



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Alaska District

GOLD NUGGETS

'Building and preserving Alaska's future'

November 2012



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Col. Christopher Lestochi, district commander, signs the record of decision to issue the Point Thomson Project regulatory permit along with Lee Bruce, senior project manager for ExxonMobil Development Co., at district headquarters.

District issues permit for Point Thomson

By Pat Richardson
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District issued a permit Oct. 26 to ExxonMobil Corporation and PTE Pipeline LLC to place fill material in waters and wetlands, and structures in navigable waters to construct the Point Thomson Project on Alaska's Arctic Coastal Plain adjacent to the Beaufort Sea.

The Corps issued the permit under the authorities of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

The Point Thomson permit authorizes construction of infrastructure to extract hydrocarbon resources by directional drilling into the Thomson Sand Reservoir. Infrastructure includes three drill pads with one containing a

facility for hydrocarbon processing, about 10 miles of infield roads, a gravel mine, airstrip, barge docking facility, navigational structures, dredging, emergency boat ramp, infield gathering pipelines and export pipeline to the Badami facility 23 miles to the west.

The permit contains 37 special conditions to minimize adverse impacts to the environment, including payment of a mitigation fee to The Conservation Fund to compensate for unavoidable losses of aquatic resources.

In signing the record of decision to issue the permit, Col. Christopher Lestochi, district commander, said he found the applicants' preferred alternative, with modifications and optimizations developed through the review process, to be the least environmentally-damaging practicable

Continued on Page 2

New Web site part of change across Corps of Engineers

The Alaska District launched a new public Web site Oct. 19.

The change is part of a Corps-wide initiative to migrate 58 of its primary public Web sites to the American Forces Public Information Management System, a cloud-based content management system run by the Defense Media Activity. DMA manages the public Web site platforms for the Defense Department, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.

AFPIMS is scalable to thousands of users and millions of content items, streamlines content management and offers increased security and fast delivery of content to the end-user.

The public Web site is the primary tool for informing and educating people about the Corps, and how the district is "Building and Preserving Alaska's Future."

To increase transparency and deliver fast, easily accessible content to stakeholders, it was necessary to improve the Corps' online presence.

The system provides districts and divisions with a consistent navigation scheme, content placement and standardized page templates that reflect Corps branding. The objective is to deliver a rich end-user experience that makes use of audio, video and other Web elements.

Streamlined content management will make it easier to keep Web pages current.

Among these improvements, the migration goal is to provide visitors with a visually appealing Web site and disability access by complying with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

With a new platform, menu and navigation paths on the site have changed, so page links that are bookmarked, referenced in documents, listed on letterheads or signature blocks, or noted elsewhere need to be updated.

With the revamped Web site comes
Continued on Page 2

Web site

Continued from Page 1

a shift of responsibility for content management.

The Alaska District Public Affairs Office now serves as the point of contact for posting and updating content on the public Web site. Work orders may be submitted to Public.Affairs3@usace.army.mil.

Meanwhile, ACE-IT remains responsible for updating content on the employee intranet Web site.

To request service, continue to

submit work orders to ACE-IT via the internet.

Those who need help locating “lost” content on the new site or have other concerns or requests may contact the Public Affairs Office.

The work force is encouraged to assist with ensuring that the district’s online users have access to current, accurate and relevant information.

The Defense Media Activity is responsible for the overall operations

and maintenance of the hardware and software associated with the system, and aims to continually improve the Corps’ public web presence to ensure quick access to and delivery of information.

Although the Alaska District has joined many other districts and divisions in completing migration, work continues on the remaining sites. By Dec. 31, all 58 Corps sites are scheduled migrate and go live.

Public Affairs Staff Report

Permit

Continued from Page 1

alternative as required by law.

These measures included relocation of both east and west gravel fill pads away from higher functioning coastal wetlands, minimizing fill placement along the coastal shoreline to provide polar bear access and reduction of the gravel mine size.

“Today’s decision is consistent with the Corps of Engineers’ regulatory mission to protect the nation’s aquatic resources while allowing reasonable

development,” said Lestochi. “Our regulatory review process provides us with a path to make decisions that are fair, flexible and balanced.”

The Corps evaluated five alternatives that included both inland and coastal infrastructure designs, and completed an environmental impact statement for the project.

It conducted an in-depth analysis of alternatives and supplemental technical information in order to come

to a decision on the permit application. The president’s Interagency Working Group on Coordination of Domestic Energy Development and Permitting in Alaska facilitated efficient working relationships between federal resource agencies.

With this permit, ExxonMobil may place fill material into a total of 267.1 acres of North Slope waters and tundra wetlands. The Point Thomson Project is 60 miles east of Prudhoe Bay.



Photo by John Budnik

Soup celebration

The Alaska District celebrated a successful closeout of Fiscal Year 2012 with a luncheon in the headquarters building sponsored by senior leaders Oct. 9. Afterward, the year’s “unsung heroes” were honored with awards presented by corporate board members.

GOLD NUGGETS

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E-mail inquiries may be sent to: public.affairs3@usace.army.mil or Curt Biberdorf. View the Alaska District Web site at www.poa.usace.army.mil, Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/AlaskaCorps> and YouTube page at <http://youtube.com/user/AlaskaCorps>.

Display honors Alaska Native heritage

By Curt Biberdorf
Public Affairs Office

For centuries, the land today known as Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson was inhabited by Dena'ina, one of the Athabascan-language speaking nations spanning from western Alaska to Canada.

The cultural history of these native people is now honored with the new Dena'ina Cache and Signage Display located on a field near the intersection of Post Road and Arctic Warrior Drive.

The cache display, which replaced two deteriorated totem poles installed in the 1950s, represents a structure once commonly used by Alaska Natives to store dried fish and meat. It was dedicated Oct. 5 during an event with local tribe leaders and family members.

"My hope is that our celebration today is not really a destination but the beginning of a journey that will bring a greater sense of awareness to the people who live and work on the installation of the wonderful accomplishments and proud heritage of the native people in this region," said Col. Brian Duffy, 673rd Air Base Wing and JBER commander.

These achievements include providing land to establish military bases across the state, and collecting military intelligence as spotters and scouts under a cooperative relationship that was critical during the Cold War, he said.

After retiring the totem poles, base officials still wanted to recognize the importance of Alaska Natives and their culture in Alaska's military history but with an object more representative of their local heritage, Duffy said.

First envisioned in 2007, the project was created and constructed by members of the Native Village of Eklutna—the closest federally-recognized tribe to JBER—with funding from the Air Force and contracting by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District.

The district often works with federally-recognized tribes through its environmental, civil works and regulatory programs.

"The Alaska District was more than happy to be involved in this project," said Col. Christopher Lestochi, Alaska District commander.

The district respects tribal interests in natural and cultural resources and is committed to the government-to-government relationship between the Corps and federally-recognized tribes. "I believe a project like this highlights that relationship and perhaps more importantly gave us the opportunity to play a small part in the creation of this interpretive display," he said.

Many members of the native community contributed to the project. Eklutna and Knik tribal elders and leaders shared traditional knowledge, historical data, photos, design and review for the interpretive display while a young Eklutna tribe member created a mural for it. Eklutna tribal members participated in every step of construction from cutting down trees on JBER property to make the structures to moving the finished products onto the display field.

For the finishing touch, the Air Force paved roadside parking space for three vehicles and a walking path between the sign and cache for improved access.

Many native people once launched trips to harvest game, fowl, fish, berries and roots from the area covering JBER. It was a place to meet other tribes. Although the site is a great loss to the native community, the Knik Tribal Council is proud the Eklutna people were recognized as the original residents, said Michael Tucker, Native Village of Knik vice president.

"With the military, we are always treated respectful," said Maria Coleman, Native Village of Eklutna vice president and cultural manager. "It's an important milestone to have our story written by us."

She was not taught as a child about what it is to be an Alaska Native, and when her children were growing up, she recalled how they brought home papers that presented Alaska Natives as living only in "ancient times."

"I'm so proud of how (the project) turned out," Coleman said. "I'm so thankful for everyone sharing because this is so important to our children and

Continued on Page 4



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Tribal members and military officials gather to dedicate the Dena'ina Cache and Signage Display near the intersection of Post Road and Arctic Warrior Drive on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Oct. 5.

Display

Continued from Page 3

grandchildren. This is a wonderful fulfillment of sharing our history, culture and intimate ties to the land.”

