 3 fishermen and Area 2 fishermen in the state of Rhode Island. This project provided financial assistance to lobster fishermen while providing entanglement risk reduction through the removal of floating groundlines, replacing them with sinking groundlines. Your originally stated goals and objectives were met or were exceeded during the implementation of this project.

As you know, this award expired on July 31, 2011. Since this letter serves to provide approval of your final report, the award will now proceed to the close-out phase. You will be notified once the award has been officially closed out.

If you have any questions concerning this award or the review of your final report, please contact Amanda Johnson, the Federal Program Officer for this award, via phone at (978) 282-8463 or via e-mail at Amanda.Johnson@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Colligan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mary A. Colligan
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources