



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

April 3, 2008

Carl Schrader
Environmental Impact Analyst
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
6860 Glacier Highway, P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2506

RE: Revised EFH Assessment: Gustavus Dock Improvements Project #67599

Dear Mr. Schrader,

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed your proposal to revise the mitigation measures for the referenced project. The revised measures include eliminating a restriction on in-water fill or pile driving from April 1 through May 31, adding the replacement of culverts that restrict fish passage at Rink Creek Road (Alaska Department of Fish and Games Anadromous Waters Catalog stream # 114-23-10199), and having the National Park Service, in collaboration with NMFS, conduct habitat monitoring at the fill site for the staging area.

Your letter proposes that the long term benefits of increased upstream anadromous fish passage and the addition and monitoring of new rocky intertidal habitat at the sandy fill site will outweigh the short term benefits of the fish timing window. NMFS concurs with your proposal. As previously suggested by NMFS, monitoring the colonization and habitat use of the nearshore fill staging area will help substantiate and provide documentation on the efficacy of the proposed mitigation revision. Monitoring protocols could be based on a similar, yet scaled down version of a plant and animal colonization study performed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the rocky breakwaters constructed at the New Thompson Harbor in Sitka (study and monitoring report enclosed). Maintaining and implementing the special conditions of Best Management Practices and including the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan should further reduce and mitigate the adverse impacts to Essential Fish Habitat.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. Please contact Tim Wilkins at (907) 586-7643, or Timothy.Wilkins@noaa.gov, if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Mecum

Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

2 enclosures

