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

April 24, 2014

MEMORANDUM TO: Leslie Craig
Southeast Region Supervisor, NOAA Restoration Center

FROM: Virginia M. Fay
Assistant Regional Administrator, Habitat Conservation Division

SUBJECT: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment review for the proposed improvement of the Florida FWC Strategic Boat Access: City of St. Marks' Boat Ramp Improvements Project in the St. Marks River, Wakulla County, Florida

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the proposed work for the City of St. Marks' Boat Ramp Project would improve the existing boat ramp by adding a boarding dock to the existing one-lane boat ramp, which is no longer used for motor boat launching. This boarding dock would be used primarily to facilitate the launching, loading, and removal of non-motorized watercraft. Estuarine water column and sand substrates will be impacted and are identified and described as EFH under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

As specified in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, EFH consultation is required for federal actions which may adversely affect EFH. As the federal action agency, NOAA's Restoration Center prepared an EFH assessment and provided that document for our review by electronic mail dated April 23, 2014. The Southeast Region's Habitat Conservation Division (SER HCD) has reviewed the EFH assessment and finds the Restoration Center adequately evaluated potential project impacts to the federally managed species occurring within the influence of the project. We concur with the EFH assessment that project construction is not likely to adversely affect EFH and any disturbance to species will be minor and brief. 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 is not necessary unless future modifications are proposed and such actions may result in adverse impacts to EFH.

cc:
F/SER-Giordano
F/HC3-Schubert
F/SER4-Dale
F/SER46-Thompson