



5 September 2003

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Saipan Lagoon Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration, Saipan

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

a. The Saipan Lagoon Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration is in the feasibility phase. A Preliminary Restoration Plan recommending proceeding to the feasibility studies requiring a Ecosystem Restoration Report (ERR) was approved by Pacific Ocean Division in February 2000. The ERR is being conducted under the authority of Section 206 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996, Public Law 104-303, Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration.

b. The project objective is to restore approximately 918 acres of degraded reef ecosystem, and it will be accomplished by through a combination of local regulatory initiatives and limiting the area of marine habitat exposed to runoff and sediment by redirecting surface runoff away from the lagoon. The project sponsors, CNMI, Coastal Resource Management Office and Department of Public Works, strongly support the project. CNMI Division of Environmental Quality also supports the project and is providing assistance conducting on-site study tasks.

c. The project area encompasses approximately 1.5 miles of shoreline south of Garapan between the Garapan Fishing Dock and Quarter Master Road. Preliminary investigations attribute the degradation of reef habitat in the area to the turbidity and toxicity of water being discharged into the lagoon through eleven shoreline outfalls crossing under Beach Road along the 1.5-mile study reach. The primary intent of these outfalls appears to be to prevent ponding along the roadway by conveying runoff into the ocean.

d. To date \$905,000 in study funds have been received to conduct the ERR. The ERR costs will initially be fully funded by the Federal Government, subsequently cost shared at the time of construction. The ERR is scheduled to be completed in July 2004.

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