

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### LOWELL CREEK FLOOD DIVERSION SEWARD, ALASKA

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (IFR/EA) dated May 2021 for the Lowell Creek Flood Diversion addresses the feasibility of flood risk management opportunities in Seward, Alaska. The final recommendation is in the Director's Memorandum, dated 19 May 2021.

The Final IFR/EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives that would provide flood risk management in the study area. The recommended plan has been justified through cost-effectiveness/incremental cost analysis (CE/ICA) plan and includes:

- New diversion dam
- New 18-ft-diameter tunnel
- Tunnel inlet portal canopy over the new tunnel
- Extended 150-ft outfall for the new tunnel
- Refurbishment of the existing 10-ft-diameter tunnel
- Select tree removal in Lowell Creek Canyon
- Stream gauge within the tunnel

In addition to a "no action" plan, six alternatives were evaluated. Some of these alternatives contain multiple designs with similar features, thus leading to twelve options. The team evaluated two tunnel sizes for tunnel enlargement, four tunnel sizes for constructing a new tunnel as separate alternatives and four combinations of structure relocation in the floodplain. The suite of alternatives includes nonstructural components to increase each alternative's efficacy, but the District determined that nonstructural alternatives alone would not effectively address the need for the project.

- Alternative 2: Improve Existing Flood Diversion System
- Alternative 3: Enlarge Current Flood Diversion System to Convey Larger Flow  
Considering Two Tunnel Diameter Options:
  - (3A) 18-foot (ft) Tunnel

- (3B) 24-ft Tunnel
- Alternative 4: Construct New Flood Diversion System
  - (4A) 18-ft Tunnel
  - (4B) 24-ft Tunnel
  - (4C) 14-ft Tunnel
  - (4D) 16-ft Tunnel
- Alternative 5: Construct Debris Retention Basin
- Alternative 6: Floodplain Relocation
  - (6A) Floodway Through Town
  - (6B) Relocation of All Lowell Canyon Structures
  - (6C) Relocation of All Lowell Canyon Structures, Except the Hospital
  - (6D) Relocation of Residential Structures in Lowell Canyon

Full descriptions of the alternatives can be found in Sections 5.4.5 and 5.4.6 of the IFR/EA. For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the recommended plan is listed in Table 1:

Table 1. Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

	Insignificant Effects	Insignificant Effects as a Result of Mitigation*	Resource Unaffected by the Action
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquatic resources/wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fish and wildlife habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic properties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floodplains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, toxic & radioactive waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hydrology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socioeconomics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal trust resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan. Best management practices (BMPs), as detailed in the IFR/EA, will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts. A compilation of avoidance and minimization measures is provided in Section 8.4 of the IFR/EA. The measures include pre-construction bald and golden eagle nest surveys in the portion of Lowell Creek's watershed identified for selective tree removal and construction BMPs including a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the recommended plan.

Public review of the draft IFR/EA and FONSI was completed on 21 October 2020. All comments submitted during the public review period were responded to in the Final IFR/EA and FONSI.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, USACE has determined that the recommended plan will have no effect on federally listed species or their designated critical habitat.

Pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, USACE determined that historic properties would not be adversely affected by the recommended plan. The Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the determination on 20 March 2020 (correspondence located in Appendix G).

Pursuant to the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, the USACE consulted with NMFS and determined that the recommended plan would not adversely affect EFH in a letter from NFMS dated 19 October 2020.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the recommended plan has been found to be compliant with section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230). The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines evaluation is found in Appendix A of the IFR/EA.

A water quality certification pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act was issued dated 21 December 2020 by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Division of Water. All conditions of the water quality certification will be implemented to minimize adverse impacts on water quality.

By operation of Alaska State law, the Federally approved Alaska Coastal Management Program expired on 1 July 2011, resulting in a withdrawal from participation in the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) National Coastal Management Program. The CZMA Federal consistency provision, Section 307, no longer applies in Alaska.

Technical, environmental, economic, and cost-effectiveness criteria used to formulate alternative plans were specified in the Water Resources Council's 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources

Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in the evaluation of alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other Federal, State, and local agencies, Tribes, the input of the public, and the review by my staff, I determine that the recommended plan would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

19 July 2021

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Date



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DAMON A. DELAROSA  
COLONEL, Corps of Engineers  
District Commander