Subject: DWH-Early Restoration- Essential Fish Habitat Consultation Initiation-Florida Enhancement of Franklin County Parks and Boat Ramps – Indian Creek Park project
From: Jamie Schubert-NOAA Federal <jamie.schubert@noaa.gov>
Date: 3/13/2014 2:27 PM
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Mr. Thompson,
Attached is the Essential Fish Habitat Assessment for the **Florida Enhancement of Franklin County Parks and Boat Ramps – Indian Creek Park project**. This project is being proposed in the Deepwater Horizon Draft Phase III Early Restoration plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Please consider this our initiation of our Essential Fish Habitat consultation. If you anticipate this consultation requiring more than 30 days (April 14, 2014) please let me know.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 409-621-1248 or at jamie.schubert@noaa.gov.
Thanks,

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Attachments:

DWH-ER-EFH-Franklin.County.Indian.Creek.Park.2014-02-14.docx 553 KB

Determination of Effect on Essential Fish Habitat from Florida Enhancement of Franklin County Parks and Boat Ramps – Indian Creek Park project

EFH overview from Magnuson Stevens Act

The 1996 Magnuson-Stevens Act requires cooperation among the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), anglers, and federal and state agencies to protect, conserve, and enhance Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). EFH is defined as those waters and substrates necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity. The designation and conservation of EFH seek to minimize adverse effects on habitat caused by fishing and non-fishing activities.

Project description

The proposed Franklin County Indian Creek Park project would improve the existing Indian Creek Park boat launch facility at North Bayshore Drive in Franklin County. The proposed improvements include constructing restroom facilities and connecting them to an existing central wastewater facility nearby, installing an informational kiosk, and renovating the existing boat ramp, bulkhead, and parking area to enhance water access. Figure 1 illustrates the project location.

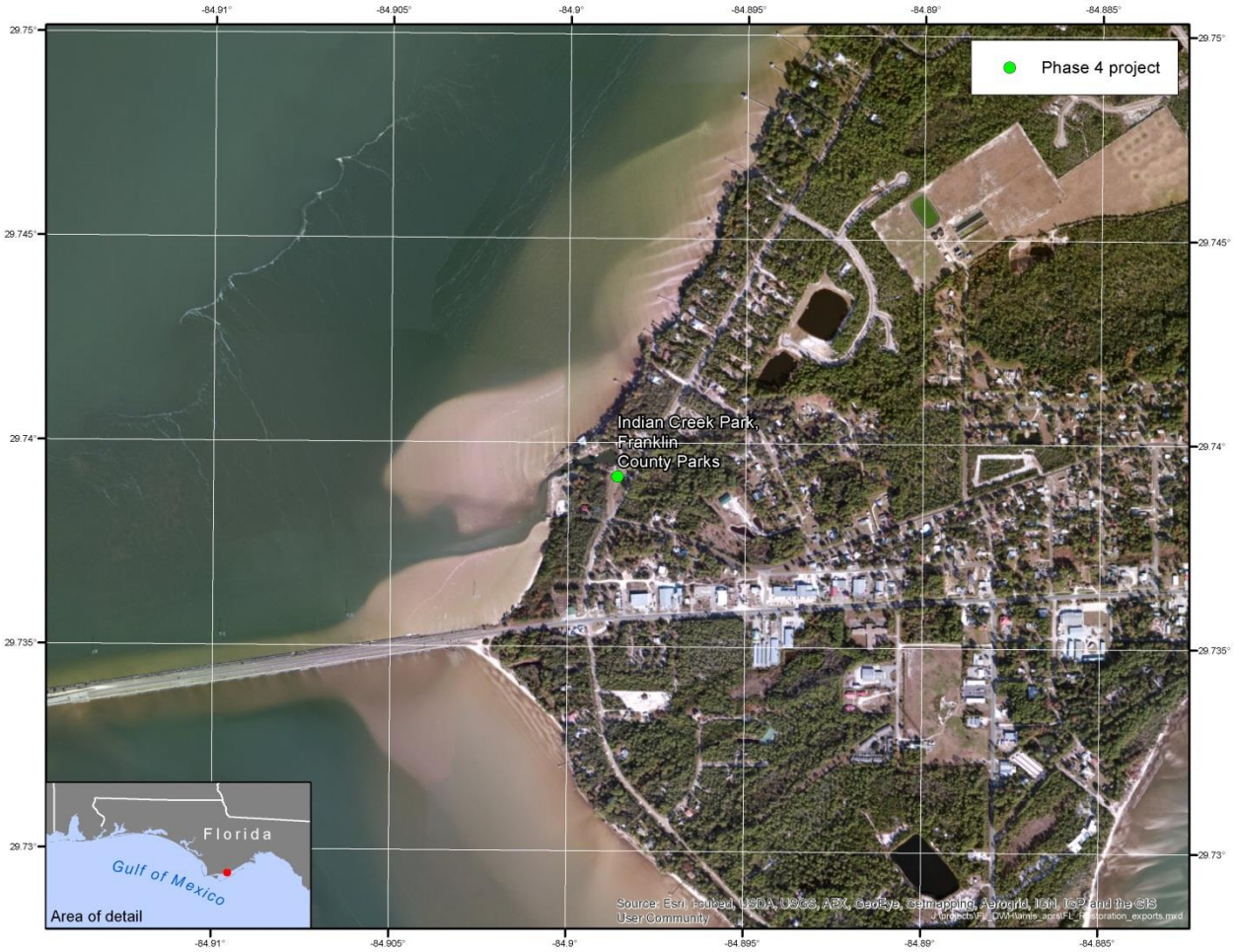

Figure 1. Location of the Indian Creek Park facility improvements.

Federally managed fisheries and EFH

Information on designated EFH in the Gulf of Mexico was obtained in September, 2013 from the NMFS' EFH web site at *http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/protection/efh/newInv*. Table 1 provides a summary of the species identified as having designated EFH for one or more life stages within the area of potential affect for the proposed project.

Table 1. Federally managed species with designated Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the proposed project area.

EFH Category	Species
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	
	Atlantic Sharpnose Shark-Adult
	Atlantic Sharpnose Shark-Juvenile
	Atlantic Sharpnose Shark-Neonate
	Blacknose Shark-Adult
	Blacknose Shark-Juvenile
	Blacknose Shark-Neonate
	Blacktip Shark-Adult
	Blacktip Shark-Juvenile
	Blacktip Shark-Neonate
	Bonnethead Shark-Adult
	Bull Shark-Juvenile
	Finetooth Shark-Adult-and-Juv
	Great Hammerhead Shark-All
	Nurse Shark-Juvenile
	Scalloped Hammerhead Shark-Juvenile
	Scalloped Hammerhead Shark-Neonate
	Spinner Shark-Juvenile
	Spinner Shark-Neonate
Coastal Migratory Pelagics of the Gulf of Mexico AND South Atlantic	
	Spanish Mackerel
	Cobia
	King Mackerel
Gulf of Mexico Red Drum	
	Red Drum
Gulf of Mexico Shrimp	
	Pink Shrimp
	Rock Shrimp
	Seabob Shrimp
	White Shrimp
	Brown Shrimp
Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	
	Lane Snapper
	Lesser Amberjack
	Mutton Snapper
	Nassau Grouper
	Queen Snapper
	Red Grouper
	Red Snapper
	Scamp

	Silk Snapper
	Snowy Grouper
	Speckled Hind
	Tilefish
	Vermilion Snapper
	Warsaw Grouper
	Wenchman
	Yellowedge Grouper
	Yellowfin Grouper
	Yellowmouth Grouper
	Almaco Jack
	Banded Rudderfish
	Black Grouper
	Blackfin Snapper
	Blueline Tilefish
	Cubera Snapper
	Gag
	Goldface Tilefish
	Gray (Mangrove) Snapper
	Gray Triggerfish
	Greater Amberjack
	Hogfish

Assessment of effects to EFH

Restoration actions at the Indian Creek Park boat ramp are expected to have no to minor impacts on EFH. The proposed parking lot improvements and restroom would be constructed above mean high water and would lack a direct connection to identified essential fish habitat management areas. However, providing a more reliable means of treating human waste from the restrooms by establishing a wastewater utility connection could provide some minor regional water quality benefits. Repairing the existing boat ramp and bulkhead, which involve in water work, would not result in a habitat conversion as all repairs and renovations will take place within the footprints of the existing structures.

The existing boat ramp is paved and includes a boarding dock; however, review of recent aerial photographs indicates the ramp is silted in and currently unusable. The shoreline adjacent to the boat ramp is armored with large boulders. The single-lane boat ramp is approximately 20 feet wide and runs perpendicular to the shoreline. The boat launch is located along the East Bay portion of the Apalachicola Bay shoreline. The in-water habitat adjacent to the ramp is shallow nearshore habitat with a sandy bottom. The boat ramp is near a large bridge crossing the Apalachicola Bay and the shoreline nearby is frequently interrupted with developed structures associated with the residential neighborhood.

The cracked concrete surface of the existing boat ramp would be removed, along with adjacent bulkhead material as needed, and a new concrete boat ramp would be installed. The new ramp would be in the same location as the existing ramp. Heavy machinery would be used to break up the concrete ramp and bulkhead and load into large dump trucks for removal. New subgrade material would be compacted and prepared for the new concrete. Concrete forms for new

bulkheads and ramp surface would be constructed and poured using hand-held and small mechanical tools. All work would be performed behind a silt curtain to isolate the construction activities from the water. Safety fencing would be constructed to prevent incidental access. The footprint of the finished ramp would be the same as the existing facility.

Repair of the 275 foot long bulkhead would be performed by a combination of hand-held and mechanical tools from upland and barge locations. Existing sections of bulkhead would be removed using machinery to lift the materials. All in-water work would be performed behind silt curtains to isolate the work area from the open water. After bulkhead installation, construction crews of two to three persons would install 99 feet of rubber bumpers to the open water side using hand held tools from a barge. Best management practices (BMPs) for erosion control would be implemented and maintained at all times during construction to prevent siltation and turbid discharges into waters of the state. Silt and sedimentation control measures would be installed and properly maintained at all points where runoff from disturbed areas could result in water quality violations of Chapter 62-302, F.A.A. This may include the use of filter fences (staked or floating), sedimentation screens, erosion control blankets, or other appropriate erosion and turbidity control measures.

The project is anticipated to begin in early 2014 and be completed by fall of 2015 unless severe weather delays construction. Work would begin with final designs and permitting followed by construction of the amenities. The temporary staging area for the project materials, supplies, and equipment during construction would be located within the existing paved parking lot and material would be loaded directly onto the barge. During construction, adjacent areas with equivalent or better habitat will be available and undisturbed and organisms could move away from disturbed areas.

Conclusion

The project is not likely to adversely affect EFH. The proposed boat ramp and bulkhead repair work will take place within the footprint of the existing boat ramp and bulkhead. All other planned work (parking area improvements and restroom construction) will take place above mean high water and will have no impact on EFH. No habitat would be converted as part of this project. Disturbance to species will be minor and brief.