



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 27, 2007

Jane Gendron, Environmental Coordinator
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
6860 Glacier Highway
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2506

RE: Petersburg Airport Runway Safety Area
Improvements, Revised EFH Assessment
Project Number 68207

Dear Ms. Gendron:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) December 24, 2007 response letter and revised Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment for the Petersburg Airport Runway Safety Area Improvements, Project No. 68207. Thank you for responding to the comments in our recent letters (October 15, 2007, and December 7, 2007) and for making some changes in the draft EFH Assessment.

The EFH Assessment could be further improved by including a one paragraph summary of how the compensatory mitigation value was calculated. For example using the information you provided in the last 3 rows of Table 1 in your December 24, 2007, letter to NMFS plus additional information from the environmental assessment the one paragraph summary could be written as:

The compensatory mitigation value for stream habitat was calculated by estimating the costs of creating equivalent habitat at another location. ADT&PF determined that it would cost about \$30 per linear foot to construct similar resident fish habitat and \$50 per linear foot to construct similar anadromous fish habitat (see Appendix E of the EA). The value used for compensatory mitigation of wetlands is \$500 per acre. This is the value set by the 2003 Memorandum of Agreement among FAA, USACE, DOT&PF, USFWS, and ADF&G. ADOT&PF will provide \$198,000 for compensatory mitigation for this project which includes: \$45,500 for mitigation for 91 acres of wetlands; \$60,000 for mitigation for reduced flow to 1,200 linear feet of anadromous fish habitat (HS-5 downgradient); \$53,500 for 1,070 linear feet of anadromous fish habitat lost (HS-4, 6, 7; and MS-1 downgradient); and \$39,000 for 1,300 linear feet of resident fish habitat lost (HS-4, 6, 7; and MS-1 upgradient).



Additional information was added to Section III of the EFH Assessment, titled Proposed Mitigation. The information added states that the original intent of the Falls Creek fish ladder was to improve upstream access for pink and chum salmon which are blocked from upstream habitat except for optimal summertime flows. This section also states that access would be improved for all anadromous fish species to 12.4 miles of stream. Can pink and chum salmon access the full 12.4 miles of stream upstream of the fish ladder or just a subset of this habitat? Please clarify this in the EFH Assessment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions regarding our comments please contact Cindy Hartmann at 907-586-7585.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James W. Balsiger', with a stylized flourish extending to the right. To the right of the signature, the initials 'JWB' are written in a similar hand.

James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: ADNR, Petersburg, Jim Cariello
USFWS, Juneau, Richard Enriquez
EPA, Juneau, Chris Meade
ADF&G, Juneau, Tom Schumacher
ADOT&PF, Ben White and Jim Heumann
FAA, Patricia Sullivan
USKH, Linda Smith (lsmith@uskh.com)
ADCOM, Joe Donohue
COE, Victor O. Ross

Cindy Hartmann
December 27, 2007

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