



13 February 2003

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Coral Mitigation, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas

1. Purpose: To provide information on the subject study.
2. Points of Major Interest and Facts.

a. The Coral Mitigation study is being conducted under authority of Section 22 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1974, as amended, and funded under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Program. PAS studies are cost shared on a 50 percent Federal and 50 percent non-Federal basis. However, Section 1156 of the WRDA 1986 waives the project sponsor's cost sharing requirements up to \$200,000 for all studies and projects conducted within the CNMI.

b. The study was initiated in fiscal year 2002 at the request of the project sponsor, CNMI, Coastal Resource Management Office. To date \$160,000 in study funds were received, no additional funds are anticipated to complete the study.

c. The objective of this study is to develop a strategy for mitigating the impacts to coral from local civil works projects implemented within the waters of the CNMI. A coral mitigation strategy will be developed consistent with the CNMI's preference for on-site and in-kind alternatives only after avoidance and minimization have been considered. The appropriate level of mitigation will be solely based on the ecological values and functions of the aquatic resources that are impacted.

d. Final report is scheduled to be completed in December 2003.

3. Congressional Interest. There is minimal Congressional interest in this project, at this time.