



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

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

September 30, 2002

Kathryn Erickson
Alaska Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, Alaska 99801-7999

Re: Skagway River Pedestrian Bridge Ref# 68238/NH-097-2(14)
Updated EFH Assessment

Dear Ms. Erickson:

The National Marine Fisheries Service has reviewed the Updated Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment for the Skagway River Bridge Widening project, dated August 27, 2002. The purpose of the original project proposal is to provide safe pedestrian access to a city park and ball field on the west side of the Skagway River. The project updates include increasing the size of piles from 24-inch diameter to 30-inch diameter and placing about 200 cubic yards of Class III riprap below ordinary high water (OHW) along the northwest side of the Skagway River to provide protection for the new bridge abutement. These proposed changes would result in increasing the amount of gravel and cobble substrate eliminated by pile placement from 32 square feet to 50 square feet and covering an additional 2000 square feet of EFH with Class III riprap below the OHW along the northwest side of the Skagway River.

We concur with your finding that the project may adversely affect EFH, and that impacts can be minimized through implementation of the following conservation measures (these were previously provided to ADOT):

- Establishment of an in-water work window from Nov 1 to April 15 and June 15 to July 15, to protect outmigrating salmon smolts and in-migrating adults.
- Contractor specifications that include best management practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts to water quality.



- An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan to address water quality issues.

Considering the proposed project changes, additional conservation measures for EFH are not necessary.

Please contact Susan Walker for further coordination regarding this project (907-586-7646, susan.walker@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: ADF&G
USFWS
ADNR
ADEC
EPA
ADGC