



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**

Southeast Regional Office

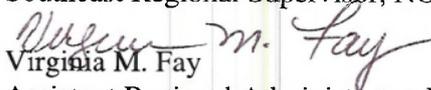
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March 5, 2014

MEMORANDUM TO: Leslie Craig  
Southeast Regional Supervisor, NOAA Restoration Center

FROM:   
Virginia M. Fay  
Assistant Regional Administrator, Habitat Conservation Division

SUBJECT: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment review for the proposed  
Cat Point Living Shoreline project in Apalachicola Bay, Franklin  
County, Florida.

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) proposes to implement living shoreline techniques at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Office Complex and Nature Center in Eastpoint, Florida. To reduce erosion and restore habitat, living shoreline and marsh creation techniques would be used in this project to stabilize eroding shorelines by dampening wave energy, while also providing habitat that was once present in the project area. The breakwater will protect an existing marsh and add new marsh through planting and shoreline stabilization. Construction of the project will impact estuarine mud, sand, and shell substrates and water column, which are identified and described as EFH under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

As specified in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, EFH consultation is required for federal actions which may adversely affect EFH. As the federal action agency for this matter, NOAA's Restoration Center prepared an EFH assessment for the Trustees and provided that document for our review by electronic mail dated February 26, 2014. The Southeast Region's Habitat Conservation Division (SER HCD) has reviewed the EFH assessment and finds the Restoration Center adequately evaluated potential project impacts to the federally managed species occurring within the influence of the project. We concur with the EFH assessment that potential impacts to EFH from the Cat Point Living Shorelines project are not likely to adversely affect EFH. The SER HCD has no EFH conservation recommendations to provide pursuant to Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act at this time. Further consultation on this matter is not necessary unless future modifications are proposed and such actions may result in adverse impacts to EFH.

cc:  
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