



# **Puerto Rico Marine Debris Emergency Response Guide: Field Reference Guide**

NOAA Marine Debris Program  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
March 2023

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

This *Field Reference Guide* condenses information contained in the *Puerto Rico Marine Debris Emergency Response Guide: Comprehensive Guidance Document* to facilitate use during emergency response operations. While the *Comprehensive Guidance Document* serves as a complete reference for marine debris response in Puerto Rico, the *Field Reference Guide* includes organization contacts and the most pertinent information for quick reference in the field and during times of crisis. Both documents and subsequent versions will be posted on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program website at <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/our-work/emergency-response>.

The purpose of these documents is to improve preparedness for response and recovery following a disaster that generates marine debris in Puerto Rico. The *Comprehensive Guidance Document* and complementary *Field Reference Guide* outline existing response structures at the municipal, territory, and federal levels to facilitate a coordinated, well-managed, and immediate response to marine debris incidents impacting shorelines and waterways in Puerto Rico. Organization roles and responsibilities are presented in a consolidated one-page [flowchart](#), which functions as a decision tree for marine debris response. Additionally, organization jurisdictions are presented in a [map](#), which is also available [online](#). The document also includes an overview of permitting and compliance requirements that must be met before debris removal work begins. This information is synthesized in a one-page reference [handout](#).

### 1.2 Scope of *Guide*

The *Guide* addresses both natural and anthropogenic marine debris incidents affecting Puerto Rico. In 33 U.S.C. § 1956(3), marine debris is defined as any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or Great Lakes. Although vegetative debris is not included in the legal definition for marine debris, stakeholders have identified it as a common debris stream of concern following natural disasters. Therefore, in this document, the term marine debris is used more generally and also includes vegetative material and debris that could be exposed to or release oil, hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants that enters a waterway

following an acute incident and poses a threat to the natural or built environment. This also includes shoreline and wetland debris and debris in some inland, non-tidal waterways.

## **2 Puerto Rico Marine Debris Response Flowchart**

The “Puerto Rico Marine Debris Response Flowchart” provides a visual one-page representation of organization roles and responsibilities. The flowchart functions as a decision tree for marine debris response with color-coded endpoints. Yellow endpoints represent response to debris that could be exposed to or release oil or hazardous substances. Blue endpoints represent response to debris that is not exposed to and does not have the potential to release oil or hazardous substances. Endpoints within the green shaded area indicate that response may occur under Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) authorities and/or funding.

The intent of the flowchart is to outline the most likely response structure with the understanding that flexibility is an inherent component of an effective response.



# Puerto Rico Marine Debris Response Flowchart

## Purpose

The flowchart functions as a decision tree for marine debris response with color-coded endpoints. It is designed to inform response to debris that enters a waterway following a natural or anthropogenic incident and poses a threat to the natural or built environment. This may include shoreline and wetland debris and debris in some inland, non-tidal waterways.

## Acronyms

ACP – Area Contingency Plan  
 COR3 – Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency  
 DoD – U.S. Department of Defense  
 DTOP – PR Department of Transportation and Public Works  
 DNER – PR Department of Natural and Environmental Resources  
 EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
 ESF – Emergency Support Function

