



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

National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 19, 2006

Guy R. McConnell  
Chief, Environmental Resources Section  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
2204 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Elmendorf AFB  
Alaska 99506

Re: Ralston and Pleasant Islands site restoration work for FAA

Dear Mr. McConnell:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letter requesting information on threatened or endangered species and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Ralston and Pleasant Islands site restoration work at these former Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) sites. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) intends to cleanup hazardous waste, remove collapsed structures, and return these former Federal Aviation Agency sites to natural conditions at these sites. NMFS offers the following information under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

**Endangered Species**

The following species<sup>1</sup> occur in Alaska waters and have been provided protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*):

*Listed species*

|                                       |                               |            |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Blue whale                            | <i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>  | Endangered |
| Bowhead whale                         | <i>Balaena mysticetus</i>     | Endangered |
| Fin whale                             | <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>  | Endangered |
| Humpback whale                        | <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> | Endangered |
| Northern right whale                  | <i>Eubalaena glacialis</i>    | Endangered |
| Sei whale                             | <i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>  | Endangered |
| Sperm whale                           | <i>Physeter macrocephalus</i> | Endangered |
| Steller sea lion (western population) | <i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>     | Endangered |

<sup>1</sup> In its definition of species, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, includes the traditional biological species concept of the biological sciences and "any subspecies of fish or wildlife or plants, and any distinct population segment of any species of vertebrate fish or wildlife which interbreeds when mature" (16 USC 1532). NMFS uses the term *evolutionarily significant unit* as synonymous with *distinct population segment* and lists Pacific salmon accordingly. For the purposes of section 7 consultations, these are all "species."



|  |                                 |            |
|--|---------------------------------|------------|
| Steller sea lion (eastern population)        |                                 | Threatened |
| Chinook salmon (Puget Sound)                 | <i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i> | Threatened |
| Chinook salmon (Lower Columbia River)        |                                 | Threatened |
| Chinook salmon (Upper Columbia River Spring) |                                 | Endangered |
| Chinook salmon (Upper Willamette River)      |                                 | Threatened |
| Chinook salmon (Snake River spring/summer)   |                                 | Threatened |
| Chinook salmon (Snake River fall)            |                                 | Threatened |
| Sockeye salmon (Snake River)                 | <i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>       | Endangered |
| Steelhead (Upper Columbia River)             | <i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>      | Endangered |
| Steelhead (Middle Columbia River)            |                                 | Threatened |
| Steelhead (Lower Columbia River)             |                                 | Threatened |
| Steelhead (Upper Willamette River)           |                                 | Threatened |
| Steelhead (Snake River Basin)                |                                 | Threatened |
| Leatherback sea turtle                       | <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>     | Endangered |

*Designated critical habitat*

Steller sea lion  
Northern right whale

All salmon species are under the jurisdiction of NMFS, Northwest Regional Office, Seattle, Washington. There is no critical habitat for salmon species in Alaskan waters. Additional information regarding the ESA is available on our website at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/default.htm>.

The proposed action appears to indicate that the activities are upland activities and away from the marine environment. If the Corps determines that the proposed action has no effect on listed species, no further consultation with NMFS is necessary.

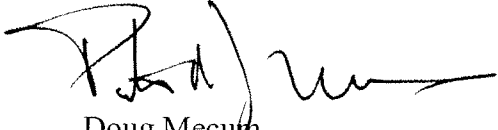
**Essential Fish Habitat**

The letter states that the Corps has determined the described activity would not affect EFH because the project is not close to any salmon producing streams and the barge landing sites would not damage habitat. Under Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, federal agencies are required to consult with the Secretary of Commerce on any action that may adversely affect EFH. EFH has been designated in waters for anadromous fish, specifically salmon, and certain life stages of marine fish under NMFS' jurisdiction. Five fishery management plans exist for fisheries in Alaska. They cover groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska, groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, crab in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, and salmon and scallops statewide. Please visit our web site at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat> for additional information on habitat and EFH information.

The proposed project is not likely to adversely affect EFH and thus further EFH consultation is not needed.

This information is for your use in fulfilling requirements under the ESA and the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Please direct any questions regarding endangered species to Susan Walker ([susan.walker@noaa.gov](mailto:susan.walker@noaa.gov) or 907-586-7646).

Sincerely,



For D/M

Doug Mecum  
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

Cc: \*Records  
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