US Army Corps of Engineers®
Alaska District

DRAFT Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment

Homer Navigation Improvements
Homer, Alaska
Appendix K: Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

May 2026

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Homer Navigation Improvements
Homer, Alaska

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (IFR/EA) dated XX XXX XXXX, for the Homer Navigation Improvements addresses navigation inefficiencies and unsafe conditions created by rafting and opportunities and feasibility in Homer, Alaska. The final recommendation is contained in the report of the Chief of Engineers, dated XX XXX XXXX.

The Draft IFR/EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives that would provide safe, reliable, and efficient navigation for commercial, private, and government users over the 50-year period of analysis from 2034-2083 by providing for the safe maneuverability and protected mooring of the existing and anticipated fleet in the study area. The Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) is the justified by the authority of Section 2006 of Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2007, Remote and Subsistence Harbors, as amended by Section 1147 of WRDA 2024 and includes:

- *East and West Rubble-mound Breakwaters*: The breakwaters would enclose a basin allowing for a fairway for harbor transit and a 37-acre mooring area. The breakwater sections total approximately 4,500 feet and have crests constructed to an elevation of +30 feet mean lower low water (MLLW).
- *Dredging*: General navigation dredging includes a 90-foot-wide entrance channel to a depth of -26 feet MLLW and an adjoining fairway and mooring area to -24 feet MLLW. Dredging of the mooring basin ranges from -24, -20, and -15 feet MLLW and is a local service of the non-Federal sponsor at no cost to the Federal government.
- Local Service Facilities (LSF): Supporting LSF for the harbor include a new float system for the expanded basin (complete with gangways, finger floats, and electrical utilities) and the construction of a new fuel dock. The System 5 float in the current harbor would be removed and replaced with a new float system providing moorage for 40 vessels at 24 feet in length and 132 vessels at 32 feet in length. Supporting LSF for includes a new float system for the expanded basin (complete with gangways, finger floats, and electrical utilities) and the construction of a new fuel dock.
- An Ecological Survey and Monitoring Workshop in Homer during the Pre-construction Engineering and Design Phase to collaborate with stakeholders to develop a robust Ecological Survey and Monitoring Plan, with eelgrass (*Zostera* marina) as a primary focus. Surveys and monitoring would take place prior to construction and extend no more than 5 years post-construction.

In addition to a “no action” alternative, four alternatives were evaluated. The alternatives included are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Final Array of Alternatives

Alternative	Major Alternative Features
0: No Action Alternative	
1a: Large Transient Vessel Harbor	• Alleviates overcrowding of larger vessels with lengths between 85 and 225 feet. • 8-acre moorage basin • 64 large vessels accommodated in expanded harbor • Current harbor reconfiguration accommodates 239 vessels with lengths under 32 feet
1b: Transient Vessel Harbor	• Alleviates overcrowding in current harbor. • 33-acre moorage basin • 116 vessels accommodated in outer harbor • Current harbor reconfiguration accommodates 239 vessels with lengths under 32 feet
2: Transient and Waitlisted Vessels Harbor	• Alleviates overcrowding and accommodates current moorage waitlist. • 37-acre moorage basin • 304 vessels accommodated in expanded harbor • Current harbor reconfiguration accommodates 239 vessels with lengths under 32 feet
3: Transient, Waitlisted, and Projected Vessels Harbor	• Alleviates overcrowding, accommodates current moorage waitlist, and projected fleet growth over the next 20 years. • 50-acre moorage basin • 779 vessels accommodated in expanded harbor • Current harbor reconfiguration accommodates 239 vessels with lengths under 32 feet

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the TSP are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Potential Effects of the TSP

Resource Category	Significant adverse effect	Less than significant effects as a result of mitigation	Less than significant effects	Resource unaffected by action
Sea Ice	☐	☐	☒	☐
Tides	☐	☐	☐	☒
Wind	☐	☐	☒	☐
Currents and Circulation	☐	☐	☒	☐
Surface Water Stream Flow	☐	☐	☐	☒
Relative Sea Level Change	☐	☐	☐	☒
Geology/Topography	☐	☐	☒	☐
Soil & Sediment	☐	☒	☐	☐
Bathymetry	☐	☐	☒	☐
Seismicity	☐	☐	☐	☒

