



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
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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) Review of the restoration of North Breton Island in the Chandeleur Island barrier system, Louisiana.

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposes the restoration of North Breton Island in the Chandeleur Island barrier system in Louisiana. Project implementation entails the creation of more than 70 acres of beach, 138 acres of dune, and 137 acres of back barrier marsh habitat. Lacking restoration efforts, all subaerial portions of the project area are expected to disappear in the near future. Water bottoms, water column and wetlands in the vicinity of North Breton Island are categorized as essential fish habitat (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, USFWS has prepared an EFH assessment for the project and provided that document for our review by electronic mail dated March 7, 2014. The Southeast Region's Habitat Conservation Division (SER HCD) has reviewed the EFH assessment and finds USFWS adequately evaluated potential project impacts to the federally managed species occurring within the influence of the project. We concur with the determination in the EFH assessment that negative project impacts are expected to be temporary and 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:
F/SER-Giordano
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