



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

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

March 26, 2014

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

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

SUBJECT: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment review for the Swift Tract
Living Shoreline project in Bon Secour Bay, Baldwin County,
Alabama

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Swift Tract Living Shoreline project will provide for the restoration and protection of 1.6 miles of shoreline in Bon Secour Bay by constructing breakwaters. The cumulative impact of the project is expected to create conditions favorable to submerged aquatic vegetation colonization and to generally improve water quality. Nearshore 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 February 20, 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 will result in short term adverse impacts to EFH. However, once the breakwaters are stabilized, a long-term beneficial impact is expected from the shoreline protection. 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

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