



# Public Notice

US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Alaska District  
Regulatory Branch (1145b)  
Post Office Box 6898  
Elmendorf AFB, Alaska 99506-6898

Date:  
January 6, 2005  
Identification No:  
SPN-2006-01  

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In reply refer to identification Number

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**SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE 06-01**  
**Request for comments**  
**For CPAI's proposed woodchip fill**

The Alaska District, Corps of Engineers, issued a Department of the Army (DA) permit POA-1996-874 for the placement of fill associated with the construction of ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc's (CPAI) CD-1, Alpine Central Processing Facility. The permit authorized the use of clean gravel fill and fines for construction of the facility. CPAI has subsequently requested the DA Corps of Engineers approve the use of wood chips generated from natural (clean dimensional lumber) and man-made lumber (plywood and wafer board) as fill in waters of the United States.

Currently, 2 or 4 cubic yard polyester bags are filled with clean gravel fill and are then placed as physical erosion protection on the side slopes of roads, drill pads or other locations in which erosion protection is required. The bags are either removed, degraded or are replaced. Gravel fill in or outside a bag may be removed and reused, stockpiled for later use, remain in place, be returned to a gravel pit, or be replaced as a result of subsidence if eroded by wind or water. If the proposed use is approved, CPAI will place wood chips generated from grinding waste wood into the same bags as a method of disposal. The permittee proposes to grind and dispose of only clean non-treated wood and plywood.

Waste wood might be incorporated with clean gravel fill and placed to form roads and pads.

No specific quantity of wood chips has been proposed for inclusion in each bag or in road/pad fill. No estimate is available for the amount of wood chips that might be released to the environment at any single location or overall.

Once placed polyester bags normally photo and thermally degrade. Moving previously placed bags frequently results in failure of the bag thereby introducing wood chips into the environment. Unlike gravel, wood chips may be highly susceptible to movement (dispersion) by even small amounts of wind and water.

CPAI conducted a water quality monitoring program at Alpine to determine the potential water quality impacts of the use of wood chips in polyester bags. The Corps review of the results determined the data to be inconclusive. The environmental baseline was a disturbed site and did not incorporate a non-disturbed control site.

The applicant previously has and currently can dispose of wood chips via incineration for which the applicant has appropriate air quality permits. Therefore, the Corps' preliminary 404(B)(1) evaluation has determined that the applicant has a practicable alternative to the proposed method of disposal.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is seeking comment on the potential effects of the proposed activity on biological and chemical oxygen demand, potential release of contaminants, water quality in general and other impacts related to the introduction of chipped wood into the North Slope environment in an effort to protect, restore and maintain the physical, chemical and biological integrity of this portion of the Nations aquatic resources.

Comments can and should be sent to this office by February 6, 2006. The Corps will then determine if the use of wood chips as fill meets the definition of fill in this case only and if a 404(b)(1) practicable alternative exists. If you wish to submit comments send them to: Corps of Engineers, ATTN: CO-R-N, SPN 2006-01, Post Office Box 6898, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, 99506-0869, or by e-mail to: [regpagemaster@poa02.usace.army.mil](mailto:regpagemaster@poa02.usace.army.mil).

District Engineer  
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers