



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 7, 2006

Colonel Kevin J. Wilson
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 898
Anchorage, Alaska 99506-0898

Re: POA-2006-1333-D
Herring Cove

Attn: Serena Sweet

Dear Colonel Wilson:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the above referenced proposal to construct a new water main from Herring Cove to Mountain Point along the South Tongass Highway, south of Ketchikan, Alaska. Two pipes would be buried (one 12-inch diameter raw water pipe and one 8-inch diameter sewer pipe) in a 4-foot wide by 12,420-foot long trench. Installation of these pipes will require trenching across an approximately 100-foot long portion of Herring Cove/Herring Cove Creek.

Section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) requires federal agencies to consult with NMFS on all actions that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). NMFS is required to make EFH Conservation Recommendations, which may include measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate or otherwise offset adverse effects. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Anadromous Streams Catalog indicates that Herring Cove Creek provides important habitat for chum, coho and pink salmon. A fish hatchery is located upstream of the project site. Herring Cove itself is a high value estuarine flat containing important eelgrass habitat. The cove provides spawning and rearing habitat for a number of commercially important species, as well as providing forage for marine mammals.

Water pollution in marine habitats resulting from poorly maintained individual septic systems is a common problem in coastal Alaska. NMFS is pleased that this project will provide homeowners and businesses in the area access to a municipal wastewater treatment system. In accordance with Section 305(b)(4)(A) of the MSA, NMFS makes the following EFH Conservation Recommendations to minimize the impact of pipeline installation on marine resources in Herring Cove:

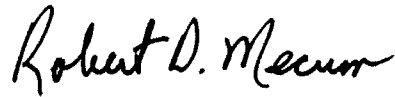
1. No dredging or excavating should be permitted from April 1 to June 15. These activities can produce high levels of turbidity that are harmful to juvenile salmon.
2. If eelgrass occurs in the proposed pipeline corridor, contact NMFS to discuss the possibility for transplanting eelgrass to an appropriate site in the cove.



Under section 305(b)(4) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Corps is required to respond to NMFS EFH Conservation Recommendations in writing within 30 days. If the Corps will not make a decision within 30 days of receiving NMFS EFH Conservation Recommendations, the Corps should provide NMFS with a letter within 30 days to that effect, and indicate when a full response will be provided.

If you have any questions regarding our recommendations for this project, please contact John Hudson at 907-586-7639 or john.hudson@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Mecum
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: Applicant
EPA Juneau, Chris Meade*
ADNR, Mark Minnillo and Jackie Timothy*
USFWS Juneau, Tina Racy*
ADEC Juneau, Brenda Krauss*
OHMP, Erin Allee*

* e-mail PDF