A cache is a storage house built on stilts usually five to nine feet tall. It is constructed using smooth poles tied with spruce roots or notched to wedge the poles together. Mud, clay and moss were often used to narrow the spaces. Overhanging floors and poles—sometimes coated with bear or beaver fat—deterred animals access to it.

Large families moved into camps along Knik Arm and Cook Inlet to fish using spears and traps, taking as many as they needed to last the whole winter, said Alberta Stephan, Native Village of Eklutna elder.

“The natives all had caches like you

see here,” Stephan said. “It was built up high to keep rodents and squirrels away.”

People reached the house by using a ladder made from a log with closely spaced limbs broken off forming steps. However, because of safety concerns from JBER officials, a ladder is not a part of the display. Another type of cache is a pit dug into the ground.

“Some of you may have seen some pits by the rivers where you fish,” Stephan said. “When the fish was caught far away from fish camp, they had to dig a hole and line it with grass to keep the fish cool until they were ready to go home.”

Around Cook Inlet, evidence suggests Alaska Natives lived in the

area as long as 1,500 years ago. From the 1700s to 1900s, explorers noted plentiful fish camps and settlements along the ocean and inland. Descendants of early Athabaskan natives became the Chickaloon, Eklutna, Knik and Tyonek tribes.

Over time, the native people lost access to land and resources because of colonization, population-depleting epidemics, expansion of U.S. government facilities, and changes in policies and regulations.

After remarks by members of the official party, family representatives and tribal council members at the Arctic Warfighter Events Center, the group moved to the display and Stephan dedicated the cache with a blessing.



Tower up

David Prado (right), district safety engineer, observes a crew from Alpine Tower and Technology of Anchorage repairing a high-frequency radio antenna used by the Emergency Management Office at the district Oct. 19. The antenna repair was the last phase of a project that also replaced frayed coaxial and rotator cabling, which are now routed through buried plastic tubing. The high frequency receiver-transmitter, located in an adjacent trailer, is tested monthly. With the system, the district is capable of performing long-haul communications to any location in the world should a disaster disrupt regular services.

Across the district

In memoriam



Allan Skinner, regulatory specialist, died Sept. 30 at the Providence Medical Center in Anchorage after an extended illness. Skinner was a 50-year federal employee and worked 38 years with the Alaska District. He also served as a park ranger for the National Park Service in several places, including Yellowstone National Park, and for the Corps in California and Indiana.

CFC charity drive under way

The Combined Federal Campaign continues through Nov. 23. This year's CFC theme is "Give a little. Help a lot!" The Public Affairs Office is again managing the district's effort. Incentive gifts are on display and booklets containing a list of charities and paper pledge forms are in the atrium. Key workers are available to answer questions and help fill out the form or with donating online. To learn more about CFC, visit <http://www.alaskacfc.org>

SAC plans gift basket silent auction

The Social Activities Committee is sponsoring a silent auction of gift baskets Nov. 14 with a preview set for Nov. 13 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. in the atrium. Basket donations of any size are needed to help raise funds for the annual winter party.

Any tasteful idea is welcome, but some suggested themes include auto, bath, commuter, movie, toys, cooking, date, family time, baby, pet, chocolate, bakery and tools. Individuals, groups or organizations willing to donate a themed basket should contact Lynn Maurer or LaQuida Barlow.

Donors can register on the community folder in the shared drive. Each basket should be delivered with a list of items inside and a suggested starting bid.

Baskets should be dropped off no later than close of business Nov. 12 to Michelle Sappa in Room 160 or to Renee Sedlak in the Regulatory Division.

Winter party takes Hawaiian theme

A luau is planned for the district's employees and adult guests at the Arctic Warrior Events Center Dec. 6 from 4-7 p.m. Hula Hands restaurant will cater the meal while the Social Activities Committee will lead a "Let's Make a Deal" style game with prizes for the winners. Cost is \$10 per ticket, and sales will end at 240 tickets.

Tickets may be purchased by visiting LaQuida Barlow in Contracting. The first 10 people to volunteer for both setup and cleanup receive a complimentary ticket. Contact to Stasia Wierzbicki to volunteer.