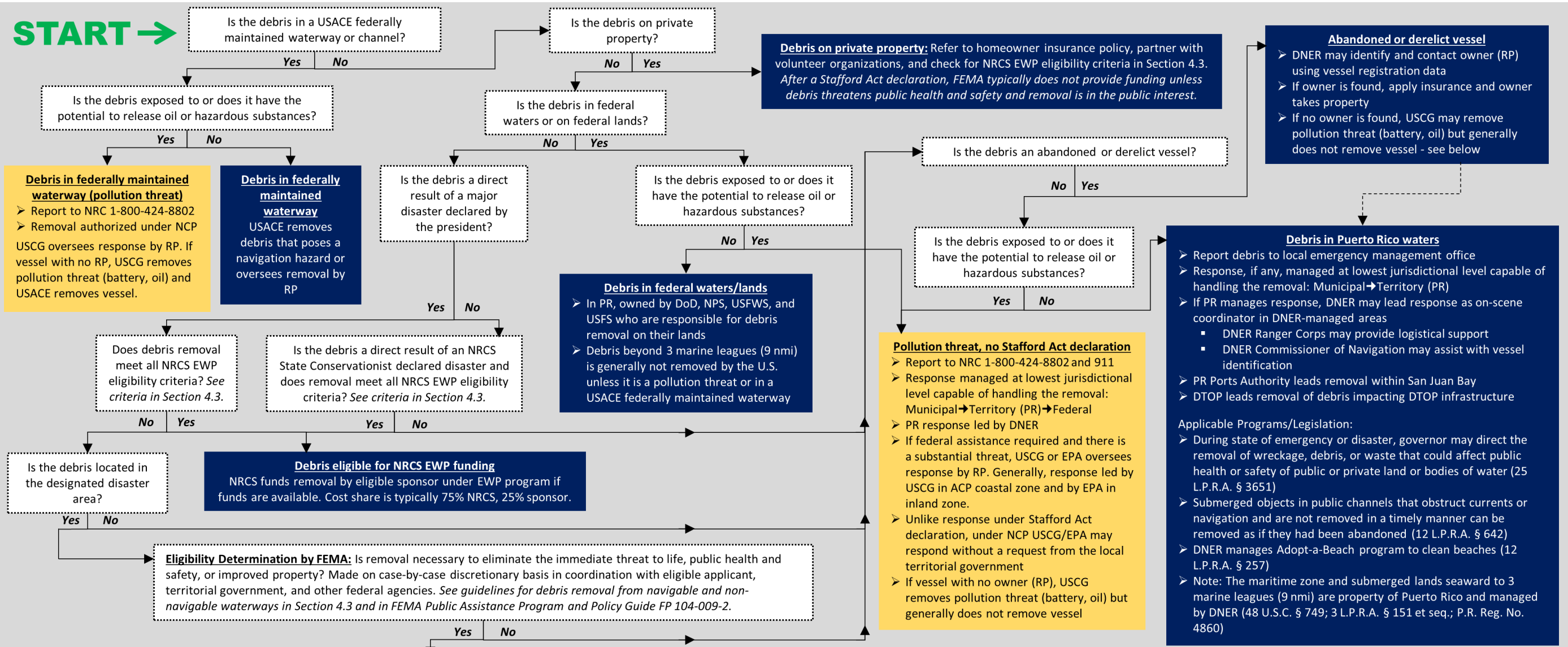
EWP – Emergency Watershed Protection  
 FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency  
 NCP – National Oil & Hazardous Substances Contingency Plan  
 NPS – National Park Service  
 NRC – National Response Center  
 NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 PREMB – PR Emergency Management and Disaster Administration Bureau

RP – Responsible Party  
 USACE – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 USCG – U.S. Coast Guard  
 USFS – U.S. Forest Service  
 USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

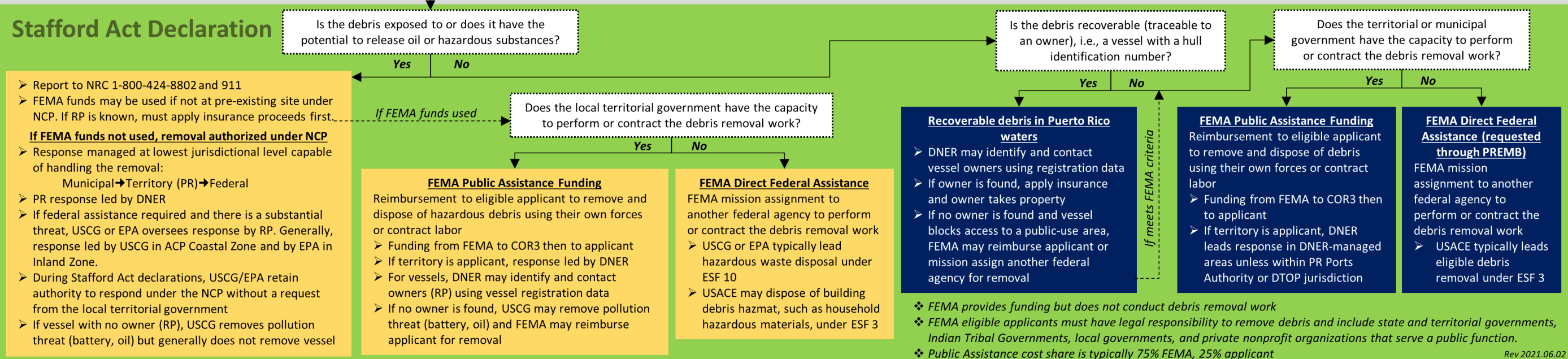
## Flowchart Key

Response to debris that is exposed to or has the potential to release oil or hazardous substances
Response to debris that is not exposed to and does not have the potential to release oil or hazardous substances
Response under Stafford Act authorities and/or funds

