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EFH consultation: AL TIG RP/EA #3: Bayfront Park

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Wed, May 6, 2020 at 7:47 AM

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From: January.Murray@noaa.gov <january.murray@noaa.gov>
Date: Tue, May 5, 2020 at 4:27 PM
Subject: Re: EFH consultation: AL TIG RP/EA #3: Bayfront Park

Hello Christy,

Through the early consultation process beginning on August 6, 2019, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has engaged in the environmental review of the Bayfront Park Restoration and Improvement Phases II a-b Project. NMFS has reviewed the "Restoration Plan #3 (RP III) Final EA Clean for Review," "Appendix I Rare and Projected Species," and numerous revisions of "RP3 BE Form Drafts" in coordination with the Alabama Trustee Implementation Group (AL TIG). On November 12, 2019 and again on December 30, 2019 the NMFS responded to the AL TIG that the EFH assessment information provided was incomplete. The NMFS recommended this project conduct hydrographic modeling and complete engineering and design to fully assess impacts to EFH.

On February 20, 2020 the NMFS received the "Bayfront Park EFH Assessment" and the "Bayfront Park Coastal Engineering 30% Design Report" for review. On March 4, 2020 the NMFS requested clarification as the information provided in the Bayfront Park EFH Assessment and the Bayfront Park Coastal Engineering 30% Design Report was different (i.e.: project design, features, and impacts to EFH) from the BE Forms. On March 9, 2020 the NMFS received the USACE Joint Permit Application with alternatives analysis and updated EFH acreage estimations. On May 5, 2020, the Bayfront Park 90% Design Plans were provided which outlined the project's features and clearly characterized, delineated, and quantified impacts to EFH by habitat type.

The Bayfront Park Restoration and Improvement Phases II a-b Project proposes shoreline and park improvements in Mobile County, Alabama. Construction of an approximate 3.67 acres sand pocket beach with an approximate 119 foot average width of beach fill above mean sea level (MSL) and an approximate 780 foot average length of beach fill above MSL will result in the permanent conversion of approximately 2.1 acres of existing estuarine intertidal EFH habitat to upland due to beach fill. In addition, approximately 9,600 square feet of breakwaters and 24,000 square feet of groins will result in the loss of 0.8 acres of EFH through rock fill. The project also proposes to replace and expand an existing boardwalk with overlooks for approximately 865 linear feet of which 160 linear feet will span tidal marsh resulting in 0.029 acres of impacts to EFH. To avoid shading impacts to jurisdictional wetlands located within the tidal marsh footprint of the project, the design of the boardwalk will include 3/4-inch top graded decking to allow gapping for light penetration, the elevation/height of the boardwalk will be a minimum of 5 feet above the (marsh) floor level, and the width of the boardwalk will be limited to no greater than 8 feet.

The total EFH impacts for this project (2.87 acres rounded up to 2.9 acres) are based on near 60% design status prepared by Barry A. Vittor and Associates. The NMFS, Habitat Conservation Division, anticipates any adverse effects which might occur to marine and anadromous fishery resources, and essential fish habitat, would be minimal and we do not object to the project as proposed. Unless modifications to this proposal are made, no further consultation on effects to essential fish habitat is necessary.

Thank you for your coordination,
January Murray

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