Resource Category	Significant adverse effect	Less than significant effects as a result of mitigation	Less than significant effects	Resource unaffected by action
Air Quality	☐	☐	☒	☐
Water Quality	☐	☒	☐	☐
Floodplain	☐	☐	☒	☐
Noise	☐	☐	☒	☐
Cultural Resources	☐	☐	☐	☒
Terrestrial Habitat	☐	☐	☒	☐
Marine Habitat	☐	☒	☐	☐
Primary Productivity	☐	☒	☐	☐
Marine Fish and Invertebrates	☐	☒	☐	☐
Avian Species	☐	☒	☐	☐
Marine Mammals	☐	☒	☐	☐
Invasive Species	☐	☒	☐	☐
Socio-economics	☐	☐	☒	☐
Built Environment	☐	☐	☒	☐
Protected Tribal Resources	☐	☐	☒	☐
Protection of Children	☐	☐	☐	☒

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the TSP. Mitigation measures will be implemented, if appropriate and practicable, to minimize impacts (Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of Proposed Mitigation and Best Management Practices

Resource Category	Proposed Mitigation	Statutory Authorities
Soils & Sediment	• Fine-grained material from new breakwater rock would be screened. • Vessel operations would be restricted in shallow water and grounding prohibited outside the project area. • Silt curtains/fences for new work dredging operations. • Filter material would be placed over barge scuppers to return clear water.	CWA
Water Quality	• Use best management practices during dredging (e.g., regulating bucket speed) and use silt curtains where effective to reduce turbidity. • Require contractor to develop and implement a comprehensive Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan. • Conduct daily equipment inspections for leaks and maintain spill response supplies on-site. • Report all spills in accordance with state law (Alaska Statute 46.03.755).	CWA, OPA, AS 46.03.755

Resource Category	Proposed Mitigation	Statutory Authorities
Air Quality	• Require contractors to use equipment that is in good repair and meets all applicable emission standards. • Require implementation of best management practices, such as wetting work surfaces, if visible dust is generated.	CAA
Noise	• Require personnel to use appropriate hearing protection. • Restrict public access to high-noise areas using barriers and notices. • Schedule high-noise activities to avoid periods of high public use, such as the annual Shorebird Festival.	OSHA
Cultural Resources	• Require contractor to halt construction activities immediately and contact an USACE archaeologist if a potential Historic Property or Cultural Resource is encountered.	NHPA
Terrestrial Habitat	• Require contractor to develop a site management plan that prioritizes use of existing paved or disturbed areas and clearly delineate constructions boundaries to prevent encroachment into vegetated parcels. • Regrade and re-seed temporarily disturbed areas with a native mix post-construction.	CWA
Marine Habitat	• Coordinate with Alaska Department of Fish and Game for all construction work within the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area.	AS 16.20.500 – 16.20.690
Primary Productivity	• Conduct a stakeholder workshop to develop a formal Ecological Survey and Monitoring Plan with a primary focus on eelgrass.	CWA, ESA, MSA
Marine Fish & Invertebrates	• Implement seasonal restrictions to avoid impacts to Alaska Department Fish and Game salmon smolt stocking. • Require immediate notification of any fish kill events. • Require use of silt curtains for new work dredging and use of clean fill within the neutral range of 7.5 to 8.4 power of hydrogen (pH) wherein practicable. • Require bubble curtains for pile driving to reduce noise and prioritize vibratory hammers.	CWA, ESA, MSA
Avian Species	• Require all trash during construction be stored in wildlife-proof containers. • Conduct pre-construction nest surveys to establish buffer zones for construction activities. • Reduce construction vessel speed to 8 knots or less near Steller's eiders (*Polysticta stelleri)*. • Implement and monitor a 660-foot in-air acoustic shutdown zone and an underwater acoustic zone during key winter months (October–May) for Steller's eiders.	BGEPA, ESA, MBTA
Marine Mammals	• Adhere to strict vessel transit rules for project vessels regarding speed and mandatory separation distances for marine mammals and their critical habitats.	ESA, MMPA