**START** →



## Stafford Act Declaration



❖ FEMA provides funding but does not conduct debris removal work  
 ❖ FEMA eligible applicants must have legal responsibility to remove debris and include state and territorial governments, Indian Tribal Governments, local governments, and private nonprofit organizations that serve a public function.  
 ❖ Public Assistance cost share is typically 75% FEMA, 25% applicant

Rev 2021.06.02

### 3 Puerto Rico Marine Debris Response Map

The “Puerto Rico Marine Debris Response Map” displays relevant organization jurisdiction boundaries. After a marine debris incident, the agency (or agencies) with jurisdiction and authority for removing debris will vary depending on where the debris is located. This map includes information that stakeholders identified as important in determining jurisdiction within the territory. A dynamic version of the response map is also available [online](#) in NOAA’s Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA).



# Puerto Rico Marine Debris Response Map



## Legend

- Puerto Rico Seaward Boundary (9 n.mi.)
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Federally Maintained Waterway
  - U.S. Coast Guard-EPA Coastal-Inland Zone Boundary for oil or hazardous substance response
  - Jobs Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
  - Municipal Boundary
- USA Federal Lands**  
Federal Managing Group
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="background-color: #8B4513; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span> Forest Service        | <span style="background-color: #FF8C00; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span> Fish and Wildlife Service |
| <span style="background-color: #A9A9A9; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span> Department of Defense | <span style="background-color: #32CD32; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span> National Park Service     |

## City of San Juan



## **4 Permitting and Compliance Requirements in Puerto Rico**

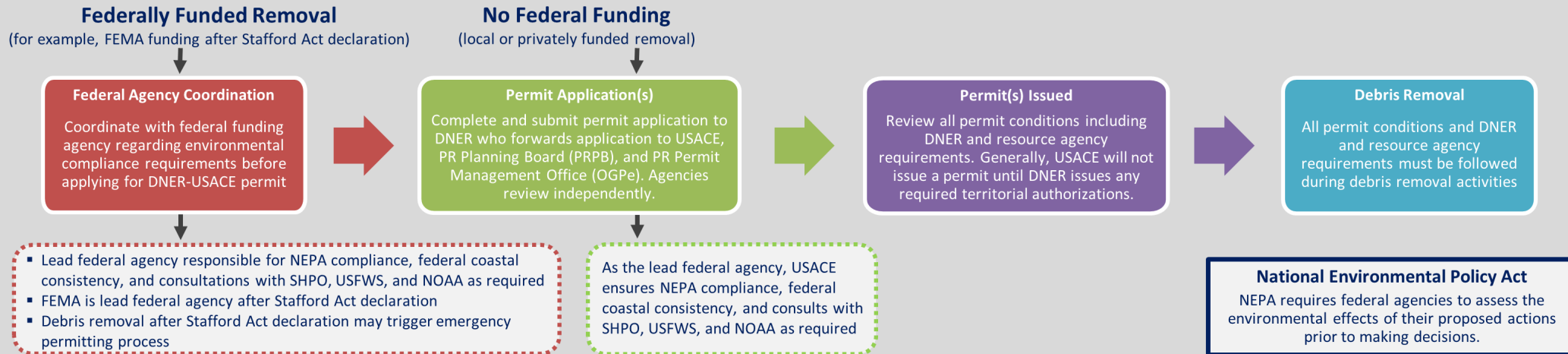
The “Permitting and Compliance for Marine Debris Removal in Puerto Rico” handout on the following page synthesizes permitting and compliance requirements that must be met before debris removal operations begin. The top portion of the handout outlines the process to follow to stay in compliance, while the bottom portion highlights specific territorial and federal agency requirements with general contact information.



# Permitting and Compliance for Marine Debris Removal in Puerto Rico

- A PR Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permit may be required for activities which may alter or affect water resources or wetlands, such as debris removal that involves dredging, the discharge of dredge or fill material, or impacts the navigability of a waterway
- The **organization or individual conducting the debris removal** is responsible for obtaining necessary permits, and DNER and USACE have a joint permit application process
- The **lead federal agency** is responsible for compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal coastal consistency, and consulting with the PR State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as required

