



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>

October 3, 2018

F/SER46:CG/RS

MEMORANDUM TO: Christy Fellas
DWH Environmental Compliance Coordinator, Restoration Center

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

SUBJECT: Essential fish habitat review of the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment #1.1: Queen Bess Island Restoration Project

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund a bird restoration project in Barataria Bay, Louisiana. The Queen Bess Island Restoration Project would result in minimal and temporary impacts to intertidal wetlands, mangroves, 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 a biological evaluation and an EFH assessment for this project and provided the documents for our review by electronic mail dated September 28, 2018. The Southeast Regional Office's Habitat Conservation Division (SERO HCD) provided technical assistance to avoid and minimize impacts to EFH. Those changes were incorporated into final project designs. The NOAA's Restoration Center determined the project will have no substantial adverse effect on EFH because the project is restorative in nature and has been designed to avoid permanent impacts. The SERO HCD has reviewed the EFH assessment and has determined the document adequately evaluates proposed project impacts to EFH. We concur the project implementation would result in minimal temporary EFH impacts to intertidal wetlands, mangroves, estuarine water column, and subtidal sand and mud habitats; however, these impacts will not be substantial. Best management practices have been developed to minimize both short-term construction impacts and long-term impacts to habitats. The SERO 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/SER4 – Dale

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