



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

October 18, 2007

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

Re: POA-2007-1515-D
Wrangell Narrows

Attn: Ms. Marcia Heer

Dear Colonel Wilson;

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed the October 9, 2007, general permit agency coordination letter for the proposed work by the City of Wrangell and the Tongass National Forest. The applicants propose to excavate 517 cubic yards of rip rap, install 250 cubic yards of clean rock fill material, and install 967 cubic yards of rip rap within 317 lineal feet along the south bank of Institute Creek and the coastal shoreline adjacent to the existing beach access road. The applicant also proposes to install root wads, a J-hook vane, and a rock staircase. The project purpose is to stabilize an eroded stream bank to original contours and protect it from further erosion. The project location is at Institute Creek Park in Wrangell, Alaska, where Institute Creek enters Zimovia Strait.

We offer the following comments specific to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA). Section 305(b) of the MSFCMA requires Federal agencies to consult with NMFS on all actions that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). NMFS is required to make conservation recommendations, which may include measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate or otherwise offset adverse effects.

Institute Creek is not designated as an anadromous fish stream in the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) anadromous waters catalogue. The mouth of Institute Creek is fairly broad, fifty to sixty feet across and low gradient (personal communication with Kenneth Elmore). This could provide anadromous fish habitat except that the substrate is large rock, the velocity is high and there is no cover (personal communication with Jim Cariello).

The inshore area of the project location may provide important habitat for several marine fish species including dusky, shortraker, yelloweye, and rougheye rockfish; arrowtooth flounder; Pacific cod; sablefish; walleye Pollock; rex sole; Pacific ocean perch; skates; sculpins; and various forage fish. Marine species near the project area may be adversely affected by increased sedimentation from construction activities.



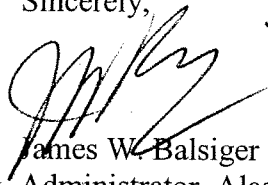
NMFS offers the following EFH Conservation Recommendations, pursuant to Section 305(b)(4)(A) of the MSFCMA to minimize impacts to water quality and EFH:

1. The project should be designed and constructed in a manner to minimize the transport of sediment into downstream marine waters. NMFS supports the applicants plan to perform the work only when the tide levels are below the half-tide level.
2. NMFS recommends preparing an erosion and sediment control plan prior to implementing any construction. This plan should describe the management practices that will be used to control sediment runoff from construction activities and minimize impacts to water quality.

Under section 305(b)(4) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Corps is required to respond to NMFS EFH 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 Cindy Hartmann at 907-586-7585.

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: Applicant: City of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, AK 99929
USDA FS, Kenneth Elmore and Tom Cady*
EPA, Juneau, Chris Meade*
ADNR, Petersburg, Jim Cariello*
USFWS, Juneau, Richard Enriquez*
ADF&G, Juneau, Tom Schumacher*
COE, Anchorage, Marcia Heer and Victor Ross*
NMFS, HCD, Juneau, Cindy Hartmann*
NMFS, AKR, Records
* Electronic copy