

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District, has assessed the environmental effects of the following action:

Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration
Chester Creek
Anchorage, Alaska

Urbanization in Anchorage, Alaska has caused major obstructions to fish migration in Chester Creek and has reduced the creek's salmon stocks almost to extinction. The action is to restore fish passage at the mouth of the creek to allow spawning salmon access to the creek and to provide an area for smolt to gradually acclimate to salt water.

The recommended plan (alternative 2) is to construct a 1,550-foot open channel from Westchester Lagoon with an 18 to 19.5-foot culvert under the railroad line. The culvert will be hydraulically suited for the target fish species and will simulate a natural channel. The channel will include a spillway or weir to maintain a constant water level in the lagoon. Work will include relocating utilities, constructing a pedestrian bridge over the new open channel, relocation of 190 feet of the bike trail, and disposing of the approximately 4,015 cubic yards of excavated material in Westchester Lagoon to create bird habitat islands.

The proposed action is sanctioned under Section 206 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 (PL 104-303), as amended. The recommended plan will maximize ecological benefits increasing the salmon entering the creek, increase survivability of juvenile out-migrating salmon, and increase bird habitat.

Construction activities and use of the project will not produce significant adverse effects. No threatened or endangered species or cultural resources will be impacted by the project. The proposed action is habitat restoration and mitigative measures are not required. This action is consistent with State and local coastal zone management programs to the maximum extent practicable. The action also complies with Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines for the disposal of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States.

The environmental assessment supports the conclusion that the project does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to construct the aquatic ecosystem habitat restoration project at Chester Creek, Anchorage, Alaska.

TIMOTHY J. GALLAGHER
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Date