## Compliance Process When Permit is Required



## Primary Agency Requirements and Contact Numbers

<p><b>PR Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER)</b> 787-999-2200 ayudaciudadano@drna.pr.gov</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manages joint permit application process with USACE and PRPB                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serves as the initial agency to submit a permit application and forwards a copy to all reviewing agencies including USACE, PRPB, and OGPe</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Reviews federal permit applications for compliance with PR water quality standards</li> <li>▪ Issues permits to establish and operate solid waste facilities, and for the storage, recycling, and final disposal of solid wastes</li> <li>▪ Authorizes and establishes requirements for temporary debris management sites for declared disasters</li> </ul>	<p><b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</b> Jacksonville District Antilles Office Regulatory Section CESAJ-RD-SA@usace.army.mil</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ USACE, DNER, and PRPB have a joint permit application process</li> <li>▪ USACE may not require a permit for certain types of debris removal, particularly if there is no disturbance to the seafloor. Please coordinate with USACE prior to submitting an application.</li> <li>▪ Some permits that may be required for debris removal in waterways and wetlands are:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>NWP-3 Maintenance</b> for removal/maintenance of culverts, sediments or debris accumulated around outfalls, bridges, etc.</li> <li>▪ <b>NWP-18 Minor Discharges</b> of dredge or fill material</li> <li>▪ <b>NWP-19 Minor Dredging</b> of no more than 25 cubic yards</li> <li>▪ <b>NWP-22 Removal of Vessels</b> for removal of wrecked, abandoned, or disabled vessels or other man-made obstructions to navigation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>PR Planning Board (PRPB)</b> 787-723-6200</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reviews federal actions for consistency with enforceable policies</li> <li>▪ Reviews public projects for conformity with plans and programs adopted by the PRPB</li> </ul>	<p><b>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)</b> NOAA Fisheries ESA: 727-824-5312 EFH: 787-405-3605</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation required if marine debris response involves federal permits and/or funding (USACE permit, FEMA funding, etc.) to comply with:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed endangered or threatened marine species or adversely modify designated critical habitat</li> <li>▪ Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act to ensure actions do not adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>PR Permit Management Office (OGPe)</b> 787-754-5504</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Issues final determinations, permits, and certifications related to development and use of buildings</li> <li>▪ Makes environmental compliance determinations</li> </ul>	<p><b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</b> Caribbean Ecological Services Field Office 786-244-0081</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation required if marine debris response involves federal permits and/or funding (USACE permit, FEMA funding, etc.) to comply with:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ESA to ensure actions do not adversely modify designated critical habitat or jeopardize the continued existence of any listed endangered or threatened land or freshwater species and certain marine species such as manatee</li> <li>▪ Coastal Barrier Resources Act to ensure actions do not encourage development on coastal barriers of Puerto Rico</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>PR State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)</b> 787-721-3737</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensures compliance with National Historic Preservation Act</li> <li>▪ Consultation with SHPO required if marine debris response involves a federal agency and/or funding (USACE permit, FEMA funding, etc.) to evaluate whether activities affect properties included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places</li> </ul>		



## 5 Contact Information

Note: Contact information is only included for organizations who have provided and/or approved information in the following tables.

### Territorial Agencies

Agency	Division/Topic	Point of Contact	Phone	Email
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER)	Debris response	Nilda Jimenez-Marrero	787-645-5593 (C)	njimenez@drna.pr.gov
	Debris response: Jobos Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve	Aitza Pabón, Manager	787-538-2352	aepabon.jobos@gmail.com
		Milton Muñoz, Stewardship Coordinator	787-853-4617 x 3163	milton.jbnerr@gmail.com
	Environmental emergencies: Oiled or hazardous debris (ESF 10)	Karen Cortés	-	karencortes@drna.pr.gov
	Ranger Corps, first responders	Haydelin Ronda Torres, Commissioner of Rangers	-	hronda@drna.pr.gov
	Solid and hazardous waste management	Maria Coronado	-	mariacoronado@jca.pr.gov
Permitting and compliance	General contact	787-999-2200	ayudaciudadano@drna.pr.gov	
Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety	Planning and coordination	Kay Vazquez, Intelligence Analyst	787-233-8010	kvazquez@dsp.pr.gov
		Carlos Verges Rodriguez, Intelligence Analyst	787-598-2818	cmverges@dsp.pr.gov
	Puerto Rico Emergency Management and Disaster Administration Bureau (PREMB)	Nino Correa, Commissioner	-	ncorrea@prema.pr.gov
		Abner Torres, Director	-	atorres@prema.pr.gov
Puerto Rico Permit Management Office (OGPe)	-	General contact	787-754-5504	-
Puerto Rico Planning Board (PRPB)	-	General contact	787-723-6200	-
	Planning and coordination	Maryguel Fuentes	-	fuentes_m@jp.pr.gov
		Rose Ortiz Diaz	-	ortiz_r@jp.pr.gov
Puerto Rico Ports Authority	Division of Engineering and Planning	Romel Pedraza, Chief	787-729-8715 x 3178	rpedraza@prpa.gobierno.pr
Puerto Rico Public-Private Partnerships Authority	Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3)	Ricardo Pallens Cruz, Earthquakes Disaster Recovery Director & Natural and Cultural Resources Sector Lead	787-370-3853	rpallens@cor3.pr.gov
Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	-	General contact	787-721-3737	-
	Planning and coordination	Miguel Bonini, Senior Historic Property Specialist	787-721-3737 x 2005	mbonini@prshpo.pr.gov
		Elba Diaz	-	ediaz@prshpo.pr.gov
		Gloria Ortiz	-	gmortiz@prshpo.pr.gov

