US Army Corps of Engineers®
Alaska District

DRAFT Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment

Homer Navigation Improvements
Homer, Alaska
Appendix L: Environmental Stakeholder Working Group

May 2026

Authority Memorandum for Record

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ALASKA DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 6898
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, AK 99506-0898

CEPOA-PMC-E

January 8, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Established for the Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK, under the Authority of the National Environmental Policy Act

1. The purpose of this Memorandum of Record (MFR) is to document the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as the authority under which the Environmental Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG) was established for the General Investigation being conducted for the Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK, feasibility study.

2. The ESWG was established as a method of applying NEPA early (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] § 1501.2), NEPA scoping (40 CFR § 1501.9), and public involvement in the environmental assessment process (40 CFR § 1501.5) for the Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK. Additionally, updated USACE Planning Guidance specifically directs study teams to communicate risks to the public, partners, stakeholders, Tribes, and decision makers and encourages "active outreach to and participation of all interested groups and use of the full spectrum of technical disciplines in activities and decision-making" (ER 1105-2-103, 2-4a(1)). Planning teams are to develop and implement "stakeholder and community engagement strategies to meaningfully engage the public throughout the planning process" (ER 1105-2-103, 2-4c).

3. The ESWG is comprised of individuals and organizations that demonstrated, during the charette, a desire to inform the potential environmental impacts of potential alternatives being assessed during the feasibility study. Following the charette, attendees of the Charette Environmental Stakeholder group gathered by the Cook Inletkeeper for specific environment-related discussions were invited to continue forward as part of the ESWG. During initial scoping activities, individuals and organizations were able to request to join the group.

4. The enclosed ESWG Final Guidance was developed during initial group activities. The guidance sets the ground rules of the ESWG communications and activities. Once finalized, members were required to acknowledge and agree to the guidance to continue forward as a member of the ESWG. Members of the Project Delivery Team and regulatory agencies were exempt from acknowledging and accepting the guidance.

5. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at (907) 753-2757 or Kayla.N.Campbell@usace.army.mil.

Encl

KAYLA N. CAMPBELL
Biologist, Environmental Resources Section
USACE, Alaska District

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ALASKA DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 6898
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, AK 99506-0898

CEPOA-PMC-E August 9, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Guidance for the *Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK*.

1. **Introduction:** United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) recognizes the valuable local knowledge and experience of individuals and organizations regarding the natural resources in and near Kachemak Bay and Homer, Alaska. USACE's consideration and inclusion of this knowledge and experience is critical to ensure its documents and planning/decision-making processes are fully informed. The Environmental Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG) is being formed to provide transparency, foster collaboration, inform planning/decision-making, and enhance analyses and outcomes for the General Investigation (GI) Study, *Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK*. USACE will lead and be a part of the ESWG while retaining control of content and planning/decision-making as it pertains to the Integrated Feasibility Report and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Document (IFR/NEPA Document) for the GI Study.

Participation in the ESWG does not curtail or foreclose any individual's or organization's right to make public comments pertaining to the project at any point during the GI Study. Furthermore, the ESWG does not preclude any Tribe from requesting staff-level or formal Government-to-Government consultation and does not take the place of USACE's Federal consultation obligations to Federally-recognized Tribes or legal obligations with other agencies.

2. **Purpose:** The purpose of the ESWG is to provide an additional platform to ensure that USACE fully considers the natural resources in and near Kachemak Bay and Homer, Alaska, and the potential impact of alternatives therein, in its planning, analysis, and decision-making processes, through collaboration with invited individuals and organizations throughout the GI Study.

3. **Objectives:** ESWG participants will adhere to the objectives presented in this Memorandum for Record (MFR) to the utmost of their ability.

a. *Inform the Process.* The ESWG is a group focused on sharing information to fully inform USACE planning, analysis, and decision-making and to ensure consideration of important natural resources and the potential impacts therein. The ESWG will not make decisions relating to the content of the IFR/NEPA Document or planning/decision-making processes committed to the authority and discretion of USACE.

b. *Create a Pathway of Collaboration, Not Debate.* The ESWG is a platform for collaboration and information-sharing among USACE and local and regional individuals and organizations with environmental knowledge and experience who have a wide spectrum of beliefs, values,

and opinions. It is not a platform for debate about whether potential study alternatives will or will not be implemented.

c. *Respect Different Perspectives and World Views.* There will be a wide range of perspectives represented within the ESWG due to different values, beliefs, and opinions. While these perspectives will be acknowledged and considered, as appropriate, to inform the study and environmental analyses, they will not be debated.

d. *Early and Sustained Engagement*. USACE will lead monthly ESWG virtual meetings to facilitate discussion, exchange information, and provide updates, as necessary. In-person meetings, e-mails, and phone calls will be used on an "as needed" basis. USACE may also pursue more directed engagement that includes only specific individuals/organizations that are part of the overall ESWG.

e. *Develop and Maintain Trust*. Trust within the ESWG will be quintessential to fully realize the benefits of the working group. Thus, patience, respect, honesty, transparency, and active engagement will be integral to collaboration efforts. ESWG participants are encouraged to communicate and collaborate as they deem appropriate and practicable.

f. *Recognize Challenges*. The ESWG will experience challenges. As challenges present themselves, they will need to be acknowledged and discussed by the ESWG. Some will be non-negotiable and can only be acknowledged (e.g., funding constraints). However, when negotiable (e.g., date/time of meetings), the ESWG can choose to accept the challenge "as is" or develop a work-around. Decisions are unlikely to be fully agreed upon and may require voting to determine how the group will move forward. The "One to Five" Method (modified "Fist to Five" Method) will be implemented for voting to determine if there is a clear decision or if further discussion and a revote is required. The "One to Five" Method will require individuals to vote by providing a number one through five that reflects: 1. Strongly Dislike/Find Unacceptable; 2. Somewhat Dislike/Find Unacceptable; 3. Neutral/No Opinion; 4. Somewhat Like/Find Acceptable; 5. Strongly Like/Find Acceptable). Final decisions will default to USACE if there is not a clear decision after two rounds of voting.

4. **Documents and Review:** USACE may share ESWG working documents and request review and/or feedback from the ESWG to facilitate working group communications and activities. USACE will attempt to send such ESWG working documents in a timely manner that will allow sufficient time for ESWG members to review and provide feedback, when able and as appropriate.

5. **Record Keeping and Information Control:** USACE will take meeting notes (herein, Meeting Minutes) that will be shared with the ESWG within five working days post-meeting. Meeting Minutes will capture ESWG attendance, discussions, and decisions. Meeting Minutes will be shared via email to the ESWG email distribution list, and as necessary, physical letters. A list of ESWG members and meeting dates and agendas will be included within an appendix of the draft and final IFR/NEPA Document that will be available for public and agency review and comment. Meeting Minutes and other significant ESWG correspondence will be available upon request.

ESWG correspondence that is not protected by law will be available to the public and is not to be considered private communication with USACE. It is the responsibility of the individual and/or organization to verify whether information is protected prior to sending such information to

USACE. Information shared during ESWG meetings and activities should not be provided to media outlets. Sharing information discussed at ESWG meetings with media outlets has the potential to detract from the purpose and objectives of the ESWG.

6. **Acknowledgment and Agreement:** This Memorandum for Record (MFR) will be shared with those who demonstrated a desire to participate in the ESWG. Acknowledgement of the MFR and agreement to commit a sincere effort to align individual/organizational engagement in accordance with this MFR is required for an individual/organization to participate as a member of the ESWG.

To officially become part of the ESWG, individual(s)/organization(s) will be required to acknowledge and agree to the content of this MFR by stating they understand the principles and agree to be part of the ESWG through email or letter to the USACE contact listed below.

7. **Guidance Revision:** USACE has the authority to revise and members have the right to request guidance revision after the Final ESWG Guidance is shared and acknowledged/agreed to by members. Prior to implementation of revisions, members will be notified of pending revision(s) and revised guidance will be shared as a draft to each member. Members will have up to 15 days after the draft is shared to provide comment to USACE for consideration prior to implementation of revisions. After the 15-day comment period, USACE will finalize the revised ESWG Guidance and share it with each member. Prior acknowledgement and agreement of the original Final ESWG Guidance will carry over to revised guidance unless a member notifies USACE they do not agree with the newly revised guidance.

8. **Dismissal:** Should an individual and/or organization knowingly and repeatedly commit actions that disregard the purpose and objectives stipulated herein, that individual and/or organization's participation within the ESWG will be evaluated, and they will be considered for removal. The final decision and justification for removal will be made by USACE and will be communicated to the removed individual and/or organization via email. The individual and/or organization can appeal the decision up to 15 days after the notification is sent.

9. **USACE Contact:** USACE sincerely appreciates the individuals and organizations willing to participate in the ESWG for the *Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK*. Any questions or concerns for USACE should be directed to Ms. Kayla Campbell, Biologist / NEPA Coordinator of the Environmental Resources Section, Civil Works Branch, Alaska District, USACE, at 907-753-2757, Kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil, or the following postal address:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CEPOA-PMC-E (Campbell)
P.O. Box 6898
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska 99506-0898

Kayla Campbell
Biologist / NEPA Coordinator
Environmental Resources Section

Guidance Document

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ALASKA DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 6898
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, AK 99506-0898

CEPOA-PMC-E August 9, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Guidance for the *Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK*.

1. **Introduction:** United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) recognizes the valuable local knowledge and experience of individuals and organizations regarding the natural resources in and near Kachemak Bay and Homer, Alaska. USACE's consideration and inclusion of this knowledge and experience is critical to ensure its documents and planning/decision-making processes are fully informed. The Environmental Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG) is being formed to provide transparency, foster collaboration, inform planning/decision-making, and enhance analyses and outcomes for the General Investigation (GI) Study, *Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK*. USACE will lead and be a part of the ESWG while retaining control of content and planning/decision-making as it pertains to the Integrated Feasibility Report and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Document (IFR/NEPA Document) for the GI Study.

Participation in the ESWG does not curtail or foreclose any individual's or organization's right to make public comments pertaining to the project at any point during the GI Study. Furthermore, the ESWG does not preclude any Tribe from requesting staff-level or formal Government-to-Government consultation and does not take the place of USACE's Federal consultation obligations to Federally-recognized Tribes or legal obligations with other agencies.

2. **Purpose:** The purpose of the ESWG is to provide an additional platform to ensure that USACE fully considers the natural resources in and near Kachemak Bay and Homer, Alaska, and the potential impact of alternatives therein, in its planning, analysis, and decision-making processes, through collaboration with invited individuals and organizations throughout the GI Study.

3. **Objectives:** ESWG participants will adhere to the objectives presented in this Memorandum for Record (MFR) to the utmost of their ability.

a. *Inform the Process.* The ESWG is a group focused on sharing information to fully inform USACE planning, analysis, and decision-making and to ensure consideration of important natural resources and the potential impacts therein. The ESWG will not make decisions relating to the content of the IFR/NEPA Document or planning/decision-making processes committed to the authority and discretion of USACE.

b. *Create a Pathway of Collaboration, Not Debate.* The ESWG is a platform for collaboration and information-sharing among USACE and local and regional individuals and organizations with environmental knowledge and experience who have a wide spectrum of beliefs, values,

and opinions. It is not a platform for debate about whether potential study alternatives will or will not be implemented.

c. *Respect Different Perspectives and World Views.* There will be a wide range of perspectives represented within the ESWG due to different values, beliefs, and opinions. While these perspectives will be acknowledged and considered, as appropriate, to inform the study and environmental analyses, they will not be debated.

d. *Early and Sustained Engagement*. USACE will lead monthly ESWG virtual meetings to facilitate discussion, exchange information, and provide updates, as necessary. In-person meetings, e-mails, and phone calls will be used on an "as needed" basis. USACE may also pursue more directed engagement that includes only specific individuals/organizations that are part of the overall ESWG.

e. *Develop and Maintain Trust*. Trust within the ESWG will be quintessential to fully realize the benefits of the working group. Thus, patience, respect, honesty, transparency, and active engagement will be integral to collaboration efforts. ESWG participants are encouraged to communicate and collaborate as they deem appropriate and practicable.

f. *Recognize Challenges*. The ESWG will experience challenges. As challenges present themselves, they will need to be acknowledged and discussed by the ESWG. Some will be non-negotiable and can only be acknowledged (e.g., funding constraints). However, when negotiable (e.g., date/time of meetings), the ESWG can choose to accept the challenge "as is" or develop a work-around. Decisions are unlikely to be fully agreed upon and may require voting to determine how the group will move forward. The "One to Five" Method (modified "Fist to Five" Method) will be implemented for voting to determine if there is a clear decision or if further discussion and a revote is required. The "One to Five" Method will require individuals to vote by providing a number one through five that reflects: 1. Strongly Dislike/Find Unacceptable; 2. Somewhat Dislike/Find Unacceptable; 3. Neutral/No Opinion; 4. Somewhat Like/Find Acceptable; 5. Strongly Like/Find Acceptable). Final decisions will default to USACE if there is not a clear decision after two rounds of voting.

4. **Documents and Review:** USACE may share ESWG working documents and request review and/or feedback from the ESWG to facilitate working group communications and activities. USACE will attempt to send such ESWG working documents in a timely manner that will allow sufficient time for ESWG members to review and provide feedback, when able and as appropriate.

5. **Record Keeping and Information Control:** USACE will take meeting notes (herein, Meeting Minutes) that will be shared with the ESWG within five working days post-meeting. Meeting Minutes will capture ESWG attendance, discussions, and decisions. Meeting Minutes will be shared via email to the ESWG email distribution list, and as necessary, physical letters. A list of ESWG members and meeting dates and agendas will be included within an appendix of the draft and final IFR/NEPA Document that will be available for public and agency review and comment. Meeting Minutes and other significant ESWG correspondence will be available upon request.

ESWG correspondence that is not protected by law will be available to the public and is not to be considered private communication with USACE. It is the responsibility of the individual and/or organization to verify whether information is protected prior to sending such information to

USACE. Information shared during ESWG meetings and activities should not be provided to media outlets. Sharing information discussed at ESWG meetings with media outlets has the potential to detract from the purpose and objectives of the ESWG.

6. **Acknowledgment and Agreement:** This Memorandum for Record (MFR) will be shared with those who demonstrated a desire to participate in the ESWG. Acknowledgement of the MFR and agreement to commit a sincere effort to align individual/organizational engagement in accordance with this MFR is required for an individual/organization to participate as a member of the ESWG.

To officially become part of the ESWG, individual(s)/organization(s) will be required to acknowledge and agree to the content of this MFR by stating they understand the principles and agree to be part of the ESWG through email or letter to the USACE contact listed below.

7. **Guidance Revision:** USACE has the authority to revise and members have the right to request guidance revision after the Final ESWG Guidance is shared and acknowledged/agreed to by members. Prior to implementation of revisions, members will be notified of pending revision(s) and revised guidance will be shared as a draft to each member. Members will have up to 15 days after the draft is shared to provide comment to USACE for consideration prior to implementation of revisions. After the 15-day comment period, USACE will finalize the revised ESWG Guidance and share it with each member. Prior acknowledgement and agreement of the original Final ESWG Guidance will carry over to revised guidance unless a member notifies USACE they do not agree with the newly revised guidance.

8. **Dismissal:** Should an individual and/or organization knowingly and repeatedly commit actions that disregard the purpose and objectives stipulated herein, that individual and/or organization's participation within the ESWG will be evaluated, and they will be considered for removal. The final decision and justification for removal will be made by USACE and will be communicated to the removed individual and/or organization via email. The individual and/or organization can appeal the decision up to 15 days after the notification is sent.

9. **USACE Contact:** USACE sincerely appreciates the individuals and organizations willing to participate in the ESWG for the *Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK*. Any questions or concerns for USACE should be directed to Ms. Kayla Campbell, Biologist / NEPA Coordinator of the Environmental Resources Section, Civil Works Branch, Alaska District, USACE, at 907-753-2757, Kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil, or the following postal address:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CEPOA-PMC-E (Campbell)
P.O. Box 6898
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska 99506-0898

Kayla Campbell
Biologist / NEPA Coordinator
Environmental Resources Section

List of Participants

Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Participant List		
Active Participant	**In-Active Participant**	**Organization Representation**
Amy Holman	Betsy McCracken	Center for Biological Diversity
Amy Woodruff	Bridget Marvott	Chugach Regional Resources Commission
Brandee Ketchum	Carol G. Harding	City of Homer
Bruce Shulte	Dave Lyon	Coal Point Trading Company
Bryan Hawkins	Erin Shew	Cook InletKeeper
Caroline Pierce	Janette Keiser	Environmental Protection Agency
Cooper Freeman	Jessica Sheppard	HDR
Curtis Lee	Julie Engebretsen	Homer Fish and Game Advisory Committee
Dave Erikson	Lani Raymond	Homer Soil and Water Conservation District
David Seris	Loretta Brown	Kachemak Bay Birders
Debbie Tobin	Michael Opheim	Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
Donna Aderhold	Olga Von Zeigesar	Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
Fern Spaulding	Ruth Carter	Kachemak Bay Research Reserve Community Council
George Matz	Stephen Payton	Kachemak Bay Watershed Council
Hal Shepherd	Sue Maugen	Mobilizing Through Action and Planning Partnerships
Jack Wiles	Tyler Huling	National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
Jenny Carroll	Yarrow Hinnant	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Karyn DeCino		Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries Inc.
Katie Gavenus		Homer Port & Harbor
Kayla Campbell		Pratt Museum
KC Kent		Seldovia Village Tribe
Kelly Eldridge		The Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
Kris Holderied		University of Alaska Anchorage
Kyra Wagner		U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Lauren Sutton		U.S. Coast Guard
Laurie Daniel		
Marilyn Sigman		
Molly Hammersmith		
Nancy Hillstrand		
Penelope Haas		
Robert Archibald		
Robin Carr		
Ronny McPherson		
Ross Whippo		
Sue Christiansen		
Susan Sturges		
Syverine Bentz		
Tyler Teese		
Whitney Conard		

Disclaimer: These lists are informal and do not represent the extent of participation of the listed individual or formal participation of an organization.

Note: Active participants are those individuals who participated in the ESWG at one point in time but otherwise did not continue participating. E.g., individuals who did not acknowledge or agree to the ESWG Guidance Document or who participated as an agency participant but retired during the time period of the ESWG activities.

Alaska Native Tribe Invitation Letter Example

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ALASKA DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 6898
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, AK 99506-0898

August 28, 2023

CEPOA-PMC

Crystal Collier, President
Seldovia Village Tribe
P.O. Drawer L
Seldovia, Alaska 99663

Dear Ms. Collier:

An Environmental Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG) has been established by United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for a study being conducted to analyze the feasibility of harbor improvements in the vicinity of Homer, Alaska. This feasibility study, the *Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK*, is being conducted in partnership with the City of Homer. It is being performed under Section 204 of the Flood Control Act of 1948 (Public Law 80-858, as amended), which authorizes investigations of harbors and rivers in Alaska. USACE sent you a formal invitation to consult with us on this study on May 5, 2023.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you or interested representatives from Seldovia Village Tribe to participate in the ESWG. The ESWG has been established in response to comments USACE received during the initial public charette for this study which occurred May 17 – 19, 2023, at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center and Headquarters in Homer, Alaska. Multiple individuals and organizations in attendance stated a strong concern about potential environmental impacts and a desire to participate in the environmental analysis throughout the study process. The ESWG will facilitate information exchange as it relates to the study to ensure that the affected environmental resources and potential impacts to them are fully considered.

The ESWG and its future activities do not foreclose or supersede any of our Nation-to-Nation consultation obligations. The ESWG will help inform the USACE's Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document, which is the document prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act that will be made available for public and agency review and comment.

Should members of the Seldovia Village Tribe want to participate in the ESWG in order to share their knowledge, experience, and concerns regarding the environmental resources within Kachemak Bay and along the Homer Spit as it relates to this study, we welcome their involvement. If you could please provide us with their full name and email, we will reach out to them directly with information about future virtual meetings of

the ESWG. Members will need to provide their mailing address if they do not have email and/or virtual access. The contact information provided will only be used for ESWG purposes.

Member information and any questions or concerns may be directed to me via phone at (907) 753-2539; by email at Curtis.D.Lee@usace.army.mil; or by mail at: CEPOA-PMC (Curtis Lee), P.O. Box 6898, JBER, Alaska 99506-0898.

Sincerely,

LEE.CURTIS.DALE.1235433865

Digitally signed by LEE.CURTIS.DALE.1235433865
Date: 2023.08.28 12:20:16 -08'00'

Curtis Lee
Project Manager, Civil Works Branch

Meeting Agendas and Notes

Additional content and revisions received post-meeting reflected by red font.

RECORDED MEETING

Meeting Minutes
Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
July 10, 2023
2:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Meeting: Initial Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

Meeting Type/Location: Virtual / Webex at https://usace1.webex.com/meet/kayla.n.campbell

Meeting Topic(s): Administrative Actions, Status Updates

Attendance (23 Individuals): *Name (Organization, if Applicable)*

- Kayla Campbell (USACE)
- Molly Hammersmith (USACE)
- Donna Aderhold (City of Homer, Gulf Watch Alaska Program)
- Jenny Carroll (City of Homer)
- Lauren Sutton (KBNERR, Research Coordinator)
- Tyler Teese (USACE)
- Amy Burnett (HDR)
- Marilyn Sigman (Retired Biologist, Alaska Sea Grant)
- Laurie Daniel (KBNERR Council)
- KC Kent (HDR)
- Curtis Lee (USACE)
- Amy Holman (NOAA)
- Kelly Eldridge (USACE)
- Julie Engebretsen (City of Homer)
- Stephen Payton (Seldovia Village Tribe Environmental Program Coordinator)
- Dave Seris (USCG, D17)
- Caroline Wilkinson (NOAA OCS)
- Bridget Maryott (Cook InletKeeper)
- Michael Rouse (USACE)
- Kris Holderied (NCCOS Kasitsna Bay Lab)
- Karyn Decino (NCCOS Kasitsna bay Lab)
- Bryan Hawkins (Port & Harbor Director)
- Michael Opheim (CRRC)

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Working Group Draft Guidance
- Audience Structure
- Current Status/Completed Milestones
- Schedule Highlights
- Next Meeting Date/Time
- Open Discussion (as time allows)

Due Out(s) & Request(s) for Information: *This section lists out the due outs or requests for information that were identified during the meeting in order to ensure they are not lost within the Meeting Minutes.*

- **Completed:** USACE will incorporated modified Fist to Five methodology into Section 3.f. of the guidance memo prior to sending draft for member comment/revision.

- **Completed:** USACE will send out Meeting Minutes from July 10, 2023, meeting with updated draft guidance and slides with **CONCEPTUAL** figures of current array of alternatives.

- **Completed, No later than July 18, 2023:** Members will provide comments on the July 10, 2023, "Meeting Minutes".

- **Completed, No later than July 21, 2023:** USACE will incorporate July 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes comments received by July 18, 2023, as prudent, and resend notes.

- **No later than July 25, 2023:** Members will provide ESWG Guidance comments/tracked revisions to USACE Point of Contact Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil. Comments will be tracked via the comment tracker established for group correspondence.

- **No later than 2 weeks prior to next meeting:** USACE will incorporate ESWG Guidance revisions and address comments received by July 25, 2023, as prudent, prior to implementation of guidance.

- **No later than 2 weeks prior to next meeting:** Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.

- **No later than 2 weeks prior to next meeting:** Individuals will determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at ESWG meetings with rationale for determination.

- **No later than 1 week prior to next meeting:** Individuals will have to had acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance as described in the guidance to remain on the email distribution list to continue to receive ESWG information, which will enable them to fulfill meeting roles "as required" pending meeting agendas.

- **No later than next meeting:** USACE will establish a ESWG Meeting Distribution List based on organization and individual feedback.

- **Completed, No later than next meeting**: The project delivery team will discuss/consider the combination of current alternatives in combination to expanding the current harbor footprint by removing material internally on the eastern face and whether that would lessen the footprint of expansion outside the current harbor.

    - Project delivery team follow-up occurred on July 12, 2023, due project delivery team meeting.

    - It was identified that the expansion of the current harbor footprint had been considered in combination with all current alternatives when conducting initial screening discussions. Due to the frequency of comments regarding its consideration as an alternative, the project delivery team (USACE, City of Homer, HDR) discussed providing an explanation as to why it was eliminated for further consideration. The project delivery team discussed providing such explanation on the City of Homer site's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page for this study.

- **No suspense:** HDR, NCCOS Kasitsna Bay Laboratory, and KBNERR will coordinate/share information and data as it relates to sediment transport modeling within Kachemak Bay.

Meeting Notes Summary/Highlights:

- Discussed the ESWG Draft Guidance in preparation to share draft guidance with the group post-meeting for final comments/feedback before the document is finalized and implemented prior to the next meeting.

- Due to group size, moving forward, specific individuals/group representatives identified as “required” or “as required” will be invited to virtual meetings to ensure meetings remain effective/efficient. To facilitate this, the meeting agenda will be shared to the ESWG Email Distribution List and individual not identified as “required” will be requested to self-identify as “as required” if they have knowledge/experience on agenda topics. Post-meeting, Meeting Minutes will be shared with the ESWG Email Distribution List to allow for additional information/comment from members who were not part of the virtual meeting.

- Alternatives were screened and reduced to the No-Action Alternative and five Action alternatives. Currently, alternatives are only concepts. They will be more defined as the study moves forward/informs the designs The action alternatives include four enclosed basins with different footprint extents/size, and a detached basin design that would provide minimal footprint to address study need/objectives.

- September 2023 is when the next public engagement is anticipated to be held by the City of Homer and USACE.

- Next ESWG Meeting Date/Time anticipated to occur mid- / late-August sometime after 1:00 pm via Webex.

Detailed Meeting Notes:

- Notes: (1) Working to extend invitation to members of Tribes via letters. (2) Project delivery team is a group composed of USACE, City of Homer (project non-Federal sponsor), and HDR.

- Introductions – Name and as applicable: background, role, organization

- Working Group Draft Guidance (Document Review)

    - General Guidance Purpose and Content: To ensure group communications and activities facilitate the purpose for which this group was established.

    - Describe an Integrated Feasibility Report / NEPA Document: This study will not result in a standalone Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. In a group meeting later, we will review what an Integrated Feasibility Report / NEPA Document is and where the NEPA related material is found internal to such a document/how the data is captured.

- Guidance Overview – Read each section of the guidance memorandum to facilitate discussions.

- Group Feedback

    - Request to incorporate a modified Fist to Five Method/Approach for group decision-making in Section “3. Objectives, f. Recognize Challenges”. During discussions, it was identified that this would provide a spectrum for voting to enhance voting on a topic and assist in identifying when further discussion should be facilitated when pursuing a “majority” rules vote. E.g., if voting is close (i.e., 48% vs 52%) and/neither side feels strongly, this would be a good indication to discuss a topic further prior to a revote.

    - USACE will send out the Working Group Guidance memo after incorporating a modified Fist to Five Method/Approach into Section 3.f. Recognize Challenges. Group members will be asked to provide comments/tracked changes to USACE no later than July 25, 2023. USACE will incorporate changes and resend the guidance memo to group members for implementation of “Section 5. Acknowledgement and Agreement” prior to next meeting.

- Audience Structures:

    - Meeting Group (Subset of the Email Group): Identified individuals (to include designated POCs for organizations) necessary to ensure efficient/effective meetings.

        - This idea was supported by the group who attended the virtual meeting, which included individuals who had experience managing long-running groups for other projects/processes.

        - Meeting invites will be sent out to a separate “Meeting” email distribution list that consists of a subset the whole group. The subset will consist of “Required” and identified “As Required” and speakers.

        - Meeting agendas will be shared with every member.

        - “As Required” and speakers will be identified based on meeting agendas provided prior to meetings by organization representatives and individuals.

            - “As Required” vs Speaker: an individual who is part of the working group will be considered “As required” if not the designated representative while a speaker will be an individual who is not part of the working group but was identified as having expertise/knowledge on a meeting agenda topic.

            - Organization representatives and individuals will notify USACE of “As Required” and/or speakers to allow USACE to incorporate their attendance as appropriate. The following information needs to be shared with USACE for “As Required” / Speakers:

        - Name
        - Email
        - Rationale/Purpose of Attendance
    - Organization Meeting Representation:
        - **Organizations will designate a representative to attend group meetings and to facilitate group communications/activities for their organization as it related to the working group.**
            - If a designated representative is unable to attend, they are responsible for catching up their organization's alternate for the meeting.
            - Representatives will identify if a meeting/activity applies to their organization and whether that organization's representative will attend.
            - Representatives will manage/facilitate organization's communications/activities with USACE.
        - The onus will be on the representative to ensure their organization is represented at meetings and/or identifying individuals within their organization who should attend as an "As Required" member or a speaker based on provided meeting agenda.
    - Individual Meeting Representation:
        - Need to provide whether self-identifying as "Required" or "As Required" for meetings.
        - If self-identified as "Required", individuals will need to provide rationale for decision.
- Email Group: Every member of the group will be part of the email distribution list (letters will be provided to those who are part of the group but do not have virtual/email capabilities). Material sent will include meeting notes and out of meeting updates, etc. Agendas will be shared to the email distribution list to facilitate "As Required" and Speakers.

- Current Status/Completed Milestones:
    - Currently in the process of gathering/reviewing literature. Data gaps are not fully identified and still needs to be developed. The group will be notified via email and/or meeting (as appropriate) on data gaps are identified to facilitate filling the gap with local knowledge and/or research/data not yet available.

- Screened Alternatives: Alternatives were screened by the project delivery team, which includes USACE and the non-Federal Sponsor, the City of Homer and HDR. The Charette and known existing background data informed the project delivery team in alternative screening discussions and preliminary decisions.
    - Screening Criteria: Criteria used to screen which alternatives will move forward and which would be eliminated from further consideration:
        - Completeness: Will the plan work? Is it implementable, does it depend on outside action?
        - Effectiveness: Does the alternative measurably meet the planning objectives?
        - Efficiency: How cost-effective is the alternative?
        - Acceptability: Acceptance by State, local, and public entities
        - Implementability: How feasible is it from a technical, financial, and legal perspective
        - Satisfaction: How welcome is the plan to the various stakeholders in the community
    - Current Array of Alternatives (See PowerPoint. Alternatives' figures are **CONCEPT** and not final design. Note: reflected depths on figures represent current depth):
        - Alternatives remaining/developed from the initial array of alternatives that were developed during the Charette:
            - No-Action (Required throughout study even though it did not pass the screening process).
            - Alternative 1a – Enclosed Basin, Minimal Footprint: Accommodate design fleet (current vessel in harbor and the waitlist – this may develop) and minimize costs.
            - Alternative 1b - Enclosed Basin, Moderate Footprint: Accommodate design fleet and provide uplands for additional infrastructure/recreational opportunities.
            - Alternative 1c - Enclosed Basin with Extension, Moderate Footprint: Accommodate design fleet and larger sized vessels and provide uplands for additional infrastructure/recreational opportunities.
            - Alternative 1d - Enclosed Basin (Crescent), Maximum Footprint: Accommodate design fleet and larger sized vessels and provide uplands for additional

infrastructure/recreational opportunities. Would allow for more growth than Alternative 1c.

- Alternative 2 – Detached Basin: Similar to Alternative 1a but would be detached from Homer Spit.

- USACE discussed that modeling efforts are being made to show shoaling/sediment circulation to inform the project delivery team of such information for the study process. This was brought up due to concern with Alternative 2 potentially having high amounts of shoaling due to the opening between the proposed breakwater and spit.

  - Modeling for sediment circulation/shoaling will be implemented for ALL alternatives being considered forward through the study.

  - HDR is running the modeling with baseline data and a Mike-21 suite model for this study.

    - The current model is depth-averaged and not stratified.

    - The 2-layer stratification and other information/data relating to sediment circulation/shoaling within Kachemak Bay will be shared from Kasitsna Bay Laboratory with HDR to supplement / provide comparison data for study modeling efforts. HDR and Kasitsna Bay Laboratory (Kris Holderied) will coordinate direct information/data exchange.

    - KBNERR (Lauren Sutton) has sediment transport information and will share with HDR as well.

- Inquiry about whether a combination of two alternatives from the Charette was fully considered by the project delivery team. The combo alternative was described as expanding the current harbor by removing sediment/soil from the eastern wall to reduce the size of alternatives that build off the outside of the spit. The project delivery team will discuss that at their next internal meeting (separate from ESWG meetings).

- Alternatives under consideration are all relatively located on the east side of the spit adjacent to the current harbor.

- Member post-meeting comment: If an expansion alternative is implemented that developed a space for large vessel moorage, there will be a need to uplands for parking. Even with the current harbor size, summer parking for trailers fills up quickly and results in individuals parking on the shoulder of the road.

- Member post-meeting comment: In the 90s when the barge basin was built, 15 acres of land was created. That 15 acres is now being used as an RV park and a large boat haul out towards Bob Cousins property behind the ice rink. 20-yard rock trucks were used to move what was just slurry of the excavated material. As the sheet piles were driven into the bottom sediment, they would stop once in a while but would go right through the lumps of coal being found while the barge basin was excavated.

