



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

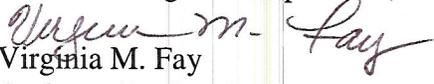
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March 5, 2014

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

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

SUBJECT: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment review for the proposed Pensacola Bay Living Shorelines Project (PBLs) in Pensacola Bay, Escambia County, Florida.

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection propose to use living shoreline restoration techniques to stabilize shorelines by reducing wave energy, while also providing new oyster reef and marsh habitat. This project will occur at Sanders Beach and Project GreenShores Site II. Both sites are to be constructed on City of Pensacola-owned submerged land. The PBLs will include breakwater construction at both sites to create approximately four acres of oyster reef habitat and to protect the approximately 18.8 acres of salt marsh habitat to be created by this project. Estuarine mud, sand, and shell substrates and water column will be impacted by the construction of the project 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 for this matter, NOAA's Restoration Center prepared an EFH assessment and provided that document for our review by electronic mail dated February 26, 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 negative impacts resulting from the PBLs construction would be minor and brief, and the overall project will enhance and restore marine habitats in areas supporting EFH. 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:
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