## Federal Agencies

Agency	Division	Topic	Point of Contact	Phone	Email
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Region 2	Environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP)	José Ayala, EHP Specialist (Caribbean Area Office)	787-405-8658	jose.ayala3@fema.dhs.gov
			John Dawson, Regional Unified Federal Review Coordinator	-	john.dawson@fema.dhs.gov
			John McKee, Regional Environmental Officer	-	john.mckee@fema.dhs.gov
			Iván Montilla Despiau, EHP Specialist (SME) (Joint Recovery Office 4339PR)	202-716-8522	ivan.montilladespiau@fema.dhs.gov
			Jorge Rodríguez López, Acting EHP Director (Joint Recovery Office 4339PR)	202-704-8527	jorge.rodriguezlopez@fema.dhs.gov
		Public Assistance	Adrian Ashburn	-	adrian.ashburn@fema.dhs.gov
			Larry Ciacci	-	lawrence.ciacci@fema.dhs.gov
			Indira Maneiro, Natural and Cultural Resources Acting PAGS, Transportation Deputy PAGS	202-702-6486 (C)	indira.maneiro@fema.dhs.gov
			Danna Planas, JRO Public Assistance Director	-	planasocasio.danna@fema.dhs.gov
		Response	Christopher Gallager	-	christopher.gallager@fema.dhs.gov
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS or NOAA Fisheries)	Emergency ESA/EFH consultation	General contact	-	nmfs.ser.emergency.consult@noaa.gov
		EFH information	Jose Rivera	787-405-3605	jose.a.rivera@noaa.gov
			Pace Wilber	843-568-4184	pace.wilber@noaa.gov
		ESA information	General contact	727-824-5312	-
			Melissa Alvarez, Natural Resource Specialist	954-734-0716 (O) 201-978-9075 (C)	melissa.alvarez@noaa.gov
	Coral restoration	Michael Nemeth, Coral Reef Restoration Specialist	939-202-6311	michael.nemeth@noaa.gov	
	National Ocean Service, Office of Coast Survey	Navigation preparation and response	Nicolas Alvarado, Regional Navigation Manager - South Florida, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands	202-253-9536 (C)	florida.navmanager@noaa.gov
	National Ocean Service, Office of Response and Restoration	Potential to release oil or hazardous substance	Brad Benggio, Scientific Support Coordinator for USCG District 7 (FL, GA, SC, and Caribbean) and RRT Region 4 and Caribbean	305-530-7925 (O) 206-375-5697 (24hr)	brad.benggio@noaa.gov
		Planning and coordination for marine debris issues	Ashley Hill, Florida and Caribbean Regional Coordinator	240-687-9434 (C)	ashley.hill@noaa.gov
			Yaritza Rivera, Hurricane Response Coordinator - Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands	202-770-8227	yaritza.rivera@noaa.gov
<i>Continued on next page</i>					