- Member post-meeting comment: Alternative 2 (the unattached version) seems like there would be not only sediment issues but more susceptibility to weather conditions impacting the harbor that would increase safety risks to vessels and human individuals (e.g., individuals conducting recreational/industry activities).

- Member post-meeting comment: With the crescent alternative that would accommodate larger vessels, was the project delivery team thinking it would be for vessels to deliver freight and goods direct to the lower Kenai Peninsula instead to Anchorage and transported down via the highway? If that was the case, it should be considered that it would be beneficial if the Port of Anchorage ever became inaccessible. However, this would also require uplands to accommodate the increases and additional equipment, trucks, trailers, and infrastructure (e.g., storage and marine businesses) that would result from such.

- Member post-meeting comment: Has there been thought to where the rip rap would come from for the breakwaters? Would that material come from within the Kenai Peninsula or from a query on Kodiak and need to be shipped up. Herndon and Thompson in '93 hauled rock from Seldovia to the Homer spit to armor the seaside against storms.

- Member post-meeting comment: Cultural Resource/Subsistence Comment, With previous and current activities on the spit, culturally sensitive areas of concern and any harvest that the natives in the area would have used that area for are not recalled. In the past, natives from the southside used to hunt caribou in the beluga lake area before it was Beluga Lake. Moose and ducks were hunted from Jakolof to the head of Kachemak Bay but not much is recalled happening on that Homer side. Although, stories were recalled of razor clams one time being on the Homer Spit but that seemed to be more towards the Anchor Point side / base of the spit.

- Alternatives Milestone Meeting – The project delivery team updated USACE Headquarters about current study status as it relates to scope (to include schedule and budget) and how alternatives were screened to decide which will move forward in the study vs which were eliminated from further consideration.

- Current Federal Agency Involvement
    - Cooperating Agencies
        - EPA will assist with the consideration and analysis of:
            - Water resources (Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certificate, Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Report, and the Dredged Material Management Plan/relating materials)
            - Air resources (Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate)
            - Environmental Justice
        - USCG will assist with the consideration and analysis of navigable waters and navigational aids.
    - Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (Letters from USFWS and ADF&G providing guidance/direction in fish and wildlife considerations and requirements).
    - Other Consults/Coordination (not all encompassing):
        - State Critical Habitat Area - KBNERR
        - Essential Fish Habitat Coordination/Consultation – NMFS
        - Potential Special Area Permit – ADF&G
        - Endangered Species Act Coordination/Consultation – NMFS and USFWS
        - Government-to-Government and Tribal Coordination and Consultation – Applicable Tribes
        - National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Coordination/Consultation – SHPO
        - Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certificate – Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
        - Floodplain Development Permit – City of Homer

- Schedule Highlights:
    - June 30, 2023 – Completed Alternatives Milestone Meeting
    - FY 2024 – Potential Modeling Workshop (Waiver Dependent)

- Monthly ESWG Meetings – TBD
- September 2023 – Potential City & USACE Public Engagement
- April 2024 – Study Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone
- June 2024 – Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document Released for Public & Agency Review and Comment

- Working Group Meeting Schedule
  - General meeting scheduling guidance
    - Virtual meetings were identified as beneficial due to providing better opportunities/flexibility for attendance by a larger/diverse/dispersed audience.
    - Mid-month was mentioned as reasonable, but it was requested that USACE takes into account the holidays, especially in winter when considering dates moving forward.
    - In the Fall/Winter, low tides were noted to occur later.
    - Weekends or Weekdays?
    - Time of Day?
    - Avoid:
    - Other Considerations:
  - Next Meeting Date/Time: will be sent via email. Anticipated mid- / late-August.

- Open Discussion (dependent on time available)
  - None

ENVIRONMENTAL STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP

HOMER NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENTS STUDY, AK

NEPA Coordinator - Kayla Campbell

Environmental Resources Section
Civil Works Branch
Alaska District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
10 July 2023

U.S. ARMY

US Army Corps of Engineers®

CONTENT

- Disclaimer
- General Vicinity of Alternatives
- Current Array of Alternatives

DISCLAIMER

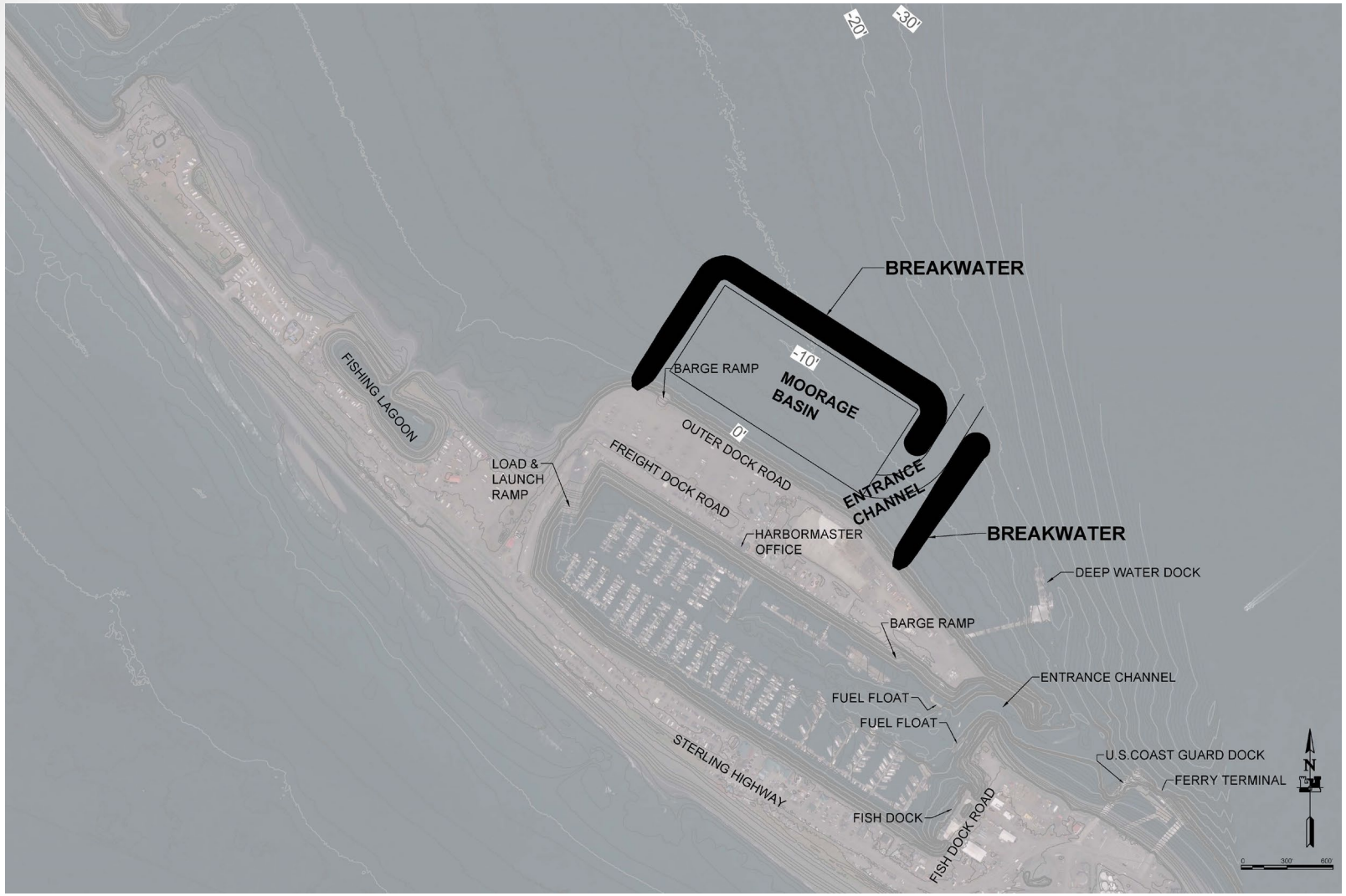
The current array of alternatives is subject to change and is based on preliminary information / data. Furthermore, the figures are CONCEPTS and are not to be considered the final design to be implemented should the study progress to construction of an alternative.

RELATIVE VICINITY OF ALTERNATIVES

NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

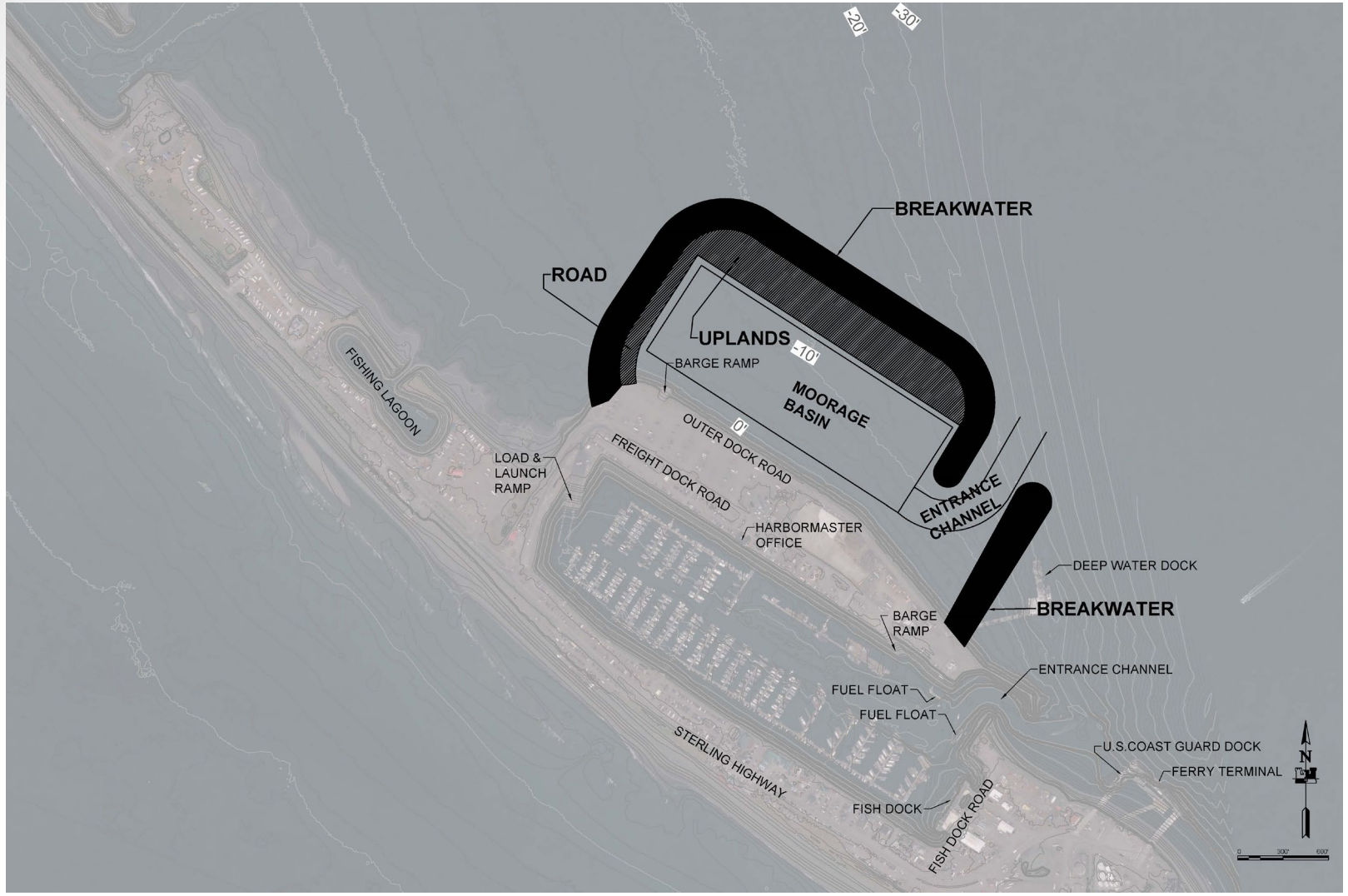
Will be considered throughout the study process and represents the current and future conditions without the implementation of an action alternative as shown in the slides to follow.

ALTERNATIVE 1A: ENCLOSED BASIN, MINIMAL FOOTPRINT



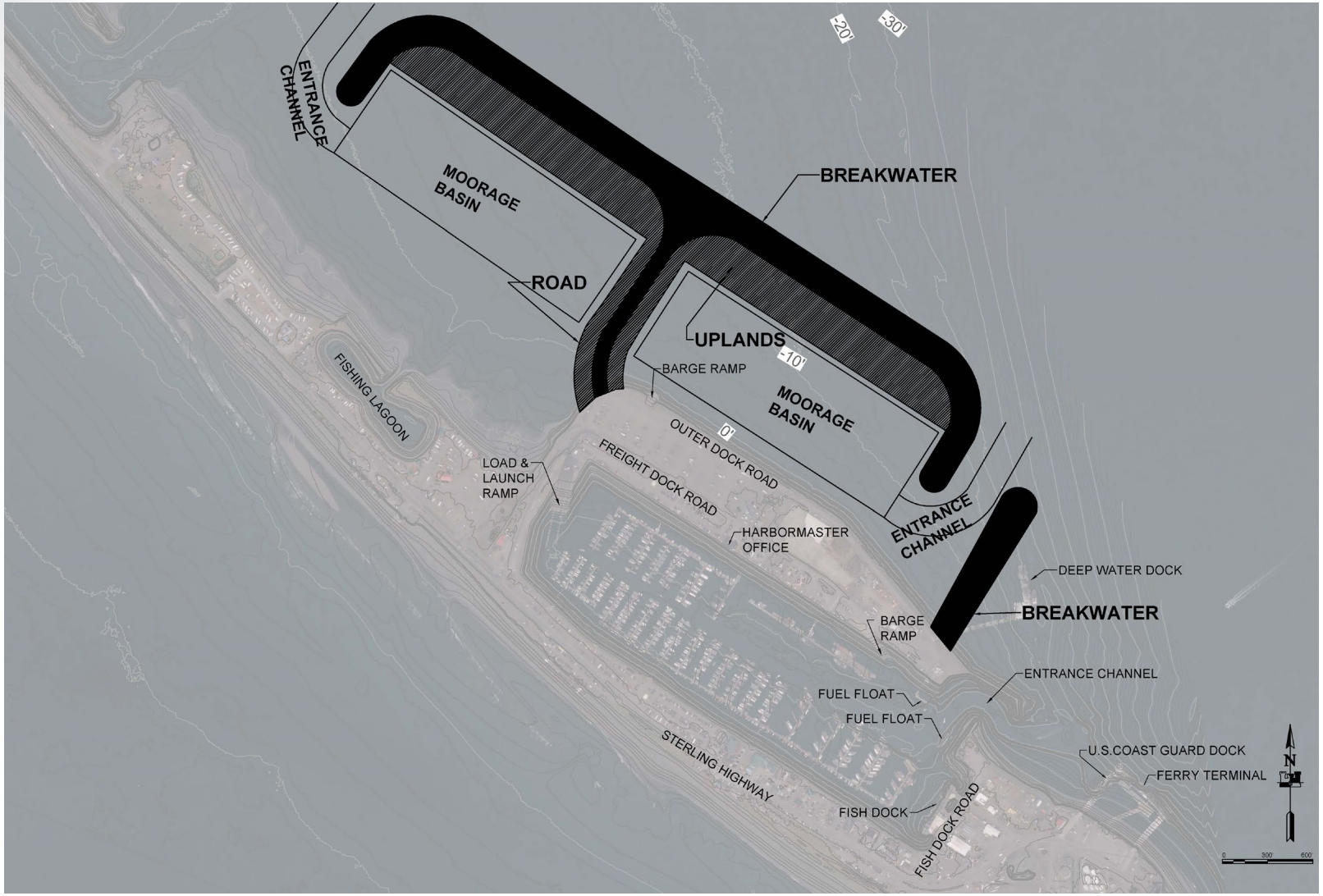
Rubble mound or similar non-floating structure breakwater creating single enclosed basin adjacent to existing harbor with no associated uplands. Harbor provides moorage for large vessels currently in small boat harbor. Includes reconfiguration of current harbor to accommodate needs for small boats (including boats on waitlist). Provides minimum local service facilities required for design fleet (fuel, potable water, electricity, sewage disposal, dock facilities).

ALTERNATIVE 1B: ENCLOSED BASIN, MODERATE FOOTPRINT



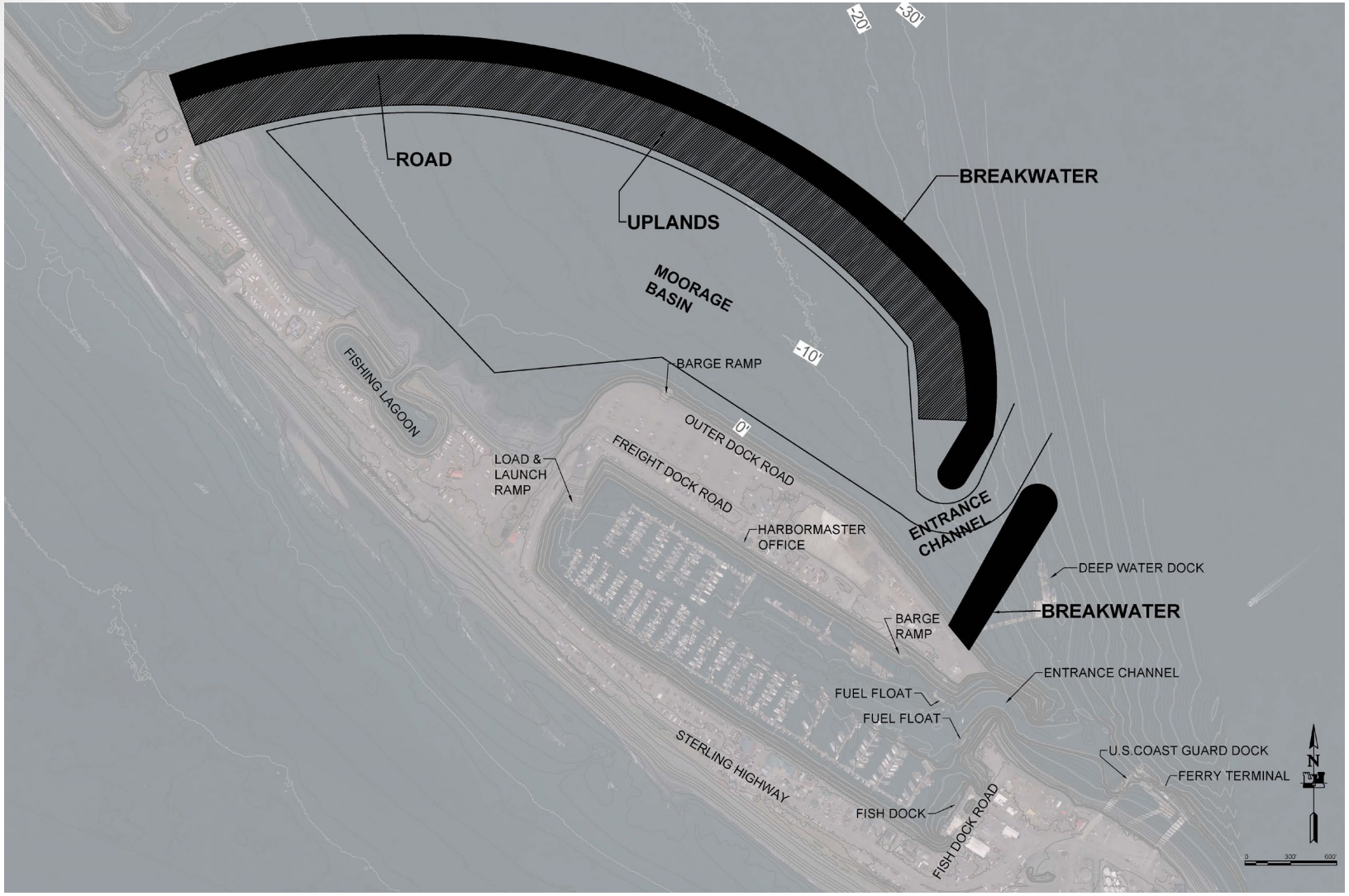
Rubble mound or similar non-floating structure breakwater creating single enclosed basin adjacent to existing harbor including uplands (upland infrastructure e.g. road, parking, buildings, storage etc.). Harbor provides moorage for large vessels currently in small boat harbor and/or future fleet growth and may include side-tie (rafting) transient moorage. Reconfigure current harbor to accommodate needs for existing small boats (including boats on waitlist). Provides minimum local service facilities required for design fleet (fuel, potable water, electricity, sewage disposal, dock facilities).

ALTERNATIVE 1C: ENCLOSED BASIN W/ EXTENSION, MODERATE FOOTPRINT



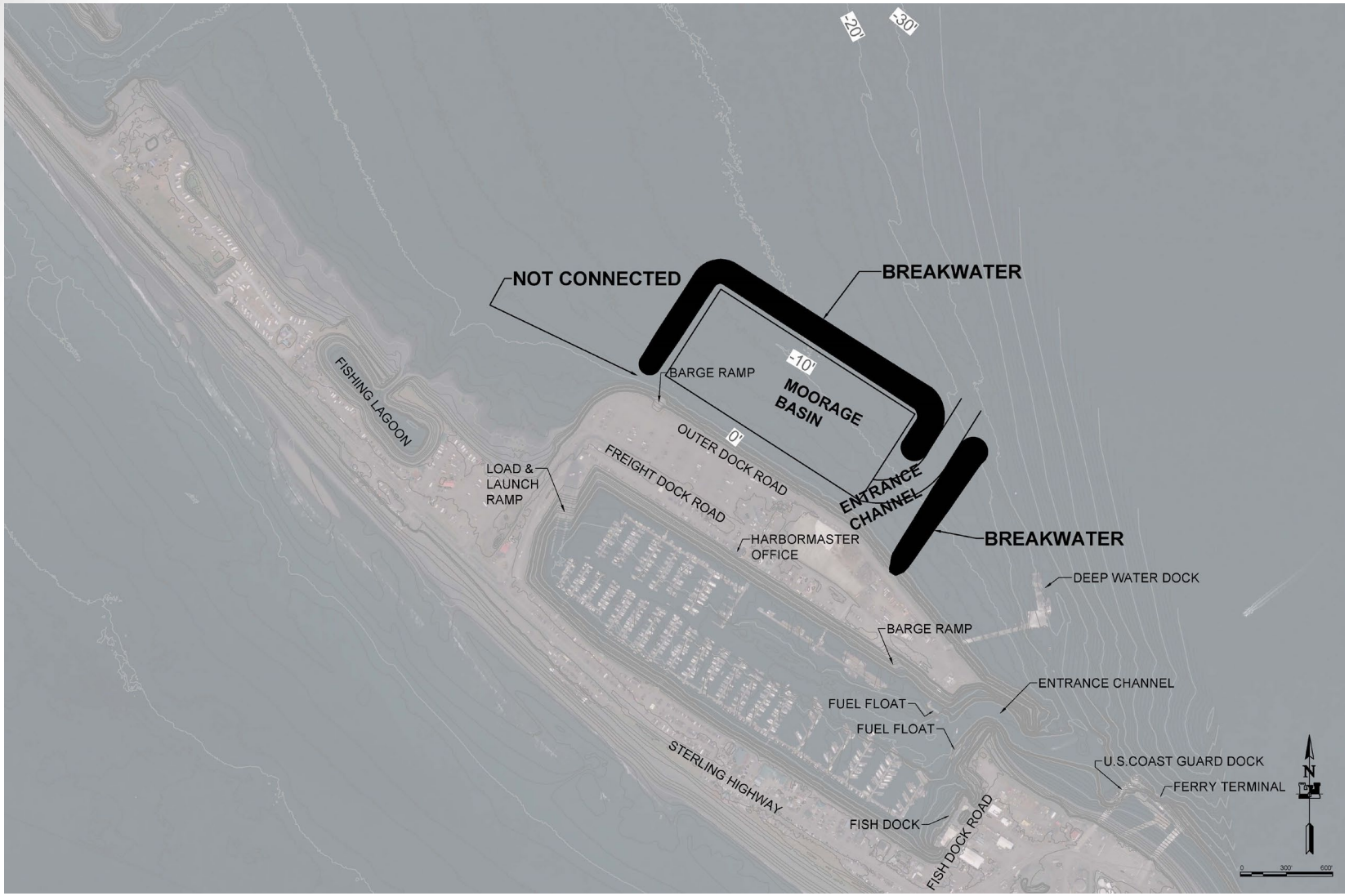
Rubble mound or similar non-floating structure breakwater creating two enclosed basins adjacent to existing harbor including uplands (upland infrastructure e.g. road, parking, buildings, storage etc.) Harbor provides moorage for design fleet as well as room for larger boats (200 ft.+) not currently accommodated by existing harbor, and/or future fleet growth, and may include side-tie (rafting) for transient moorage. Reconfiguration of current harbor to accommodate needs for existing small boats (including boats on waitlist). Provides minimum local service facilities required for design fleet (fuel, potable water, electricity, sewage disposal, dock facilities).

ALTERNATIVE 1D: ENCLOSED BASIN (CRESCENT), MAXIMUM FOOTPRINT



Rubble mound or similar non-floating structure breakwater creating single large enclosed basin that connects to spit away from existing harbor including uplands (upland infrastructure e.g. road, parking, buildings, storage etc.). Provides moorage for design fleet as well as room for larger boats (200 ft.+) not currently accommodated by existing harbor, and/or future fleet growth, and may include side-tie (rafting) for transient moorage. Reconfiguration of current harbor to accommodate needs for existing small boats (including boats on waitlist). Provide minimum local service facilities required for design fleet (fuel, potable water, electricity, sewage disposal, dock facilities).

ALTERNATIVE 2: DETACHED BREAKWATER



Detached breakwater creating single partially enclosed, sheltered basin with large entrance channels and located adjacent to existing harbor with no associated uplands. Provides moorage for large vessels currently in small boat harbor. Reconfiguration of current harbor to accommodate needs for existing small boats (including boats on waitlist). Provides minimum local service facilities required for design fleet. (fuel, water, potable water, electricity, sewage disposal, dock facilities).

RECORDED MEETING

Meeting Minutes
Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
August 23, 2023
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Administrative Information

Meeting: August Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

Meeting Type/Location: Virtual / Webex at:
https://usace1.webex.com/usace1/j.php?MTID=mcc7899f83879138e85ec155880ef0cf0

Meeting Topic(s): Admin Actions, Fieldwork, Footprint Resources, Avifauna, Status Updates

Meeting Agenda:

- Attendance
- Administrative Topics
  - Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"
  - Meeting Minutes
  - Non-Meeting Correspondence Management
  - Final ESWG Guidance
- Study, Environmental Resource Fieldwork
- Environmental Resources Topics
  - Resources within Alternatives' Footprint
  - Avifauna
- Study Status and Important Upcoming Study Dates
- Open Discussion

Attendance (16 Individuals): *Name (Organization, if Applicable)*

Project Delivery Team (PDT) Members (6 Individuals)			
Kayla Campbell	*USACE*	*Tyler Teese*	*USACE*
KC Kent	*HDR*	*Curtis Lee*	*USACE*
Mike Rouse	*USACE*	*Amy Woodruff*	*City of Homer (P&H)*
Non-PDT Members (10 Individuals)			
George Matz	*KBB*	*Marilyn Sigman*	*FANWRS*
Robert Archibald	*Friends*	*Lauren Sutton*	*KBRR Staff*
Laurie Daniel	*KBRR Community Council*	*Katie Gavenus*	*CACS*
Michael Opheim	*CRRC*	*David Erikson*	
Debbie Tobin	*UAA*	*Dave Seris*	*USCG*

CACS = Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
CRRC = Chugach Regional Resources Commission
FANWRS = Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends = The Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
KBB = Kachemak Bay Birders
KBRR = Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
P&H = Port and Harbor
UAA = University of Anchorage Alaska
USCG = United States Coast Guard
USACE = United States Army Corps of Engineers

Status of Previous Meeting To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the previous ESWG meeting(s).

To Do(s)

Status	Task
G	USACE will incorporate modified Fist to Five methodology into Section 3.f. of the guidance memo prior to sending draft for member comment/revision.
G	USACE will send out Meeting Minutes from July 10, 2023, meeting with updated draft guidance and slides with CONCEPTUAL figures of current array of alternatives.
G	No later than July 18, 2023: Members will provide comments on the July 10, 2023, "Meeting Minutes".
G	No later than July 21, 2023: USACE will incorporate July 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes comments received by July 18, 2023, as prudent, and resend notes.
G	No later than July 25, 2023: Members will provide ESWG Guidance comments/tracked revisions to USACE Point of Contact Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil. Comments will be tracked via the comment tracker established for group correspondence.
G	No later than 2 weeks prior to next meeting: USACE will incorporate ESWG Guidance revisions and address comments received by July 25, 2023, as prudent, prior to implementation of guidance.
Y	No later than 2 weeks prior to next meeting: Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE. ***Task is enduring (i.e., will continue to apply throughout group activities)***
B	No later than 2 weeks prior to next meeting: Individuals will determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at ESWG meetings with rationale for determination. ***It will be self-determined by individuals and organizations each meeting based off agenda.***
R	No later than 1 week prior to next meeting: Individuals will have to had acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance as described in the guidance to remain on the email distribution list to continue to receive ESWG information, which will enable them to fulfill meeting roles "as required" pending meeting agendas. ***Extending deadline to after this meeting but before the next ESWG meeting, deadline to be determined. In the meantime, individuals/organizations may acknowledge/agree with ESWG Final Guidance and/or request removal from group.***
B	No later than next meeting: USACE will establish a ESWG Meeting Distribution List based on organization and individual feedback. ***Task will no longer apply. One email distribution list will be maintained.***
G	No later than next meeting: The project delivery team will discuss/consider the combination of current alternatives in combination to expanding the current harbor footprint by removing material internally on the eastern face and whether that would lessen the footprint of expansion outside the current harbor.
G	NCCOS and KBNERR will coordinate/share information and data with HDR that will support HDR sediment transport modeling within Kachemak Bay.

Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable.
Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Has the project delivery team for the study considered the combination of expanding the current harbor with the current array of alternatives to minimize the footprint of any expansion outside of the current harbor?	Expansion of the current harbor footprint was considered as a potential standalone alternative and combined with other alternatives. A response addressing this common inquiry will be represented on the City of Homer's FAQ page about the study.

To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the meeting.

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
G	**By August 25, 2023:** Kayla Campbell will share the August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes with the ESWG via email.
G	**By September 1, 2023:** September meeting date and time is shared with ESWG via email.
G	**By September 8, 2023:** Members will share August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil
G	**By September 15, 2023:** Kayla Campbell will share Final August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes with ESWG.
Y	**1 week prior to the September ESWG Meeting:** Individuals will have to had acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance as described in the guidance to remain on the email distribution list to continue to receive ESWG information, which will enable them to fulfill meeting roles "as required" pending meeting agendas.
Y	**1 week prior to the September ESWG Meeting:** Non-meeting correspondence and September ESWG Meeting agenda is shared with ESWG via email.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Will there will be a plan to include a survey of ecosystem services of this project (e.g., carbon sequestration in mud bay, eel grass beds as habitat for multiple species, etc)?	*Pending*

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study's project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

Blue font indicates added based on meeting discussion.
Red font indicates added post-meeting from meeting email correspondence.

Summary and Highlights

After the administrative topics, discussion-based topics were covered. To assist discussions, a figure for the "study footprint" was shown. The "study footprint" represented the area anticipated to most likely to be directly impacted by potential alternatives' construction. This footprint was shared to facilitate initial discussions and data gathering and confirmation for the study and generally focused on direct impacts. Although not mentioned during the meeting, typically a study area called a "region of influence" is developed to capture all areas reasonably assumed to be impacted, both directly and indirectly, by construction of the alternative.

The first discussion topic ("Resources within the Alternative's Footprint") covered various resources (e.g., important habitat, species, sediment type, cultural resources, etc) likely located in or near the "study footprint". Some key highlights from the general environmental resource discussions are as follows:

- Cultural resources: USACE is seeking potential cultural resource information from members that may not be available in literature or on online databases. This could include past activities in and around the area, debris washed ashore, old trucks/bicycles, etc. An example shared during group discussion was potential old coal railroad artifacts.
- Invasives species: Species mentioned included the flatbottom sea star, European green crab, tunicates, and pigeons. It was noted that the flatbottom sea star is considered "indigenous" but outcompetes other sea star species.
- Subsistence: Homer was identified as being part of a non-subsistence area according to Alaska Statute 16.05.258. However, subsistence was determined to be important to the cultural and lifestyle of the Homer and nearby communities. Thus, there were perspectives that the line between personal use and subsistence is blurry for Homer and other communities using Kachemak Bay. Specific focus during subsistence discussions were clam/mussel harvesting and set netting.
- Marine mammals and the sunflower sea star: discussions centered around a pre-developed list based on online mapper information from NMFS. Three species were mentioned for potential addition to the list while two were annotated for potential removal based off discussions. General/anecdotal observations were shared as it related to where they generally occur. Noise impacts and vessel strikes were mentioned for potential impact consideration.

