



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

<b>PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:</b>	<b>October 30, 2015</b>
<b>EXPIRATION DATE:</b>	<b>November 30, 2015</b>
<b>REFERENCE NUMBER:</b>	<b>POA-1999-2070-M6</b>
<b>WATERWAY:</b>	<b>Chukchi Sea</b>

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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 Mary Romero at (907) 753-2773, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, by fax at (907) 753-5567, or by email at [mary.r.romero@usace.army.mil](mailto:mary.r.romero@usace.army.mil) if further information is desired concerning this notice.

**APPLICANT:** Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), Brett Nelson, 2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709. (907) 451-2238 or [brett.nelson@alaska.gov](mailto:brett.nelson@alaska.gov)

**LOCATION:** The project site is located within Section 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8, T. 22 N., R. 18 W., Umiat Meridian; USGS Quad Map Barrow B-4; Latitude 71.2855° N., Longitude 156.7674° W.; Barrow Airport, in Barrow, Alaska.

**SPECIAL AREA DESIGNATION:** The project is located within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.

**PURPOSE:** The applicant's stated purpose is to correct deficiencies in the existing airport infrastructure identified in the Wiley Post/Will Rogers Memorial Airport Master Plan

**PROPOSED WORK:** The placement of 138,535 cubic yards (cy) of clean fill material into 16.81 acres of jurisdictional Palustrine wetlands for the expansion of infrastructure at the Wiley Post/Will Rogers Memorial Airport in Barrow, Alaska.

The project would include the construction of additional north apron space extending the top of pad 400 feet to the east of the existing apron by developing a 400-foot x 200-foot (maximum 415-foot x 280-foot toe-to-toe measurement due to topography) gravel extension by placing 24,145 cy of fill into 2.97 acres of wetlands; a M&O facility pad would be constructed at 500-foot x 400-foot (maximum 560-foot x 525-foot toe-to-toe measurement) by placing 82,860 cy of fill material into 7.63 acres of wetlands; and two access roads would be needed, the first Access Road would be constructed to connect the M&O pad to Emaiksoun (Freshwater Lake) Road and would be 2460-foot x 24-foot (maximum 2331-foot x 75-foot toe to toe measurement) requiring 25,470 cy of fill in 5.2 acres of wetlands.

The second access road would be the runway access road and would go between the M&O pad and the runway, it would be 450-foot x 44-foot (maximum 480-foot x 100-foot toe to toe measurement) and require the placement of 6,060 cy of fill material into 1.01 acre of wetlands. Materials for the project would come from the expansion of the ADOT material site west of the airport.

The expansion would also mechanically clear an additional 13.96 acres of wetlands, stockpiling of material would occur within the material site area. 60,000 cy of the 198,535 cy to be extracted from the gravel pit would be unusable fill material, a portion of which will be used for reclamation purposes.

All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (sheets 1-6), dated July 20, 2015.

**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: Avoidance of wetlands is not possible, all existing developed areas are fully utilized and the surrounding area is wetlands.

b. Minimization: The expansion of the apron would utilize an existing shoulder, minimizing further wetland impacts. Appropriate BMPs will be utilized during construction to ensure that fill does not extend beyond the boundaries of the permit and to prevent sediment laden water from leaving the project area. Tundra sod from the material site will be utilized on embankments to promote revegetation and prevent erosion. Additionally the pads, roads, and materials site will be the smallest footprint possible while still achieving the desired expansion.

c. Compensatory Mitigation: ADOT&PF has looked at several scenarios for mitigation for the M&O facility expansion including the M&O pad, Access Rd and Runway Access. These areas are composed of Category I, II, and III wetlands including deep polygon complex and patterned seasonally flooded/saturated sedge-shrub tundra. There is also evidence of a drainage channel linking wetlands in this area to Isatkoak Lagoon. ADOT&PF offers the following as compensatory mitigation for 13.84 acres of wetland impacts.

- ❖ Partner with Ilisagvik College, Cooperative Extension Program to develop community initiatives aimed at protecting/rehabilitating local wetlands.
  - Program currently offers a community program on native plant education and is interested in partnering opportunities.

- This tundra garden project has just completed its second season and has involved transplanting test patches of tundra sod and plants to an area behind the senior center where an area of destroyed wetlands is located.
- Current funding has supported the work of a student work crew for two weeks each summer.
- Our proposal would provide additional funding that would allow for
  - A longer work season. Four to six weeks would be ideal.
  - Infrastructure to improve the site such as geotextiles to prevent further erosion.
  - Community work days. Invite the community to be actively involved in the wetland restoration project.
  - Digital storytelling. Have the students create digital stories of their involvement in the tundra garden project. The human aspect of wetland/watershed environments and interactions.
- This group also maintains the boardwalks around Isatkoak lagoon, the community's fresh water source.
  - They would like to design and install signs around the lagoon boardwalk educating community members about various aspects of the wetland environment.
- There are currently 15 trained Citizen Science/Coastal Observers for Barrow. Their focus is on coastal erosion. Isatkoak College would like to develop programming to train more Citizen Scientists with a focus on wetlands.
- Isatkoak College would like to contract a Community Educator with a background in ethno-botany and experience working in/with wetlands, particularly tundra and Arctic biology. This position would be part time from April/May – September/October.

The existing tundra garden program shows that a level of interest in such programs exist in the community. Iisagvik College is a local college with ties to the community. It provides a stable organizational structure capable of successfully implementing these initiatives.

ADOT&PF states the wetlands to be impacted as part of the material site and North Apron expansion are categorized largely as category III wetlands comprised of impounded disturbed wetlands and patterned saturated sedge-shrub tundra. There are some Category I wetlands made up of flooded graminoid marsh and permanently flooded ponds. The material site wetlands are fairly isolated in that the existing material site and Emaiksoun Rd. bound the wetlands on the East and West. The North Apron is more than 500 ft from any water bodies or obvious flow channels. The amount of acres to be impacted represents a small fraction of the total amount of wetlands in the watershed. The amount of wetland loss is not believed to be significant based on the amount, type, and location of wetlands to be impacted. ADOT&PF therefore proposes no compensatory mitigation for the loss of these wetlands. The reduction of the project footprint and enhanced erosion controls will minimize impacts to the fullest extent possible.

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 is an unevaluated property in the vicinity of the worksite. It has been designated **BAR-00039**. Because the property has been determined to be outside of the project area, no further action is required.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** The project area is within the known or historic range of the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*), Steller's eider (*Polysticta stelleri*), and spectacled eider (*Somateria fischeri*).

We have determined the described activity may affect the threatened the polar bear, Steller's eider, and spectacled eider. We have initiated the appropriate consultation procedures under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Any comments they may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat would 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). No EFH species are known to use the project area.

**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 authority:

(X) 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).

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-1999-2070-M6, Chukchi Sea**, 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.