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15 May 2006

Mr. Erik Kappelin
Independent Maritime Consulting (Florida) Ltd.
2703 Day Avenue, Unit No. 1
Coconut Grove, Florida 33133

Re: Coral Triage Strategy for MARGARA Grounding Site

Dear Erik:

An initial assessment survey of the MARGARA grounding site was conducted 11 May 2006. Survey participants included representatives for both the Responsible Party and the co-Trustees (Commonwealth of Puerto Rico [PRDNER] and U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]). A meeting of survey participants was held 12 May 2006 to discuss possible tasks associated with restoration of the MARGARA grounding site. Restoration tasks were based on observed conditions of the grounding site and included emergency triage of viable corals displaced during the grounding event. The purpose of this letter is to describe the scope of work associated with emergency coral triage at the MARGARA grounding site offshore of Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Emergency triage efforts include locating, repositioning, righting, and caching displaced coral colonies and fragments. Displaced corals include both hard and soft corals detached during the grounding event. A higher priority is placed on the displaced hard corals because of their relatively high sensitivity to unstable conditions as compared to the displaced soft corals. Hard corals are the slowest growing component of the impacted biological community and are the delimiting factor in determining the recovery period for the impacted habitat.

Displaced corals will be repositioned to increase stability and minimize potential collateral damage to adjacent biota. Hard coral colonies and fragments displaced and overturned during the impact event will be righted (i.e., tissue side up) to abate tissue degradation due to shading and abrasion. Soft corals will be cached loosely with hard corals and along temporary holding lines. Holding lines for displaced soft corals will be constructed by tautly pulling a line between metal rebar stakes secured in the reef substrate. Cable ties will be used to secure displaced soft corals along the holding lines. Most displaced corals will be cached at or directly adjacent to the impact scar they are found closest too. The number of cached corals will be estimated to help determine the level of effort necessary to conduct later tasks associated with primary restoration of the grounding site. Navigational coordinates for coral cache location will be recorded utilizing a global positioning system (GPS).

Emergency coral triage will be conducted utilizing a six to eight person survey team and charter dive vessel. Survey team members will include Continental Shelf Associates, Inc., PRDNER, and NOAA employees. Survey operations are planned to begin 15 May 2006.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (561) 746-7946.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Graham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce Graham
Senior Scientist