Avifauna was the second and last discussion topic on the agenda. Highlights of discussions are as follows:

- Overall Kachemak Bay has international value to bird species and this includes the area specific to the "study footprint".
- Specific species discussed due to their status, abundance, presence, and/or activities within the "study footprint" included the: black turnstone, rock sandpipers. Steller's eiders, kittiwakes, glaucous winged gulls, semi-palmated plovers.
- Bird habitat in and near the "study footprint" is valuable to the species that use it for foraging, resting, and breeding. This area of Kachemak Bay appears to be used extensively for foraging by waterfowl and ducks and the current harbor rocky infrastructure is ideal nesting and resting habitat. The current harbor also acts as a windbreak for many bird species to rest within.

- Potential direct impacts from breakwater construction would be conversion of foraging habitat to resting/nesting habitat. There would likely be various indirect impacts to consider with such a conversion (e.g., impacts to circulation of Kachemak Bay and/or displacement of foraging areas).

Following schedule discussions, important upcoming dates/events were mentioned:

- 9/23/2023: Tentative City of Homer Study Public Workshop with USACE presence.
- Next ESWG Meeting: Late-September (post-9/23/2023) after the aforementioned City of Homer meeting. Would be after 1:00 pm, to be determination.

Before ending the meeting, open discussion included a comment about ensure that the various types and levels of impacts are taken into consideration in the study.

Detailed Notes

- **Attendance**
    - See "08-23-2023_Meeting Minutes_Administrative Information" for list of attendees.
- **Administrative Topics**
    - **Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"**
        - See "08-23-2023_Meeting Minutes_ Status of Previous Meeting To Dos and Requests for Information" document)
        - Went over the status of the tasks and responses to questions from the July 10, 2023, meeting.
            - Organizations providing the names of representatives will be an enduring task. "Enduring" mean this task will continue to be applied for the duration of the ESWG.
            - Individuals/organizations self-identifying as "Required" or "As Required" at ESWG meetings will not be generalized. Instead, I recommend moving forward that based off the Meeting Agenda, individuals/organizations will determine whether their attendance is required, as in there are agenda topics of high interest and/or value and/or individual/organization can provide knowledge or experience relevant to agenda topics).
            - Change in prior bullet made the purpose of a separate email distribution no longer applicable to ESWG activities and was thus removed as a task.
            - The date members will need to acknowledge/agree to the ESWG Final Guidance is being extended. Members will need to agree/acknowledge at a minimum before the next meeting (in September).
    - **Meeting Minutes**
        - Format was changed based off feedback from a ESWG member. Content will be separated into separate documents to support differing needs for members.
    - **Non-Meeting Correspondence Management**
        - The purpose of this document is to maintain record of non-meeting correspondence as well as facilitate discussions and provide consistent responses with group members outside meetings.
        - Correspondence comments will generally be summarized while responses will vary in detail.
        - Plan is to share this document about 1 week prior to each meeting.
        - Comments/Responses will be "Locked in" when document is sent to the group. This means the comments/responses will not change, but still be accessible for reference by members within updated versions of the document. There is potential that prior "locked in comments" will differ from

prior information or subsequent information shared. This is due to the nature of study which develops as we progress, things change, and new information is received.

- **Final ESWG Guidance**
  - Shared with the group and members are requested to acknowledge/agree prior to the September meeting at a minimum, and it will be required for attending that meeting.

- **Study Footprint**
  - Figure representing where direct construction/infrastructure impacts are anticipated for the study's potential alternatives was shared.
    - This does not mean indirect impacts are not being consider. This was just to help facilitate initial discussions on resources that would have the most potential for direct impacts that will inform indirect impacts further.
    - A region of influence (ROI) is typically established that represent the total area that direct AND indirect impacts of a proposed action would be reasonably assessed to occur. This would be greater than the direct study footprint represented in the study footprint figure for this meeting's discussions.
  - See "08-23-2023_Meeting Minutes_Study Footprint Figure".
- **Study Fieldwork**
  - Initially, fieldwork was going to be conducted this fall. However, this is being readjusted to 2024 summer/fall timeframe.
  - Goal would be to collect monthly data as able and reasonable to confirm old data and information and/or gather site specific data and information.
  - Types of fieldwork planned with general purpose of fieldwork in parenthesis:
    - Grab Samples (preliminary chemical/sediment analysis to inform later detailed analysis required for various permits)
    - Beach Seining in combination with eDNA (fish species focused)
    - Fauna Surveys (Marine Mammals, Bird Species, and other visual observations would be annotated)
    - Bottom Trawling (benthic-focused)
    - Drop Camera (seafloor visual/benthic survey)
    - Conductivity, Temperature, and Depth (water conditions)
  - Geotechnical sediment sampling efforts and circulation modeling are being conducted for the study as well.
- **Environmental Resources Topics**
  - **(Potential) Resources within Alternatives' Footprint**
    - Cultural resources on the Spit or in the water?
      - Tyler Teese further expanded that databases have historical findings and data for the site but not everything gets recorded.

Blue font indicates notes were added during meeting discussion.
Red font indicates notes were added post-meeting.

Thus, if members have anything they have come across or observed in or near the study footprint / Kachemak Bay in general that may have cultural significance to share that information with him (Tyler Teese) and/or Kayla Campbell. This could include information about old vehicles and/or items and debris observed in and around the area.

- Old coal railroad artifacts near Coal Point Park were mentioned as a potential consideration.
- Potential point of contact mentioned by name was Janet Klein and other older, homesteader kids (from meeting chat) who in their 70s and 80s for information about culturally important resources on that side of the Spit.
- Kayla Campbell mentioned USACE is planning further outreach with Tribes for cultural resources and for inclusion in this group.

- Area excluded from Kachemak Bay State Critical Habitat.
- 1990s ADF&G indicated blue mussels and hardshell clams.
- Nearshore Fish Atlas data and Essential Fish Habitat.
    - When HTI constructed the entrance to the barge basin, a permit extension was required to work on the beach that involved a track hoe and 20-yard rock trucks. King Salmon were using the barge basin prior to construction completion in the spring.
- What is the Marine Mammal / Sunflower Sea Star prevalence in area like? (Reference “08-23-2023_Meeting Minutes_ Potential Marine Mammals Species List” document).
    - Notes from the meeting and email correspondence for this topic will be included on the “08-23-2023_Meeting Minutes_ Potential Marine Mammal Species List” document.
- Bird resources (next discussion topic).
- In-water monitoring stations (ex. Invasive species and phytoplankton monitoring stations) in/near footprint.
    - KBNERR has ongoing Pier 1 beach monitoring and should have information about sunflower sea stars and crab species.
- Specific invasive species of concern: non-native tunicates, rodents such Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) and the European green crab (*Carcinus maenas).*
    - Potential Point of contact for invasive tunicates information would be Catie Bursch, who worked with Kachemak Bay Research Reserve in the past.
    - Flatbottom sea star (i.e., Northern Pacific seastar, *Asterias amuresis*) is present in the area, and not necessarily nonindigenous. However, they outcompete other native sea stars and there is no records indicating they are native, but early records do indicate they existed at Kodiak before being observed

in Kachemak Bay. They are persistent and abundant around harbor pilings at the mouth of the harbor and in landward. This species is known to transfer by vessel ballast water
    - Monitoring European green crab and traps along Kachemak Bay Spit.
    - Colonial tunicate invasives.
    - Impacts of invasives what will they replace/most impact.
    - Non-indigenous invasive pigeons.
- Is location specifically tied and/or important to subsistence activities?

  Subsistence Definition (Alaska Statute 16.05.940 and Title VIII of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 803): "*"customary and traditional" uses of wild resources for various uses including food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, transportation, handicrafts, sharing, barter, and customary trade."*
- Personal use within study footprint area includes beach seining and use of setnets for coho salmon near Pier 1, fishing area in Fish Lagoon and outside in the bay in and near the barge use area and along that beach.
- Clam harvesting occurred heavily in this area in the past. Currently is not conducted in the same frequency due to the decrease in populations of clams and mussels in this area as well as clam harvesting closure. However, if the population was to recover and such activities were allowed, there would be an anticipated uptake in this activity and a concern/consideration of the alternative should include impacts to recovery and or loss of opportunity in that area for clam/mussel harvesting if the population was to recover. (Ninilchik is a case example for razor clams recovery). The clam harvest closure included Homer Spit for the last 14 years or so.
- Homer's sportfish department (ADFG Sports Fish Department (Phone 907-235-6930) should have data on clams and mussels in the area and would be a good point of contact for this resource.
- Subsistence and personal use were noted to be a blurred line for Homer, because although Homer is considered urban and non-subsistence area (Alaska Statute 16.05.258), the activities do correlate with subsistence in the traditional sense to various members of this group.
- Marine water (Salinity of 15-29 ppt; 18-30%).
    - Will inform the types of screening levels used for chemical analysis conducted on sediment that would potentially be dredged.
- Kelp forest/eelgrass potential within substrate.
- Sediment composition and type: presume generally finer (58-97% silt/clay content) with a silt over a clay layer rather than coarser sediment throughout area. Information has indicated that coal has potential to be in the substrata of the seabed.
    - In the past, a drilling rig got stuck in mud bay (further east) and parts were left in place – can see location in site bathymetry (https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/maps/bathymetry/)

- Potential beneficial use ideas for dredged material?
    - Dependent on the composition/type of sediment.
- In-water and shoreline recreation/land use in study footprint?
- Other important data/information on resources not covered?

- **Avifauna** (i.e., bird species, bird habitat, and other biological and/or physical features of the alternatives that are important to birds, like prey resources).
    - Study sediment circulation modeling will inform potential impacts to this resource.
    - Information was shared by Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuge and the Kachemak Bay Birders for this resource that can be used to inform USACE analysis. Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird online database, USFWS online Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) online application, USFWS Planning Aid Letter, ADF&G Planning Aid Letter, Important Bird Area GeoHub, and other databases and literature may be used.
    - Refer to "Checklist of Birds, Kachemak Bay" online document sent by George Matz, representative for the Kachemak Bay Birders. Are there ways to identify data specific to the study footprint?
    - Kachemak Bay is an Important Bird Areas and Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Site of International Importance. Habitat adjacent to Homer Spit is also an Important Bird Area.
        - However, within the overall footprint of these areas, what is the relative value of the alternatives' footprint? What factors make it more valuable than nearby habitat in Kachemak Bay? What factors make it less valuable?
        - Value of habitat is highly dependent on the species being discussed. The current harbor and area east of the Homer Spit offers different habitat than other areas in Mud Bay.
        - Foraging activities and prey within the waters of the "Study footprint", east of the current harbor and adjacent to the spit are important.
        - Protected refuge (infrastructure acts as a windbreak) for resting activities and rocky during high tide breakwater/infrastructure for nesting and resting activities are important features of the current harbor for bird species. A specific species mentioned that uses the harbor's rocks was the black turnstone.
        - Freshwater ducks are observed in the current harbor as are other ducks and waterfowl. Waterfowl and ducks are seen in the area east in the study footprint as well.
        - Diversity across mud bay (includes the current study footprint) for habitat is a key feature of Kachemak Bay that makes it internationally significant location for bird species.

- There are likely trade-off that would come with an implementation of a construction alternative in waters east of the spit (i.e., conversion of foraging areas into roosting habitat).
- Indirect impacts to consider is a constructed breakwater's impact on the circulation of Kachemak Bay and how that impacts the nutrients transportation throughout mud bay that supports a wide variety and number of bird species. For example, the use of the area east of Homer Spit depends on ice dynamics during periods of freezing and thawing, winds, and currents. Thus, would recommend consideration of an expanded Harbor footprint on these dynamics.
- Rock sandpiper feed in mud bay.
- Marilyn Sigman has personally surveyed the area in spring – her and George Matz, who represent organizations that are participating in the ESWG, will be good follow-up points of contacts for further information.

▪ ESA-listed, Threatened Steller's Eider – is this species observed often in the study footprint? If yes:
  - When (e.g., seasonality and/or months)? In what numbers? Observed activities?
  - Steller's eiders are known to occur within the area near and at the current harbor over winter (also fall and spring).

▪ In general, for the study footprint:
  - What bird species are most observed? What are the predominant bird activities in the area? What months is the study footprint the most populated by bird species? Is there a reason for this high abundance? What months is the study footprint the least populated by bird species? Is there a reason for this low abundance?
  - Breeding in and around the current harbor infrastructure – Kittiwakes appear to breed in the harbor and their nests need to be taken into account if those areas are to be disturbed (i.e., noise disturbance from construction activities should be considered).
  - Breeding by the industrial dock (by the coast guard dock) appears to occur with kittiwakes and glaucous winged gulls. Note, herring gulls and glaucous-winged gulls interbreed in Cook Inlet, so some of the nesting pairs in the Harbor are glaucous-winged, Herring, or hybrids.
  - Consider seasonality and subsequent avoidance, minimization, and/or permits that would be implemented/required for potential construction activities in and around this area as it relates to bird species.
  - North of fishing hole, in the supratidal areas and beach area by RV park – semi-palmated plovers have been observed displaying

breeding behaviors and potentially successfully breeding from spring into summer (June).

- Other avian related discussions?
  - There is often a balancing act for mitigations as it relates to potential project designs/constructions and their impacts to environmental resources. For avifauna, seasonality as it relates to the where, in what abundance, what type, and type of activities being conducted by birds is a strong consideration for types of mitigations implemented as it relates to the timing of construction activities.
  - Take into consideration that international valuable resources (key stop over for shorebirds, waterfowl/ducks) would potentially be impacted.
  - There is a concern of sediment drifting/covering of critical feeding areas like Mud Bay and the westside of the Homer Spit.
  - Data from the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) is available that shares data about dead birds found on monitored beaches. University of Washington facilitates the protocols and training.
- There is potential for this resource to be a topic of discussion again in a future ESWG meeting.

- **Study Status and Important Upcoming Dates**
  - A status update of the study will be shared in detail during the City of Homer Public Workshop in September for the study.
  - Important Upcoming Dates:
    - 9/23/2023: **Tentative** City of Homer Study Public Workshop with USACE presence.
    - Next ESWG Meeting: Late-September (post-9/23/2023) after the aforementioned City of Homer meeting. Would be after 1:00 pm, **to be determination**.
- **Open Discussion**
  - The multiple levels of impacts that would result from potential construction alternatives need to be considered (i.e., direct/physical impacts, indirect impacts, future impacts, current impacts, cumulative impacts, and intangible impacts, etc), Some indirect are going to be more critical than the direct and need a full consideration for the study's design and potential expansion of the harbor. This should not only include things like constructed breakwaters but potential infrastructure (e.g., infrastructure wastewater and/or potential pollutants).
  - A question was asked in meeting chat whether there will be a plan to include a survey of ecosystem services of this project (e.g., carbon sequestration in mud bay, eel grass beds as habitat for multiple species, etc.

Blue font indicates notes were added during meeting discussion.
Red font indicates notes were added post-meeting.

Potential Marine Mammals Species List

List developed from feedback shared by NMFS and USFWS as well as NMFS and USFWS online resources. Apply overall to Kachemak Bay and does not necessary indicate listed species would occur in the Alternatives' footprint.

Northern sea otter, harbor seal, and harbor porpoise likely would be the most commonly occurring species in the study footprint.

Species that have been observed in the area but not listed and notes therein:

- Elephant seals – Have been observed in area both living and dead. Found dead between Anchor Point and Homer. These may be uncommon/very rarely occurring but with warming climate trends their frequency in this area may become more frequent/common.
- Guadalupe fur seal – The observation in Kachemak Bay of this species was the northern most record to have been made. Like with the Elephant seals, there is potential with warming climate that frequency could increase.
- California sea lions – Have been observed in area.

It was noted and affirmed that the underwater and in-air noise impacts from construction and increased vessel activities are something that should be considered especially as it relates to marine mammals. Vessel strike impacts should be considered as well for implementation of study alternatives.

Table 1. Potential Marine Mammal List

Species	Population / Stock / Region	MMPA Status	ESA Status
Beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*)	Cook Inlet	Protected, Depleted	Endangered
	Anecdotally observed near Miller's Landing potentially around summer 2019. In the 80s and 90s behind ice rink area it appeared that killer whales were predating beluga whales according to individuals who were students at the time. In the 80s off the spit in mud bay there were numerous beluga whales closer to shore (not common to be that close) when a pod of killer whales was further out in the bay. There is potential there was a correlation between the two events and that the beluga whales were pushed further towards the shoreline to avoid the killer whales that were potentially predating the beluga. Predating and occurrence of beluga whales was also perhaps occurring where there was crabbing and hydrophone data collection for whales and porpoises on the other side of the spit. The hydrophones recorded a lot of calls.		
Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*)	Alaska	Protected	-
	Generally, seem to occur in outer bay but not necessarily in study area in recent years. Dead Dall's porpoise have been identified in the Lower Cook Inlet / west of the Homer Spit. In an autopsy of one Dall's, it was potentially determined to be an inconclusive death.		
Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)	Northeast Pacific	Protected, Depleted	Endangered
	Typically observed on the west side of the spit but indicates potential to occur in study footprint as well.		

Blue font indicates notes were added during meeting discussion.
Red font indicates notes were added post-meeting.

Species	Population / Stock / Region	MMPA Status	ESA Status
Gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*)	Eastern North Pacific	Protected	-
	Dead individuals of gray whale with Dall's porpoise have been identified in the Lower Cook Inlet / west of the Homer Spit.		
Harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)	Gulf of Alaska	Protected	-
	Can be present in / near the study footprint.		
Harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina richards*i)	Gulf of Alaska	Protected	-
	Can be present in / near the study footprint. Have been seen in the current harbor hauling out on the raft systems.		
Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)	Western North Pacific	Protected, Depleted	Endangered
	Hawaii		-
	Mexico	Protected	Threatened
	Can be present in / near the study footprint. Humpback whale has been in the harbor (event occurred a couple years or so ago) and high tide they can be seen closer to shore.		
Killer whale (*Orcinus orca*)	Eastern North Pacific Alaska Resident	Protected	-
	GOA/AI/BS Transient Stock		
	Can be present in / near the study footprint and resident and transient have been observed last fall (2022) and this summer (2023). Potential there is predation of other marine mammals (i.e., beluga whales) from this species.		
Minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*)	Alaska	Protected	-
	Do occur in/near area. Most likely during high tide when closer to shore.		
Northern fur seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*) **Potentially strike from list due to lack of evidence that they occur in Kachemak Bay**	California	Protected	-
	Eastern Pacific	Protected, Depleted	
	No known observations from group attending. Although online mappers have this species ranging in this area, it is not always accurate.		
Pacific white-sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens* **Potentially strike from list due to lack of evidence that they occur in Kachemak Bay**	North Pacific	Protected	
	Perhaps was observed in the mid-90s by a water taxi driver. However, other known and/or indications were not known by meeting attendees outside of that. So perhaps a vagrant individual.		
Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*)	Eastern U.S. DPS	Protected	-
	Western U.S. DPS	Protected. Depleted	Endangered
	Can be present in / near the study footprint.		
Sunflower sea star (*Pycnopodia helianthoides*)	---	N/A	Proposed
	Can be present in / near the study footprint.		
Northern sea otter (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*)	Southcentral Alaska Stock	Protected	-
	Can be present in / near the study footprint.		

Blue font indicates notes were added during meeting discussion.
Red font indicates notes were added post-meeting.

Study Footprint Figure

Note: This area represents where direct impacts from construction and establishment of infrastructure would most likely occur. This does not mean that indirect and/or impacts outside of this area would not be consider. Rather, it is to focus discussions on the direct impacts that would inform the informal impacts, which could be just as or more important.

RECORDED MEETING

Meeting Minutes
Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
September 28, 2023
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Administrative Information

Meeting: September Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

Meeting Type/Location: Virtual / Webex at:
https://usace1.webex.com/usace1/j.php?MTID=mf513609a589d7925ca371e1e721a7dd5

Meeting Topic(s): Study Schedule, Integrated Feasibility Report, Contamination, Hazards

Meeting Agenda:

- Attendance
- Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"
- Study Schedule
- Integrated Feasibility Report – How is NEPA Analyses Incorporated
- Potential Contaminants and Hazards
    - Past Sources / Events / Contaminants / Hazards
    - Current Known Sources / Events / Contaminants / Hazards
    - Potential Project Induced New Sources / Contaminants / Hazards
    - Potential Mitigations (Minimize, Avoid, Compensate)
- Open Discussion

Attendance (14 Individuals): *Name (Organization, if Applicable)*

Project Delivery Team (PDT) Members (5 Individuals)			
Kayla Campbell	*USACE*	*Tyler Teese*	*USACE*
Megan Green	*USACE*	*Curtis Lee*	*USACE*
Michael Rouse	*USACE*		
Non-PDT Members (9 Individuals)			
Laurie Daniel	*KBRR Community Council*	*Marilyn Sigman*	*FANWRS*
Lauren Sutton	*KBRR Staff*	*Penelope Haas*	*KBCS*
Robert Archibald	*Friends*	*Bruce Schulte*	*WKU Professor* *UAA Affiliate Professor*
Kris Holderied	*NCCOS Kasitsna Bay Lab*		
Dave Seris	*USCG*	*Serena Seiler*	*WKU Graduate Student*

FANWRS = Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends = The Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
KBCS= Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
KBRR = Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
NCCOS = National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
UAA = University of Anchorage Alaska
USCG = United States Coast Guard
USACE = United States Army Corps of Engineers
WKU = Western Kentucky University

Status of Previous Meeting To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the previous ESWG meeting(s).

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
G	**By August 25, 2023:** Kayla Campbell will share the August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes with the ESWG via email.
G	**By September 1, 2023:** September meeting date and time is shared with ESWG via email.
G	**By September 8, 2023:** Members will share August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil
G	**By September 15, 2023:** Kayla Campbell will share Final August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes with ESWG.
Gr	**1 week prior to the September ESWG Meeting:** Individuals will have to had acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance as described in the guidance to remain on the email distribution list to continue to receive ESWG information, which will enable them to fulfill meeting roles "as required" pending meeting agendas.
G	**1 week prior to the September ESWG Meeting:** Non-meeting correspondence and September ESWG Meeting agenda is shared with ESWG via email.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Will there will be a plan to include a survey of ecosystem services of this project (e.g., carbon sequestration in mud bay, eel grass beds as habitat for multiple species, etc)?	*Pending*

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study's project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the meeting.

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.
Gr	**Individuals that have acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance will be placed on the new email distribution list and receive ESWG information and future meeting invites. Members who have not, will be added at the time they acknowledge/agree to the guidance.**
G	**By October 13, 2023:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will share September 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes for initial member feedback via email.
Y	**By October 23, 2023:** Members will share September 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil
Y	**By November 6, 2023:** Kayla Campbell will share Final September 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes with ESWG and the tentative November meeting agenda and non-meeting correspondence tracker via email.
Y	**Prior to December 30, 2023:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will inform ESWG members how ESWG activities will be re-initiated after a study pause.

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Will there will be a plan to include a survey of ecosystem services of this project (e.g., carbon sequestration in mud bay, eel grass beds as habitat for multiple species, etc)?	*Pending*
Are there sediment/current circulation studies based on the earlier harbor expansion and its impacts in Kachemak Bay? To include any monitoring work done during or after construction to evaluate changes/impacts.	*Pending*
What is the relative size of potential Homer Harbor expansion alternatives in the study compared to the Port of Nome, Akutan, and other navigation projects? What USACE projects are the most similar to what is being assessed in the Homer Feasibility Study?	*Pending*
Is ice modeling available from past harbor expansion or an option for current study?	*Pending*

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study's project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

Blue font indicates added based on meeting discussion.
Red font indicates added post-meeting from meeting email correspondence.

Summary and Highlights

A new Environmental Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG) email distribution list be created and only include members who have agreed/acknowledged the ESWG guidance for continued involvement in group activities after today's meeting. Members can continue to acknowledge/agree to be added to the new distribution list and continue participating in ESWG activities. Note, this does not pertain to members of USACE or other Federal agencies who were added solely for study consultation and/or cooperating agency purposes.

It was determined post-September 28, 2023, ESWG Meeting that USACE will put ESWG meetings on hold until after the study pause. This would enable funding and time allotted to ESWG activities to be better informed by information attained and developed from now until after the study pause. Furthermore, it will avoid holiday travel dominant months (November through December). USACE will communicate how ESWG members will be notified of resumed ESWG activities prior to the study pause.

USACE Alaska District studies currently and "recently" published are available at: https://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Library/Reports-and-Studies/. Members were recommended to review/scan Integrated Feasibility Reports and NEPA Documents available at the aforementioned link to understand what ESWG activities are informing. Recommended looking at reports under: "Documents Available for Review", expand "Civil Works" and under "Nome" review the "Port of Nome – Final Integrated Feasibility and Environmental Assessment (March 2020)" and its appendices. This is a good example of a study that assessed similar alternatives (harbor expansion). Note: unlike in this report, some integrated reports will develop an environmental appendix to capture a lot of the environmental information all within one appendix and in more detail than would be shared in the main/base report.

The focus of this ESWG meeting was to discuss known and potential past, current and future sources, events, and types of contaminants and hazards in and around Kachemak Bay that may not be actively captured on available databases like Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Contaminated Sites Database. Thus, it could include anecdotal evidence. Meeting attendees shared potentially relevant literature and other online resources via chat log. Potential mitigations (minimization, avoidance, and compensation measures) were also discussed.

Meeting was closed out with open discussion.

Detailed Notes

- **Attendance**
  - See “09-28-2023_Meeting Minutes_Administrative Information” for list of attendees.
- **Status of Previous “To Do(s)” and “Request(s) for Information”**
  - See “09-28-2023_Meeting Minutes_ Past & Current To Do(s) and RFI(s)”. Highlights as follows:
    - Grey (i.e., Gr coded) to dos are enduring. This means they will persist throughout ESWG activities.
    - Inquiry about ecosystem services was carried over as the project delivery team is still assessing and formulating a response.
  - A new ESWG email distribution list will be created and only include members who have agreed/acknowledged the ESWG guidance for continued involvement in group activities after today’s meeting. Emails will be sent via the original email distribution list to remind individuals that to continue in the ESWG’s activities, they will need to agree/acknowledge with the guidance. Upon acknowledgment/agreement, individuals will be added to the new email distribution list. Note, this does not pertain to members of USACE or other Federal agencies who were added solely for study consultation and/or cooperating agency purposes.
- **Study Schedule**
  - There is an anticipated pause. USACE is funded by Congress for the study work they are conducting. Funding was not allocated for fiscal year 2024. The City of Homer and USACE are continuing to look at all potential options to avoid and/or minimize the delay.
  - Impacts to the study and ESWG?
    - The “3” year timeline would be paused and restart when funding becomes available. Although, USACE will optimize the use the remaining funds from study initiation to continue important study requirements.
    - The ESWG activities would also pause. The tentative plan would be to provide the “way ahead” via email to group member that will define how USACE would notify members that ESWG activities would be restarting and when the next meeting would be.
    - The City of Homer can and will continue to work on their part of the study with HDR (e.g., sediment circulation modeling efforts would continue).
  - Next ESWG meeting to be held after study pause. How ESWG activities will be re-initiated will be communicated via email to members that have agreed/acknowledge the final ESWG guidance and are part of the new ESWG email distribution list.
- **Integrated Feasibility Report – How is NEPA Analyses Incorporated?**
  - It is important to understand that this study will result in an INTEGRATED feasibility report and NEPA document. This means it will be different than a typical, stand-a-lone Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Statement.
  - These reports can vary for many reasons.

        - Updating and evolving policy, regulation, and/or laws may change the base templates/formatting of these reports.
        - Integrated Feasibility Reports and NEPA documents address a wide variety of studies. Our current study is a General Investigation Feasibility Study under the authority of the Flood Control Act Section 204.
        - The environmental resources assessed and incorporated into existing conditions (i.e., affected background) and alternative consequences are depending on the type and purpose of the study, anticipated activities that would be associated with the Federal action, where the study would take place, what resources are present and would be potentially impacted, and more.
    - USACE Alaska District studies currently and "recently" published are available at: https://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Library/Reports-and-Studies/
        - Recommend looking at reports under: "Documents Available for Review", expand "Civil Works" for various examples to review, if so desired.
        - Under "Nome" is the "Port of Nome – Final Integrated Feasibility and Environmental Assessment (March 2020)" and appendices. This is a good example of a study that assessed similar alternatives (harbor expansion). Note: unlike in this report, some integrated reports will develop an environmental appendix to capture a lot of the environmental information all within one appendix and in more detail than would be shared in the main/base report.

- **Potential Contaminants and Hazards**
    - Definitions/Examples:

Source	Infrastructure, equipment, and/or repetitively occurring activity relating to the contaminant and/or hazard release and/or exposure. *E.g., vessels and their related traffic in and out of the current harbor.*
Event	Something noteworthy that happened in Kachemak Bay that may have caused adverse and/or damage from contaminant and/or hazard release and/or exposure. *E.g., vessel wreck that caused POL release.*
Contaminant	A physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substance or material that may be in concentrations that threaten the health of humans and/or wildlife (to include habitat). *E.g., diesel range organics*.
Hazard	Something that presents a safety and/or health hazard to humans and/or wildlife (to include habitat) other than contaminants. *E.g., vessel movement within Kachemak Bay.*
Minimize	Reduce the likelihood of occurrence and/or severity of impacts. *E.g., marine speed limit restrictions to minimize potential accidents/collisions of vessels with marine mammals and/or other vessels.*
Avoid	Prevent the likelihood of occurrence and/or severity of impacts. *E.g., not placing/disposing contaminated sediment in a non-contaminated location*.
Compensate	Prevent the likelihood of occurrence and/or severity of impacts. *E.g., not placing/disposing contaminated sediment in a non-contaminated location.*
Best Management Practice	Methods that have been determined to be the most effective and practical means of preventing or reducing pollution (may overlap with minimize and avoid). *E.g. stormwater management of new infrastructure to filter out pollutants from runoff.*

- Discussions will be focused on sources/events that have or may have occurred in Kachemak Bay and on nearby land with potential to impact the water, sediment, and human/wildlife activities within Kachemak Bay. Especially want to highlight/identify potential, suspected, and/or known contaminants and hazards present on the east side of the Homer Spit.
- Past:
    - Sources:
        - Cruise ships dumping within Kachemak Bay.
    - Events:
        - Unusual Mortality Events in Cook Inlet, Kachemak Bay, Northern Gulf of Alaska, and potentially Pacific. This includes unusual mortality events for (1) sea otters in 2006 and 2015, (2) whales within northern gulf of Alaska, (3) marine birds due to heat waves, disease, and potentially algae blooms like in a 2015 event, and (4) more.
        - *George Ferris*, a jack up rig, got stuck in Kachemak Bay east of the Homer Spit that also had an oil spill associated with it (1976)
        - The 1964 earthquake may have added/shifted contaminants into the deeper sediment layers within the study area that could be disturbed/exposed by construction activities.
    - Contaminants: Oil, algae bloom, diseases.
    - Hazards: *George Ferris* legs of the jack up rig left in Kachemak Bay – navigational hazard.
    - Literature:
        - Various shared in the meeting chat.
        - Flow impact study/post-construction monitoring reports from the rebuilding/expansion of the current harbor. This report may have been given to USACE and/or the Port and Harbor may have a copy. Dave Erikson was mentioned as a potential point of contact for locating a copy of such a report. Dames & Moore may have a copy of the report in their archives. There is a concern that it was lost as society has been converting from hardcopy records to digital archiving. conversion of hardcopies to digital archiving.
- Current/Recent:
    - Sources:
        - Ballast water dumping (invasive tunicate concerns).
        - Current activities associated with the harbor and vessel traffic/activities in and out of Kachemak Bay.
    - Events:
        - *Randall* Yost was a jack up rig from Singapore that had extensive hull fouling. Hull fouling led to concern about invasive species and/or other contaminants.

- *Endeavor* is one of the world's largest jack up rigs (448 feet tall legs when extended, 226 feet long, and 259 feet wide) got brought into the current harbor by the *Buckaneer Hall,* because it was getting damaged at the deep-water dock during winter. It is the only jack up rig that has been able to jack up in the area after the establishment of the Alaska State Critical Habitat Area.

- Contaminants: fuel/oil
- Hazards:
  - Whether the Homer Spit is eroding and/or sinking due to sea level rise is something that needs to be assessed to inform the 50 year life of a potential USACE project on the Homer Spit.
    - Erosion hazard concerns on the west side of the Homer Spit. Concern is building on something that is eroding and this is an overall spit concern – not just study-specific. Thus erosion rate is worth considering.
    - Sea level rise concern. There is an UAF and Kachemak Bay Research Reserve study covers what around the study area is rising in relation to sea level rise. An article was shared that indicated while sea level rise is about 3 millimeters each year, the Homer Spit is rising about 5 millimeters each year.
  - Ice conditions in winter (much of it related to wind-caused ice).
    - Can vary drastically depending on the temperatures.
    - Mud Bay can freeze solid.
    - Tidal influence can break ice up and keep it in a Brash state (Polartrec has a photo of these conditions): ice in shallow areas will cycle between breaking up and refreezing to form pans of ice that can get about 8 inches thick. This ice will jam into the harbor and limit small boats from transitioning in and out of the harbor during periods of ice (winter/spring). If conditions are right, ice can last for month duration.
    - Ice scour of intertidal predominately on the northside of Kachemak Bay (the south side has warmer water).
    - Ice and wildlife:
      - In past there were times when hundreds of otters would be on ice in Mud Bay (Debbie Tobin may have some further information on this).
      - Kachemak Bay Research Reserve did a study on marine mammals and sea ducks hauling out in Mud Bay. Highest concentrations were at the base of the Homer Spit, but there are distributed throughout the area.
      - Further way from shore, out from the visible Gravel Bar in Mud Bay/Coal Bay is an underwater sill that can hold

ice in and is where the wildlife gathers most in during winter.

