



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office
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Jackson, Mississippi 39213
Phone: (601)965-4900 Fax: (601)965-4340

March 27, 2020

IN REPLY REFER TO:
2020-I-0581

Ms. Erin Chandler
Fish and Wildlife Service
Gulf Restoration Office
341 Greeno Road North, Suite A
Fairhope, Alabama 36532

Dear Ms. Chandler:

The Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Mississippi Field Office has reviewed the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill natural resource restoration project titled "Mississippi Oyster Gardening Program". Our comments are in reference to compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

The proposed project includes a volunteer-based oyster gardening program that would grow sub-adult oyster from spat on shell stock that hang from water piers, wharves and docks located in coastal waters along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. These oysters would then be transferred to designated areas in coastal MS waters that are not open to oyster harvesting.

We concur with your determination that the proposed project "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" the West Indian manatee. Unless the project description changes, or new information reveals that the effects of the proposed action may affect listed species in a manner or to an extent not considered, or a new species or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by the proposed action, no further action pursuant to the ESA is necessary.

If you have any questions, please contact David Felder in this office, telephone (601) 321-1131.

Sincerely,

Stephen Ricks
Stephen M. Ricks
Field Supervisor
Mississippi Field Office