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
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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 restoration/improvement of the Norriego Point Restoration and Recreation Project in East Past, Destin, Okaloosa County, Florida

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the proposed work for the Norriega Point Restoration and Recreation Project includes constructing/repairing erosion control structures and placing dredged sand behind the structures to restore eight acres of upland beach. In addition, this project would involve constructing new public amenities including: a picnic pavilion with restrooms, showers, and drinking fountains; educational signage; a multi-use trail; bike racks; and vehicle parking along the access road adjacent to the Point. 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 March 5, 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. Project construction will restore eight acres of upland habitat resulting in an adverse impact to eight acres of estuarine sand substrate and water column. Best management practices will be utilized during construction to minimize impacts to adjacent habitats and these impacts should be minor and brief. In view that this is a restoration project, 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