- The ice dynamics greatly influence use of the area by overwintering birds and sea otters that sometimes haul out on the ice floes. Rock sandpipers can roost on the ice as well.

- Ice Modeling Efforts may be beneficial for assessing how the current harbor and any study alternative would be impacted by ice conditions. Ideally, new infrastructure would improve or at not worsen the ice conditions experienced at the current harbor (potential mitigation).

- Potential "Project" Induced:
  - New Sources:
    - In the past Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve identified sedimentation circulation studies as a requirement to fully understand potential impacts of new infrastructure built in Kachemak Bay.
    - Reduced/changed flow/current of sediment and water circulation associated with potential new infrastructure that may impact:
      - The amount of oxygen available to benthic organisms and other wildlife in the water.
      - Where contaminants migrate and/or concentrate (this was something that occurred with the construction of the current harbor).
      - Sedimentation build-up and larvae distribution/bottom of food web species (e.g., zoo/phytoplankton movement) on the northeast side of spit.
    - More vessel activities / different vessels:
      - Increased ballast water dumping concerns and/or other activities increasing the risk of potential contamination/hazards due to lack of appropriate infrastructure (local service facilities) and increased probability of accidents/spills.
  - Contaminants: Light Pollution, spills, and vessel discharge increases.
  - Hazards:
    - Bringing more vessels and individuals that would increase marine and terrestrial traffic and potential congestion.
    - Increase traffic would be a concern during a tsunami event with evacuation procedures and potential object hazards.
    - Noise hazards/pollution that may adversely impact ecotourism vessels in Kachemak Bay as well as species within the area.

- Additional activities (unregulated) that would occur when vessels are being worked on (increases from what currently occurs in harbor).
- Increase fishing pressures on the sportfish targeted species as a result of potential expansion of the harbor and/or tourism.
- Increase charter boats and impacts to the fish / other species (also economic concern).
- Current rate of erosion and/or will a potential alternative / change in circulation patterns increase (or decrease) this erosion.

- Potential Mitigations
  - Minimize:
    - Design to improve maintenance activities that occur at the Homer Spit (to include for current harbor maintenance dredging) and implement mitigations that would reduce the potential for and of contaminants and hazards from impacting the environment (wildlife and other users).
      - E.g., better and/or more access to “disposal” infrastructure (for oil and others like discharges) and make it easier to access such infrastructure.
      - E.g., install utilities to facilitate safer and more environmentally protective activities to prevent it from spreading/entering into the environment (includes structures).
    - Design consideration to minimize and/or improve sediment impacts (e.g., works with water and sediment flow that limits amount that settles out in new harbor and/or into the existing harbor).
    - Consider placement of dredge material to minimize erosion and/or address erosion.
    - Displace and/or relocate the Launch Ramp Road that is used to deploy kayaks/and other non-motorized craft where it would be better protected/removed from areas with heavy vessel traffic and would enhance the recreational opportunities associated with it. Current site is protected from vessel traffic but logistically it is not the best due to how the tide impacts it. Furthermore, there are discussions occurring that this area may become more industrialized.
  - Avoid:
    - Launch Ramp Road that is used to deploy kayaks/and other non-motorized craft that is protected/removed from areas with heavy vessel traffic (could also displace/relocate, see potential mitigations).
    - Location of footprint / constructed infrastructure – the more the footprint overlaps with Mud Bay and further north alongside the east side of the Homer Spit towards its base, the impacts to natural resources would increase. Generally, deeper water is more ideal to avoid/minimize impacts.
  - Compensate:

        - Best Management Practice:
    - Research/Literature/Databases (Note, not a comprehensive list)
        - Literature/online resources were shared in chat log during meeting by members. References shared are as follows:
            - NOAA/NCCOS sediment bioeffects program reports for Kachemak Bay: https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/project/bioeffects-program-reports-alaska/
            - Past marine mammal event - sea otter mortality: http://www.otterspecialistgroup.org/Library/Alerts/Unexplained_Sea_Otter_Die_off_20060920.html
            - Overview of currents in lower Cook Inlet: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352485521000013?via%3Dihub#sec3
            - Biological Investigations of Homer Spit Coastal Area: https://www.arlis.org/docs/vol1/N/8366080.pdf
            - Report from KBNERR on Randolph Yost jack up rig that was in Kachemak Bay, in proximity to Homer harbor, with concerns about potential invasive species: https://accscatalog.uaa.alaska.edu/sites/default/files/KBRR%20Randolph%20Yost%20jack-up%20rig%20survey%20report_fnal.pdf
            - A summary of the *Asterias amurensis* observations in Kachemak Bay is in Chapter 9 about echinoderms in: BIOLOGICAL INVASIONS OF COLD-WATER COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS: BALLAST-MEDIATED INTRODUCTIONS IN PORT VALDEZ / PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND, ALASKA FINAL PROJECT REPORT 15 March 2000. Anson Hines and Greg Ruiz, PIs.
            - 2016 article: Ballast-borne marine invasive species: exploring the risk to coastal Alaska, USA by Verna et. al., 2016.
            - Kachemak Bay Research Reserve has the source data for sea level rise around the Homer Spit, but the following quote comes from an ADN story: https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/kenai/2017/02/12/erosion-at-the-end-of-the-homer-spit-is-speeding-up/
                - “While sea rise is estimated to be occurring globally at around 3 millimeters per year, the land on the Kenai Peninsula is rising faster than that rate, scientists have shown. Baird said studies show Homer is rising at a rate of about 8 millimeters per year, while the Homer Spit is rising at only 5 millimeters per year. The studies say the rising land is occurring in part because of the bulge of tectonic plates colliding and in part because of the lost weight of melting of glaciers.”
            - Homer Harbor ice pictures: https://www.polartrec.com/expeditions/mosaic/journals/2020-01-19

        - Homer News article from 2017 about ice: https://www.homernews.com/news/ice-blocks-harbor/
        - Kachemak Bay Ecological Assessment project website: https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/project/ecological-assessment-for-kachemak-bay-alaska-science-tools-to-inform-management/
        - For imagery: NCCOS also has aerial photo imagery taken at low tide from seagrass mapping efforts in 2005. Also have the ShoreZone imagery for all of Kachemak Bay: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/habitat-conservation/alaska-shorezone
    - Past USACE Homer Harbor Sampling Results for Annual Maintenance Dredging Operations (most recent sampling events were conducted by USACE in 2019).
    - ADEC Contaminated Sites Database,

      https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=315240bfbaf84aa0b8272ad1cef3cad3
    - 2009 Sediment Quality Triad Assessment in Kachemak Bay: Characterization of Soft Bottom Benthic Habitats and Contaminant Bioeffects Assessment
    - 2013 Assessment of Contaminant Body Burdens and Histopathology of Fish and Shellfish Species Frequently Used for Subsistence Food by Alaskan Native Communities
    - 2016 Baseline assessment of organic contaminants in surficial sediment from Kachemak Bay, Alaska
    - 2018 Characterization of Benthic Habitats and Contaminant Assessment in Arctic Lagoons and Estuaries
    - NCCOS Kachemak Bay BIOMapper,

      https://maps.coastalscience.noaa.gov/biomapper/biomapper.html?id=kbay
- **Open Discussion**
    - If a large vessel harbor expansion alternative is implemented, consideration of the depth on the **outside** of the Federal structure is important for commercial considerations for larger vessels on the outside of such infrastructure.
    - Pile dock on outside of the structure was something brought up and is recommended for consideration if it was planned (a potential future project upon completion of an alternative of this study if constructed).
    - ShoreZone imagery is done at low-tide and gives a good sense of how it looks (exposes more of Mud Bay and can be used to identify the sill discussed earlier).

RECORDED MEETING

Meeting Minutes
Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
April 24, 2025
3:00 pm to 4:30 pm

Administrative Information

Meeting: April Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

Meeting Type/Location: Virtual / Microsoft Team

Meeting Topic(s): Study Status, Fieldwork, Model, Monitoring/Study/Survey Recommendations

Meeting Agenda:

- Attendance
- Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"
- High Level Overview of Upcoming Important Study Milestones
  - Tentatively Selected Plan
  - Planned Draft Report Release for Public and Agency Comment
- Ecological Model
  - Purpose of Model
  - Workshop and Initial Conceptual Model
  - Other Model Inputs
  - Future Workshop Participant Review of Ecological Model
  - Certification and Application of Ecological Model
  - USACE Environmental and Cultural Fieldwork Review
- Completed and Upcoming USACE Study Fieldwork – Specific to Environmental and Cultural Resources
  - Completed Fieldwork
  - Upcoming Fieldwork
- Recommendations for Post-Construction Environmental Monitoring and Surveys
  - Harbor infrastructure (e.g., breakwater, float systems)
  - Harbor Activities, Including Vessel Operations
  - Dredging Operations
- Open Discussion

Attendance (16 Individuals): *Name (Organization, if Applicable)*

Project Delivery Team (PDT) Members (5 Individuals)			
Kayla Campbell	*USACE*	*Bryan Hawkins*	*NFS*
Fern Spaulding	*USACE*	*Jenny Carroll*	*NFS*
Brandee Ketchum	*USACE*		
Non-PDT Members (11 Individuals)			
Bruce Schulte	*WKU/UAA*	*George Matz*	*KBB*
Joshua O'Connor	*Graduate Student*	*Kris Holderied*	*NCCOS*
Susan Sturges	*EPA*	*Laurie Daniels*	*KBRR Community Council*
Whitney Conard	*EPA*	*Penelope Haas*	*KBCS*
Caroline Pierce	*EPA*	*Robert Archibald*	*Friends*
Donna Aderhold	*City of Homer, Gulf Watch Alaska Program*		

EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
FANWRS = Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends = The Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
KBCS= Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
KBRR = Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
KBWC = Kachemak Bay Watershed Council
NCCOS = National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
NFS = Study Non-Federal Sponsor
NOAA Nav = NOAA Navigation Manager
UAA = University of Anchorage Alaska
USCG = United States Coast Guard
USACE = United States Army Corps of Engineers
WKU = Western Kentucky University

Status of Previous Meeting To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the previous ESWG meeting(s).

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.
Gr	**Individuals that have acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance will be placed on the new email distribution list and receive ESWG information and future meeting invites. Members who have not, will be added at the time they acknowledge/agree to the guidance.**
G	**By October 13, 2023:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will share September 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes for initial member feedback via email.
G	**By October 23, 2023:** Members will share September 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil
G	**By November 6, 2023:** Kayla Campbell will share Final September 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes with ESWG and the tentative November meeting agenda and non-meeting correspondence tracker via email.
G	**Prior to December 30, 2023:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will inform ESWG members how ESWG activities will be re-initiated after a study pause.

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Will there will be a plan to include a survey of ecosystem services of this project (e.g., carbon sequestration in mud bay, eel grass beds as habitat for multiple species, etc)?	Part of the Feasibility Study process will be proposing mitigations to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for adverse environmental impacts. These can include post-construction surveys, monitoring, and/or studies related to ecosystem services. Mitigations may be required and/or recommended through various environmental consultation/coordination processes as well.
Are there sediment/current circulation studies based on the earlier harbor expansion and its impacts in Kachemak Bay? To include any monitoring work done during or after construction to evaluate changes/impacts.	There are multiple studies in relation to Kachemak Bay sedimentation and current circulation that would inform such information in and around the Homer Spit. However, I could not find anything specific to the previous expansion. This does not mean it does not exists.
What is the relative size of potential Homer Harbor expansion alternatives in the study compared to the Port of Nome, Akutan, and other navigation projects? What USACE projects are the most similar to what is being assessed in the Homer Feasibility Study?	The Port of Nome is very similar in the terms of types of activities proposed and the overall project based off current alternatives (i.e., harbor expansion). However, the Nome/Norton Sound environment is different than that in Homer/Kachemak Bay. There

	could be a “size” difference as well. However, comparison of the size of the proposed expansion at Nome compared to the Homer Navigation Improvements Study alternatives cannot be inferred at this time.
Is ice modeling available from past harbor expansion or an option for current study?	None has been identified, but it is something that can be considered for the current study.

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study’s project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the meeting.

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.
Gr	Individuals that have acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance have been placed on the new email distribution list and will receive ESWG information and future meeting invites. Original participants who have not, will be added at the time they acknowledge/agree to the guidance.
G	**By May 2, 2025:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will share April 24, 2025, Meeting Minutes for initial member feedback and Non-meeting Correspondence Tracker via email.
G	**By May 9, 2025:** Members will share Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil
G	**By May 16, 2025:** Kayla Campbell will share Final Meeting Minutes with ESWG and the tentative May meeting agenda.

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Can a list of environmental studies that are implemented for USACE projects similar to the Homer Navigation Improvements Study alternatives be shared to provide a general idea of the types of studies USACE has/typically implements? This is to include studies (to include monitoring or surveys) that are implemented during the design phase, construction phase, or post-construction.	The plan is to incorporate this into the May ESWG Meeting agenda.

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study's project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

Summary and Highlights

The predominate focus of the April 24, 2025, ESWG Meeting was to provide (1) an overview of USACE environmental activities since the last ESWG meeting held September 28, 2023, prior to the Study pause, and (2) discussion potential monitoring, survey, mitigation, and etc to consider for the type of project features/activities/operations the Study alternatives are anticipated to include; i.e., harbor infrastructure (e.g., breakwater, float systems), harbor activities (e.g., vessel operations), and dredging operations. It was also shared that the tentatively selected plan will be decided by the Study project delivery team (USACE, Non-Federal Sponsor (City of Homer), and HDR). The TSP will focus the content of the Draft Study Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Analysis, which is planned for release in the fall of 2025. This is when the public and other agencies have an opportunity to review the draft report and provide comment to USACE before the report is finalized.

With regards to overview of USACE environmental activities since the last ESWG. The development process for a study ecological model and environmental/cultural fieldwork were described. The Study ecological model was originally conceptualized during a workshop in April 2024. Workshop participants included ESWG members and other project stakeholders, many who were referred by an ESWG member. The goal for the ecological model is to incorporate the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science's Kelp Model and HDR's study Sediment and Water Current Circulation Model as inputs. There is a goal to re-engage the original workshop participants for feedback on the further developed ecological model before it is certified. Completed and future environmental/cultural fieldwork for the Study was covered. During fieldwork review, the ESWG was provided an opportunity to provide input for identifying potential species observer on footage from underwater camera surveys. Fieldwork was focused on areas within the direct Study footprint. The rationale/reason for this is partially due to feasibility of sites outside the footprint and the fact that resources within the direct footprint have high potential to experience adverse impacts.

After the review of USACE environmental activities since the Study pause, there was an ESWG discussion activity focused on the ESWG members providing potential recommendations for environmental studies, monitoring, mitigations, etc, that could be implemented to inform the environmental impacts during the design through post-construction of a construction alternative. The recommendations included: type of recommendation (mitigation, study, survey, monitoring, etc); general timeframe it would be implemented (i.e., during design, post-construction); frequency or timing considerations of implementation (if applicable); the recommendation; and what the recommendation will address/its purpose (e.g., impacts to eelgrass). These recommendations will be reviewed and considered for the potential and practicality of implementation under Study alternatives.

Open discussion was held after the ESWG discussion activity. Potential concerns that could result in recommendations were provided based on meeting chat feedback and the overall focus of fieldwork and when the ESWG will be able to review and comment on the Study Draft Study Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Analysis were addressed. The Water Trail considerations and potential environmental economic considerations were also discussed. An ESWG Member also brought to the attention of the group that MSc students collected human – marine mammal interaction data along the Homer Spit, including around the Study footprint. A thesis using this data will likely be finalized after May 2025. USACE plans to review the thesis for potential applicability to/use for the Draft Study Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Analysis.

Detailed Notes

- **Attendance**
  - See "Final_04-24-2025_Meeting Minutes_Administrative Information" for list of attendees.
- **Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"**
  - See "Final_04-24-2025_Meeting Minutes_ Past & Current To Do(s) and RFI(s)". Highlights as follows:
    - Grey (i.e., Gr coded) to dos are enduring. This means they will persist throughout ESWG activities.
  - A new ESWG email distribution list was created and only includes members who have agreed/acknowledged the ESWG guidance for continued involvement in group activities. Multiple emails were sent to the original ESWG distribution list to remind individuals that to continue in the ESWG's activities, they will need to agree/acknowledge with the guidance. Upon acknowledgment/agreement, individuals will be added to the new email distribution list. Note, this does not pertain to members of USACE or other Federal agencies who were added solely for study consultation and/or cooperating agency purposes. There is also an allowance for members to request a non-ESWG member to "fill in" for them or attend. For example, members can request attendance of graduate/research students and subject matter experts who could provide information for an agenda topic.
  - An item was added to the Request to Information List based on a question from Kris Holderied during a post-meeting discussion.
- **High Level Overview of Upcoming Important Study Milestones**
  - A Project Delivery Team Internal Milestone - Tentatively Selected Plan (commonly referred by its acronym TSP) will be selected by the Study Project Delivery Team composed of the Non-Federal Sponsor, HDR, and USACE Study team members to focus content of the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report / Environmental Analysis (IFR/EA).
  - Planned Draft IFR/EA release for public and agency comment is the fall of 2025.
- **Ecological Model**
  - Purpose of model is to inform the ecological impacts of the alternatives proposed under the Homer Navigation Improvements Study.
  - Workshop was held to develop an initial conceptual ecological model with environmental/project stakeholders. The model process is iterative, and the results of the workshop was the basis of ecological models that informed the direction of the initial Study Ecological Model that has been and will continue to be iteratively developed into a final product by the Study Project Delivery Team with the intent of a touchpoint with the workshop participants to discuss the further developed model.
    - Was a 2-day event that was held at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge headquarters building on April 11 to 12, 2024, during the study pause.
    - The workshop required participants to complete an application as number of participants was limited due to the workshop "leads to participants" ratio used to ensure productive workshop.

- Other Model Inputs
  - National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) Kelp Model Inputs – USACE Study Team Members and Engineer Research and Development Center Integrated Ecological Team worked with NCCOS Dr. Ross Whippo to incorporate his kelp model into the USACE Study Ecological Model.
  - HDR Sediment and Water Current Circulation Model Inputs – USACE is going to work with HDR to integrate the Sediment and Water Current Circulation Model inputs in to the Ecological Model.
- Future Workshop Participant Review and Feedback of Ecological Model
  - The goal is to hold a virtual touchpoint meeting with original workshop participants to review the Study Ecological Model prior to submittal for model certification.
  - Date and time for the virtual meeting will be shared once known. Recommendations from workshop participants present during this meeting are appreciated.
- Certification and Application of Ecological Model
  - Model will be certified by the USACE Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise.
  - Application of model on Study will inform the impacts of proposed Study alternatives and allow a comparison against the future without project conditions.

- **USACE Environmental and Cultural Fieldwork Review**
  - Fieldwork was focused on the direct footprint of the Study to gain recent, site-specific information to inform the content and analyses for the IFR/EA.
  - Completed fieldwork in 2024 and 2025:
    - Beach Seine Surveys – to enhance understanding of nearshore fish species and non-fish species.
    - eDNA Collection – to supplement and be used in conjugation with the beach seine surveys to inform the nearshore environment/species.
    - Bottom Trawl Surveys – to inform the benthic communities in the portions of the study within deep waters.
    - Winter Waterfowl Surveys (focus on Steller's eiders) – to inform Endangered Species Act listed Steller's eider presence (i.e., location and numbers) around the Homer Spit. This will be used in conjugation with (1) early 2000s USACE Winter Steller's eiders surveys and (2) Kachemak Bay Birders' data available from their publicly available resources and eBird and in their Kachemak Bay Sea Duck Survey report(s).
    - Grab Sediment Sample Collection – to inform the surface sediment composition.
    - Narrative Transect Review – to provide an on-site narrative observation of the sediment, vegetation, and fauna within the intertidal zone within the potential study footprint.
    - Conductivity, Temperature, and Depth Readings – to provide these metrics.
    - Underwater Video – to inform the benthic communities and sediment present within the study footprint.

- Provided underwater footage still grab for purposes of potentially confirming/identifying species.

- Dead eelgrass (grab still from footage taken April 10, 2025)? ESWG Suspects it is a combination of eelgrass, understory kelps, and microalgae. Potential online resources that could help inform this are 2005 Aerial Imagery and NCCOS Kachemak Bay Biomapper.
  - Provided by Kris Holderied: Link to NCCOS Kachemak Bay BioMapper - https://maps.coastalscience.noaa.gov/biomapper/biomapper.html
    - If you click box for "Base Imagery" on the right side, you will see the aerial imagery, taken at low tide. The green/brown colors show you a sense of aquatic plant distribution (includes eelgrass, understory kelp and benthic

microalgae). Clearer to see in the shallower waters in the inner part of Mud Bay, but can also see it along the shoreline in the project area.

- If you click the "Seagrass" block on the right, you can see where seagrass (eelgrass) was mapped in Mud Bay - in 2005. It will be depth-limited by light availability.

  - Jellyfish Planula Larva? Kris Holderied provided this is likely an anemone, closed up. This was suspected by USACE as well.
  - Kris Holderied offered to assess these images post-meeting with others at NCCOS to further confirm the species observed in the images provided.

- Cultural Resource Area Recon – to verify the existence/non-existence of historical properties in the area of potential effect.

- Anticipated Upcoming Fieldwork
  - Sediment Sample Collection from Geotechnical Cores – to collect sediment from required depths to provide preliminary (1) identification of any potential contaminants of concern exceed screening levels and (2) sediment composition/layers within a potential dredged prism.
  - Potential Additional Underwater Video – to further inform extent/location of eelgrass within the study footprint during the period when eelgrass will be established and present.
  - Potential Hydrophone Acoustical Readings – to inform the ambient noise levels.

- **Recommendations for Post-Construction Environmental Monitoring and Surveys (ESWG Discussion Activity)**
  - Notes before starting discussion:
    - Harbor Infrastructure, Harbor Activities, and Dredging Operations are overarching features/activities/operations that can be association with the potential study alternatives and will be used as a basis for this discussion.
    - The goal is to provide recommendations/ideas that focus on the study and its potential impacts with relation to the environment. Discussions can include potential ways to mitigate an impact typically associated with the type of feature/activities/operations.
    - Format/content of bullets will at a minimum include:
      - **Recommendation Type** (mitigation, study, survey, monitoring, etc)
      - **General Implementation Timeframe** (e.g., during design, post-construction)
      - **Implementation Frequency/Timing Considerations** (e.g., annually, intervals, seasonally)
      - **Recommendation**

- **Recommendation Purpose/What It Addresses** (e.g., impacts to eelgrass).
- Example (Not a real recommendation): Modeling – Post-Construction – 1-year, 5-year, and 10-year interval – Implement ice movement modeling on the potential study alternatives – to identify potential damage that can lead to breakwater repairs to avoid designs that are more susceptible to damage.

- Recommendations may not be viable to implement at this stage of the Study. I.e., modeling in the Feasibility Phase, if not already underway, would not be likely a viable option for implementing.
- Due absence of USACE Study Cultural Resources Subject Matter Expert, potential cultural mitigation recommendations can include information pamphlets, interpretive signs, public presentations. etc.

- Harbor infrastructure (e.g., breakwater, float systems)
  - Model – during design – one time event/as design solidified – pair water circulation and sedimentation modeling with the environmental parameters that currently exist (e.g., oxygen, zooplankton, water column structure) throughout the vertical water column throughout the year (seasonally) – inform potential environmental impacts to changes in circulation e.g., shorebirds and Fishing Lagoon impacts as a result of circulation/sedimentation changes.
  - Study – post construction – 1- and 5- year study (i.e., immediate impact and longer term impact) - pair water circulation and sedimentation modeling with the environmental parameters that currently exist (e.g., oxygen, zooplankton, water column structure) throughout the vertical water column throughout the year (seasonally) – inform actual impacts to changes in circulation and indirect impacts e.g., shorebirds and Fishing Lagoon impacts as a result of circulation/sedimentation changes.
  - See open discussion summary of chat for concerns that may precipitate potential recommendations.
  - Study – Before/During Design – Concurrent with Study/Design - Monitor sea level rise/isostatic rebound – Purpose of recommendation is to gather recent data to develop an understanding of future the new infrastructure will need to be able to adapt to as land is known to have been rising faster than sea level but the last few years of bluff, beach, and spit erosion correlates with tidal data that seems to show that the rebounding effect since the 1964 earthquake is subsiding.
    - Last studies by Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR) around 2013. Is there potential for KBNERR to begin monitoring again?
    - USACE Hydraulics and Hydrology Engineer does incorporate sea level rise analysis in these types of studies.
- Harbor Activities, Including Vessel Operations
  - See open discussion summary of chat for concerns that may precipitate potential recommendations.
- Dredging Operations
  - Model – during design – one time event/as design solidified - use circulation model to identify how suspended sediment would accumulate/circulate within the system and subsequent impact – indirect impacts to benthic communities.

- Survey – During Design – one time – use geotechnical to determine quantity of material and the existing environment that would be directly impacted by the dredged material discharge (e.g., in-water or upland) – to understand impacts of dredged material management strategy
- Monitoring – Post Construction – would be determined based design impacts – to monitor the dredged material discharge sites to evaluate the changes and impacts to the environment post-dredge discharge - to understand success/impacts dredged material management strategy or if we need to consider other options

- All recommendations with consideration to "frequency or timing" must consider the overall environmental analysis details and potential direct/indirect/cumulative impacts of the design as assessed at the time. Thus, recommendation frequency and timing provided herein are not necessarily subject to remain as originally proposed in this meeting.

- **Open Discussion / Will Include Summary of Meeting Chat**
  - Environmental concerns that may precipitate potential recommendations, provided by Penelope Haas in meeting chat:
    - Invasive species from ballast water
    - Noise pollution
    - Pollution and carbon emissions from barges, tankers, cruise ships.
    - Water quality impacts from boat work on the spit
    - Extent plan involves filling of the Beluga Wetlands or other wetlands to accommodate storage of smaller vessels or to dispose of dredge spoils cheaply
      - Impacts to wetlands are avoided as much as practicable, and disposal of dredged material in wetlands is not a typically cheap option both monetary-wise but also environmentally-wise.
    - Impacts to Marine Mammals due to strikes, noise pollution, and other impacts.
    - What will new industries–and related pollution and noise pollution–do to key species, their habitats, and food sources
    - Halibut, Black and Yelloweye Rockfish, Shorebirds, Sea Ducks. King Salmon impacts.
    - Recovery of Kachemak Bay crab, shrimp, clams, and herring.
    - Industrial activity impacts on tourism businesses.
      - If a recommendation is provided for this concern, it is requested it be focused on environmental aspects/impacts.
    - Location for sourcing of breakwater rock. Specific concern with sourcing from Iliamna area and the impacts to bears.
  - Mud Bay concern from Laurie Daniels based on the differences between the habitat within the direct study footprint and that of habitat from Mud Bay along the coastline to Miller Landing. Concern that building off the east side of the existing harbor will impact Mud Bay, which is important for birds and marine mammals and the site of the largest eelgrass beds near the Spit. Fieldwork appears to be solely focused on the direct study footprint. Why has there not been any field work or summary of known information about the impacts of potential construction of study alternatives on nearby areas like Mud Bay to Miller Landing?
    - The habitat beyond the study footprint and impacts therein are being considered.
    - Fieldwork is focused on the direct study footprint as that is very likely where the most environmental impact would occur and be experienced.

- Fieldwork outside the direct study footprint has occurred to a lesser extent. Environmental conditions prevented some fieldwork from being conducted in areas outside the direct study footprint, like Mud Bay further north along the Homer Spit than the direct study footprint (due to it becoming unfeasible). For example, sites located more north of the footprint were included in the original plan for beach seining. These sites were deemed unfeasible and abandoned due to the shallowness of depths, speed at which the water depth changed due to tide, and the presence of boulders the net would catch on that prevented a smooth intake to collect fish specimens.
- The "lack" of fieldwork does not indicate that data and other information/literature is not being gathered to inform potential impacts to Mud Bay and other habitat in Kachemak in order to inform indirect and cumulative impacts from the study alternatives.
- Some of the study modeling efforts will be able to inform an area beyond the direct footprint.
- Kris Holderied reinforced that there is also a change in habitats with depth along the Homer Spit.

- Laurie Daniels provided a concern that there seemed to be a focus on the post-construction phase and that a design would be decided very soon even though there was a long study pause and last ESWG meeting ~ 18 months ago. Wanted to know what is the state of that decision; i.e., what is being considered right now as all the ESWG/Public know right now is the several basic designs but nothing about how they are ranked yet. Wants to know how the ESWG will engage in that decision and comment on it, and at what point will a decision be made about whether the tentatively selected design necessitates an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement and when/how that is commented on as well.
  - There are phases to USACE's projects. This study comprises the first phase of a larger process. This study is part of the Feasibility Phase, wherein USACE determines if there is an economically (this includes environmental economic considerations, not just monetary) viable project to address the purpose and need. The Feasibility Phase does not end in a final design. It ends in a 35% design that is further developed into a final design in the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) Phase. PED includes additional analyses and design development that balances a stable design with practical considerations/mitigations like environmental mitigations.
  - The tentatively selected plan milestone that is internal to the project delivery team will be based on approximately 15% developed designs and largely based on economic value (includes considerations of environmental impacts and other intangible benefits/costs) of the alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the study.
  - The ESWG is a group to help inform USACE Environmental in the environmental analyses and discussions with the project delivery team. The information provided by the ESWG thus will inform environmental considerations when USACE and the project delivery team discuss and determine the **tentatively** selected plan. The tentatively selected plan selected is used to focus the Draft IFR/EA content and analyses.

    - The Draft IFR/EA content/analyses will be released for public and agency comment. This is where the ESWG members, as part of the public and other agencies, can review the draft IFR/EA and provide comments that USACE will use to consider in the finalization of the report. It will be at that time that the whether the environmental analyses resulted in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement will be shared.
    - Laurie plans to call Kayla Campbell to discuss her questions further. Such correspondence would be included in the Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker if/when it occurs.
- Fern Spaulding asked if the group knew who the Nearshore Fish Atlas NMFS current point of contact is as USACE wants to upload relevant data from fieldwork into that open source
    - Kris Holderied will share the point of contact information with USACE.
- Penelope Haas provided a potential environmental considerations with regards to economics:
    - Impacts to Shorebird Festival from potential alternatives.
    - Land use changes – e.g., ecotourism, cultural hub activities like walking- and how would those uses be changed and restricted.
- Last summer Bruce Schulte, Misty McPhee, and Debbie Boege-Tobin had two students collecting data at the Homer Spit, that includes the area around the direct study footprint, looking at human use and the co-occurrence and interactions with harbor seals and sea otters. The two MSc students will be defending their theses in the next few months. The plan is to continue studying the human wildlife interaction at the Homer Spit.
    - The thesis focused on human – marine mammal interactions: the end of the Homer Spit (within the study footprint) near Fishing Lagoon is a key location where those interactions took place with harbor seals and humans. Post-May thesis will be available. Manuscript in the works. USACE plans to request for review and potential inclusion into environmental analyses wherein applicable.
- George Matz inquired about monitoring of existing habitat and organisms to determine impacts and whether there is a good idea of existing conditions.
    - It was mentioned that part of the study is to developed the existing conditions background as a basis to assess the Future without Project Conditions that is compared against the study alternatives that include construction.
- Robert Archibald inquired if the Kachemak Bay Water Trail and its dedicated launch site are known as the study is being assessed.
    - Kayla Campbell requested if Robert could share what information he had on the Water Trail, and Robert provided he will share information on it.
    - Jenny Carroll provided that the Water Trail question was captured in the March 15 public meeting as it related to harbor designs.
    - Kris Holderied added that with regards to the Water Trail, it was suggested to include a non-motorized vessel launch site on the outside of the breakwater that would give better water access to kayaks, etc, away from harbor traffic.
- NCCOS is planning to conduct some underwater camera work within Kachemak Bay. They plan to share footage applicable to the study with USACE.

Blue font indicates meeting discussion (notes based on verbal feedback and meeting chat).
Red font indicates post-meeting information (notes from verbal feedback and meeting emails).

