Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Management Plan

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U.S. Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Marine and Estuarine Management Division

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PROPOSED CORDELL BANK NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

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Title: Final Environmental Impact Statement and Management Plan for the Proposed Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Abstract: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration proposes to designate Cordell Bank on the edge of the Pacific continental shelf, 20 miles west of Point Reyes, California as a National Marine Sanctuary.

The proposed Sanctuary includes all waters within a line extending southwest from Bodega Head to the 1,000 fathom depth contour west of Cordell Bank, then south along this contour until it joins the boundary of the Point Reyes-Farallon Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The proposed Sanctuary includes 397.05 square nautical miles.

The designation of Cordell Bank as a National Marine Sanctuary would provide an integrated program of resource protection, research and interpretation to assist in the long-term management and protection of its resources. Resource protection will involve cooperation with other agencies in formulating resource protection policies and procedures including the enforcement of regulations for visitor use.

Two Sanctuary regulations are proposed. One of those regulations will prohibit the discharge into the Sanctuary of oil and other materials that may be harmful to Sanctuary resources, except as specifically permitted for research, educational, salvage or Sanctuary management purposes. The other regulation will prohibit removing, taking, or injuring or attempting to take, remove or injure benthic organisms, except as specifically permitted for research, educational, salvage, or Sanctuary management purposes. Three other activities are potentially subject to regulations; hydrocarbon activities, anchoring on Cordell Bank, or within the 50 fathom contour surrounding the Bank and taking, removing, or injuring or attempting to take, remove or injure cultural or historical resources. Alternatives to the proposed action include the status quo, larger and smaller boundary options and a non-regulatory option.

Research will include baseline studies, monitoring, and analysis and prediction projects to provide information needed in resolving management issues. Interpretation programs will be directed to improving public awareness of the Sanctuary's resources and the need to use them wisely to ensure their viability.

Lead Agency: U.S. Department Commerce
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