



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

Public Notice of Application for Permit

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

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:	January 19, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE:	February 21, 2017
REFERENCE NUMBER:	POA-2017-27
WATERWAY:	Norton Sound

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 Jeremy Grauf at (907) 753-2798, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, by fax at (907) 753-5567, or by email at Jeremy.Grauf@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this notice.

APPLICANT:

Onya Stein
Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC)
4831 Eagle Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99503
907-561-7927
osteina@avec.org

AGENT:

Owen Means
HDL Engineering Consultants
3335 Arctic Boulevard, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99503
907-564-2143
omeans@hdlalaska.com

LOCATION: The project site is located approximately 1.2 miles north of Stebbins, Alaska 99671, on the Stebbins-St. Michael Road, at Latitude 63.53355° N., Longitude -162.27726° W.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to provide the AVEC an alternative source of renewable energy.

PROPOSED WORK: The AVEC is proposing to place approximately 2,661 cubic yards of structural fill material into 0.53 acre of palustrine wetlands, to develop a wind energy generation facility consisting of a wind turbine with a hub height of 164 feet and rotor diameter of 171 feet, 246 foot access road, and a 0.23 acre wind tower gravel pad. All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (Enclosure 1, sheets 1-5), dated January 18, 2016.

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: A Concept Design Report completed in 2013 did not identify any suitable sites or wind energy development on St. Michael Island that would avoid impacts to wetlands. Several sites were evaluated for the potential of the wind resource, constructability, land ownership, site access, and environmental impacts.

b. Minimization: The entire project site is wetlands and, therefore, minimization of the acreage of wetland impacts is primarily through minimizing the length of access roadway required by siting the wind turbine as close to the existing Stebbins-St. Michael Road as possible. The proposed site layout avoids significant areas of surface water entirely, and natural low-lying areas and drainages to the maximum extent practicable by utilizing a small ridge between two southwest to northeast draining troughs. The transmission line between the wind turbine and the existing Stebbins-St. Michael intertie will be installed within the proposed access road impact area to further reduce wetland impacts.

c. Compensatory Mitigation: The project's potential wetland impacts are within a watershed with large expanses of wetlands, extremely limited development, and little to no potential for significant cumulative impacts. For these reasons, AVEC is requesting a waiver of the requirement to provide compensatory mitigation.

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 Alaska State Historic Preservation Office has already concurred that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed project in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requirements (See Enclosure 2). However, any comments the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office may have concerning cultural resources will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

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

We have determined the described activity may affect the threatened spectacled eider, Steller's eider, and polar bear. We will initiate 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 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).

No EFH species are known to use the project area.

CHOOSE the relevant paragraph(s) and decisions within them.

We have determined the described activity would not adversely affect EFH in 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).

Project drawings and a Notice of Application for State Water Quality Certification are enclosed with this Public Notice.

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

ANCHORAGE

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-2017-27, Norton Sound**, 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.