RECORDED MEETING

Meeting Minutes
Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
May 30, 2025
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm AKDT

Administrative Information

Meeting: May Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

Meeting Type/Location: Virtual / Microsoft Team

Meeting Topic(s): Feasibility Study Overview, Environmental Studies, Baseline Data

Meeting Agenda:

- Administrative Tasks
  - Attendance
  - Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"
- USACE Feasibility Study High Level Overview
  - What is it?
  - Study Outcomes
  - Public and Agency Involvement
  - Environmental Activities
- Baseline Data Discussion
- Open Discussion

Attendance (12 Individuals): *Name (Organization, if Applicable)*

Project Delivery Team (PDT) Members (3 Individuals)			
Kayla Campbell	*USACE*	*Robin Carr*	*USACE*
Fern Spaulding	*USACE*		
Non-PDT Members (9 Individuals)			
Hal Shepherd	*KBWC*	*Laurie Daniel*	*KBRR Community Council*
Kris Holderied	*NCCOS*	*Ross Whippo*	*NCCOS*
Lauren Sutton	*KBNERR Staff*	*George Matz*	*KBB*
Debbie Tobin	*UAA*	*Caroline Pierce*	*EPA*
Donna Aderhold	*City of Homer, Gulf Watch Alaska Program*		

EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
FANWRS = Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends = The Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
KBCS= Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
KBRR = Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
KBWC = Kachemak Bay Watershed Council
NCCOS = National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
NFS = Study Non-Federal Sponsor
NOAA Nav = NOAA Navigation Manager
UAA = University of Anchorage Alaska
USCG = United States Coast Guard
USACE = United States Army Corps of Engineers
WKU = Western Kentucky University

Status of Previous Meeting To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the previous ESWG meeting(s).

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.
Gr	Individuals that have acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance have been placed on the new email distribution list and will receive ESWG information and future meeting invites. Original participants who have not, will be added at the time they acknowledge/agree to the guidance.
G	**By May 2, 2025:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will share April 24, 2025, Meeting Minutes for initial member feedback and Non-meeting Correspondence Tracker via email.
G	**By May 9, 2025:** Members will share Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil
G	**By May 16, 2025:** Kayla Campbell will share Final Meeting Minutes with ESWG and the tentative May meeting agenda.

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Will there will be a plan to include a survey of ecosystem services of this project (e.g., carbon sequestration in mud bay, eel grass beds as habitat for multiple species, etc)?	Part of the Feasibility Study process will be proposing mitigations to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for adverse environmental impacts. These can include post-construction surveys, monitoring, and/or studies related to ecosystem services. Mitigations may be required and/or recommended through various environmental consultation/coordination processes as well.
Are there sediment/current circulation studies based on the earlier harbor expansion and its impacts in Kachemak Bay? To include any monitoring work done during or after construction to evaluate changes/impacts.	There are multiple studies in relation to Kachemak Bay sedimentation and current circulation that would inform such information in and around the Homer Spit. However, I could not find anything specific to the previous expansion. This does not mean it does not exists.
What is the relative size of potential Homer Harbor expansion alternatives in the study compared to the Port of Nome, Akutan, and other navigation projects? What USACE projects are the most similar to what is being assessed in the Homer Feasibility Study?	The Port of Nome is very similar in the terms of types of activities proposed and the overall project based off current alternatives (i.e., harbor expansion). However, the Nome/Norton Sound environment is different than that in Homer/Kachemak Bay. There could be a "size" difference as well. However, comparison of the size of the proposed expansion at Nome compared to the Homer

	Navigation Improvements Study alternatives cannot be inferred at this time.
Is ice modeling available from past harbor expansion or an option for current study?	None has been identified, but it is something that can be considered for the current study.
Can a list of environmental studies that are implemented for USACE projects similar to the Homer Navigation Improvements Study be shared to provide a general idea of the types of studies USACE has typically implemented? This is to include monitoring or surveys that are implemented during the feasibility, design phase, construction phase, or post-construction.	This RFI will be addressed in the May 30, 2025, meeting discussions as an agenda topic. Rather than Environmental Studies, USACE conducts environmental activities pursuant to informing the environmental baseline and potential impacts of an alternative with follow-on actions to validate assessments, wherein determined necessary/appropriate.

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study's project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the meeting.

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.
Gr	Individuals that have acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance have been placed on the new email distribution list and will receive ESWG information and future meeting invites. Original participants who have not, will be added at the time they acknowledge/agree to the guidance.
Gr	**By June 6, 2025:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will share May 30, 2025, Meeting Minutes for initial member feedback and Non-meeting Correspondence Tracker via email. **Suspense shifted to June 13, 2025, due to effort to clean up meeting transcript.*
Gr	**By June 13, 2025:** Members will share Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil **Suspense shifted to June 20, 2025, due to effort to clean up meeting transcript.*
Gr	**By June 20, 2025:** Kayla Campbell will share Final Meeting Minutes with ESWG and the tentative July meeting agenda. **Suspense shifted to June 27, 2025, due to effort to clean up meeting transcript. It was shared July 2, 2025.*

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study's project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

Summary and Highlights

The transcript function was used for this meeting for the first time. It was not a successful tool in accurately capturing discussions and resulted in a requirement for major revisions of content for readability. The revised transcript will be shared and support the ESWG May 2025 Meeting Minutes.

Discussions began with a high-level overview of a USACE Feasibility study to ensure proper understanding of what the purpose and outcomes of the study will be. This included topics discussing how the public and other agencies are involved in the overall study process and environmental activities conducted at this phase and follow-on phases. Key points are captured in the Detailed Notes outline, and further discussion is captured in the transcript.

Baseline Data and Open Discussions became one discussion point. The overarching themes of comments and discussion were focused on the following questions/concerns:

- What baseline data exists?
- What sources of baseline data are available?
- Are there gaps in baseline data to make an impact determination?
- How are impacts determined/defined?
- Does the analysis capture impacts beyond the direct construction footprint?
- How detailed is analysis in the feasibility phase?
- How does the environmental analysis continue after the feasibility phase?
- What's the best way to comment on local service facilities?

The above is not a comprehensive list, and individuals will need to review the transcript for additional information on discussions.

Detailed Notes

- **Administrative Tasks**
  - **Attendance**
    - See "05-30-2025_Meeting Minutes_Administrative Information" for list of attendees.
  - **Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"**
    - See "05-30-2025_Meeting Minutes_ Past & Current To Do(s) and RFI(s)".
  - **USACE Feasibility Study High Level Overview**
    - **What is it?**
      - A USACE feasibility study is an in-depth evaluation process that assesses potential solutions for a water resources problem and determines if there is a Federal Interest in a proposed project.
        - The Federal Interest for Homer relates to navigation. USACE is authorized to provide safe, reliable, and efficient waterborne transportation systems for harbors and waterways for movement. This is primarily for commerce, with a limited interest in recreation.
    - **Feasibility Study Outcomes**
      - The feasibility study will result in an Integrated Feasibility Report and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Document (IFR/NEPA Document) that will include a potential Recommended Plan.
        - The Recommended Plan is the alternative selected from the array of alternatives. This plan would consist of a 35% design. At the end of the Feasibility Study Phase, the Recommended Plan is sent to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works; ASA(CW)) as a Chief's Report. The feasibility study is complete when the Chief's Report is signed and transmitted to Congress by the ASA(CW). Congress will determine if the Recommended Plan will be authorized for design and construction.
        - The IFR/NEPA Document integrates the NEPA Analysis with the USACE Feasibility Report rather than two separate documents.
        - If there is no Federal Interest, the feasibility study would be terminated.
    - **Public and Agency Involvement (Not all-inclusive)**
      - **Completed/Ongoing**
        - Charrette was held in May 17-19, 2023.
        - Environmental Stakeholder Working Group meetings and activities.
        - Ecological Modeling Workshop held April 11-12, 2024, and its continued development with USACE Engineer Research and Development Center Ecological Model Team, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, and HDR.
        - Non-Federal Sponsor Study Meetings on September 23, 2023, and March 15, 2025.
        - Preliminary coordination and consultation with applicable environmental regulatory agencies/services, to include, but not limited to, Alaska

Department of Fish and Game, National Marine Fisheries Services, United States Fish and Wildlife, United States Coast Guard, and Environmental Protection Agency.

- Cooperating Agency coordination (includes the Environmental Protection Agency and United States Coast Guard).

– **Upcoming**

- Ecological Model review and feedback with original workshop participants prior to model certification.
- Draft IFR/NEPA Document release for public comment, September 2025. This is the first opportunity for the public and agencies to officially review and provide comment on USACE's Draft IFR/NEPA Document.
- Continued coordination and consultations with applicable environmental regulatory agencies/services.
- Comments? -

▪ **Environmental Activities** –

– **An asterisk indicates it has/is being applied to this feasibility study.**

– **Standard Activities in a Feasibility Study**

- *Sea Level Rise Analysis – assesses the design of the alternatives against projected sea level rise over the life of the project for project structure resiliency.
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report process – dependent on regulatory agency capacity and whether one is necessitated by anticipated potential impacts – initial determination of regulatory agencies was that a report will not be issued. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game issued planning aid letters in lieu of a full report. The agencies did request results of the sediment/current circulation modeling to inform their decisions.
- *Cultural Resources National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 process - determines if there are any historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect and if they are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Consults with Federally recognized tribes, State Historic Preservation Office, and other stakeholders on the finding of effect.
- *Geotechnical Investigations - used to assess the sediment composition within the potential construction footprint to determine whether it is suitable for planned purposes (e.g., building a breakwater).
- *Sediment Analyses – provide data to inform sediment composition and concentration of potential contaminants of concern within the sediment to inform proper material management strategies (e.g., the suitable uses or discharge of dredged material).

– **Other Environmental Activities in Feasibility Phase** - potentially consider based on present environmental resources and the footprint/potential activities associated with the study alternatives. What environmental activities are undertaken are also determined with consideration to the recency and availability of existing data.

- *Habitat Suitability Model - determines the value of habitat specific to targeted species. These can vary in complexity, and the ecological model being developed for this feasibility study will be a model of this type.
- Other Ecological Models - more complex models can be sought to further understand the existing baseline and potential impacts of the feasibility study alternatives to an environmental resource or multiple environmental resources.
- *Site-specific Fieldwork - District level fieldwork determined based on assessment of need for recent and/or site-specific information necessary for establishing the existing environmental baseline conditions within means of a reasonable budget/timeline. This may include joint fieldwork with other local, State, or Federal agencies.
- *Sediment/Current Circulation Modeling: Will infer the existing and potential changes from implementation of an alternative in current and sediment circulation within Kachemak Bay.
- Required consultation/coordination pursuant to applicable environmental laws and regulations. This may include but are not limited to;
  - *Essential Fish Habitat Assessment pursuant to Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).
  - *Draft Biological Assessment pursuant to Endangered Species Act Section 7.
  - *Draft Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Analysis pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1).
  - *Water Quality Certification pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 401, may be a Conditional Water Quality Certification in Feasibility Phase.
  - *Navigation Aids discussion with United States Coast Guard.

– **Scope of environmental activities** in Feasibility Phase are based on the resource and potential effect(s) to the resources. Thus, the direct, indirect, and cumulative impact analyses are not constrained to the direct construction footprint and may extend to other areas. A prime example is potential impacts to the sediment and current circulation. Modeling will assess impacts beyond the immediate and immediately adjacent areas to the direct construction footprint and enable USACE to infer potential impacts to other areas.

– Potential Activities in **Preconstruction Engineering and Design Phase** may include, but not limited to:

- Additional geotechnical investigation, sediment analyses, and/or agency consultation/coordination required to further inform and optimize design and project measures.
- Coordination for necessary environmental permits required for Construction Phase that may include, but are not limited to:
  - Incidental Take Authorizations for in-water work pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act.
  - Letter of Concurrence or Biological Opinion pursuant to the Endangered Species Act Section 7.

- Potential Activities in **Construction Phase** may include, but are not limited to:
  - Sound Source Verification with regards to underwater noise calculations for in-water work that are used to determine potential impacts to marine mammals and to inform the ESA Section 7, MMPA, and MSA consultations
  - Monitoring by Protected Species Observers to ensure take of protected species is avoided and/or minimized to the extent practicable, and to enact the proper procedures should take occur.
  - Timing mitigations to avoid critical fish or bird windows.
- Potential Activities in **Post-Construction Phase** may include, but are not limited to:
  - Monitoring or surveys associated with specific environmental resources of concern to ensure implemented mitigations or strategies are acting in accordance with what was assessed in Feasibility and Preconstruction Engineering and Design Phases. An example of this could be monitoring of dredged material discharge site(s)/management strategy to validate discharge of material is behaving as it should base on USACE's prior assessments. E.g., if material was disposed at an in-water dispersive site, monitoring would be conducted to ensure material was not settling and accumulating over time.
  - Continued environmental permitting and environmental condition review as applicable to the project and its activities. E.g., renewing/acquiring new permitting for maintenance dredging or conducting additional sediment analyses to ensure material management strategy of material remains suitable.

- **Baseline Data / Open Discussion**
  - **See Transcript**
    - Transcript has been revised for readability. There was a commitment to retaining the integrity of discussion inputs and Kayla Campbell requests comments if revisions changed the context.
    - Meeting chat log was incorporated wherein appropriate into the transcript instead as a separate item herein.
    - The transcript function will be abandoned as a means of capturing meeting discussions as the degree of revisions required to make the discussions captured readable was extensive.
  - **Topics Covered**
    - USACE Feasibility Study High Level Overview Agenda Topics
    - Overarching Topics of Baseline Data/Open Discussion (not in order)
      - What baseline data exists?
      - What sources of baseline data are available?
      - Are there gaps in baseline data to make an impact determination?
      - How are impacts determined/defined?
      - Does the analysis capture impacts beyond the direct construction footprint?

- How detailed is analysis in the feasibility phase?
- How does the environmental analysis continue after the feasibility phase?
- What's the best way to comment on local service facilities?

Blue font indicates meeting discussion (notes based on verbal feedback and meeting chat).
Red font indicates post-meeting information (notes from verbal feedback and meeting emails).

The following notes were developed based on a system transcribed transcript. Content was modified wherein necessary for readability. This included at times summarization or bulleting of key points, fixing spelling/wording errors, removal of filler words (e.g., um, yeah, thank you, etc), and more. However, a conscious effort was made to ensure the intent of what was discussed and said by participants was retained. It is also important to note that wording was subject to the system's capabilities, and within the context transcribed by the system, some words were not captured or registered incorrectly.

A description of annotations:

- **Bold name**: The speaker of content described will be signified through bold formatting of their name followed by their discussion input.
- "Wording": Context as it was spoken will be signified by retaining such within quotations, i.e., "this is an example of how word-for-word spoken content will appear." Minor adjustments will not be annotated.
- [Wording]:Anything within quotations and brackets, i.e., [word], signifies and adjustment of spoken dialogue for clarity.
- […]: Wording was deleted from spoken context due to it being "filler content" or when removing wording would enhance clarity of what was spoken.

Outside of the content formatted as described in the aforementioned bullets should be considered a summary of what was said.

USACE FEASIBILITY STUDY HIGH LEVEL OVERVIEW

Kayla Campbell:

"Today, I have our planner Robin Carr on to help describe the Feasibility study itself before we'll get into [discussion on] "environmental studies" at the end of the more prescriptive discussion, and we will have a chance in open [discussion] for comments from the group."

Kayla handed the discussion over to Robin Carr, the USACE planner for a high-level overview of a feasibility study and its outcomes and overall process.

Robin Carr

"Our main purpose of the feasibility study is determining the Federal Interest in a project. […] For Homer specifically, we have various authorities and it's focusing on navigation . We're [USACE] looking at trying to [identify] what improved efficiencies can be had in navigation and specifically for providing safe, reliable and efficient waterborne transportation. We primarily look at commerce, but we also have a limited interest in recreation."

"Through the study, the project delivery team will look at what are various options for trying to fix a specific problem that's identified. For Homer, the major problem is the overcrowding that is causing inefficiencies in the [existing] harbor."

"We look at a suite of alternatives and then compare them against the No Action Alternative. [Potential Action Alternatives] are always compared against not doing

anything. Then, at a certain point, if it's determined that […] the No Action Alternative is the best plan, the study just ends there. The study won't recommend the No Action plan. The study stops at the point when it's determined that there is no Federal Interest [… and] this [has] happened for Homer Harbor."

Robin provided that an earlier USACE feasibility study for Homer Harbor ended and no report was published due to a lack of a Federal Interest. The reason for this is to stop spending money on a report if it is determined that there's no interest in developing it any further, and this is always an option.

A full report isn't developed if there is no Federal Interest, but if there is a Federal interest, alternatives will be assessed to identify a Recommended Plan.

"The [Project Delivery] Team will continue [forward[with the Integrated Feasibility Report [and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Document] that details the various [Action] Alternatives, and why one alternative was selected [as the Recommended Plan]."

"The Recommended Plan is then summarized by the Chief of Engineers and sent to Congress, where Congress can choose to authorize and appropriate funding for the construction of that plan, at their discretion. […The] purpose of the feasibility report is to ultimately develop a Recommended Plan to see if [the Recommended Plan] is warranted and then to allow for the Chief of Engineers to recommend it for Congress."

Congress can decide what alternatives will move forward and be built and which alternatives will not move forward.

Kayla Campbell

Reinforced that the Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document is an integrated document and the NEPA Analysis won't be written as it typically is when developed as a standalone document. Rather, the NEPA Analysis is meshed within USACE's Feasibility Report. If things are unclear when the report is released, there is an opportunity to communicate such through the public comment process.

"We do a lot of outreach and consultations and coordination with public, State, local, Federal - all types of agencies and individuals - throughout [the feasibility study]. There's a list of completed ongoing [consultations and coordination listed within the Meeting Minute's notes and I will focus discussion] on the upcoming types of coordination and involvement we will have."

"One of those is the ecological model review and feedback with the original workshop participants […] We are anticipating that to occur either this month or early next month."

"Then one of the most important touchpoints we have [coming up] is […] the [Draft] Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document [release] for public comment. That's going to happen September 2025. This will be the first official opportunity for the public and other agencies to review the [draft] document and provide comment."

All comments are welcomed. Comments are not constrained and USACE will address and provide a response to comments received. This is a really important touchpoint and really important opportunity for the Environmental Stakeholder] Working Group to get a

look at the draft report and provide a comment regardless of if: (1) it's something discussed before or not based off the content of the draft report you review.

30-days is the standard comment period duration. I have heard some people think that's too short and want to share that individuals are able to provide a comment during the comment period stating such for consideration by USACE.

Other upcoming coordination, public involvement involves continuing coordination and consultations we have to do for compliance with NEPA and other environmental laws and regulations. This includes coordination/consultations with environmental regulatory agencies. Pre-consultations/coordination and starting consultations/coordination are important in the feasibility phase as well as identifying what we need to do to be compliant with environmental laws and regulations applicable to this feasibility study and its proposed Action Alternatives under consideration.

There was a pause for questions from the ESWG participants, but there were no questions.

Kayla Campbell

Now we move into environmental activities, and I did put an asterisk by those activities [in the Meeting Minutes that apply to this] feasibility study."

A request for information was provided by multiple members of the Environmental Stakeholder Working Group about what are typical environmental studies USACE does when conducting their environmental analyses and determinations, especially on studies like the Homer Navigation Improvements Study.

I provided "we do more environmental activities rather than a full on [environmental] studies. Study is a term that can be used in various ways, but it means something pretty significant if we use it, and it is not necessarily something we typically do within the feasibility phase of a study like this [one]."

Instead of standard environmental studies, the discussion focused on standard environmental activities of a feasibility study like the Homer Navigation Improvements Study. A description was provided in the notes for review by interested Environmental Stakeholder Working Group members, but during this meeting I limited describing them in order to leave most of the time for the meeting for baseline and open discussions along with questions.

The standard [environmental] activities typically [include]:

- a Sea Level rise Analysis
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report process and coordination requirements.
- Cultural Resource National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 process.
- Geotechnical investigations
- Sediment Analyses

“A lot of [these environmental activities are] to prepare for the next phase and ensure that we're reducing risk of something that would halt the project in the later phases. We [USACE] do not want to move on to the next phase if there's anything that would put a stop to the project.”

“We're also trying to gather information, so we can inform the impacts to environmental resources.”

Other [not necessarily standard] environmental activities can also [occur] in the feasibility phase. The scope of what those are and what exactly is implemented at this stage is really dependent on (1) the type of project, (2) the location of the project, and [(3) the environmental resources impacted].”

We also have to interface with the public, local, State, and Federal agencies [which may determine specific needs or valued environmental resources we should specifically research or review, like Mud Bay in this study. Mud Bay has been brought up multiple times by different individuals and entities to ensure potential impacts to it are considered.

Other activities and feasibility stage as it relates to [this study and others may include]:

- A habitat suitability model, our [developing] ecological model is shaping out to be is a habitat suitability model, [although] a little bit more of a complex one.
- Other ecological models that can be more complex depending on what is determined a valuable environmental resource.
- There’s site-specific fieldwork determined necessary at the district level. We determined as part of the Alaska District what was important fieldwork for this feasibility study based on the need for recent data and the environmental resources potentially impacted by the study alternatives. Informing the baseline conditions is important to informing the potential impacts. Note, there is a consideration to budget and timeline when determining what environmental activities/fieldwork USACE will undertake to inform the baseline conditions and potential alternative impacts in the feasibility phase. USACE can't do everything and prioritize the most critical needs is essential where aiming for an informed analysis.
- A non-standard environmental activity on this study includes the sediment and current circulation modeling being conducted by HDR.
- Consultation and coordination requirements for compliance to environmental laws and regulations. What these are, are highly subject to the project, its activities, the location, and the existing environmental resources. For this study, the following are examples of products for applicable consultations/coordination: Essential Fish Habitat Assessment, Draft Biological Assessment, Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Analysis, and a Clean Water Act 401 Water Quality Certification.
- Navigation aids consultation with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) is underway. The USCG is a cooperating agency on this study and discussions of navigation aids needed for the alternatives of the study are ongoing.

The scope of USACE's environmental analysis during a feasibility study includes direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts and reviews beyond the immediate construction footprint and extends to where potential impacts can reasonably be anticipated to occur and/or experienced. Cumulative impacts take into consideration other future, past, and present projects. A great example of an analysis in the feasibility study phase that will inform impacts beyond the direct construction footprint of a potential alternative, is the sediment and current circulation modeling being conducted. Based on the model results, impacts can be anticipated to resources outside the direct construction footprint, like potential impacts to Mud Bay. There are limits to environmental analysis as it does not make determinations or assumptions based on conjecture that is not supported by available literature or data.

"Additional environmental activities [continue if and] when we get to the Preconstruction Engineering Design phase. This may include additional geotechnical investigations, sediment analyses, and coordination and consultations as necessary to optimize whatever design there is as well as project measures. That can […include] what are we doing with the dredge material and how do we limit that and minimize it."

"We [USACE] work on getting permits as well and going through [further coordination, consultation, and permit application] processes." For example, on projects, an Incidental Take Authorization can be pursued and it will be informed by design details and "go through a very extensive process between [USACE] and [the applicable] agencies like National Marine Fisheries Service and United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

A primary goal of environmental activities and analyses is to inform the existing conditions and identify mitigations to potential impacts from the potential alternative to environmental resources.

Environmental activities that could potentially take place during the construction phase of a USACE project, includes but is not limited to, protected species observer monitoring to ensure there's no unauthorized take of any species, and sound source verification actions to validate underwater noise assumptions used to determine potential impacts to marine mammals based on the type of work activity.

Post-construction phase of environmental activities may include additional monitoring or surveys associated with certain resources identified during earlier phases to assess if it aligns with USACE's assessment. If it does not, considerations on how to rectify significant deviations occurs. Continuous environmental permitting, as applicable and required, for the project would occur. An example is permitting for maintenance dredging of USACE project, like for the current Homer Harbor. Certain permits have statutory limits on the duration of coverage. When completing permit applications, an assessment of site and project conditions occurs in order to identify any changed conditions that may need to be address in renewal or extension process for environmental permits. The goal is to mitigate environmental impacts to the extent practicable.

Questions?

Kris Holderied

Requested additional details and clarity about what USACE looks for in the feasibility phase and how that determines or effects the next phase. Provided she understood that

USACE looks for indications of “show stoppers” in the Feasibility Stage, but wanted more detail of the work done in the feasibility stage via an example.

Kayla Campbell

It can slightly vary between projects, but a good example for this study are the completion of chemical and grain size analyses of sediment to determine what the appropriate dredge material management strategy will be for a constructed alternative.

Key in the feasibility phase is USACE would want, at a minimum, to assess:

- Is there any contamination? Specifically, is there any contamination at locations considered a “hot spot” or a likely “source” of contamination/contaminant migration if there was one? Samples should be collected from such locations to inform if there is contaminated material.
- What is the composition of the material? The composition of the sediment will determine the feasible, suitable dredged material management strategies that will be acceptable to applicable regulatory and permitting agencies, e.g., Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC).

A preliminary chemical analysis and grain size analysis of sediment at a minimum in the feasibility phase is essential to determine what is the likely, or best course of action for dredged material management. This typically involves a limited number of samples to get an initial, informed baseline.

This would be followed by a complete analyses of the sediment in the Preconstruction engineering and design phase that will confirm is the proper path forward and provide the information required for approval from applicable permitting/regulatory agencies (e.g., the EPA and ADEC). This process would require USACE to meet specific criteria to ensure we do a sufficient and complete analysis, which typically requires surface samples, leave surface sample (sediment exposed after material is dredged), and then throughout the sediment matrix between those points. This will inform the composition of the material and quantities therein to determine what is the proper dredge material management strategy: water disposal/placement, beneficial use, or upland disposal?

Sediment composition is important in determining proper placement, disposal, or use of the material. Not all sediment types can be used for a specific beneficial use. Upland disposal, or if it has to be trucked/shipped off to a disposal facility is something we're aiming identify in the feasibility phase, as that is quite expensive and informs the potential project cost.

That could be a showstopper. In the feasibility phase, USACE works to identify and reduce risk of a “showstopper” prior to transitioning to follow-on phases.

Kris Holderied

“That's clear, it's about the level of detail.”

Kayla Campbell

“[It’s] like you said, Kris, [the purpose of the feasibility phase] is to identify the showstoppers as well as inform if this is something that is feasible to construct from the lens of the Federal government […i.e., is there a] Federal interest […] here for us to continue forward?

Hal Shepherd

“I was wondering if you have or if [USACE] has some sense as to whether or not there is going to be an environmental impact statement (EIS) produced for this project.” “Another question is, is to what extent is all this environmental analysis going to be impacted by the Trump administration?” Inquired if the timeline for conducting environmental analyses will be drastically reduced under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).

Kayla Campbell

“I can at least partially answer the question. When it comes to determining the level of NEPA documentation, whether it's a categorical exclusions (CATEX), environmental assessment (EA), or environmental impact statement (EIS), there's certain processes we have to follow. With an EIS, the Notice of Intent (NOI) is the clear signal that this has become an EIS. Where we are at in the feasibility phase is we are still gathering and drafting the report to determine what level is appropriate for the environmental analysis.”

When the draft is published, that would represent what the decision is with regards to the level of NEPA Analysis was determined appropriate for the study. Or you'll see a NOI from USACE if at any point in time USACE determined an EIS is required.

“With the EIS, what would push us into [this level of analysis]? The reason a NOI notice intent would be issued is if a significant impact to an environmental resource is identified [that cannot be mitigated].” What's “significant” is highly subjective to an individual. What we [USACE] consider significant is going to be based on [a legal authority applicable to the Federal government, e.g.,] regulations and laws, as well as […] a holistic picture [of the resource].”

“When the draft reports released, that's where you are going to get the answer [on whether the environmental analysis will be commensurate with an EA or EIS. Note,] when that's released, it’s not set in stone. You can make comments if you feel the level of analysis is not sufficient or that USACE missed something [in its analysis] and needs to [address a gap in its analysis].”

“The comments one can provide USACE is very open ended and not constrained.”

As for how things are going to change with regards to environmental analysis requirements under NEPA, USACE will learn and adjust to keep continuing forward.

“As it stands right now, nothing has significantly changed for our timeline when compared to typical feasibility studies.” When new legal authorities (e.g., laws and regulation) are enacted, how it impacts a project can vary depending on how it is enacted, when it is enact during a project process, what it applies to, and more. At

times, prior legal authorities have been “grandfathered in” and applied to a project even though a new one is established.

“Fern, I think you might be able to talk to [this question] too. If there's a change on the Federal [scale], how does that impact this whole process?

Fern Spaulding

“As it stands right now, the NEPA implementing regulations have been rescinded. However, [USACE] still has their own policy and guidance for implementing NEPA, so we will still follow our own regulations and policy to implement NEPA, within our own feasibility studies.”

Kayla Campbell

“Did that answer your question, Hal?”

Hal Shepherd

“Yes, thank you.”

BASELINE DATA AND OPEN DISCUSSIONS.

Kayla Campbell

“To get started, it's very open-ended, so does someone have a topic to start off with or a resource we want to start off talking about?”

George Matz

“You mentioned by the post-construction monitoring, but I think to have that be relevant to anything you have to know what's going to be compared to, which are […] the baseline conditions before construction. […] I've never seen a checklist of exactly what that includes [i.e., baseline conditions]. […] You have a various number of projects [i.e., fieldwork] underway and to what degree those will satisfy [describing the baseline conditions] and [identify] where there's a gap where you don't have enough information [is uncertain]. [The fieldwork,] it's just kind of an inventory.”

Kayla Campbell

The baseline is part of our analysis done in the feasibility phase that will be incorporated in that integrated report. To inform the baseline, it does not mean USACE will have specific quantities or values for every resource and can be more of a qualitative description on a higher level of impact assessment to a resource.

Provided an example of a higher qualitive review of focus birds as an example, because that's a concern of many in the ESWG.

Birds and their abundance are being assessed in Homer. USACe will provide an analysis of the effect of a potential constructed alternative to birds in Homer. Baseline data gathered in the feasibility phase will inform our assessment of impacts to birds. If birds are a focus of our monitoring in post-construction, we would use the baseline to assess any changed condition and then determine if it is a change specifically link/associated with the constructed alternative. If it is, we would then look into if it is still

within the realm of what was determined during our prior analysis and if not, we will determine if and how to address the different in actual impacts to birds.

Another example, using dredged material disposal: USACE determined dredged material disposal at an in-water dispersive site was a suitable management strategy during its analysis. Post-construction, USACE monitors the site and tracks sediment dispersion to ensure it is dispersing as anticipated but discovers the material is not dispersing but accumulating. Now USACE determines, what do we need to do to rectify this difference in condition?

You can apply the overall concept across the board with regards to the purpose of monitoring:

- Determine if it is it within the scope of what was assessed or not.
- If not, what do is necessary to address the difference/changed condition?

We don't monitor every environmental resources to identify a change condition. We identify what needs to be monitored based on the significant and risk of an impact to the resource as well as feasibility of monitoring. Monitoring is often seen as a proposed mitigation to avoid significant impacts to an environmental resource.

Laurie Daniel

Provided a follow-up on what George said in chat:

“What isn't being addressed is for example shorebirds in the intertidal and mudflats in Mud Bay. We don't want a lack of baseline date and then find ourselves with impacts that need to be mitigated. We want to avoid having the impacts and avoid any form of mitigation from the beginning.”

Kayla Campbell

“[Concerns and potential impacts to Mud Bay and shorebirds] is something we're [USACE] aware of. We do have a component of our analysis that focuses on migratory birds and of course, birds as a resource in that area [throughout Kachemak Bay and near the potential project footprint].

“And George has shared with me a lot of information with regards to surf birds lately, but also with birds in general that has been very useful. [The information shared] is in our project records [and available] for reference, as we develop [that analysis].”

“With the baseline data, I want to know from the group: what specific data do you think would be relevant for [USACE] to collect.” For examples:

- Does [something] already exist that can provide baseline data for a resources, like the products the Kachemak Bay Birders provide?
- Is there something that we should be collecting information/data on from your perspective, and if so, what specifically?

More focused, specific questions and concerns would allow use to provided better responses. I would like to know what kind of monitoring you think we should be doing

now to address this concern and then what we should carry forward post construction to validate from your perspectives.

Because for our purposes, we will be looking at what alternative-specific impacts will occur and how that impacts resources, like potentially Mud Bay. If it impacts Mud Bay, those impacts would be captured in the assessment to include considerations of environmental commitment, mitigation, and best management practice measures. We always look to first avoid. If we cannot avoid, we minimize, if we cannot minimize, we consider options of compensation if necessary. So, there is a process USACE goes through once an impact is identified for considering how to reduce adverse impacts.

Impacts are based on the baseline data available and informs what has potential to be impacted by construction of a potential alternative. For migratory birds, we do not have specific abundance data of every species in the area to inform the baseline to be used in our assessment and to inform post-construction monitoring if pursued.

Kris Holderied

"I'm going to ask just because more knowledgeable people are going to weigh in, I assume because you're looking at migratory [birds], you're also talking about seasonality [...and] getting any information on sensitive times of the year. […] The folks who are online have much more information on that than I would."

Kayla Campbell

"We have some resources with the seasonality as well from United States Fish and Wildlife Service and […] the Kachemak Bay Birders Checklist." Through those we have a good idea of seasonality and frequency of species within the area but not specific abundance data, i.e., individual counts.

Hal Shepherd

In regards to Kayla Campbell asking what data needs to be collected:

"I don't really know right off the top of my head about specific studies, but it seems to me that this is sort of from the 30,000 foot view. You want full ecosystem wide watershed wide data."

