



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# EFH Policy Statement Update: Beach Dredge and Fill, Beach Renourishment and Large-Scale Coastal Engineering

Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Committee

Jekyll Island, Georgia

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....*To Conserve and Manage*



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# EFH Policy Statement Development

- The Council's EFH policy statements and recommendations provide NMFS, state agencies, other Federal and regional habitat partners guidance and rationale to conserve and protect EFH in the South Atlantic region.
- Provides the Council the ability to submit Standing Policy Statements when providing comments with a limited review period.
- Policy Statements are an important tool NMFS HCD routinely provides to applicants during the pre application phase of the EFH Consultation process.



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# EFH Policy Statement Structure

- Policy Context
- EFH at Risk
- Threats to Marine and Estuarine Resources
- Best Management Practices
- Research Needs





# EFH Policy Statement Recommendations on Best Management Practices

1) In general, frequent and widespread beach renourishment projects (dredge and fill) occurring in the United States southeast together may cause measurable impacts to EFH under the jurisdiction of the SAFMC. Coastal communities are strongly encouraged to evaluate the full range of alternatives, including retreat, to these types of projects when addressing erosion and sea level rise.





## Recommendations on BMPs (continued)

2) For each project, a comprehensive environmental document should be prepared based on the best available information and should include:

- a) Defined areas of direct and indirect impact
- b) Baseline surveys designed with appropriate methodology to adequately document pre-project conditions for biological, physical and water resources in both direct and indirect impact areas.
- c) An analysis of alternatives, including alternatives that may minimize future need for additional nourishment activities.
- d) A during-construction monitoring plan
- e) A post-construction monitoring plan

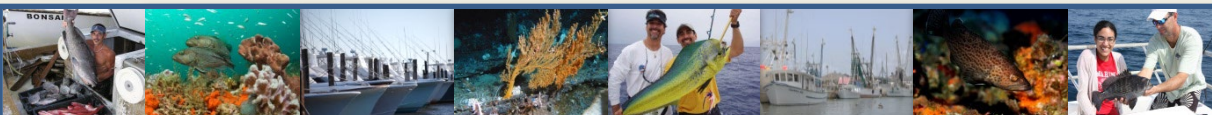




## Recommendations on BMPs (continued)

3) Dredging should be limited to bathymetric peaks or accreting system components (rather than depressions or level sea bottom) in areas characterized by strong currents and sand movement, in order to increase sediment infilling rates and decrease the duration of impacts to benthic habitats.

4) The depth of material removed should be limited to the shallowest depths possible and removal should not dredge to depths that lead to a change in sediment type (e.g., from sand to clay) but rather retain the same bottom character to promote recruitment of similar organisms that reflect pre-dredge community composition.

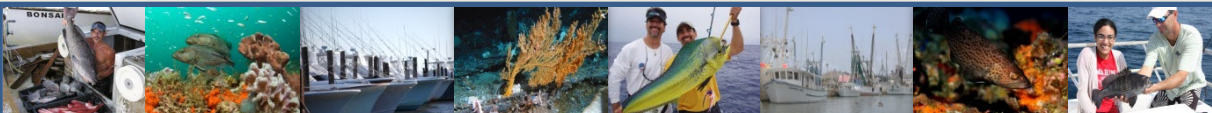




## Recommendations on BMPs (continued)

5) In areas with seasonal benthic recruitment periods, beach renourishment and large-scale coastal engineering activities should be conducted during periods of low biological activity (environmental windows), for example, ahead of spring/summer benthic recruitment periods, to allow maximum recovery of adversely impacted communities.

6) Habitats designated as EFH-HAPC or recognized in state-level natural resource management plans should not be used as borrow areas for sand mining.





# Congressional Mandates Addressing Impacts on EFH and Role of EFH Policy Statements

- Identify and describe Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and EFH-HAPCs (Update every 5 Years)
- Develop, maintain and refine spatial representations of EFH and EFH-HAPCs
- Eliminate or reduce the impact of fishing gear on EFH (regulations in FMPs)
- **SAFMC EFH Policy Statements** support mandate to develop recommendations to eliminate or reduce the impact of non-fishing activities on EFH (policies and commenting)

