



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service*

*P.O. Box 21668*

*Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

June 1, 2006

Captain Mark R. DeVries  
Commander, Sector Anchorage (SPW)  
U.S. Coast Guard  
510 L Street, Suite 100  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-1946

Re: Smitty's Cove Artificial Reef  
Anchoring Restriction

Dear Captain DeVries:

On May 10, 2006, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) deployed Alaska's first planned and monitored artificial reef in Smitty's Cove, Whittier, Alaska. NMFS is using two different structures, one built with about 100 concrete pyramids weighing 400 pounds each and the other with about 100 concrete balls weighing 300 and 400 pounds each. The two reef styles were installed side-by-side for comparison purposes. Subsequent to deployment we received a report that an individual had dragged anchor through the reef, damaging a few structures.

The objectives of the artificial reef are outlined below, as well as our rationale for requesting anchoring restriction for Smitty's Cove. The procedures for establishing an area to limit vessel traffic and or operations are lined out in 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 165.5, and require the following:

**1.) The name of the person submitting the request**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

**2.) The location and boundaries of the zone to be regulated**

Smitty's Cove, Whittier, Alaska (see attached chart for specific location of artificial reef)

**3.) The date, time and duration that the area should be established**

NMFS requests the area be permanently closed to anchoring as soon as possible to prevent the possibility of further damage to reef structures.



**4.) A description of the activities planned for the area**

The area is the site of a NMFS demonstration project examining the efficacy of using artificial reef structures to mitigate the loss of nearshore marine fish habitat due to shoreline development. It is also a mitigation site funded by Alaska Marine Lines (AML). Collectively, NMFS and AML have invested approximately \$70,000 in the project. The artificial reef will be monitored for 5 years, the first two by a graduate student from the University of Southern Alabama. Monitoring funds are provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (\$31,000) and matched with funds from the Prince William Sound Science Center (\$25,000).

The artificial reef will be used by recreational divers from all over south central Alaska. The site will serve as a living laboratory for the children of the Whittier school, and receives broad support from the community of Whittier.

**5.) The nature of the restrictions or conditions desired**

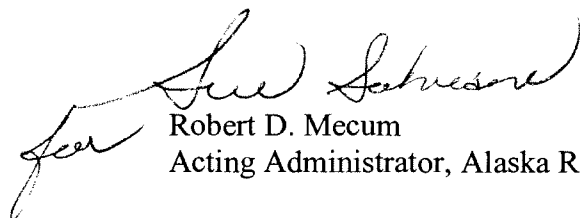
A total restriction on anchoring within Smitty's Cove (to prevent damage to artificial reef structures)

**6.) The reason why the area is necessary**

As stated in number 4 above, the area is a scientific, recreational, and educational dive site. A substantial amount of Federal and private funds and personnel hours have been invested into the artificial reef project. In order to avoid damage to that investment we request the area be closed to anchoring. This restriction will not affect the operations of AML, Alaska Railroad, or others using the nearby DeLong Dock, and we understand the City of Whittier is supportive as well. In addition, this restriction should not impact many mariners as the area already has numerous charted obstructions.

Thank you for considering our request. Brian Lance is the contact for this project and can be reached at 907 271-1301 or [brian.lance@noaa.gov](mailto:brian.lance@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,



Robert D. Mecum  
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

Enclosure: chart

cc: Records  
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