



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

Public Notice of Application for Permit

Regulatory Division (1145)
CEPOA-RD
Post Office Box 6898
JBER, Alaska 99506-0898

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:	September 15, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE:	October 15, 2014
REFERENCE NUMBER:	POA-2014-360
WATERWAY:	Port Valdez

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

Comments on the described work, with the reference number, should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Jack Hewitt at (907) 753-2708, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, by fax at (907) 753-5567, or by email at jack.j.hewitt@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this notice.

APPLICANT: City of Valdez, Post Office Box 307, Valdez, Alaska 99686.

AGENT: R&M Consultants, Inc., 9101 Vanguard Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99507.

LOCATION: The project site is located within Sections 5 and 32, T. 9 and 8 S., R. 6 W., Copper River Meridian, USGS Quad Map: Valdez A-7, Latitude 61.1243° N., Longitude 146.3371° W., in Valdez, Alaska.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) new harbor development project.

PROPOSED WORK: The City of Valdez, under this permit request, is proposing to construct a road to access the new facility, parking, boat launch ramp, floating docks, and other harbor related improvements. This work would include discharging 80,000 cubic yards (CY) of fill material and rip rap, below high tide line (HTL), into 3 acres of the newly constructed boat basin, and an additional 20,000 cubic yards into 1.5 acres of previously undisturbed marine waters. To anchor the proposed trestles, gangways, float system the applicant install 90 – 16" steel piles and 115 – 18" steel piles. All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan, 15 sheets, dated September 2014.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The proposed work is in support of a new boat harbor facility being constructed by the USACE. Pursuant to Section 4012 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, the USACE is constructing the breakwaters and dredging the harbor basin, as a navigational improvement project.

APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the United States from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

- a. Avoidance: All wetland impacts have been avoided with selection of the proposed harbor location.

b. Minimization: Design of the proposed boat ramp, access road, and parking area have been minimized to the greatest extent practicable. However, these structures would require the placement of 100,000 cubic yards of fill material and rip rap, into 4.5 acres of marine water below HTL. The impacts to previously undisturbed Waters of the U.S., has been minimized by selecting a layout design which locates two-thirds of the footprint within the newly constructed boat basin. Uplands would be fully utilized with this alignment, including being used for areas to stage work in order to avoid temporary impacts to Waters of the U.S.

c. Compensatory Mitigation: As compensation for unavoidable impacts, the applicant is proposing to place a conservation easement on 8.25 acres of marine estuary, in an area known locally as the Duck Flats. Please see Figure 16.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The latest published version of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs) has been consulted for the presence or absence of historic properties, including those listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no listed or eligible properties in the vicinity of the worksite. Consultation of the AHRs constitutes the extent of cultural resource investigations by the District Commander at this time, and he is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources. This application is being coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Any comments SHPO may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The project area is within the known or historic range of Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*), sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), right whale (*Eubalaena japonica*), sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*).

We are currently gathering information regarding these species and have yet to make a determination of effect. Should we find that the described activity may affect the species listed above, we will follow the appropriate consultation procedures under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844). Any comments the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife, plants, or designated critical habitat, will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

We have determined the described activity may adversely affect EFH in the project area for the following species: pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*), chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*), coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*). This Public Notice initiates EFH consultation with the NMFS. Any comments or recommendations they may have concerning EFH will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Alaska District fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Alaska District on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This Public Notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal right or resource. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander during the public comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

AUTHORITY: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authorities:

Perform work in or affecting navigable waters of the United States – Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403).

Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States – Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

Transport dredged material for the purpose of dumping it into ocean waters - Section 103 Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1413). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the criteria established under authority of Section 102(a) of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, as amended (40 CFR Parts 220 to 229), as appropriate.

District Commander
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF WATER
401 Certification Program
Non-Point Source Water Pollution Control Program

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
WQM/401 CERTIFICATION
555 CORDOVA STREET
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-2617
PHONE: (907) 269-7564/FAX: (907) 334-2415

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into navigable waters, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL95-217), also must apply for and obtain certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the discharge will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. By agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Conservation, application for a Department of the Army permit to discharge dredged or fill material into navigable waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act also may serve as application for State Water Quality Certification.

Notice is hereby given that the application for a Department of the Army Permit described in the Corps of Engineers' Public Notice No. **POA-2014-360, Port Valdez**, serves as application for State Water Quality Certification from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

After reviewing the application, the Department may certify there is reasonable assurance the activity, and any discharge that might result, will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. The Department also may deny or waive certification.

Any person desiring to comment on the project, with respect to Water Quality Certification, may submit written comments to the address above by the expiration date of the Corps of Engineer's Public Notice.