



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

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St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

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March 17, 2014

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

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

SUBJECT: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment review for improvements to the Franklin County Waterfront Park in and adjacent to Apalachicola Bay, Franklin County, Florida.

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Franklin County Parks and Boat Ramps proposes improvements to the Waterfront Park by augment existing parking and adjacent tie-up docks to enhance water access to Apalachicola Bay. In addition, an existing onsite building would be embellished to serve as an information center and dock master office. A kiosk describing fishing ethics, litter control, and the important resources surrounding the area would also be added as part of this project. Estuarine mud, sand, and shell substrates and water column will be impacted and 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 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 the project is 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:

F/SER-Giordano

F/HC3-Schubert

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DWH-AR0225506