**Federal Agencies Continued**

Agency	Division	Topic	Point of Contact	Phone	Email
<i>Continued from previous page</i> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	National Ocean Service, National Geodetic Survey, Remote Sensing Division	Remote sensing	Mike Aslaksen	240-533-9576	mike.aslaksen@noaa.gov
	National Weather Service	Weather-related planning and coordination	Ernesto Morales, Warning Coordination Meteorologist	787-662-2275	ernesto.morales@noaa.gov
National Park Service (NPS)	-	Response on NPS-owned lands	C. Anna Toline, Marine Scientist, Oceans Program Coordinator	843-518-1939	catherine_toline@nps.gov
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	-	Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program	Yilia Baucage-Bou, State Conservation Engineer	787-766-5715 787-342-6916	yilia.baucagebou@usda.gov
			Luis Cruz-Arroyo, Caribbean Area Director	787-281-4836	luis.cruz-arroyo@usda.gov
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District	Emergency Management	Emergency management (Jacksonville District, Antilles Office)	Logan Wilkinson, Emergency Management Chief	904-232-1881	logan.c.wilkinson@usace.army.mil
			Johann Sasso, Disaster Program Manager	787-729-6860	johann.m.sasso@usace.army.mil
		Emergency management (other support offices)	Tony Hill, Emergency Manager	501-773-1493	michael.a.hill@usace.army.mil
			Matt Tate, Debris Program Manager, CEMVD-RO	251-802-2011	jacob.m.tate@usace.army.mil
	Navigation	Federally maintained waterway or channel	Milan Mora, Navigation Chief	-	milan.a.mora@usace.army.mil
Regulatory Section, Antilles Office	Compliance and permitting	Regulatory Section	786-886-9198	CESAJ-RD-SA@usace.army.mil (Email preferred)	
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	-	Report potential to release oil or hazardous substance	National Response Center (NRC)	800-424-8802	-
	District 7	Planning and coordination	LTJG Andrew Garcia, RRT IV Coordinator/Alt. Co-Chair and Caribbean Coordinator	-	andrew.m.garcia@uscg.mil
	District 7, Sector San Juan	Capability contact coastal zone	Sector San Juan Command Center	787-289-2041	-
			Sector San Juan Incident Management Division	787-729-5399	-
	Planning and coordination	Chief Warrant Officer Daniell Lashbrook	786-246-0698	daniell.a.lashbrook@uscg.mil	
U.S. Department of Interior	-	Environmental response and recovery	Ryan Potosnak, ESF/RSF National Coordinator	202-208-7564	ryan_potosnak@ios.doi.gov
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <i>Continued on next page</i>	-	Report potential to release oil or hazardous substance	National Response Center (NRC)	800-424-8802	-
	Region 2	Capability contact	EPA Region 2 Regional Emergency Operations Center	732-906-6850 732-321-4370	-

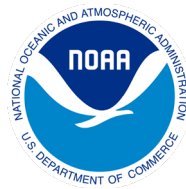


## Federal Agencies Continued

Continued from previous page  U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Region 2	Capability: Technology	ASPECT 24 Hour Access via EPA Headquarters Emergency Operations Center	202-564-3850	-
		Ocean disposal of vessels	Mark Reiss, Chief Dredging, Sediment, and Oceans Section	212-637-3799	reiss.mark@epa.gov
		Planning and coordination	Steve Touw, Caribbean Regional Response Team Coordinator	732-906-6900	touw.steve@epa.gov
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Caribbean Ecological Services Field Office	-	General contact	786-244-0081	caribbean_es@fws.gov
		-	Angel Colon, Fish and Wildlife Biologist	787-298-2510	angel_colon-santiago@fws.gov
		Planning and coordination ESF-10	Felix Lopez, Ecologist/Contaminants Specialist	305-304-1128	felix_lopez@fws.gov
		ESA information	Marelisa Rivera, Deputy Field Supervisor	305-304-1814	marelisa_rivera@fws.gov
U.S. Forest Service	-	Woody debris management	William Gould	-	william.a.gould@usda.gov
U.S. Navy	-	Planning and coordination	John E. Baxter, PE, Regional Environmental Coordinator, Navy On-Scene Coordinator	904-482-8397	john.e.baxter24.civ@us.navy.mil

## Academia and Nongovernmental Organizations

Organization	Division	Point of Contact	Phone	Email
Conservación ConCiencia	-	Raimundo Espinoza, Director	787-902-7760	rai@conservacionconciencia.org
San Juan Bay Estuary Program	-	Cristina Ramirez Colón, Stakeholder and Aquatic Debris Assistant Project Manager	787-725-8165	cramirez@estuario.org
		Brenda Torres Barreto, Executive Director	787-725-8165	btorres@estuario.org
The Nature Conservancy	-	Alberto Mercado, Puerto Rico Program Manager	787-674-4802	alberto.mercado@tnc.org
University of Puerto Rico	Sea Grant College Program	Ruperto Chaparro, Director	787-832-3585	ruperto.chaparro@upr.edu
		Berliz Morales, Marine Extension Agent	787-832-3585	berliz.morales@upr.edu



Gina M. Raimondo  
United States Secretary of Commerce

Dr. Richard W. Spinrad  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
and NOAA Administrator

Nicole R. LeBoeuf  
Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services  
and Coastal Zone Management