



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

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

August 29, 2002

Colonel Steven T. Perrenot
District Engineer, Alaska District
Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Branch (1145b)
P.O. Box 898
Anchorage, Alaska 99506-0898

RE: Ref # 1-2002-0813
Waterway: Johnson Cove

Attn: Ms. Jan Stuart

Dear Colonel Perrenot:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposal by the United States Forest Service (USFS) to moor a barge, two support docks, and an attached walkway at Johnson Cove, Prince of Wales Island. The barge will be used intermittently to provide housing and water supply to USFS personnel while conducting scientific research and operations related to resource management. Work will consist of the following:

1. Moor an 85-foot long by 32-foot wide barge secured with two anchors and 5 shoreline ties.
2. Construct a 24-foot long by 20-foot wide crew preparation float.
3. Construct a 24-foot long by 20-foot wide heli-pad float.
4. Install a fresh water intake line from a small upland stream to the floating lodge using a 3/4 inch waterline approximately 2000 feet long.

Essential Fish Habitat provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens and Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), require the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to make conservation recommendations to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) before it issues a permit, if we believe the project could adversely affect EFH. The presence of Essential Fish Habitat for several demersal and salmonid species is of concern. In addition aquatic vegetation present at the site including eelgrass may also be adversely



affected. Eelgrass is important to various life stages of fish in Southeast Alaska for predator avoidance, feeding, and reproduction.

Moorage of the facility in shallow water for extended time periods will affect the amount of natural light passing through the water column to reach substrate. Reduced light transmission to vegetated shallows can adversely affect local aquatic plant assemblages as well as the marine species they support. We suggest the applicant consider a design of the two 24-foot by 20-foot floats that provides the maximum amount of deck grating practical in lieu of a solid deck cover. The additional light transmission will be beneficial to aquatic vegetation and associated species.

The following permit conditions are recommended pursuant to provisions of both the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act/Clean Water Act 404 (b)(1) guideline compliance and MSFCMA.

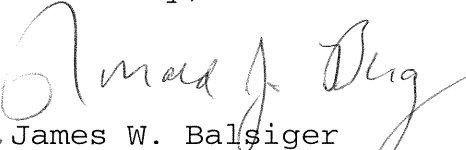
EFH Conservation Recommendations:

1. No grounding of the floats or barge should occur during any tidal stage.
2. No pentaclorophenol treatment is to be used on wooden structures, and any treatment of wood is to be limited to pressure injected preservatives.
3. The lodge shall not be moored over any shoreline where eelgrass is present.

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

David Martins is the NMFS contact for this project and can be reached at (907) 586-7643.

Sincerely,

For 
James W. Balsiger

Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: EPA Anchorage (Mark Jen)
ADEC, AADGC, ADNR, USFWS, Juneau
ADF&G, Craig
USFS, Thorne Bay