



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
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

March 20, 2020 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 #6 and Environmental
Assessment: Restore and Conserve Wetlands, Coastal, and
Nearshore Habitat - Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline Project

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund a living shoreline restoration project in Eloi Bay of the Biloxi Marsh in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. The Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline Restoration Project would result in minimal and temporary impacts to estuarine habitats, including water column, and water bottoms 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 (RC) prepared a biological evaluation (BE) form in addition to the Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment (RP/EA) containing an EFH assessment for the project, and provided the documents for our review by electronic mail dated March 20, 2020. Technical assistance has been provided by the Southeast Regional Office's Habitat Conservation Division (SERO HCD) to avoid and minimize impacts to EFH. The NOAA's RC determined the project will not have a substantial adverse effect on EFH because the project is restorative in nature, and has been designed to minimize 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 impacts to estuarine EFH; 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 – Sweeney

F/SER – Giordano

F/SER4 – Dale

F/SER46 – Gothreaux, Swafford

