

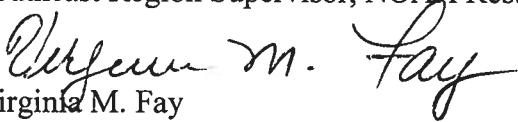


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

April 11, 2017 F/SER46:BH/RS

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

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

SUBJECT: Essential fish habitat review of the Alabama Trustee Implementation Group Restoration Plan #1

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund six land acquisition and public access projects in southern Alabama. The project activities described in the biological evaluations would result in minimal temporary impacts to estuarine water column and subtidal sand and mud habitats categorized as essential fish habitat (EFH) under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

The NOAA's Restoration Center prepared biological evaluations for these projects and provided the documents for our review by electronic mail dated November 16, 2016. Technical assistance to avoid and minimize impacts to EFH was provided by the Southeast Regional Office's Habitat Conservation Division (SERO HCD). Best management practices to minimize both short-term construction impacts and long-term impacts to EFH were developed and those changes were subsequently incorporated into final project designs. By memorandum dated March 29, 2017, NOAA's Restoration Center determined the projects will have no effect on EFH because the projects are either in uplands, in the planning stage, or have been designed to avoid impacts. The SERO HCD has reviewed the evaluations and finds the documents adequately assess proposed project impacts to EFH. The SER HCD concurs the project implementation would result in minimal temporary EFH impacts to estuarine water column, sand, and mud habitats; however, these impacts will not be substantial enough to require compensatory mitigation. Therefore, 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/HC3 – Fellas
F/SER – Giordano
F/SER4 – Dale
F/SER46 – Howard

