




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
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

October 29, 2019 F/SER46:CG/RS

MEMORANDUM TO: Christina E. 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: Lake Borgne Restoration Project

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund a marsh restoration project in Lake Borgne, Louisiana. The Lake Borgne Marsh Creation (Increment One) Restoration Project 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 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 28, 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 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