Resource Category	Proposed Mitigation	Statutory Authorities
	• Implement and monitor mandatory shutdown zones, enforced by Protected Species Observers, for all in-water work.	
Invasive Species	• Require a contractor Environmental Protection Plan detailing biofouling, ballast water, weed-free material, and Early Detection and Rapid Response protocols. • Conduct inspections of all vessels and equipment upon arrival.	CWA; NISA, E.O. 13112

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the TSP. A Eelgrass Mitigation Assessment supporting this determination is found in Appendix M of the IFR/EA.

Public review of the Draft IFR/EA and this Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was completed on June 22, 2026. All comments submitted during the public review period will be responded to in the Final IFR/EA and FONSI. USACE will notify agencies when the Final IFR/EA and FONSI are published.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, USACE determined that the TSP "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the Federally-listed beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*), fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*), and Steller's eider (*Polysticta stelleri*). USACE further determined that the plan would result in "no adverse modification" to the Cook Inlet beluga whale's Critical Habitat Area 2, which is the only critical habitat within the designated Action Area. Additionally, USACE determined that the TSP would have "no effect" on the sunflower sea star (*Pycnopodia helianthoides*) and short-tailed albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*). A Biological Assessment will be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their concurrence with these determinations for the species under their respective jurisdictions. The Draft Biological Assessment is found in Appendix I of the IFR/EA.

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 TSP. USACE will seek concurrence from the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office and required stakeholders for its determination of "no historic properties affected."

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the TSP is pending a final determination for compliance with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 Code of Federal Regulations 230). The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines evaluation is found in Appendix G of the IFR/EA.

A Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act will be obtained from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation prior to

construction. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation acknowledged USACE's intent to acquire a Section 401 Water Quality Certification in an email received by USACE on September 4, 2024. USACE will be pursuing a Section 401 Water Quality Certification in the Feasibility Phase to minimize adverse impacts to water quality.

The Federally-approved Alaska Coastal Management Program expired on July 1, 2011, resulting in withdrawal from participation in the Coastal Zone Management Act's National Coastal Management Program. Thus, the Coastal Zone Management Act's consistency provision, Section 307, no longer applies in Alaska.

An Essential Fish Habitat Assessment was drafted pursuant to the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended. USACE determined that the TSP would not cause significant adverse effects to Essential Fish Habitat with the implementation of mitigation measures and BMPs. The Draft Essential Fish Habitat Assessment will be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service and recommended conservation measures will be reviewed for implementation under the TSP. The Draft Essential Fish Habitat Assessment is located in Appendix H

Pursuant to E.O. 11988, Floodplain Management, the TSP is located within the coastal floodplain. Although the activity is not classified as water dependent, USACE has determined there is no practicable alternative to this location due to the requirement to connect to existing harbor infrastructure and utilize natural wave protection. The project is designed to minimize floodplain impacts and will not induce incompatible development. Therefore, the action complies with E.O. 11988.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials will be completed prior to construction of the TSP.

Technical, environmental, and cost effectiveness criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those 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 evaluation of alternatives. Based on the Draft IFR/EA, the reviews by other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the TSP would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. Furthermore, I certify that the resulting Draft IFR/EA, represents the following: the USACE's good-faith effort to prioritize documentation of the most important considerations and factors required by NEPA within the congressionally mandated page limits and timeline; that this prioritization reflects the USACE's expert judgment; the document is substantially complete; that any considerations addressed briefly or left unaddressed were, in the USACE's judgment, comparatively not of a substantive nature that meaningfully informed the consideration of environmental effects and the resulting decision on how to proceed; and that in the USACE's judgment the analysis contained therein is adequate

to inform and reasonably explain the USACE's final decision regarding the proposed Federal action.

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Date

JEFFREY S. PALAZZINI
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander