



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

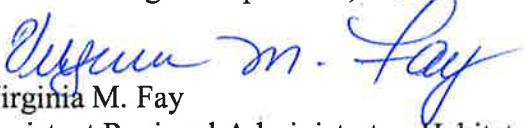
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May 1, 2018 F/SER46:BH/RS

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 #2

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund eighteen projects in southern Alabama. The Triage Center Project, Little Lagoon Living Shoreline Project, Oyster Clutch Relief and Reef Configuration Project, and the Oyster Grow-Out and Restoration Reef Placement Project would result in minimal and 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 and EFH assessments for these projects and provided the documents for our review by electronic mail dated April 10, 2018. Technical assistance has been provided by the Southeast Regional Office's Habitat Conservation Division (SERO HCD) to avoid and minimize impacts to EFH. Those changes were incorporated into final project design. The NOAA's Restoration Center determined the projects will have no substantial adverse effect on EFH because the projects are either in uplands, are restorative in nature, or have been designed to avoid permanent impacts. The SERO HCD has reviewed the EFH assessments and have determined the documents adequately evaluate proposed project impacts to EFH. We concur 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. Best management practices to minimize both short-term construction impacts and long-term impacts to habitats have been developed. 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

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