



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Point Reyes National Seashore
Point Reyes, California 94956

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7617

JUN 28 2016

William Steele
NOAA-NMFS
West Coast Region
777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325
Santa Rosa, California 95404

RE: Commencement of Drakes Estero Restoration Project-Reference NMFS No: WCR-2015-3124

Dear Mr. Steele:

We wanted to update you on the status of the restoration efforts at Drakes Estero. The NPS has initiated a contract for work to remove the racks and bottom debris from Drakes Estero, and anticipates the contractor initiating work on the site by mid-July, 2016. Based on discussions with the contractor, they will be able to remove all racks and bottom debris classified as moderate and heavy from the Estero. They will also remove the plastic debris, lines and anchors from the identified sandbar areas.

Over the past few weeks, the NPS has initiated field training, testing and refinement of field collection methods for the eelgrass monitoring program in anticipation of the planned restoration activities on Drakes Estero. This week, we are beginning pre-construction monitoring for the project.

The permitting package described generally the activities and approach, including removal of racks, bottom debris, and debris from the sand bar. The contractor anticipates two working long-arm excavators on the water and transport barges to ship debris to shore. The long-arm excavators will allow for work to occur on multiple bents before moving, thereby reducing the overall number of times barges need to anchor.

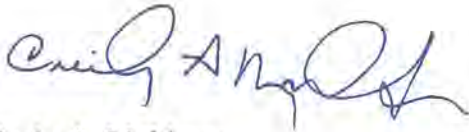
The permitting package anticipated 3,200 SF (0.07 acres) of impact associated with the construction of a potential 20'x150' dock and associated anchors to support debris removal activities at the put in location. The contractor does not plan to construct a dock. In lieu of a dock, the contractor anticipates working from the shoreline using a long-armed excavator to access and remove debris/boxes from the transport barges. They have identified the need for placement of a timber mats (note – mats are made of 4-12"x12"x20' timbers bolted together to create 4'x20' mats), within an approximately 20'x20' area. Minor smoothing will be necessary to set the mats. The mats would be placed on unvegetated shoreline access area over

accumulated shell. The location will be selected to minimize potential impact of operations to eelgrass, generally within the former dock and work platform area of the developed complex. Surrounding the completed deck mats there will be steel pipe driven along the edge to secure the mats at high tide and prevent them from floating out of place. Adjacent to the mat, and in the water, the contractor will also install 8 inch round steel pipe (pushed into the substrate to tie off barges and boats. In order for personnel to access the barges and push boats, the contractor will install aluminum floating walkway ramps and secure them to the steel pipes. The ramps will serve as a main access for personnel to access boats and barges.

Based on additional review of recent aerial imagery which shows extent of eelgrass, the access will be at the location of the former dock, where there is no eelgrass and good access to the channel. As with the permitted dock, the timber mat will be temporary in nature and the area is a far smaller than the footprint anticipated in the permitting package. Based on this additional information we anticipate that most potential eelgrass impacts anticipated for this area can be avoided.

Over the next few weeks we will be finalizing the process with the contractor in advance of mobilization to the site. This is an important step in the restoration of Drakes Estero.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cicely A. Muldoon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Cicely A. Muldoon
Superintendent