"On how [will the construction of an alternative impact environmental resources]? […] If it's going be a harbor expansion, [it] might impact the whole watershed. And that [involves] all different kinds of data from everything from […] climate change type data, how our future impacts of expanding the harbor […] exacerbate climate change, impacts with pollution or development, watershed management, fish, fish returning, spawning fish returns, and having said that, I think that a lot of that data […] already exists."

"The research reserve would be the primary source of that data. Data and then other existing organizations like Cook Inlet Keeper and Kachemak Bay Conservation Society and other groups. So, I'm not really suggesting go out and start collecting a massive amount of data because I think a lot of it's already out there."

Kayla Campbell

“We [USACE] do a lot of literature review and have a lot of resources from the group [ESWG] from the very beginning [stages]. We were given a lot of resources for access and looking up existing baseline data from previous studies, with varying the recency.

We had developed Excel Spreadsheets listing literature/databases for site-specific, resource specific information. These have been useful and used as references when developing our environmental analyses.

For purpose of the ESWG, it would be useful for USACE purposes that a group or individual specify specifically what they think would be a solution or a good method or idea for achieving certain goals or rectifying concerns. This would allow us to compare what is provided against our current analyses and ensure consideration of what was shared and how to properly respond. When a question or concern is not specific and more general, it can be difficult to respond to.

We have been gathering the background information, developing existing conditions based off of accessible literature and data, to include our own field work and on the ground investigations we've done.

Laurie Daniel

Provided types of things that would be good to consider with regards to baseline information and determining potential impacts / what could be monitored in the meeting chat:

“For shorebirds, for examples - Species diversity and abundance. How they are using the habitat and where their habitats occur within the impact zone. Food resources availability. Seasonal changes such as how impacts act in summer vs winter ice conditions.”

Kayla Campbell

“A lot of that is being considered. With these [integrated] reports, there is a certain level we get into with our analysis. I would say looking through all of Kachemak Bay and knowing the exact abundance and exact locations [of every specific species] is too in depth [for our analysis]. [The analysis] is higher level than that.”

More of the in-depth analysis is completed where we anticipate/assess there's going to be greater impacts. Focus will be on resources and activities associated with impacts of greater degree (e.g., impacts determined negligible typically have very high level analysis compare to greater impacts anticipated.

Laurie Daniel

Provided in the meeting chat:

“There will be direct impacts in Mud Bay. Which is mig[ratory] bird and marine mammal habitat.”

Kayla Campbell

“That is something we will be looking at [for] our analysis, and you'll see be able to see how that was [incorporated] when the report is released.

Asked Fern if she wanted to add on to the discussion.

Fern Spaulding

“Part of our environmental effects analysis [is] to consider direct impacts and then also indirect impacts and whether there'll be short term adverse impacts, long term adverse impacts or no impact. So, that is all part of our effects analysis that we write up.”

George Matz

“I'd like to comment on that. […] We know that Kachemak Bay is an attraction for avian life and especially water birds […and] that's the shorebirds and migrating [birds] through here and that stopover, and the waterfowl here in the winter time. The attraction is food.”

Provided impacts to the shorebirds and waterfowl will be dependent on impacts to the food source and whether there will be a disruption to it.

“Any disruption to a food source would have a cascade on populations that would be attracted or not leave [Kachemak Bay] basically. I'm not sure there's enough information in terms of what the shorebirds are attracted to in the intertidal areas and the organisms there, and I'm not sure there's a really good understanding of what that is and how that will be impacted.”

Kayla Campbell

“When we talk about direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, one of the things we also associate with those impacts is temporary impacts, permanent impacts. So, things that will persist beyond whatever activity is causing the impact can be considered more of a permanent impact and temporary impacts will be things that are temporarily experienced but will shortly thereafter, within a certain amount of time, refer back to the baseline.” This is another consideration with types of impacts outside of the indirect, direct, and cumulative analyses.

When we look at impacts, oftentimes a construction impact will result in activities that cause temporary impacts and then persisting infrastructure that would cause permanent impacts.

Other factors are also considered when assessing impacts, e.g., local versus regional impacts or other types/characterizations.

When looking at potential impacts to “foraging habitat of shorebirds” we would consider if the impacts are going to be temporary or permit, beneficial or adverse, experience during or post-construction, and more. There are many layers built into the environmental analysis to get more of a holistic view of the potential impacts from construction of a proposed alternative.

Lauren Sutton

Provided the following context in the meeting chat:

“Here are my thoughts: noise, sedimentation or changes in seasonal sea ice that would affect multiple trophic levels (e.g., shorebirds and their prey [epibenthic and infaunal invertebrates, forage fish], increased risk of invasive species, and coastal erosion are pretty high threats for the harbor expansion. We (the KBNERR) have information for tracking invasive species (e.g., European Green Crab, invasive tunicates). My other thought is similar to Kris and Laurie's comments that representation of an impact factor. I would focus impacts based on HDR's current and sedimentation models.”

Lauren followed up verbally:

“One of these could be used for reference. HDR has already made their current and sedimentation models […] based on the […] different options for the harbor expansion. Coming from the research reserve perspective, I would really like to build off of what's been done and […] the bigger focus […] I think Hal makes a really good point [that] watershed ecosystem level wide is really important, but I think given a short timeline and […] little to no funding to do certain things, I think I would come at this from what areas do we think would be most impacted [and] by what and then […] go from there.”

Shared the wave and sedimentation model has already been done to inform impacts, and she would like to know would be information pertaining to the intertidal and greater harbor area food web perspective.

Shared the research reserve put in a proposal to inform the seasonality, specifically of Mud Bay, NOAA but unsure if it will be funded. This is “something […] we [don’t] necessarily have a lot of information on.” Provided there was information: from Kachemak Bay Birders on migratory birds year-round, submerged aquatic vegetation year-round, and marine mammals (but not for a comprehensive baseline study).

“It does definitely seem like the clock is ticking a little bit to get that information.” Mentioned an upcoming meeting with Kayla Campbell and Fern Spaulding to discuss a student’s project and alluded to having three months left to complete the project. “I think one of the ways that we're trying to move forward and provide data [is looking at]: What are our priorities and what do we know?

“One thing I'm I really want to [know…], how do we measure impact?” She agreed that impact will be different for different seasons, but a list of impacts would make it easier to determined what baseline is needed, how to get that information, and if that can be studied in the future.

Kris Holderied

Added a follow up and shared she agreed with everything Lauren said.

Provided that it would be beneficial for more back and forth between USACE, who has experience with these types of projects, and although there can’t be too specific discussion of the impacts at this time, could share the more impacted resources that have been identified in these types of projects. Gave sediment grain size and the substrates from years of dredging at the current harbor as an example.

“The expectation would be for those who have that expertise [to] then bring that to [… the local/site experts, e.g., Lauren, Ross, George, Laurie, and more.” Because I think that Lauren's exactly right, and the more you can […] get your head around what the biggest things might be, the better off we'd be in terms of figuring out what should be measured and monitored.”

Kayla Campbell

“The modeling, the ecological model and the sedimentation and current circulation model, those are going to be really good tools we can use to infer a lot of impacts, especially the [impacts outside the] direct footprint, because if you can model and see that there is a potential impact to the circulation and actually see how that develops [throughout the area, you can make a lot of inferences on, [for example,] Mud Bay. I.e., What's going to happen to Mud Bay due to [a potential] change in circulation. Where we're [the Project Delivery Team] at with those models and how it's progressing, [the models] are still being finalized and the results are still being developed.

“We [USACE] have […] baseline data we can look at right now, but until we actually run the models on the alternative we cannot necessarily quite use [the models] yet. We [USACE] can just do a […] more high level [review and assessment].” Once model results are determined, they can be applied to our assessments for further development, and we are continuing to identify what gaps we have, if we have any, where we can't make a reasonable assumption of the level of impact to a resource and what we can do to mitigate those, which often results in best management practices.

With concerns with having, gathering, or providing baseline data, if you think we don't have it or you want to make sure we have it and/or are considering it, this is a good time to discuss.

Debbie Tobin

With regards to “students who were working in the harbor last summer and out around the edge, where the extension project is proposed. I know Bruce [Schulte] and one of the new students was on the [ESWG Meeting] call last month, but was he able to provide you with an update on any of the data that his student Serena or Shawna collected in the harbor proper?”

Kayla Campbell

Bruce “brought up that they were looking at the human interactions with the marine mammals specifically. […] If I remember correctly, the harbor seal and sea otters in the area [were the focus and] that they have some spots near spit and that the thesis was going to come out [in] June. I did ask him to if he could share that with us so that we can use it, review it, and see how/if we can incorporate it into our analysis.”

“Often that's like the process overall. If when we get notified of stuff like that, we're like, ‘hey, can we see it?’ […and then] determine how [and if] it could be best used in the report.”

Debbie Tobin

“I have those, at least the thesis itself from them. Both successfully defended [their thesis] and they're preparing manuscripts now.” Provided she will share the thesis with USACE via Kayla Campbell.

Kayla Campbell

Confirmed thesis would be best sent to myself and Fern Spaulding.

Debbie Tobin

Provided: “it's a small snapshot and I don't know that it provides much in the way yet of meaningful data for this large project, but at least it's the beginning, of some preliminary data that's being collected.”

“For anybody on the call who isn't familiar, [the students] were looking in the harbor […] and all around from the fishing hole to the other side of the fishing hole at human wildlife interactions [which included] vessel traffic, motorized [and] not motorized, fisherman on shores, the size of the vessel, and the noise in air.”

Shared Bruce will be getting a new student around August who will be expanding upon the projects with his own research and anyone can provide feedback on what would be meaningful to collect during his research.

“We tried to get the vessel speed and the vessel size in the harbor, and there weren't many out except at the harbor for [the] entrance. Otherwise, anything along those lines and then noise level wise or if [the students are] out there and you know can collect turbidity. Initially, [the students] wanted to do some sediment grabs and/or some work to see what was in those locations as far as macro and such go. But for a quick two-year thesis, it was too much to try and accomplish. In any case, this new project and this new student coming on board are very interested in expanding that so any insights anybody has, I'd love to hear”

Kayla Campbell

“If you could make a list and send it our way, we [USACE] might have some data we can share […] that we've learned through our own processes. […] It's usually a mutually beneficial exchange of information. When we do these.”

Kris Holderied

“[…] We are doing an updated improved 3D high resolution circulation model for Kachemak Bay and extending out into [and] around Kodiak grid. It's being tested, has been tested with better freshwater input, which really improves subtidal transports, in particular in surface waters.” It's not the right timing for the feasibility study, but should the study and/or an alternative go on, it'll be useful when available near the end of September of this year, “a hindcast from 1999 to through August of 2024.”

Kayla Campbell

Did you discuss that with KC from HDR?

Kris Holderied

It is under development right now and scheduled to be done in September, so I'll follow up with [KC] as well.]

Kayla Campbell

“If you could, share [it] with us. When we release the draft [report] that's in being, our work [doesn’t] stop. […] One of the processes [for the study and report] is to get comments from the public and consider them [in refining our report and informing our decisions and more]. If you send that [the survey/model data] and it's September, simultaneous with the draft release, [it will still] be useful for our [USACE’s] purposes and something [that] could be incorporated into the final [report] depending on […] what's [determined] useful.

Kris Holderied

“That’s great. […] we have the first one that was done and so at least it's easy to look at the output and get familiar with what the grid is […] because that part is not changing.”

Kayla Campbell

“It'll be useful too, because the feasibility study ends with a 35% design and continue to be optimized as we move forward, if we move forward. In […the] Preconstruction engineering and design phase, […] the design from a feasibility study will be refined in order to optimize the [alternatives] purpose, but also take into consideration environmental mitigation aspects as well.

Lauren Sutton

Provided a recap of her earlier message/discussion input in the meeting chat

“Recap from Lauren who is happy to follow up.... things we know: 1. baseline aquatic invasive species data (KBNERR), 2. Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (Ross's work / NOAA-NCCOS KBL), 3. long-term shorebird and seasonal bird presence (KB Birders), 4. marine mammal and people interaction (Debbie Tobin); things we don't know: 1. forage fish populations, 2. invertebrate communities (epi and infaunal), 3. underwater sound/noise information, 4. Relative land-level rise (KBNERR), 5. Phytoplankton / Harmful Algal Bloom community composition (KBNERR), 6. Seasonal impacts on ecology.”

Kayla Campbell

Provided a remark for each of Lauren’s recap items:

“We know baseline aquatic invasive species data, that is something that we take into consideration in our analysis. Submerged aquatic vegetation, [USACE has been referring to] Ross's work, which Ross has been working with us [on the ecological model development…]. Long-term shorebird and seasonal bird presence, the Kachemak Bay Birders have a lot of that information, which we've been reviewing and that's a very good resource […]. Marine mammal and people interaction coming from Debbie, and then of course, we also have been taking into consideration [ESWG input from] one of

our first meetings in 2023. We discussed the marine mammals [presence in and around Kachemak Bay] based off a list we had[…].

For things recapped as we don't know from Lauren:

Forage fish populations [were a focus…] of our fieldwork within our direct footprint and we have information expanding out from there. For invertebrate communities (epi- and infaunal), [USACE has] been taking a look at that. 3, underwater noise and sound information, that's a really good baseline [metric…that] allows us to inform potential sound [levels] traveling through the water and how far that [sound will] go to. Land-level rise, Kachemak Bay Research National Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR), I've seen that, so that is something we have access to. […] Phytoplankton and the algae bloom community composition, KBNERR has that information." Impacts to ecology was last on Lauren's recap lists.

Hal Shepard

Provided in the meeting chat:

"Under the cumulative impacts analysis, consider how expansion will exacerbate impacts to food sources and temperature increases. How will future expansion affect declining populations of salmon, shore birds and other species, etc. What impacts will there be to critical wetland and other habitat that are under threat from climate change and other cumulative impacts such as development?"

Kayla Campbell

"In these projects, we look at environmental trends and changes and some of those have to do with temperature increases and considerations therein. […] That would be a consideration as we develop our [USACE] analysis. What's going to happen to these resources as we go across the life of the project? […] The analysis is supposed to look at the life of the project, which is [across] 50 years. So, we'll have to take into consideration, how is the environment going to look across that timeframe."

To address the comment on "cumulative impact analysis, I'm guessing the food sources you're talking about [are] the fishing industries as well as personal use. Is that correct?

Hal Shepherd

"I guess I'm talking about, you know, like the "BLOB". I think George and Lori referred to to it to some extent. [The BLOB] has seriously impacted food sources for common murrs and other shorebirds. So, that's definitely […] should be considered as far as the as part of the cumulative impacts analysis, [i.e.,] how would the expansion exacerbate those types of impacts?"

Kayla Campbell

"So, the focus is on competition of humans versus birds and marine mammals and fish in the area. If I'm understanding that correctly, is one of the main focuses."

"So, is the exacerbation of impacts to food sources […] a focus on the […] increasing competition […] for food resources between humans versus [other organisms like fish] marine mammals, and birds within the area?"

Hal Shepherd

“[Especially when with regards to Mud Bay], when I'm talking about [the] expansion. […] We've got decreases in populations of certain species and salmon as well as shorebirds that are happening likely because of climate change, and how is an expansion going to exacerbate that type of stress on those species that they are already experiencing.

Kayla Campbell

“That is something that's taken into consideration.”

George Matz

Provided in the meeting chat:

“If we are talking about impacts, we need to consider tourism and what makes [Kachemak Bay] attractive ([e.g.] animals).”

Kayla Campbell

There are a lot of potential impacts we will look at when assessing a project. The biological feature and resources within Kachemak Bay and how/to what extent those effects are experienced, because that is a key component. But when we look at tourism and what in Kachemak Bay makes it an attractive tourist destination, a lot of that gets incorporated into the economic analysis that is being done. For the environmental analysis portion of the study, focus will be on the environmental resources and not necessarily tourism. Although, “tourism is taken into consideration in the broader [context of the] feasibility study report.”

If the feasibility study lead to an alternative that moves into follow-on phases (Pre-construction Engineering and Design and Construction), there's the Federal project portion and then there's local service facilities. If you have comments, as it relates to potential local service facilities, understand that the Non-Federal Sponsor is the main point of contact, and those types of comments should go through the Non-Federal Sponsor. While we consider it and it is incorporate as part of our feasibility study, the Non-Federal Sponsor is the one who decides the local service facilities. The best way to be heard if you have a local service facility comment is by submitting a comment through the Harbor Expansion website that the city has developed for the study.

With our feasibility study, the Non-Federal Sponsor’s plan for local service facilities is what we use as a basis, and predicated on them. So, getting that information to them, those questions to them, is going to help address your concerns as it relates to local service facilities.

“The size of the basin, the breakwater, as well as the dredging has to do with us [USACE] and then, of course, [is incorporated/considered in] the analysis […] but when it comes to [providing] what will actually be built [local service facility-wise] that's a really good avenue to make sure [your comments are fully considered]. [There] have [been] a lot of interaction points [between the city and the community…] so [they] more than likely already have [an awareness of concerns].”

To summarize, local service facilities are controlled and determined by the Non-Federal Sponsor, i.e., the city.

Lauren Sutton

Hey. Hey, Kayla, I'm sorry. I had to jump off while you were reading my novel. Were there any questions about that?

Kayla Campbell

“I don't think there was, but if there was, they can speak now.”

No follow-up comments were mentioned.

Kayla Campbell

“Lauren, […USACE has] a lot of access to these [sources of information] simply through what you've shared prior. We have […] all that stuff you shared prior in our records.”

George Matz

“The only thing I'm not clear [on]…], I'm assuming that this harbor will have ships, will have channels, and there will be lights and stuff like that. And I don't think anyone has ever talked about the placing of these things and channels. […] The concern I have is the islets on the other side of the Bay. Those are really important areas for roosting and nesting, and if you start putting a bunch of lights on there- flashing lights-, […] channel markers, and stuff like that. I don't think this has been discussed and just how the channels the navigation aids that are needed to get the boats to the harbor [will be placed].

Kayla Campbell

“Our Coast Guard point of contact was also able to see that [question George provided via email about navigation aids], and he was able to give […] a response. And of course, we're in the feasibility phase and we will reach a 35% design at the end [of this phase]. If it moves into the Preconstruction engineering and design phase, that is when we'll optimize and refine the design of the alternative, and so this is subject to change. [… what is provided] is just a potential path forward being considered.

“And what I had from him […] is we don't see the need for more than the three fixed aids on driven pilings to mark the interest channel and lights on the end of the breakwaters.”

Tried to find further information in my email to inform this but was not successfully.

Provided the concern to impacts from navigation aids to the island and islets is unlikely to be a real concern, but the comment will be captured in the Non-Meeting Correspondence Tacker, so it is in the record for the study

“Once the draft [report is] released, I would say if your concern wasn't addressed […] I would highly recommend you just resubmit or submit a comment at that point in time, but right now it doesn't look like that's going to be a problem from what I'm seeing. Of course, I'm not the designer [or] the Coast Guard, so as far as that goes, I can only give you know my opinion on the matter, not a subject matter expert one.

“We are discussing navigation aids and you know, there's consideration with navigation aids as it is for the whole project, and how do we avoid minimize impacts to any environmental resources.

Laurie Daniel

Provided in the meeting chat:

“Kayla, when we spoke a couple weeks ago, you said the Feasibility study ends with 15% design development. But today you are saying 35%? That's a significant jump. What changed?”

Kayla Campbell

With consideration to prior discuss over phone between Kayla and Laurie, “[…] maybe I misspoke about with the feasibility study ending at a 15% […] The 15% is what we base our TSP [Tentatively Selected Plan] off of.

“That is the plan we continue forward and refine into what's basically known as the preferred alternative […or] Recommended. Plan in the case of the feasibility study. […] Within this time period, before we reached a draft [report release], we're going to have a 15% design in order to determine what our Tentatively Selected Plan is, [which..] we anticipate to be the plan we recommend, [i.e., the Recommended Plan].”

The TSP will be progress and be the focus of the draft report released for public and agency comment. “From there, we'll receive comments and continue to refine it until at the end of the feasibility phase, [when] we'll have a 35% design [and Recommended Plan].”

“And then that 35% is going to be the starting point for the next phase should it move on to the next phase of Pre-construction Engineering and Design.

Note, the Non-meeting Correspondence Tracker will capture the conversation between Laurie and Kayla that took place over phone prior to this meeting, and reflect design percentage in accordance with what was described in this meeting.

In summary “the 15% […] is to inform which alternative we think is going to be our Recommended Plan, which will be identified in the draft [report] and then refined to a 35% [by the end of the study].”

“There's actually metrics that determine what level [the] design [is at, and] there's specific metrics [met] to hit those milestones for design.”

As an environmental lead we do not focus on the percentage of design but rather the design itself. Hydrology and Hydraulics Engineers do a lot of the design work and are the subject matter experts therein.

Laurie Daniel

Provided in meeting chat:

“I also understood that there would be expanded env[ironmental] analysis in the second phase of the study, after the Feasibility Study is complete. Not just engineering. Is this correct?”

Kayla Campbell

“We [USACE] will continue to do environmental activities to confirm that the analysis we did in feasibility remains applicable.”

For example, we're doing sediment testing and analysis in this phase to inform our next steps and when we will do a further sediment analysis in Preconstruction engineering and design phase to ensure that is consistent with what we had essentially determined in this phase. If testing in the feasibility phase shows no contamination, it would be reasoned that the material's not contaminated and the study would move forward under that kind of assumption that we would then validate with sufficient full compliance in the next phase. If you identify you actually do have contamination, that's going to change a lot of things.

So, we continue to validate what we identified, discussed, and discovered in the feasibility phase, and should there be a significant change or difference to address it before we continue forward.

Furthermore, we coordinate and consult for various environmental laws and regulations in the Preconstruction engineering and design phase wherein we get issued permits or authorizations, regulatory guidance, and/or stipulations. These are incorporated into the design and operations, as applicable.

For example, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Often if they have a special area permit or fish habitat permit they issue on a project, you'll see a fish window and it will specify that certain work activities cannot occur during certain fish windows to avoid impacts to fish during significant life stage activity.

"It's a continuous environmental compliance, although it differs at each stage.
So like with the design, to how do we incorporate and/or mitigate impacts with our design beyond just meeting what we need to, to make the project complete and stable?"

"Did I answer your question, Laurie?

Laurie Daniel

Provided in the meeting chat.

"Kind of. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, my concern is identifying and preventing impacts before any final decisions or construction development begins. Not to mitigate afterwards. Esp[ecially] in regards to invert[ebrate] and vert[ebrate] animal species and all plants species."

Kayla Campbell

"A lot of this process [environmental analysis/feasibility study] will address that. […] With what we know [and] what we have available to us, we do identify how to avoid and minimize impacts before construction begins. We have to go through these phases [feasibility and preconstruction engineering and design phases] before we move on [to construction]. In the preconstruction engineering and design phase, if something is identified that is significantly off from what we covered in feasibility it could [lead] into some additional environmental analysis, like a supplemental environmental analysis or some other form of action.

Laurie Daniel

Provided in the meeting chat:

“The tricky point could be a shared definition of significant in regards to impacts.”

Kayla Campbell

“That's the difficult part, some things are pretty defined [with regards to] what's significant versus not significant. For example, if you jeopardize a population of endangered species, that's a significant impact. But for example, just taking say 1 fish, that is unlikely a significant impact unless you're talking about a certain species, if it's endangered. Then you take it to next level, is that endangered species population now going to be jeopardized because of that. And that is the question that we have to consult and work with the applicable regulatory agency to determine the significance of [with respect to endangered species].”

Defining significance is not just USACE unbacked opinion on what is significant or not, and “when we [USACE] do our [environmental] analysis, one of our responsibilities is to define [how we are determining the level of impact], and typically try to look at [characterizing impacts] by resource sometimes.

“It's not always the case, but you'll see an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement that will define a general basis of assessing an impact by giv[ing] a range or some details and description [each] qualifier [of] impact means [in relation to…] level of impact experienced [on the resource], and it'll do that for the overall consequences of your proposed action or project.”

“Sometimes, though, they'll deviate from certain categories [or qualifying language]. Especially […] when the regulatory language has a very specific meaning and description of how to assess those impacts. I.e., Endangered Species Act has a very clear way of defining what types of impacts and level impact is experienced, and they have [specific] wording. National Historic Preservation Act and cultural resources, they also have very specific wording and metrics to look out for determining significance of impacts or insignificance of impacts.”

“When we don't have that very specific statutory language, we try to define it the best we can so that when you as the public or an agency looks at it, you understand our thought process and what we mean [E.g., minor impact or major impact or insignificant impact]. […] You have to look at each report by itself when it comes to those non-statutory-type language determinations. And yes, it is very tricky to kind of define that significance level depending on the resource.”

Any other questions on that specifically or anything else?

No further comments were provided.

Kayla Campbell

“One of the goals we'll have now is to digest the transcript and we're going to end the notes [by] essentially pull[ing] out what main topics [that] were discussed at this stage [of the meeting]. So [topics] as a highlight, but we're going to provide the full transcript as well.”

“And my goal is also to provide the meeting chat log.”

“Of course, there's going to be some offset between the transcript and the chat log, but just for providing everyone access to what you who have attended had access to. As you know, some people don't join these meetings. Some intentionally don't because they feel they don't have much to provide or contribute, and so I just want to make sure they have everything that we can give them to feel like they did attend and be able to respond to it and or add to it.”

“This is the first time [using the transcript function tor record meeting discussions], but the goal is to refine it as much as we can as we continue forward Maybe this worked out perfectly, and we'll see how well it worked out once I get through digesting it, and maybe we can just leave it like this as we continue forward.”

“If you have recommendations for format, on how we run meetings, on how we issue notes, those are always appreciated. This is not a typical thing for us to do, and that's not because it's not needed it's just new, [and] we haven't done it before, so your feedback's greatly appreciated. I appreciate it in all forums, and we'll just try to make it better as we progress forward.

“Notes should come out by the end of next week, hopefully earlier than later, and then I'll be about a week turn around or more requesting for feedback and then following that will issue the final notes. Somewhere within there I'll put it in a day and time for the next meeting. There is potential that we won't have one at the end of June, but rather the beginning of July. Because it takes a little bit more than a month […] turnaround [between meetings].”

“We also are going to try to do a workshop touchpoint for that ecological model. That's a lot of work to do and fit in before our next meeting. […] Be aware [that] as we move forward, we'll be trying to keep things more open-ended [and focused] more [on] discussion back and forth topics. Whether it's an agenda topic [or something else], we look forward to hearing […your] recommend[ations…] to guide discussion in a way people feel is good or covering a concern they have, or that should be had, on this project.”

Fern Spaulding

“I don't have anything to add except the implementing regulations for [USACE] like procedures for implementing NEPA is Engineer Regulation 200-2-2 just for reference, if folks want to look it up.”

Provided references in chat:

ER 200-2-2 and 33 CFR Part 230

Kayla Campbell

Provided closing remarks and ended the meeting.

----------MEETING ENDED

Follow-on Feedback from Speakers:

Note "[ ]" indicate revisions for clarity outside of minor edits. Blue indicates post-meeting feedback from USACE from received comments.

Hal Shepherd provided a follow-up for his comments made during the May ESWG Meeting:

- [As a follow-up to his comment on page 7 of the transcript:] I asked a question about whether the Corp[s] will be drafting an EIS or whether it will limit the analysis to an [Environmental Assessment (EA)]. KBWC believes that the impacts from the expansion will be significant no matter which alternative is chosen and that an EIS is therefore essential. However, there still has been no response to the question about when the decision will be made between an EA or EIS. Given the extremely short timeline after the design is chosen, we are concerned that the agency will choose the simple EA and somehow turn the analysis from the engineering or other studies in the Feasibility Study into that EA. Even if the agency choses to do an EIS, if the timeline for this process is drastically reduced from the standard 1-2 years to just 30 days as anticipated by the Trump administration, such analysis for a project of this scope would be essentially useless.
  The release of the Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document in September will provide what level of NEPA Document (i.e., EIS or EA) was found appropriate based on the analysis and information available up until that point in time and could be considered an initial determination of USACE. However, please note, the document released is a DRAFT and as the study and environmental analysis and compliance activities progress, the level of NEPA analysis initially determined appropriate can be subject to change. Furthermore, alternative designs continued to be refined/developed in the Pre-construction Engineering and Design Phase which continues to take into consideration the environmental resources and potential impacts as well as requires continued consultations with applicable environmental regulatory agencies.
- [As a follow-up to his comment on page 10 of the transcript:] It notes that due to the significant impacts from the expansion, I mentioned the need to analyze the impacts on the full Kachemak Bay Watershed, and rather [than] go out and collect additional data, to rely on KBNERR and other institutions to apply existing data.
  Using the best available information and literature from reputable sources like KBNERR is a standard practice when USACE conducts its environmental analyses.
- [With regards to his comments a few pages later:] I put in the chat a need to include the impacts from climate change in the cumulative impacts section of the environmental analysis. However, it doesn't seem like any concrete information about what the Corps plans to study as far as environmental impacts of the expansion. George Matz for example, keeps asking for something like a checklist of all the materials they have reviewed and which ones are being incorporated into the analysis.
  This will be addressed through the release of the draft report in September.

- [Attachment mentioned in this comment is provided at the end of these transcript notes:] Our proposals for necessary studies are summed up in the attached scoping comments we submitted on the project in May of 2023. In general, as part of the process, KBWC proposed the “Climate Change Impacts” (CCI) Alternative for the Corps to consider in the range of alternatives. This alternative is based on the fact that the increasing impacts of climate change on the marine and freshwater ecosystems in the Kachemak Bay Watershed are unavoidable and therefore, any impacts to such ecosystem from the expansion, change of location or other alterations of the Harbor must be mitigated so that they do not exacerbate the impacts of climate change. However, to my knowledge this alternative has not been included in the preferred alternative or any others that the Corps is considering. We, however, believe the CCI is essential to adequately consider the potential environmental impacts of large-scale industry related to the harbor expansion on the fresh water and marine ecosystems health of Kachemak Bay and greater Homer.

  We appreciate the sharing of the scoping comments for consideration as we further develop our environmental documents and analysis. Current and anticipated environmental trends (e.g., sea level rise and emission impacts to air quality) are considered with impact analyses and designs of alternatives. Note, many of the content of the scoping comments provided are specific to the City of Homer and not within USACE’s control (e.g., updating of the City of Homer Adaption Action Plan and Climate Action Plan).

May 25, 2023

Kachemak Bay Watershed Collaborative
info@homerharborexpansion.com

RE: Scoping - Homer Harbor Expansion

Dear City of Homer**:**

As part of the scoping process for potential environmental and social impacts and costs and benefits of expanding the Homer the Kachemak Bay Watershed Collaborative proposes the "Climate Change Impacts" (CCI) Alternative for the Corps to consider in the range of alternatives. This alternative includes the fact that the increasing impacts of climate change on the marine and freshwater ecosystems in the Kachemak Bay Watershed are unavoidable and therefore, any impacts to such ecosystem from expansion, change of location or other alterations of the Harbor must be mitigated so that they do not exacerbate the impacts of climate change.

Potential impacts of large-scale industry related to the harbor expansion on the fresh water and marine ecosystems health of Kachemak Bay and greater Homer including:

1) Invasive species from ballast water;

2) Water, air and noise pollution and carbon emissions from barges, tankers, cruise ships and new industries;

3) Impacts to water quality from boat work on the spit;

4) Potential filling of wetlands to accommodate storage of smaller vessels or to dispose of dredge spoils;

5) Increased carbon emissions resulting in higher fresh and marine water temperatures which are harmful to fish and marine mammals.

In order to mitigate the above and other impacts, the CCI Alternative should include the following actions:

1) The Adaptation actions included in the City of Homer's 2009 Climate Action Plan including:

- ○ Developing management plans specific to Port & Harbor facilities on the Homer Spit (construction, maintenance, dredging, etc.) that take into account climate change impacts;

- ○ Taking climate change into consideration in all long-range planning efforts (e.g., transportation, land use, Homer Spit, emergency management, economic development);

○ To date, efforts to reduce emissions from Harbor and Port operations have been the conversion to LED lights and to gas heating.

2) Update the City of Homer Adaption Action Plan as part of development of the KBWC Watershed Resiliency Plan;

3) Analyze how the City might lead in the "greening" of American ports by upgrading, modernizing, and decarbonizing its port infrastructure and operations, as outlined in the White House's Ocean Climate Action Plan;

4) The scope of the environmental impacts of the expansion and how it could exacerbate climate impacts must address both the marine and freshwater ecosystems of the entire watershed;

5) Analyze how the expansion will be consistent with President Bidens "America the Beautiful Initiative to offset climate impacts on fish and wildlife habitat by preserving 30 percent of the Nation's federal lands by 2030;

6) Analyze How the expansion will be consistent with the 6th IPCC Report which states if global warming is to be kept below 1.5 degrees C., how any new emissions of greenhouse gasses must be offset by equivalent removals from the atmosphere and achieving carbon neutrality before 2050;

7) Analyze how the Expansion will be consistent with President Biden's multiple directives to apply principals of environmental justice, use of traditional knowledge and engage in government-to-government consultation related to Alaska Native tribal communities and governments.

We look forward to continuing to work with Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Homer and all other stakeholders to ensure the Harbor Expansion is consistent with a resilient Kachemak Bay Watershed.