Inclement weather guidelines

To mitigate safety and health hazards associated with wind, snow, ice, extremely cold temperatures and other adverse conditions, Alaska District employees will follow



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Farewell

Lt. Col. Bobby Stone, deputy district commander (left), presents Buster Godwin, Safety and Occupational Health Office chief, with the Army Commander's Award for Civilian Service during a farewell luncheon at district headquarters Oct. 12. He received the award for his contributions to the district from June 2011-October 2012 in his leadership position. He also received a commander's coin. Godwin is retiring and moving out of state.

the latest guidance of the base commander at their assigned duty station. Personnel in the Anchorage area may obtain official reporting status updates by visiting the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Facebook or Twitter pages, or viewing the Web site at www.jber.af.mil.

Another option is calling the following numbers for these locations: Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson 552-INFO (4636), Fort Wainwright 353-7109, Eielson Air Force Base 377-6127 and Fort Greely 869-3480.

Road conditions on military installations are graded from best to worst as green, yellow, red and black. In most cases, recorded messages are updated between 5-6 a.m. However, employees should not rely on the hotlines as their sole source for information.

Sources providing reliable reports about the status of the weather, roads and military installations include: Alaska Department of Transportation by calling 511 or visiting www.511.alaska.gov, National Weather Service information line at 1-800-472-0391 and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson operator at 552-1110.

Furthermore, several radio and television stations provide regular updates in the Anchorage area. Updates are

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

available at Alaska's Total Traffic Network by dialing #847 or by listening to radio reports broadcast weekdays from 6-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. on the following stations: KENI 650 AM, KTZN 550 AM, KYMG 98.9 FM, KBFX 100.5 FM, KGOT 101.3 FM and KASH 107.5 FM.

Each member of the work force is responsible for monitoring media newscasts and determining whether it is safe to report for duty. Those unsure if they have to report should contact their supervisor.

Since weather and road conditions may vary significantly between an employee's home and workplace, people should always assess their personal situation before driving. If you think that it is unsafe to drive, don't take any unnecessary risks. Instead, contact your supervisor to gain guidance on taking leave.

The installation is always staffed with operations personnel in the command center, security forces that monitor road conditions, a weather squadron that provides current and predicted weather, and numerous other capabilities that enable the base commander to make an informed decision.

These people have the latest installation command guidance and weather conditions.

FUDS projects completed, approved

The district has completed all activities in the Krusenstern Radio Relay Station Formerly Used Defense Site, located 40 miles northwest of Kotzebue. The station was used from 1955-1959 to transmit radio signals for the White Alice system.

Meanwhile, Pacific Ocean Division approved a new project at the Nike Site Love Formerly Used Defense Site located near Fairbanks. The project includes removal of a military transformer, drums and any associated contaminated soil.

Upcoming events

- Nov. 1-30 National American Indian Heritage Month
- Nov. 13 Ethics Training at Elmendorf Theater
- Nov. 13 Basket Auction Preview
- Nov. 16 Town Hall Meeting at Elmendorf Theater
- Dec. 6 District Winter Party

Deployments

Afghanistan—Linda Arrington, Tom Baker, Juliet Brown, Sgt. 1st Class Robert Contreres, Michael Doty, Ronald Faulkner, Roger Green, Ron Jackson, Brad Leavitt, Ali Martinez, Darrell Neal, David Purdy, Reynaldo Singson, Jessica Skinner, Sharon Thomas, Capt. Corey Warren, Frederick Wiedmaier



Michael Doty, electrical engineer at the Northern Area Office, deployed to Afghanistan Sept. 9 as an electrical engineer and is scheduled to return Sept. 8, 2013.



Frederick Wiedmaier, supervisory engineer technician at the Northern Area Office, deployed to Afghanistan Sept. 9 as an engineer technician and is set to return June 8, 2013.



Graduation day

(From left) Jackie Fabrizio, Design Branch chief; Steve Geppert, civil engineer in the Civil and Sanitary Section; and Rob Stolzman, assistant counsel in the Office of Counsel, are recognized for completing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Leadership Development Program Level 3 Oct. 11. Graduates from the Class of 2012 across the Pacific Ocean Division joined in a teleconference to share in the celebration of finishing a two-year program. The goal is to develop knowledge, skills and abilities of participants within each of the following four leadership domains: individual leadership, leading groups and teams, leading the organization and leading the community. As part of the Level 3 component of the program, participants expand their regional leadership perspectives and are given the opportunity to complete a developmental assignment.

Photo by Curt Biberdorf