



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

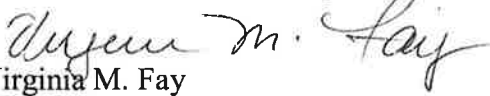
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October 23, 2019 F/SER46:CG/RS

MEMORANDUM TO: Christina 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 #1.2: Spanish Pass Restoration Project

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund a marsh and ridge restoration project in Barataria Bay, Louisiana. The Spanish Pass Restoration Project would result in minimal and temporary impacts to estuarine and nearshore habitats, including tidal wetlands, mangroves, 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 evaluations and an environmental information document containing an EFH assessment for the project, and provided the documents for our review by electronic mail dated October 3, 2019. 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 draft restoration plan and environmental assessment #1.2, which was shared with the public on October 18, 2019. 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 have determined the document adequately evaluates proposed project impacts to EFH. We concur the project implementation would result in minimal temporary impacts to estuarine and nearshore 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

