

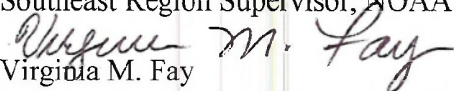


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
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St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

March 17, 2014

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

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

SUBJECT: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment review for improvements to the Franklin County St. George Island Fishing Pier in Apalachicola Bay, Franklin County, Florida.

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Franklin County Parks and Boat Ramps proposes improvements to the St. George Island Fishing Pier facilities by renovating the existing bulkhead and constructing new restrooms and an informational kiosk describing fishing ethics, litter control, and providing contacts and information for specific topics. Estuarine mud, sand, and shell substrates, and water column would be impacted during renovation of the bulkhead 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 short-term and long-term impacts of the proposed project on EFH would be minor. 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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