



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
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St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

September 4, 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 #7 and Environmental
Assessment: Terrebonne Basin Ridge and Marsh Creation – Bayou
Terrebonne Increment and Grand Cheniere Ridge and Marsh
Creation (BA-0240) projects

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund two ridge and marsh restoration projects in Terrebonne and Barataria Basins, Louisiana. Both restoration projects would result in minimal and temporary impacts to estuarine habitats, including tidal wetlands, 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 biological evaluation (BE) forms in addition to the draft Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment (RP/EA #7) containing EFH assessments for the projects, and provided the documents for our review by electronic mail dated August 18, 2020. 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 the BE forms and draft RP/EA #7, which was shared with the public on August 20, 2020. The NOAA's RC determined the projects would not have a substantial adverse effect on EFH because the projects are restorative in nature, and have been designed to minimize permanent impacts. The SERO HCD has reviewed the EFH assessments and has determined the documents adequately evaluate proposed project impacts to EFH. We concur the projects' 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 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:
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