



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

January 23, 2003

Mr. Tom Middendorf
Senior Airport Planner
Dowl Engineers
4040 B Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

RE: Haines Airport Master Plan Update

Dear Mr. Middendorf:

Thank you for providing a summary of the December 11 public meeting in Haines on the proposed Haines Airport Master Plan update. The purpose of the Haines Airport Master Plan update is to guide development of the airport over the next 20 years. A formal agency meeting will be held the summer of 2003. Environmental analyses will be completed this summer, and will include wetland mapping, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, and an overview of other possible environmental impacts associated with master plan activities. You have requested initial agency comments for environmental analyses of the project.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recommends that an inventory of all anadromous fish streams in the area of the Haines airport be included in the environmental analyses. Any environmental documentation for projects identified in the master plan will need an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment of the impacts, if they affect anadromous fish streams or adjacent wetlands, pursuant to requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. EFH includes any anadromous fish stream or anadromous fish rearing habitats within the project area. Avoidance of these areas to the maximum extent possible through the planning process will streamline environmental analyses for projects identified in the master plan.

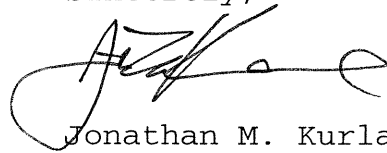
NMFS also recommends that environmental analyses include reference to proposed master plan activities that may impact prior environmental mitigation that was completed as part of the early 1990s reconstruction of the Haines Airport. A report of the monitoring of these mitigation projects, which included created and re-created wetlands, stream channel



construction, re-routing and deepening, and mitigation pond creation are detailed in Josephson et al. (1997). Master planning should take into account these mitigation projects and avoid impacting them to the maximum extent possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Shaw at (907) 586-7510.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan M. Kurland', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jonathan M. Kurland
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Habitat Conservation

cc: ADF&G, ADEC, ADOT, AADGC, ADNR, USFWS, Juneau
Chris Meade, EPA, Juneau

LITERATURE CITED

Josephson, R.P., M.S. Kelly, K.M. Brownlee, and B.L. Parry.
1997.

Report on the Monitoring of Environmental Protection and
Mitigation, Haines Airport Reconstruction. Alaska
Department of Fish and Game Regional Information Report
1J97-14, Juneau, AK, 129 pp.