Please contact Hal Shepherd at (907)491-1355; halshepherdwpc@gmail.com if you have any questions regarding these comments.

RECORDED MEETING

Meeting Minutes
Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
July 11, 2025
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm AKDT

Administrative Information

Meeting: July Environmental Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

Meeting Type/Location: Virtual / Microsoft Team

Meeting Topic(s): Eelgrass Mitigation, Herring, Sea pen, Environmental Analysis and Process, Benthic sampling

Meeting Agenda:

- Administrative Tasks
  - Attendance
  - Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"
- Eelgrass Mitigation Brainstorming Session
- Open Discussion

Attendance (10 Individuals): *Name (Organization, if Applicable)*

Project Delivery Team (PDT) Members (4 Individuals)			
Kayla Campbell	*USACE*	*Fern Spaulding*	*USACE*
Jenny Carroll	*NFS*	*KC Kent*	*HDR*
Non-PDT Members (6 Individuals)			
Jessica Shepherd	*KBWC/KBNERR*	*Laurie Daniel*	*KBRR Community Council*
Caroline Wilkinson	*NOAA Nav*	*David Erickson*	*KBB*
Susan Sturges	*EPA*	*Donna Aderhold*	*City of Homer, Gulf Watch Alaska Program*

EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
FANWRS = Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends = The Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
KBB = Kachemak Bay Birders
KBCS= Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
KBRR = Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
KBWC = Kachemak Bay Watershed Council
NCCOS = National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
NFS = Study Non-Federal Sponsor
NOAA Nav = NOAA Navigation Manager
UAA = University of Anchorage Alaska
USCG = United States Coast Guard
USACE = United States Army Corps of Engineers
WKU = Western Kentucky University

Status of Previous Meeting To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the previous ESWG meeting(s).

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.
Gr	Individuals that have acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance have been placed on the new email distribution list and will receive ESWG information and future meeting invites. Original participants who have not, will be added at the time they acknowledge/agree to the guidance.
G	**By June 6, 2025:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will share May 30, 2025, Meeting Minutes for initial member feedback and Non-meeting Correspondence Tracker via email. **Suspense shifted to June 13, 2025, due to effort to clean up meeting transcript.*
G	**By June 13, 2025:** Members will share Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil **Suspense shifted to June 20, 2025, due to effort to clean up meeting transcript.*
G	**By June 20, 2025:** Kayla Campbell will share Final Meeting Minutes with ESWG and the tentative July meeting agenda. **Suspense shifted to June 27, 2025, due to effort to clean up meeting transcript. It was shared July 2, 2025.*

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response
Will there will be a plan to include a survey of ecosystem services of this project (e.g., carbon sequestration in mud bay, eel grass beds as habitat for multiple species, etc)?	Part of the Feasibility Study process will be proposing mitigations to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for adverse environmental impacts. These can include post-construction surveys, monitoring, and/or studies related to ecosystem services. Mitigations may be required and/or recommended through various environmental consultation/coordination processes as well.
Are there sediment/current circulation studies based on the earlier harbor expansion and its impacts in Kachemak Bay? To include any monitoring work done during or after construction to evaluate changes/impacts.	There are multiple studies in relation to Kachemak Bay sedimentation and current circulation that would inform such information in and around the Homer Spit. However, I could not find anything specific to the previous expansion. This does not mean it does not exists.
What is the relative size of potential Homer Harbor expansion alternatives in the study compared to the Port of Nome, Akutan, and other navigation projects? What USACE	The Port of Nome is very similar in the terms of types of activities proposed and the overall project based off current alternatives (i.e., harbor expansion). However, the Nome/Norton Sound environment is different

Information Request	Response
projects are the most similar to what is being assessed in the Homer Feasibility Study?	than that in Homer/Kachemak Bay. There could be a “size” difference as well. However, comparison of the size of the proposed expansion at Nome compared to the Homer Navigation Improvements Study alternatives cannot be inferred at this time.
Is ice modeling available from past harbor expansion or an option for current study?	None has been identified, but it is something that can be considered for the current study.
Can a list of environmental studies that are implemented for USACE projects similar to the Homer Navigation Improvements Study be shared to provide a general idea of the types of studies USACE has typically implemented? This is to include monitoring or surveys that are implemented during the feasibility, design phase, construction phase, or post-construction.	This RFI will be addressed in the May 30, 2025, meeting discussions as an agenda topic. Rather than Environmental Studies, USACE conducts environmental activities pursuant to informing the environmental baseline and potential impacts of an alternative with follow-on actions to validate assessments, wherein determined necessary/appropriate.

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study’s project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

To Do(s) and Request(s) for Information

This section lists out the "to do(s)" (i.e., identified tasks) or requests for information that were identified during the meeting.

To Do(s)

Status	Task
Gr	Organizations will identify a representative and share such with USACE.
Gr	Individuals will self-determine if they are "Required" or "As Required" at next ESWG meeting based off the provided agenda.
Gr	Individuals that have acknowledged/agreed to the ESWG Guidance have been placed on the new email distribution list and will receive ESWG information and future meeting invites. Original participants who have not, will be added at the time they acknowledge/agree to the guidance.
G	**By July 25, 2025:** Kayla Campbell (USACE) will share July 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes for initial member feedback and the tentative August 2025 meeting agenda.
Y	**By August 8, 2025:** Members will share Meeting Minutes feedback with Kayla Campbell at kayla.n.campbell@usace.army.mil.
Y	**By August 15, 2025:** Kayla Campbell will share Final Meeting Minutes with ESWG and the August meeting agenda will be finalized.

Note 1: Status indicator: **G**reen = complete, **Y**ellow = pending/on-going, **R**ed = modification or requires information, **B**lack = no longer applicable, **Gr**ey = enduring
Note 2: Bold, italicized font are remarks.

Request(s) for Information (RFI)

Information Request	Response

Note: This table represents RFIs from ESWG member for study's project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and the City of Homer)

Summary and Highlights

The meeting discussions focused on brainstorming potential ideas for eelgrass compensatory mitigation that USACE could consider with regards to potential impacts to eelgrass from the construction of an action alternative. Eelgrass brainstorming discussions included discussion of eelgrass maps with respect to alternative footprints, and it was provided that USACE looks for compensatory mitigation that provides geographically proximal and resource similar benefits to the impacted resource, in this case, eelgrass. The study ecological model was also brought up as it will provide submerged aquatic vegetation, including eelgrass specific, metrics to inform compensatory mitigation requirements. Ideas included, but not limited to, moving the eelgrass to another location and preserving eelgrass by buying land and/or implementing conservation measures to shoreline and in-water activities. Success and feasibility were topics of discussion with relation to ideas as well.

A summary of topics discussed during Open Discussion are as follows:

- Herring Spawning and Sea Pens
- Current Array of Alternatives
- Funding of Next Phase
- Environmental Analysis Concerns
- Benthic Sampling
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process with an Integrated Feasibility Report

See Detailed Notes section for further details.

Detailed Notes

- **Administrative Tasks**
  - **Attendance**
  - **Status of Previous "To Do(s)" and "Request(s) for Information"**
- **Eelgrass Mitigation Brainstorming Session Notes**

Donna A – Any maps of the eelgrass with respect to alternatives? That would determine the types of impacts/level of impacts?

Kayla – Eelgrass overlaps with the footprint, and alternatives will result in some loss of habitat. Eelgrass would be destroyed if built on top of it, and not sure if it can be moved?

Jessica S – Can you move eelgrass? Sarah Tregar at University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) did a Master and/or PhD study on eelgrass in Mud Bay, associated with the College of Ocean Fisheries and Sciences at UAF. Now with United States Geological Survey (USGS) in Juneau. Donna A. can send contact information over.

Kayla – It would be likely that that data may have been incorporated into EcoMod that NOAA is ground-truthing. We should check if UAF data was incorporated. There's been some attempts to move eelgrass via mats/plots but it sounds like it is not always successful.

Donna A – Compensatory mitigation could be setting aside some area to make it not available for development? What would be the parameters for that?

Kayla – There's compensatory mitigation goals, and how those metrics of compensation are met. What resources could be compensated within a geographical area? See what paths are options to move forward? What can be identified?

David E. – What about the purchase of intertidal habitat on the Homer Spit that is currently privately owned? Outer side of the Homer Spit has private lands that could potentially be purchased as compensatory mitigation?

Kayla – Perhaps, could the city purchase this land as compensatory mitigation?

Jenny C – Purchasing land on the outside of the spit, how does the erosion there impact eelgrass and if erosion control could result in some compensatory mitigation? Could it be a project like that with the State work?

Kayla – Perhaps an erosion solution/project that supports nature-based solution? But a separate project would have an unknown scope.

Laurie D – Since you are working with Ross, what does he think about compensatory mitigation? Mud Bay and the accumulation of sediment there may be an opportunity to add protection to that area? Mud Bay may be impacted in multiple ways.

Kayla – Putting in protections for higher value eelgrass habitat in Mud Bay could be an option.

David E. – Properties on the inside of Homer Spit with alkali grass that could be another resource with habitat value?

Donna A – Parcel near Seldovia that is private but assumed to be public, it's a lagoon that has herring spawning. Difficulty is it is private but it's perceived as public – so how can you compensatory mitigation for that?

Kayla – Enforcement is a difficult aspect; how can you ensure that protected areas for mitigation remain as such is a hard thing. If it's private then how does that work? Can you actually successfully enforcement that?

David E – Maybe buyout, or do a conservation easement on the private property if selling isn't feasible. Kachemak Heritage Land Trust may be an option for pursing that.

Jessica S – Perhaps the lands adjacent to Beluga Slough (Homer Sponge, below the boat yard) that are wetlands should be acquired since they are being developed.

Laurie D – What are the Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) model results in area near Miller's Landing? Are there eelgrass beds further up? Could you tie the SAV to the offshore intertidal near the Homer Sponge area to elevate the entire area for compensatory mitigation. Would this fall in the impact zone? E.g., Marine traffic through that area. Ed Berg who teaches field classes in Kachemak Bay through University of Alaska (UA) may be able to provide more info on geology of the area.

Kayla – Rough look at the area near Miller's Landing based on the current SAV model results looks like a possibility for compensatory mitigation. NOAA is needing to ground-truth the results of his SAV model.

David E. – Miller's Landing offshore area does have eelgrass back there.

George M shared a follow-up comment to the meeting notes via email on July 27, 2025:

"Given the winter presence of Steller's Eiders in the Homer Spit area and that it has been designated a threatened species, this species would be a good candidate for looking into the association of a particular species with eelgrass. While there may be little information specific to Kachemak Bay, there have been studies in similar areas that demonstrate the importance of eelgrass to Steller's Eiders. Below is a paragraph from Birds of the World account for Steller's that provides an example (https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/steeid/cur/introduction). This account has much more on Steller's Eider diet, foraging, and non-breeding (winter) habitat:
"Based on distribution and foraging behavior in Izembek Lagoon, foraging is often associated with eelgrass meadows (Metzner 1993). Invertebrate diversity at Izembek Lagoon is correlated with eel-grass biomass, and invertebrate distribution may be related to presence or absence of eelgrass beds (O'Claire et al. 1979). Plant biomass and diversity of microhabitats within eelgrass beds provides excellent invertebrate substrates (Kikuchi and Peres 1977, Kikuchi 1980). Sessile organisms (e.g., marine worms) attach to eelgrass blades and moving epifauna (e.g., amphipods, aquatic sow bugs, echinoderms, snails) settle, cling, or crawl on leaf blades (Kikuchi and Peres 1977, Mcconnaughey and McCroy 1979). Eelgrass meadows support a faunal community of greater density than surrounding nonvegetated habitats (Rasmussen 1977), often approaching thousands of individuals/m^2(Mcconnaughey 1977). Thus, at some locations, foragers likely attracted to abundance and distribution of invertebrates associated with eelgrass or other marine plants."

George M shared a comment with respect to the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area (and its tie to eelgrass) in the same email as follows:

"Also, I think we need to take a close look at where the proposed harbor expansion and entrance channel would be with respect to the boundaries of the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area. The purpose of CHA's, according to AS 16.20.500, "is to protect and preserve habitat areas especially crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife, and to restrict all other uses not compatible with that primary purpose." If part of the proposed project is within the Kachemak Bay CHA, a Special Area Permit will be required and the project will need to demonstrate compatibility with the CHA purpose. That may be a hard task, if (according to the Eelgrass Mitigation Brainstorming Session Notes) "Eelgrass overlaps with the footprint, and alternatives will result in some loss of habitat. Eelgrass would be destroyed if built on top of it, and not sure if it can be moved?" An alternative not mentioned in this session is to redesign the project to

avoid conflict with Kachemak Bay CHA. The entrance channel in particular seems to be the closest to the boundary. Obviously, more discussion is needed."

Kayla – Appreciate the information and concerns provided to help inform the analysis being developed for this study.

Open Discussion

- **Herring Spawning and Sea Pens**

Donna A. – have you documented herring spawning?

Kayla – We have not. We have done fieldwork and been writing an essential fish habitat (EFH) assessment though. Do you have information?

Donna A. – Ross's colleague Paul Cziko observed herring spawning near the riprap near the vessel haulout area. Across from the load launch ramp area. Also, sea pens were observed near the Deep Water Dock.

Kayla – We too have observed sea pens in the area of the direct footprint.

Donna A – Is there any other info on forage fish besides herring?

Kayla – Our EFH assessment includes forage fish.

- **Current Array of Alternatives**

Jessica S – Where are the alternatives at? Have they been refined?

Kayla – We have an array of alternatives moving through the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) milestone that will be the basis of determining the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) based on review of the economic, environmental, and other alternative variables. The array is consistent with the array the city shared in their last public meeting for the project. The current alternatives are all within the same general area/footprint rather than different distinct geographic locations. Alternatives are at about a 15% design at TSP. At the end of feasibility, it will be a Recommended Plan of 30/35% design and transition to Preconstruction Engineering and Design with approval from Congress. Environmental is continually considered throughout USACE's project process. TSP is a tentatively selected plan of what we may recommend. The public comment period provides feedback on TSP and may become a Recommended Plan depending on feedback.

- **Funding of Next Phase**

Jessica S – Is there any indication if the funding for the next phase will be there?

Kayla – That's outside the scope of my knowledge. It depends on Congress.

Jenny C – Essentially, we are just doing a feasibility study, and identify if there is a feasible design. If it is feasible then it can/may be considered in Congress to go to the next phase. All needs to be taken into account (environmental, safety, economics).

Kayla C – Want to add that feasibility is not just "can / are you able to build it" but also takes into consideration the Federal Interest in the project.

- **Environmental Analysis Concerns**

Laurie D – The public comment period is at end of September, but the Project Delivery Teram (PDT) was supposed to pick a TSP at the end of June based on original timeline but now we are in July. That shortens the timeline on all of this and there's a concern that there's not a lot of time to do the environmental analysis/assessment to the TSP? Recent city council meeting, HDR said 1B was what USACE was leaning towards but suggested City suggest plan 2. Also,

Steller's eiders have been brought up for consideration of impacts from all alternative designs – past, present, and future foraging habitat.

Kayla – We don't wait until TSP to do our analysis/assessment. We start developing the analysis and assessments prior to TSP. For example, baseline existing conditions, understanding potential impacts, understanding the overlapping project footprints which does make this easier to refine in terms of impacts. We need the TSP decision point to refine everything based on the TSP. Regarding Steller's eiders surveys in the winter were conducted, which are being compiled into the differences in historical counts of Steller's eiders from 2001—2003 past Homer feasibility study. The release of the draft report does not indicate a stop to our environmental analysis and assessment.

Laurie D shared the following via email on August 8, 2025:

"Stakeholders raised a number of important points, but again very little substantive information was shared by the Corps about what the env assmt is actually composed of. Like an expanded outline with references to data sources used. The env assmt work is not at all transparent to the community. That it's being incorporated into the overall Feasibility Study in an iterative method only tells us the process, not the assessment details. The fact that the impact assessment is focused on the proposed expansion footprint and not considering the surrounding environment equally, or even more, important is very concerning."

Kayla – The environmental analysis being conducted by USACE within the integrated report for the study is underdevelopment and the details you mentioned in your email will be shared when appropriate within the NEPA process for our study, which is the release of the draft report. There is a misconception of the footprint of analysis in your comment as well. The general footprint/area that would be impacted by potential construction alternatives being considered under this study has been used to help focus discussions. However, we have previously stated and clarified that impacts assessed are associated wherein they are reasonably anticipated to occur – i.e., this includes impacts to the surrounding environment.

- **Benthic Sampling**

David E – Can you update us on the status of intertidal shallow subtidal benthic sampling?

Kayla – We covered this in the April meeting this year, but we did bottom trawling, eDNA, beach seining, underwater camera work, waterfowl surveys, sediment grabs, and desktop study. We also will have geotechnical survey and sediment sampling this summer.

- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process with an Integrated Feasibility Report**

Donna A – Jenny C can speak to City standpoint, but one thing that may be confusing for folks is how things feel out of sync. Seems like environmental is behind the engineering. Past National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) experiences involve a range of alternatives. This process seems like it's being refined to only be No Action alternative and the TSP. Then that is taken further to refine the design with considering the environment. Is that the process?

Kayla – The way you described the process is applicable to how the process works. The TSP and the No Action Alternative are what are carried forward throughout the environmental analysis portion of the report.

Fern – The integrated feasibility report will provide how USACE screened out alternatives and how they compared to each other to show how we made it to the TSP.

Jenny C – The process is an integrated feasibility report and environmental report viewed through different lenses (i.e., NED, OSE, comprehensive benefits) through an iterative process

to identify what is the best solution across those categories to the problem. USACE has been involved in and open about the process, but in the end TSP decision lies with USACE as the Federal decision but there can be an Locally Preferred Plan. This process is a way to determine good solutions, which includes the no action alternative.

Kayla – That is well said Jenny C, and to reiterate feasibility does not end with a complete design but a 30/35% design.

Jessica S – Appreciate the amount input USACE has allowed for the Homer community.

Kayla – We appreciate the information sharing and involvement from the community. There has been a lot of valuable input.

--- Meeting Ended.

Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker

Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
Environmental Stakeholder Working Group
Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker

Disclaimer: Meeting Minutes will entail the information/comments/responses as it relates to a meeting's discussion. Thus, such content may not be reflected in this document that is focused on capturing information shared via email/letter and as it pertains to development of ESWG specific documents. Furthermore, due to the nature of the study (a process that develops and changes overtime), past comments may / may not change prior to the creation of the final document. The responses in this document should be considered to supercede correspondence prior to the date in Column A "Comment Locked Date" and are subject to change based on new information and the active regulatory landscape.

Comment #	Commenter	Page / Section / Topic	Summarized Comment	Responder	Comment Response	Misc. Notes
Guide-000	From July 10, 2023, Meeting, Discussions	Section 3f.	Develop the voting/decision making process recommended. City of Homer uses a "Fist to Five" Method when conducting voting with large groups and it will allow a gradient/more informed voting scheme than "majority rules" as annotated in the initial draft of the guidance provided to the group. However, "Fist to Five" would need to be modified due to the nature of meetings being virtual.	Kayla Campbell	Updated version of the guidance shared 7/11/2023 that reflected meeting discussions reflected that voting will use a "One to Five" (modified Fist to Five) method to all a spectrum for voting that would enhance follow-on discussion and/or decisions.	Comment came up during the ESWG meeting held July 10, 2023, when the group reviewed the guidance document in order to illicit feedback/comments/discussion. This content was updated prior to sending the guidance out to the rest of the group requesting final comments prior to document finalization and implementation.
Guide-001	Jack Wiles	Section 3f.	Conflict Resolution - how resolved?	Kayla Campbell	Updated version of the draft guidance shared 7/11/2023 to the ESWG along with the Meeting Minutes reflected a voting scheme to facilitate decision-making as it relates to conflict resolution. Discussion in combination with voting will be the default method of resolution. Voting will be described further in the memo, but rather than majority rules, it was switched to a method that depicts more of a spectrum as it relates to potential varying perspectives/opinions.	Comment included in email sent from Jack Wiles on 7/10/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
Guide-002	Jack Wiles	Overall	Financial Data and Cost Benefit Analysis - part of the Working Group consideration	Kayla Campbell	While this is important for the study and will be indirectly influenced through group communications/activities, it is not a main / direct focus of the ESWG. The information developed/received within this group will be shared and disseminated to the project delivery team (USACE and the non-Federal Sponsor City of Homer along with HDR).	Comment included in email sent from Jack Wiles on 7/10/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
Guide-003	Jack Wiles	Overall	EIS Trigger - the process is an EA but what triggers an EIS	Kayla Campbell	Notification of the decision to prepare an EIS will be made through a Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register. Information shared in this group may help inform that decision. ESWG members are encouraged to discuss/question the level of NEPA Document, impacts to resources, the level of impact significance, potential mitigations (avoid, minimize, compensate), and whether they feel something triggers an EIS.	Comment included in email sent from Jack Wiles on 7/10/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
Guide-004	Jack Wiles	Overall	Reviews/Documents - documents are shared prior to meetings	Kayla Campbell	Acknowledge and agree. This is ideal and the goal unless there is a reason/purpose for deferring sharing/conducting an initial review during a meeting. A section was added to the guidance document to address review/documents.	Comment included in email sent from Jack Wiles on 7/10/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
Guide-005	Laurie Daniel	ESWG Guidance Implementation	Requesting clarification on what verison of the ESWG guidance that will require members to agree/acknowledge to continue to partake in ESWG activities?	Kayla Campbell	There is understanding that 1 week may not be sufficient for every member to respond in time to agree/acknowledge one week out from the next meeting. I am planning to adjust and extend the requirement to apply start after the August meeting.	Comment came from information provided in an email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/7/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
Guide-005	Jack Wiles	Overall	Green Infrastructure - will the Corps develop based on Env. Working Group input?	Kayla Campbell	Green infrastructure is something the working group is encouraged to provide information on as that information will be shared by the project delivery team as we progress through this study. Depending on the type of green infrastructure, it may pertain to the Federal Action, or pertain to local service facilities. Local service facilities are the responsibility of the non-Federal sponsor who is part of the project delivery team with USACE. Main point here, is that discussions in this group should inform both the Federal Action and local service facilities that could potentially be implemented and thus considered through the NEPA analysis and study.	Comment included in email sent from Jack Wiles on 7/10/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
Guide-006	Jack Wiles	Overall	Environmental Factors e.g. Tidal Currents / Tsunami - data to be provided by Corps.	Kayla Campbell	USACE will be discussing environmental factors with the working group as well as other agencies in order to develop understanding and ensure full consideration of the preexisting conditions/impacts of alternatives on such factors. USACE will also share information as able/necessary to facilitate the purpose of the group.	Comment included in email sent from Jack Wiles on 7/10/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
MM-000	Laurie Daniel	Format	Meeting Minutes are diffcult to read due to extent of details provided. Is it possible to provide a simplified, summary verison to reflect highlights, changes and decisions?	Kayla Campbell	Moving forward, a section that summarizes and highlights key discussion points and changes/decisions will be included after due outs but prior to the detailed notes.	Comment came from information provided in email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/17/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
MM-001	Laurie Daniel	Agenda	Format attendee list to separate the environmental stakeholder attendees and USACE/HDR.	Kayla Campbell	A separate list will be created to show which ESWG members from the project delivery team (USACE, HDR, Non-Federal Sponsor) attended a meeting.	Comment came from information provided in email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/25/2023 to Kayla Campbell. Meeting Minutes were finalized July 21, 2023. Thus, changes based off comments will not apply until next Meeting Minutes are developed.
MM-002	Laurie Daniel	Length of Notes	Meeting Minutes were too long and and recommend the use of attachments for the more detailed aspects that can be separate based off specific types of info (i.e., guidelines, deadline schedule, etc).	Kayla Campbell	This will be taken into consideration when developing the next Meeting Minutes.	Comment came from information provided in email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/25/2023 to Kayla Campbell. Meeting Minutes were finalized July 21, 2023. Thus, changes based off comments will not apply until next Meeting Minutes are developed.
MM-003	Laurie Daniel	Jargon / Simple Language	Avoid USACE jargon (i.e., "due out", "no suspense") and use simple language.	Kayla Campbell	It is intended to use simple language. If/when jargon is considered necessary to be used and used intentionally, then it will be defined. Otherwise, as members see terms and/or language that they deem as jargon and/or that needs simplified, they are encourage to provide comments noting such. "Due out" is equivalent to "to do" and "suspense" is equivalent to "deadline."	Comment came from information provided in email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/25/2023 to Kayla Campbell. Meeting Minutes were finalized July 21, 2023. Thus, changes based off comments will not apply until next Meeting Minutes are developed.
MM-004	Laurie Daniel	Due Out - Sediment Transport Information Exchnage	Was the point of the due out relating to sharing/exchanging sediment transport information/data to capture the agreement among the stakeholders that KBNERR, Kasitsna Bay Lab, and Gulf Watch Alaska will coordinate together and share info/data about sediment transport in KBay with the Corps? HDR has not done any research in KBay and has no data to share. They stand as the City's representative in the project, correct? The main thrust of their role is in Communication with the Community about the project. Not as a research organization studying local oceanography and marine ecology.	Kayla Campbell	HDR is acting as representatives for the City for this study. As it relates to sediment transport, they are conducting sediment transport modeling. During the meeting, organizations identified they had information/data relating to sediment transport modeling that would enhance HDR modeling efforts if HDR did not have the information/data already. For this, HDR and these organizations indicated they would coordinate information/data exchange post-meeting.	Comment came from information provided in email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/25/2023 to Kayla Campbell. Meeting Minutes were finalized July 21, 2023. Thus, clarifying response captured here.
SC-000	Michael Opheim	Personal / Historic Information	Email provided information relating to the current array of alternatives. Information was captured on the July 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes as it was a follow-on email to that meeting and discussions therein. However, there were two questions/comments as shown in SC-2 and SC-3 that will be captured here.	Kayla Campbell	Incorporated background in the Meeting Minutes for July 10, 2023, ESWG Meeting.	Information included in email sent from Michael Opheim on 7/11/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-001	Michael Opheim	Personal / Historic Information	With the one alternative that looked like an umbrella larger vessels were mentioned. Were USACE or HDR thinking it would be for vessels that would deliver freight and goods to the lower Kenai Peninsula instead of having to go to Anchorage and then have that same materials be driven down the highway?	Kayla Campbell	All alternatives, aside from the No-Action, would create a calm/protected moorage area for larger vessels than what the current harbor is capable of providing moorage for. The alternatives being considered with and without taking into account the USCG Aspen (225ft+). However, the exact number/sizes of vessels accommodated by each alternative is still being further developed and should become more clear as we progress forward through the study.	Question included in email sent from Michael Opheim on 7/11/2023 to Kayla Campbell.

Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
Environmental Stakeholder Working Group
Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker

Disclaimer: Meeting Minutes will entail the information/comments/responses as it relates to a meeting's discussion. Thus, such content may not be reflected in this document that is focused on capturing information shared via email/letter and as it pertains to development of ESWG specific documents. Furthermore, due to the nature of the study (a process that develops and changes overtime), past comments may / may not change prior to the creation of the final document. The responses in this document should be considered to supercede correspondence prior to the date in Column A "Comment Locked Date" and are subject to change based on new information and the active regulatory landscape.

Comment #	Commenter	Page / Section / Topic	Summarized Comment	Responder	Comment Response	Misc. Notes
SC-002	Michael Opheim	Personal / Historic Information	Has there been thought to where the rip rap would come from for the breakwaters?	Kayla Campbell	In a past study, there was a favorable benefits to cost ratio (BCR) for implementation of navigation improvement project (not positive but for the type of study, it indicated the potential for a positive BCR was high and a positive BCR is required to continue forward in the process of this study). As part of that study, a consideration that benefited the BCR was resourcing riprap/stone from within the Kenai Peninsula. This by no means restricts the study/potential alternatives to resources from nearby quarries, especially if you consider the design may require rip rap / stone / material not available at quarries on the Kenai Peninsula; however, it did indicate that during the study, it would be less of a cost than transporting rip rap from a further location. This will be developed further as we progress through the study.	Question included in email sent from Michael Opheim on 7/11/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-003	George Matz and Sue Christiansen	Alternative 1A	There is concern/disagreeance that Alternative 1A: Enclosed Basin, Minimal Footprint represents a minimal footprint as it related to environmental impacts. Additional comments relating to this concern is that the minimal footprint should be a least-cost alternative (i.e., most afforable alternative to taxpayers) for expanding harbor capacity to meet at least a substantial amount of demand for more small-boat moorage and to minimize environmental impact as well as negative impacts on other nearby important facilites for those who live in Homer (i.e., bike trail and fishing hole).	Kayla Campbell	Considering the name of this alternative as a whole is important. There are multiple enclosed basin alternatives being assessed in the study. "Alternative 1A: Enclosed Basin, Minimal Footprint" is intended to be the minimal footprint of a enclosed basin design. The minimal footprint of this enclosed basin includes the assumption that uplands would not be constructed and the area/size of the basin would address the current study needs/objectives. This one is also assumed to be the least expensive of the current "action" alternatives to the taxpayers, or in other terms, the alternatives being considered in the study outside of the No-Action Alternative. The figure shared with the group is a concept and not to size, which will be defined more as the study progresses.	Comment came from information provided in emails sent from George Matz on 7/16/2023, and Sue Christiansen 7/17/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-004	George Matz and Sue Christiansen	Current Harbor Footprint Expansion	What expansion is possible if staying within the existing footprint? Seems there is potential to substantially increase moorage for small boats by digging up some of the upland area south of the harbormaster's office. There is a lot of acreage there that seldom gets used. This would not need any new breakwater and would allow much of the construction to be done from land rather than barges. Harbor construction costs are unknown, but intuitively, this seems to be a more cost-effective approach than other alternatives. There may be reasons why using this upland area for harbor expansion may not work, but not accommodating industrial expansion should not be one.	Kayla Campbell	During this study the expansion of the current harbor footprint was considered as a separate alternative as well as a "measure", which means as a component of the other alternatives. It was screened out from further consideration as both an alternative and a measure. USACE and the City of Homer have discussed updating the FAQ page to address this recurring comment further (https://homerharborexpansion.com/faq/). The rationale for elimination will also be provided in the draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document that will be made avaliable for public/agency comment.	Comment came from information provided in emails sent from George Matz on 7/16/2023, and Sue Christiansen 7/17/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-005	George Matz	Current Harbor Footprint Expansion	As it relates to removal of upland area for current harbor footprint expansion: Claims that the upland area south of the harbormaster's office is needed for parking vehicles and trailers is overlooking the likelihood that the north end of the parking area used by vehicles and trailers during busy days will probably not be needed by boats that have moorage in any harbor expansion. Increased moorage might even reduce the need for vehicle and trailer parking. Some analysis is needed.	Kayla Campbell	This will be taken into consideration during analysis.	Comment came from information provided in email sent from George Matz on 7/16/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-006	Laurie Daniel	Representatives	There is a concern that an organization can only have their identified representative to attend future meetings.	Kayla Campbell	Organizations were requested to identify primary representative(s) as point of contact(s) for correspondence/meeting attendence specific to that group; however, this would not restrict organizations to only have 1 representative, and it would not prevent other individuals that are part of an organization to attend the meetings. Organizations and individual memebers are able and were requested to self identify as "As Required", "Required", and/or "Representative" as they see fit.	Comment came from information provided in email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/25/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-007	Kachemak Bay Conservation Society	Defining: "Require" vs "As Required" and Representative	Requested USACE describe the difference between "as required" vs "required"	Kayla Campbell	Required" and "As Required" is in reference to meetings and can be attributed to an individual or organization. "Required" is self-identification of an individual and/or organization that would like to attend ALL meetings regardless of agenda. "As Required" is self-identification as someone or an organization that will attend based off agenda. A "Representative" is being considered an individual who will represent/speak for an organization beyond the individual level. Thus, leaders of an organization and/or an individual who will be the organization's coordinator for ESWG related activities would be most appropriate. I would recommend against electing all members of an organization as a representative, as that would not meet the intent of electing representatives. Electing representatives is support efficient communications due to the large size of the group. Representatives are being consider different from other members of an organization. Representatives would generally be "required" and help facilitate the "as required" (other members) and/or electing "speakers" (non-ESWG members) for future meetings. For example, if I needed to or it seemed prudent for me to reach out directly to KBCS, I would reach out to the representative(s) who would then internally work out what is needed and how information is shared throughout their organization. The goal is we would minimize attendence to key individuals for enhanced discussions while we maintainin a high level of communication throughout the group.	Comment came from information provided in an email sent from Kachemak Bay Conservation Society on 7/8/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-008	Laurie Daniel	ESWG Guidance Implementation	Do members of an organization that are part of the ESWG need to separately notify USACE of their agreement with the ESWG Guidance or only the representative? Other members of the organization may attend a meeting depending on the agenda items and meeting schedule along with the representative.	Kayla Campbell	A representative may agree/acknowledge to the ESWG Guidance for the representative's organization. This means they can agree/ackownledge to the ESWG Guidance for other members of the representative's organization, IF that member will be partaking in ESWG activities as a part of that organization. In such circumstances, the representative will be requested to provide the name of such individuals as well as ensure they are CC'ed on such email where the representative is agreeing/acknowledging in their stead to the ESWG Guidance. If the member of the representative's organization is participating in the ESWG on an individual basis rather than as part of the organization, then that memeber will need to separately agree/acknowledge the guidance. Note, ESWG members can elect SPEAKERS to attend meetings. Speakers would be non-ESWG members, meaning they would not have to agree/acknowledge the ESWG Guidance. However, representatives/individuals who want to invite a SPEAKER will need to coordiante with USACE before inviting said SPEAKER.	Comment came from information provided in an email sent from Laurie Daniel on 7/7/2023 to Kayla Campbell.
SC-009	None	Potential Study Fieldwork	N/A		Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science were directly contacted to discuss fieldwork USACE was planning for this study due to their experience doing similar fieldwork and having amassed data that informed the fieldwork. The focus of fieldwork was to confirm older data and/or get site-specific data as it relates to the area most likely to be impacted if a current alternative was implemented/constructed. Potential fieldwork that was discussed were mainly eDNA sampling, beach seining, drop camera survey, grab samples, fauna surveys. Fieldwork euipment was also discussed.	Discussions were held virtually and coordianted by Kayla Campbell with each organization.
SC-010	George Matz	Avifauna	Shared an email covering databases developed and/or contributed to by Kachemak Bay Birders for consideration.	Kayla Campbell	Databases provided will be reviewed and used to support analyses as necessary.	Information shared 8/3/2023 and 8/18/2023 via email from George Matz to Kayla Campbell.
SC-011	Marilyn Sigman	Avifauna	Shared an email and Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival Write-up that covered the festival's background of Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (FANWR) and the festival's history, description, economic impacts, and include requests for evaluations.	Kayla Campbell	Information provided will be taken into consideration during analysis.	Information shared 8/21/2023 via email from Marilyn Sigman to Kayla Campbell.

Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
Environmental Stakeholder Working Group
Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker

Disclaimer: Meeting Minutes will entail the information/comments/responses as it relates to a meeting's discussion. Thus, such content may not be reflected in this document that is focused on capturing information shared via email/letter and as it pertains to development of ESWG specific documents. Furthermore, due to the nature of the study (a process that develops and changes overtime), past comments may / may not change prior to the creation of the final document. The responses in this document should be considered to supercede correspondence prior to the date in Column A "Comment Locked Date" and are subject to change based on new information and the active regulatory landscape.

Comment #	Commenter	Page / Section / Topic	Summarized Comment	Responder	Comment Response	Misc. Notes
SC-012	Jack Wiles	Email Attachment	An "ics" file attached to the meeting invitation email cannot be opened.	Kayla Campbell	The file was identified as an automatic attachment from the Microsoft Outlook system when and email invitation is sent out. This document does not have any pertinent information relating the ESWG correspondence or activities and should be considered a system "quirk" and ignored.	Comment came from email exchanges from 8/18/2023 - 8/21/2023 from Jack Wiles to Kayla Campbell.
SC-013	Kachemak Bay Conservation Society (Penelope Haas)	Sediment Circulation	One of the most significant potential impacts of a harbor expansion is the alteration of the currents in Kachemak Bay. The circulation of nutrients, oxygen, larvae of species including muscles, crab, shrimp, clams, and other fishes, phytoplankton, and zooplankton are the bedrock of all life in Kachemak Bay. How specifically will the Environmental Assessment measure these impacts and the effects to the biodiversity and abundance of Kachemak Bay and the communities who love and depend on it?	Kayla Campbell	The NEPA Analysis will be incorporated into the integrated study report that will be generated for this study. HDR is conducting circulation modeling to capture information on potential impacts to the circulation in Kachemak Bay in the vicinity of the potential project site. These modeling efforts will inform the NEPA analyses and potential impacts to the wildlife and habitat resources in vicinity of the potential project site (e.g., Mud Bay) in addition to information that USACE is able to gather from available data, literature, and anticipated fieldwork.	Comment came from email sent by KBCS (Penelope Haas) to Kayla Campbell on 9/12/2023
SC-014	Nancy Hillstrand	Costs	Will there be a working group to anticipate present and future building, and repair costs.	Kayla Campbell	This comment will be shared with the study project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and City of Homer), but is otherwise outside the scope (i.e., purpose) of this working group focused on environmental resources. Recommend submitting comments/inquiries like this to info@homerharborexpansion.com or by filling out the form at https://homerharborexpansion.com/contact/.	Comment came from email sent by Nancy Hillstrand to Kayla Campbell on 9/1/2023
SC-015	Nancy Hillstrand	Costs	Will the community be held responsible for hidden costs for this harbour expansion, either through taxes, harbour fees, electricity?	Kayla Campbell	This comment will be shared with the study project delivery team (USACE, HDR, and City of Homer), but is otherwise outside the scope (i.e., purpose) of this working group. Recommend submitting comments/inquiries like this to info@homerharborexpansion.com or by filling out the form at https://homerharborexpansion.com/contact/.	Comment came from email sent by Nancy Hillstrand to Kayla Campbell on 9/1/2023
SC-016	Nancy Hillstrand	Sediment Circulation	Will pollution discharge, parking expansion and transportation routes, to and from this expansion affect communities North of Homer? Roads? utilities?	Kayla Campbell	Potential and extent of pollutant discharge, parking expansion, and transportation route to and from the expansion will be taken into consideration when developing the integrated feasibility report.	Comment came from email sent by Nancy Hillstrand to Kayla Campbell on 9/1/2023
SC-017	George Matz	Avifauna	Provided slides he developed for teaching "Birds of Kachemak Bay" course at the UAA Kachemak Bay Campus. Shares info on the number of bird species per season in the area that may inform construction schedules.	Kayla Campbell	Information was received. Thank you!	Comment came word document shared by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 8/20/2023.
SC-018	George Matz	Voting	The ESWG includes Non-profit and Non-government Organizations that may require consensus for decision-making (e.g., voting). Homer also works on issues collaborately and formalities are not always necessary or emphasized. This will require patience for the group to get in sync on tasks/issues.	Kayla Campbell	In general, dates/time deadlines will be extended when it is apparent that initial requests were incompatible with scheduled deadlines. USACE greatly appreciates the participation throughout the community and understands that participants are volunteering their time, and flexibility will be essential as each member and/or organization has their normal responsibilities to fulfill beyond this group's activities.	Comment came word document shared by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 8/16/2023.
SC-019	None	Correspondence and Upcoming ESWG Meeting	N/A		USACE emailed Environmental Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG) the Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker with comments locked through 9/20/2023 and confirmed the upcoming September ESWG meeting date and time with agenda as well as provided the date/time for the City of Homer Public Workshop wherein USACE had study representatives participate. An official ESWG Meeting invite for September was sent.	Kayla Campbell sent email on 09/20/2023 to ESWG.
SC-020	None	Study Pause, Postponement of Group Activities, and ESWG Participation	N/A		Email notification was sent that due to the study status (pending pause) and upcoming holidays, the next ESWG meeting would be postponed until after the study was restarted to optimize discussions and reminder that ESWG continued participation requires acknowledgement/agreement with ESWG Final Guidance and that a new distribution list will be created based on the individuals who acknowledge/agree with guidance.	Kayla Campbell sent email on 10/05/2023 to ESWG.
SC-021	None	ESWG Participation and Study Pause	N/A		USACE sent notifications to the original ESWG email distribution list reminding individuals that they must acknowledge/accept guidance in order to continue being in the ESWG and involved in its activities. Included a reminder that the USACE study would be going on a pause and the next ESWG meeting would be postponed.	Kayla Campbell sent email on 10/13/2023 and 11/20/2023 to ESWG.
SC-022	None	Ecological Modeling Workshop	N/A		USACE sent multiple emails sharing information about an upcoming ESWG opportunity to participate in an Ecological Modeling Workshop for the Project that would occur during the study pause and requested those who desired to participate to fill out a participation request forms.	Kayla Campbell sent multiple emails to the ESWG on 12/11/2023, 1/8/2024, and 3/06/2024.
SC-023	Syverine Bentz and Lauren Sutton	Kachemak Bay and Lower Cook Inlet Marine Ecosystem Working Group Invitation	KBNERR extended an invitation to the Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK, USACE team to present at the Kachemak Bay and Lower Cook Inlet Marine Ecosystem Working Group on November 6.	Kayla Campbell	USACE was not able to attend the Work Group but provided a flyer about the study for the event.	Invitation through email sent by Syverine Bentz on 10/09/2023 with additional information shared 10/23/2023 to Kayla Campbell. Kayla Campbell sent flyer to Syverine Bentz over email on 10/31/2023.
SC-024	Laurie Daniel	Kachemak Bay Science Conference	Shared information about the Kachemak Bay Science Conference, to occur 17-20 March 2024, in case USACE would be able to attend.	Kayla Campbell	USACE was not able to attend the conference due to constraints with being on a study pause.	Come came from email sent by Laurie Daniel to Kayla Campbell on 12/09/2023.
SC-025	None	USACE Study NEPA Lead Change	N/A		The ESWG was notified that Kayla Campbell, the Study NEPA Lead, would be transitioning to maternity leave July 19, 2024, and Fern Spaulding would be replacing her in that role.	Kayla Campbell sent email on July 18, 2024, to ESWG.
SC-026	Laurie Daniel	Study Update Public Meeting	There has been no communication since the email sent prior to the pause about the USACE Study and the ESWG even though it is the commenter's understanding funding was back in place. Wanted a status update on what has been occuring in relation to the Study with regards to the environmental aspects (e.g., environmental fieldwork) and the study's timeline. Also noted that the Study Update Public Meeting overlaps with the Sea Duck Survey at Homer.	Kayla Campbell	Acknowledged the absence of communication since email sent July 19, 2024. Provided that the Study Update Public Meeting was going to signify the starting back up of the ESWG activities, and the ESWG would be caught up to speed on what occurred during the study pause and up to the public meeting. Acknowledged the conflict between the meeting and Sea Duck Survey event. Made note that the nextr ESWG virtual meeting will be in April and focus more indepth on the environmental aspects of the study than the public meeting would. Noted the public meeting materials would be made available online after the meeting.	Comment came from email sent by Laurie Daniel to Kayla Campbell on 3/05/2025.
SC-027	None	Study Update Public Meeting	N/A		Notification was sent to the ESWG notifying them of the Study Update Public Meeting being held by the City of Homer and HDR that USACE would have project delivery team members attending. It was also noted that the Study Update Public Meeting was going to signify the start of USACE's ESWG activities post study pause. Notice was also provided that the next ESWG virtual meeting would be in April, with the date and time to be determined. Furthermore, ESWG communication since the last correspondence sent notifying the group Kayla Campbell was going on maternity leave was addressed.	Kayla Campbell sent email on 3/05/2025 to ESWG.
SC-028	Cooper Freeman	Study Update Public Meeting	Shared that there is a conflict of interest with the meeting and Sea Duck Survey and how that will impact many individuals/ESWG members with environmental concerns related to the study. Asked if it was possible it could be rescheduled. Confirmed workday/week is preferred for meetings.	Kayla Campbell	Shared the City of Homer's webpage for the Homer Harbor Expansion where he could send a request for a different time/date with the City of Homer. Also provided clarification that the meeting will be a meeting for the public and further environmental engagements would be scheduled to provide the opportunity for discussions focused on the environmental aspects of the study (e.g., upcoming April ESWG virtual meeting).	Comment came from email sent by Cooper Freeman to Kayla Campbell on 3/05/2025.
SC-029	Kris Holdried	Study Update Public Meeting	Wanted to know if a potential government shutdown would impact the Sutdy Update Public Meeting.	Kayla Campbell	The USACE Study Team is project-funded and thus can continue to work on the project and attend the meeting if the government shuts down.	Comment came from email sent by Kris Holdried to Kayla Campbell on 3/12/2025.

Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
Environmental Stakeholder Working Group
Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker

Disclaimer: Meeting Minutes will entail the information/comments/responses as it relates to a meeting's discussion. Thus, such content may not be reflected in this document that is focused on capturing information shared via email/letter and as it pertains to development of ESWG specific documents. Furthermore, due to the nature of the study (a process that develops and changes overtime), past comments may / may not change prior to the creation of the final document. The responses in this document should be considered to supercede correspondence prior to the date in Column A "Comment Locked Date" and are subject to change based on new information and the active regulatory landscape.

Comment #	Commenter	Page / Section / Topic	Summarized Comment	Responder	Comment Response	Misc. Notes
SC-030	None	Study Update Public Meeting	N/A		Informed the ESWG that the USACE Study Team members will be attending the Study Update Public Meeting virtually instead of in person in order to comply with recent organizational guidance pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14222, "Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Cost Efficiency Initiative." The group was directed to have any individuals or organizations interested in joining the ESWG to contact Kayla Campbell via email. Furthermore, it was noted that USACE will be diligently assessing and addressing changes occuring on a Federal level, and that USACE is committed to environmental stewardship and compliance with Federal laws and regulations.	Kayla Campbell sent email on 3/12/2025 to ESWG.
SC-031	George Matz	Steller's eider	As representative of the Kachemak Bay Birders, he recommended Steller's eider as an agenda items for the upcoming April 2025 ESWG meeting. Noted species has been observed east of the Deep Water Dock for foraging and eBird has data with picture available collaborating this.	Kayla Campbell	Confirmed Steller's eider will be included under "Study Fieldwork" on the agenda and inquired if the Kachemak Bay Birders has raw data specific to Steller's eiders.	Comment came from email sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 3/30/2025.
SC-032	George Matz	Sea Duck Survey	Confirmed eBird as a prominent repository for Homer birders to add data into that is accessible to USACE. Shared that a report is being developed for the 5th Annual Sea Duck Survey that occurred and that he will share it with Kayla Campbell, but it will also be available on the Kachemak Bay Birders website.	Kayla Campbell	Shared interest in the 5th Annual Sea Duck Survey report and where it would be available.	Comments came from emails sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 3/31/2025.
SC-033	George Matz	Sea Duck Survey and Upcoming USFWS and KBB Surfbird Collaboration	Shared statistical/data package for observations for the last five years of Kbay Sea Duck Surveys along with details about the survey and other Kachemak Bay Birder resources for data on birds. Also provided context that while data provides presence information, it does not necessarily inform the why. An example given was the Steller eider's presence near the Deep Water Dock area for foraging in winter but not identifying what the species is foraging on. Also shared that Kachemak Bay Birders and USFWS are going to be doing a project to capture and tag surfbirds. noted surfbirds use the rock jetty of the existing harbor for roosting during migration.	Kayla Campbell	Confirmed receipt of data and email.	Comments came from emails sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 4/19/2025.
SC-034	George Matz	Correspondence, Studies, Shorebird Festival	Purpose of call was to inquire how members can correspond with USACE but have the whole of the ESWG see it. Specifically, whether he should direct message Kayla Campbell or could "reply all" to an email with the ESWG members. This call also included the purpose of the inquiry about methods of correspondence. George wanted to request the studies mentioned in ESWG disucssions for the Homer Navigation Improvements Study be described. The Shorebird Festival also came up. It was asked if USACE will attend as the Surfbird presentation that would happen during the Shorebird Festival would informative for the assessment as it relates to the impacts to Surfbirds. Confirmed event would not be hybrid/virtually accesible, but it would be good information for USACE to consider in their assessment of impacts on Surfbirds.	Kayla Campbell	Confirmed that both "reply all" and direct communication to Kayla Campbell was appropriate means of correspondence intended for the ESWG at large. It was discussed that such correspondence would be captured on this, "Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker" which is shared with the ESWG. Also acknowledged the inquiry/request to have studies mentioned described and that it would be a great inclusion in the next ESWG meeting. Provided USACE does not plan to attend the Shorebird Festival. Inquired if the event, specifically the Shorebird presentation, was a hybrid/virtually accessible event. USACE plasn to look into if the presentation materials are available post-festival.	Call from George Matz to Kayla Campbell occurred on 4/25/2025.
SC-035	Laurie Daniel	Format	Shared thoughts that the time allottment for topics was disproportionate for the April 2025 ESWG Meeting. The time dedicated to past information was thought of as extensive, even if the last meeting was in 2023, and it could have been summarized more briefly to ensure everyone was on the same page. Then the following discussion portion was rigid with notes being typed by the presenter as members spoke, and time for open discussion less than 10 minutes. The time dedicated at the meeting seemed predominately for the benefit of USACE to fill in data gaps rather than enable members to guide and help shape the work, which is a part of what was intended with the formation of the group. Provided the following suggesstions: (1) have a dedicated notetaker to allow presenter to better engage and manage with the discussions and monitor the chat for timely responses and avoid running over the time allotted for the meeting, or (2) record the meeting to enable notes to be developed from the recording.	Kayla Campbell	The purpose of the ESWG meeting in April 2025 was to officially re-starting the ESWG. The meeting provided an overview what occurred during the study pause with regards to environmental activities. The April 2025 ESWG meeting occurred 18 months after the previous ESWG meeting, that was held before the study pause. However, feedback is acknowledged and information will be summarized sumamrized briefly with constructive discussion. Subsequent meetings will focus more on discussion-based topics. Alternative methods of notetaking will be pursued to better engage between the presenter and ESWG participants (e.g., transcription functions, recordings, and dedicated notetaker). Open-ended discussion/acitivties will be incorporated in future meetings. ESWG meetings are intended for USACE to work with ESWG participants to inform data gaps. The intent of ESWG meetings is to enable local subject matter experts to provide guidance and information. ESWG participants are encoraged to reccommend agenda topics for ESWG meetings. If the ESWG meeting is fully occupied by the agenda topics prior to open discussion, there may be no time allotted to open discussion.	Correspondence was covered over phone call (5/12/2025) and email (5/30/2025) discussions between Laurie Daniel and Kayla Campbell.
SC-036	Laurie Daniel	Format	The format of Meeting Minutes makes it difficult to find information and the repetitive verisons broken down by section are unnecessary. Recommended a more flowing narrative format for meeting minutes that can be used to fill in more structured format for internal USACE use.	Kayla Campbell	Moving forward, minute sections will not be shared separately. Format of meeting miunutes may be subject to change, but should not be expected to deviate significantly from the format that has been established.	Correspondence was covered over phone call (5/12/2025) and email (5/30/2025) discussions between Laurie Daniel and Kayla Campbell.
SC-037	Laurie Daniel	Mud Bay, Impacts	Provided the location of alternatives will impact Mud Bay, out into the inner bay, and around the tip of Spit. Questioned whether work on vegetation commuities, bird or mammmal communities, or the coastal ecosystems that occur within those impacts zones that include the marine/shoreline/terrestrial 'ecotone' along the coastline of the Spit and those immediate adjacent areas (i..e., the nearshore marine environment of the inner bay close to the Spit). Provided background for Mud Bay habitat and what fauna, vegetation, and other organisms it supports and that the alternatives would impact it to one extent or another. Not evaluating the environmental impacts to Mud Bay from the proposed designs and gathering current baseline conditions in the Mud Bay area would make the study fall short in its analysis, which is perceived focused solely on the footprint of the designs.	Kayla Campbell	The environmental analysis has not been limited to the direct alternative design footprint. Envionmental analysis will include other areas where impacts can be reasonably assessed and expected to occur. Available environmental data, literature, and modeling will further inform the effects analyses for areas that were not included in USACE fieldwork.	Correspondence was covered over phone call (5/12/2025) and email (5/30/2025) discussions between Laurie Daniel and Kayla Campbell.
SC-038	Laurie Daniel	Meeting Focus	Seemed the focus of the April 2025 ESWG Meeting was focused on identifying what impacts to consider post-construction when data collection and analysis in pre-construction has not been completed. Due to uncertainty of the project moving forward from the study, it seems most value would be a focus on baseline data collection and analysis that can support the project moving forward and provide a strong starting point if the project is delayed.	Kayla Campbell	Proposed mitigation is required for the environmental effects analysis. Proposed mitigation takes into consideration the full timeline of a potential project (i.e., feasibility phase, post-construction, operations and maintenance). ESWG meeting discussions on potential environmental mitigation was open-ended for attendees to provide recommendations on opportunities for post-construction environmental mitigation.	Correspondence was covered over phone call (5/12/2025) and email (5/30/2025) discussions between Laurie Daniel and Kayla Campbell.

Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
Environmental Stakeholder Working Group
Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker

Disclaimer: Meeting Minutes will entail the information/comments/responses as it relates to a meeting's discussion. Thus, such content may not be reflected in this document that is focused on capturing information shared via email/letter and as it pertains to development of ESWG specific documents. Furthermore, due to the nature of the study (a process that develops and changes overtime), past comments may / may not change prior to the creation of the final document. The responses in this document should be considered to supercede correspondence prior to the date in Column A "Comment Locked Date" and are subject to change based on new information and the active regulatory landscape.

Comment #	Commenter	Page / Section / Topic	Summarized Comment	Responder	Comment Response	Misc. Notes
SC-039	Laurie Daniel	Level of NEPA Analysis	Inquired how and when the public will have to weigh in on the decision under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to conduct an Envionmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement for the project, which is determined based on the baseline data and impact analysis. Reinforced the level of environmental analysis under NEPA is not predetermined before such is completed. Shared the time remaining until the release of the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document is not enough to complete data collection and environmental analysis and a 60-day, not 30-day commetn window should be provided due to the complexity of the project, the extent of potential environmental impacts, and the high levle of public interest. The understanding is that the level of the NEPA analysis presented in the draft report will be a "done deal" rather than allow the public to weigh in on the NEPA decision of USACE, which is inconsistent with the NEPA process and intent.	Kayla Campbell	The release of the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document (IFR) in September 2025 will be the point in the study process where the public will be able to provide public comment. The release of the draft IFR and NEPA document signifies USACE's decision on whether an EA or EIS is appropriate based on the environmental analysis completed up until that point. The release of a draft report with an EA or EIS does not prevent USACE from changing the level of NEPA analysis required for the final report. The draft IFR is not finalize until a final report is published. The draft IFR is subject to change as environmental analysis and other project milestones are completed, and based on considerations of comments received on the draft report from the public and other agencies. Additional NEPA compliance efforts may be required after the final report is published. A public comment can be provided during the public comment period for the draft IFR if a longer comment period is desired or thought to be warranted.	Correspondence was covered over phone call (5/12/2025) and email (5/30/2025) discussions between Laurie Daniel and Kayla Campbell.
SC-040	Laurie Daniel	Alternative Design and Public Involvement	Provided that the release of the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document (IFR) would identify the chosen design and analyze it's impacts before it is finalized and submitted to higher ups by the end of the calendar year for approval and signature of a Finding of No Significant Impact. This would not provide the public an opportunity to influence the design decision after the draft report is released in September 2025. The feeling is that the public will be able to help design mitigations for impacts rather than inform a design to avoid impacts and inform the level of environmental analysis required for the project.	Kayla Campbell	The feasability phase identifies if there is a Federal Interest, which will result in a Recommended Plan that adresses the identified problem while meeting study objectives. The Recommended Plan will be a 35% design at the end of the feasibility phase. Design refinement continues to take into consideration how to migitate impacts to the environment. The Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document (IFR) will be based on a Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP), which is the alternative tentatively selected as the Recommended Plan. The TSP is selected based on approximately 15% alternative design. Information collected in both the feasibility phase and the preconstruction engineering and design phase are used to inform environmental effects and proposed mitigation. Proposed mitigations are developed if environmental impacts cannot be avoided as the design is further developed.	Correspondence was covered over phone call (5/12/2025) and email (5/30/2025) discussions between Laurie Daniel and Kayla Campbell.
SC-041	George Matz	KBB and USFWS Surfbird Project	Shared information about the Surfbird Project between Kachemak Bay Birders and United States Fish and Wildlife that involves tagging surfbirds and monitoring the species' activity via satellite, to include travel/staging activities within Kachemak Bay and where they subsequently nest. The study information/data will be publically assessible but when is to be determined. A tagged surfbird and others were on the west side of the Homer Spit near the Barge Basin feeding in the rocky mid-tide area of the beach.	Kayla Campbell	Confirmed that both "reply all" and direct communication to Kayla Campbell was appropriate means of correspondence intended for the ESWG at large. It was discussed that such correspondence would be captured on this, "Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker" which is shared with the ESWG. Also acknowledged the inquiry/request to have studies mentioned described and that it would be a great inclusion in the next ESWG meeting. Provided USACE does not plan to attend the Shorebird Festival. Inquired if the event, specifically the Shorebird presentation, was a hybrid/virtually accessible event. USACE plasn to look into if the presentation materials are available post-festival.	Comments came from emails sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 5/15/2025.
SC-042	Richard Lanctot	USFWS Surfbird Project	Inquired if USACE has particular interest in a specific region and/or type of data. Provided that they have GPS quality locations for 8 birds (contigent upon a link with the satellite and continuous function of tag). Anticipates surfbirds leaving Homer area when migrating to their alpine region breeding sites.	Kayla Campbell	Inquired if USFWS will be developing any maps/figures/tables based on their data, particularly in relation to where the tagged birds occurred with some indication of frequency or to what habitat is considered most valuable.	Comments came from emails sent by Richard Lanctot to Kayla Campbell on 5/15/2025.
SC-043	George Matz	USFWS Surfbird Project	Provided Surfbird Analysis Data that included counts of Surfbird and Black Turnstone within the Outer Spit and Island/Islets, respectively, from mid-April through late May. Although the counts during any one year between 2009 to 2023 were variable, the average data indicates the highest averaged counts occur around Sessions 5 and 6 (USACE assumes this is around early May). Provided theory that data seems to indicate Kachemak Bay area is a staging area rather than a stop over area for Surfbirds and that historically Surfbirds use the rock jettty at the entrance of the harbor for roosting although monitoring data at the current harbor entrance is variable.	Kayla Campbell	Followed up with an inquiry about if there are other key areas the Surfbirds frequent within Kachemak Bay area outside of the rock jetty at the current harbor entrance mentioned by George.	Comments came from emails sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 5/16/2025.
SC-044	George Matz	USFWS Surfbird Project	Shared screenshots of the first track USFWS sent the Kachemak Bay Birders/others. It showed where 8 tagged surfbirds were concentrated on a day between 60-foot Rock and Cohne Island. A guide provided there were about ~1,000 surfbirds in the area. More sampling is anticiapted.	Kayla Campbell	Saved information to the feasibility study's records.	Comments came from emails sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 5/29/2025.
SC-045	George Matz	Ecological Model and Homer City Council Meeting	Shared support to have at least a draft ecological meeting for the study. Mentioned the Homer City Council Meeting did not provide discussion on the ecological issues or mitigation costs that would be associated with the study. Provided the ecological model being presented to the Homer City Council to address concerns about making a decision on an alternative before being presented the enviromental constraints and economic ramifications. A email with links to attachments related to the Homer City Council Meeting was shared.	Kayla Campbell	Shared that this email would be shared with the Project Delivery Team for their consideration.	Comments came from two emails sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 6/3/2025. Email traffic was specific to the ecological model touchpoint meeting but is being included here due to its relevance to the Environmental Stakeholder Working Group and overall environmental analysis.
SC-046	Richard Lanctot	USFWS Surfbird Project	Identified that the surfbirds, once tracked, shortly left Kachemak Bay (most within a day or two of being tagged). However, he can share the raw locations and provide some support for areas that may be important but the data may not be a good indicator of relative abundance nor does it mean areas not used by the birds are not important. As additional data is collected, more inferences backed by data can be made beyond the limited data available that provides an idea of how long birds stay in the area (informative for conducting accurate population counts) but do not help esitmate population size.	Kayla Campbell	Followed up with an inquiry about if there are other key areas the Surfbirds frequent within Kachemak Bay area outside of the rock jetty at the current harbor entrance mentioned by George.	Comments came from emails sent by Richard Lanctot to Kayla Campbell on 6/4/2025.
SC-047	George Matz	Study Alternatives from Homer City Council Meeting	Shared a link to the four alternatives shared at the Homer City Council Meeting. Noted that the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area (KBCHA) boundaries were not included to inform whether there will be construction or maintenance dredging within the KBCHA, which he feels would require a more rigorous environmental review. Inquired how the ESWG would get such information. Also provided that the alternatives, especially Alternative 3, might impact sediment deposition and fish passage to the fishing lagoon, an important recreation area, especially to tourist using Heritage RV Park. Inquired if there is information on this and what migtiation opertions and are this factored into the Net Economic Development Plan.	Kayla Campbell	This email was shared with the economist on the Project Delivery Team for consideration of the economic analysis. Response to email is as provided in this tracker. The Kachemak Bay Critcial Habitat Area shapefile can be found: https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=kachemakbay.main. Whether an alternative will extend into the area or not is highly dependent on the final design. The goal would be to avoid this area to the greatest extent practicable with consideration of all project impacts and limitations with design in the proposed location. ADF&G is the agency USACE is and will continue to coordinate with, with regards to this area and potential impacts to it from the study. The HDR sediment and current circulation model will inform potential impacts to sediment/current circulation from the alternatives and that can subsequently be used to infer impacts to other environmental resources like Fish Lagoon.	Comments came from emails sent by George Matz to Kayla Campbell on 6/8/2025.

Homer Navigation Improvements Study, AK
Environmental Stakeholder Working Group
Non-Meeting Correspondence Tracker

Disclaimer: Meeting Minutes will entail the information/comments/responses as it relates to a meeting's discussion. Thus, such content may not be reflected in this document that is focused on capturing information shared via email/letter and as it pertains to development of ESWG specific documents. Furthermore, due to the nature of the study (a process that develops and changes overtime), past comments may / may not change prior to the creation of the final document. The responses in this document should be considered to supercede correspondence prior to the date in Column A "Comment Locked Date" and are subject to change based on new information and the active regulatory landscape.

Comment #	Commenter	Page / Section / Topic	Summarized Comment	Responder	Comment Response	Misc. Notes
SC-048	Karyn DeCino	Kachemak Bay GeoHUB	Shared the updated Kachemak Bay GeoHUB spreadsheet.	Kayla Campbell	This email was shared with the economist on the Project Delivery Team for consideration of the economic analysis. Response to email is as provided in this tracker. The Kachemak Bay Critcial Habitat Area shapefile can be found: https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=kachemakbay.main. Whether an alternative will extend into the area or not is highly dependent on the final design. The goal would be to avoid this area to the greatest extent practicable with consideration of all project impacts and limitations with design in the proposed location. ADF&G is the agency USACE is and will continue to coordinate with, with regards to this area and potential impacts to it from the study. The HDR sediment and current circulation model will inform potential impacts to sediment/current circulation from the alternatives and that can subsequently be used to infer impacts to other environmental resources like Fish Lagoon.	Comments came from emails sent by Karyn DeCino to Kayla Campbell on 6/9/2025.
SC-049	Sarah Saalfeld	Surfbird	Shared the raw locations for the 8 surfbirds from Kachemak Bay originally captured for tagging on the Homer Spit with map of locations.	Kayla Campbell	Confirmed email was received and inquired on a figure showing movement around the Homer Spit.	Data was shared from Sarah Saalfeld on 6/12/2025 to Kayla Campbell via email.

Close-out Notification

From:	Campbell, Kayla N CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA)
To:	Amy Holman; Amy Woodruff; Bruce Schulte; Bryan Hawkins; Caroline Pierce; Carr, Robin J CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA); Cooper Freeman; Dave Erikson; David Seris; Debbie Tobin; Donna Aderhold; geomatz41@gmail.com; Green, Megan A CIV (USA); Hal Shepherd; Hammersmith, Molly R CIV USARMY CESAS (USA); Jack Wiles; Jenny Carroll; Karyn DeCino; Katie Gavenus; kbayconservation@gmail.com; KC Kent; Ketchum, Brandee CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA); Kris Holderied; Kyra Wagner; Lauren Sutton; Laurie Daniel; Lee, Curtis D CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA); marilyn.sigman@gmail.com; Nancy Hillstrand; NOAA Navigation Manager; Robert Archibald; Ronny McPherson; Rouse, Michael B CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA); Spaulding, Fern R CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA); Sue Christiansen; Susan Sturges; Syverine Bentz; Teese, Tyler J CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA); Whippo, Ross; Whitney Conard
Subject:	ESWG Closeout / Final Study Update
Date:	Thursday, April 2, 2026 4:05:54 PM

Good afternoon ESWG,

I hope you have all been well this past winter.

We will not be able to support any further ESWG meetings. The release of the draft Integrated Feasibility Report and NEPA Document is scheduled for **May 22, 2026**, and you will have an opportunity to provide comments on the draft integrated report during the 30-day public comment period. The termination of the ESWG was always intended to coincide closely with the release of the draft report for public comment. I will provide a copy of the public notice, a link to the report, and information about how to submit comments to the members of the ESWG through email; however, **I will not be the point of contact for submitted draft integrated report comments**. Comments received on the draft will be addressed as part of the report finalization and before transmittal to the Chief of Engineers.

Thank you for your contribution to the Homer Navigation Improvements Study to-date. The local knowledge and expertise has been a benefit to the study. While not all the information that has been shared will be reflected in our draft integrated report for this study, please know it was considered, and you were heard.

Very Respectfully,

Kayla Campbell
Biologist, Environmental Resources Section
Civil Works Branch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

Office Phone: 907.753.2757
E-mail: Kayla.N.Campbell@usace.army.mil