



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

June 29, 2006

Guy McConnell
Chief, Environmental Resources Section
U.S. Army Engineer District, Alaska
P.O. Box 898
Anchorage, Alaska 99506-0898

ATTN: L. Boyer:

Dear Mr. McConnell:

This is in response to your request for information regarding the presence of threatened or endangered species and their designated critical habitat, near Barrow Alaska, which is proposed for beach protection using a storm damage reduction project. Additionally, you request to initiate consultation regarding Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) resources under the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

Endangered Species

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) directs federal interagency cooperation "to insure that any action authorized, funded or carried out by such an agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species" or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

The following species listed under the ESA for which National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) bears responsibility are found in this area:

Bowhead Whale (*Balaena mysticetus*).....Endangered

No designated critical habitat occurs near this area. As the action agency, the Corps of Engineers (Corps) should now determine whether this action may affect the bowhead whale. Your evaluation of potential effects should include consideration of secondary effects, including the proposed barge traffic. Should the Corps determine that this work may affect the bowhead whale, the Corps would then enter informal consultation, during which NMFS staff would work with the Corps' staff to consider means to avoid any adverse effects.



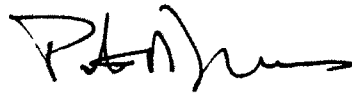
Essential Fish Habitat

Under Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, federal agencies are required to consult with the Secretary of Commerce on any action that may adversely affect EFH. The Corps has not determined whether the proposed action may adversely affect EFH. However, the Corps has provided information that includes a list of fish species present in the project area. From this list, EFH has been described for pink and chum salmon, sculpin, Alaska plaice, and yellowfin sole. NMFS suggests you review these species and their habitat associations found in Appendix F of the EFH EIS 2005 and online at http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat/seis/final/Volume_II/Appendix_F.2.pdf.

Additionally, the information provided by the Corps is too preliminary for NMFS to offer any specific EFH conservation recommendations. NMFS, does however, suggest that the Corps consider avoiding and minimizing impacts by adjusting timing for in-water around sensitive life histories such as juvenile salmon smolt out migrations, adult salmon return migrations, or those times when juvenile sole and Alaska plaice concentrate nearshore.

We hope this information will be useful in fulfilling your requirements under the ESA and Magnuson-Stevens Act. Please direct any endangered marine mammal questions to Brad Smith in our Anchorage office, (907) 271-3023. Any EFH questions should be directed to Matthew Eagleton, also in our Anchorage office, (907) 271-6354.

Sincerely,

 for D/M
Robert D. Mecum
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: *Kaja Brix – PRD
*Brad Smith
*Records File - # 1514-01 & 1503-16a

* email