

Verification Form

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Alaska District and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Alaska Protected Resources Division have jointly developed the following procedures and project criteria for Corps-authorized projects (2023 AK-SLOPES program). Adoption of these procedures and project criteria will ensure that the proposed projects in coastal Alaska described here are not likely to adversely affect 12 listed species, distinct population segments (DPS), or their designated critical habitat in Alaska. Effects to the sunflower sea star, proposed for listing in 2023, were also considered. These procedures and criteria are part of the basis for Corps' request to NMFS for concurrence with the Corps' "not likely to adversely affect" programmatic determination for the project types described in this document and referred to as the AK-SLOPES program. The Corps may use these procedures and criteria for applicable projects for five years (2023-2028) as described below.

The AK-SLOPES allows two options for marine mammals observers. One option employs a Protected Species Observer (PSO) who can distinguish between listed and non-listed marine mammals, and has ability, authority, and obligation to call for a shut down when a listed marine mammal enters or appears likely to enter the shutdown zone. The other option allows for the use of a Project Lookout who has the authority to call for a shut down for any marine mammal that enters or appears likely to enter the shutdown zone (without necessarily distinguishing between species of marine mammals). PSOs have more training and/or experience than Project Lookouts and are required to record slightly more detailed information about the marine mammal observations they make. The use of PSOs is encouraged, but we recognize that there are situations in which a PSO may not be available or cannot be accommodated in certain remote locations in Alaska. Resumes or qualifying experience must be provided to NMFS for both PSOs and Project Lookouts. See the Mitigation Measures (Section 3.7) in the Letter of Concurrence (LOC) for the AK-SLOPES programmatic consultation for a complete description of PSO and Project Lookout requirements and procedures. NOTE: PSOs will follow Mitigation Measures #5 – #41. Project Lookouts will follow Mitigation Measures #42 – #78 in the LOC.

The USACE shall submit a signed version of this completed form, together with any project plans, maps, supporting analyses, to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Regional Protected Resources Division (AK PRD) at akr.prd.section7@noaa.gov with "AK-SLOPES Program: [Project Title or Number]" in the subject line. **Note:** project design contractors and/or consultants may assist in preparing the form, but only Corps staff shall sign off on it on the final page.

Project Activity Type (check all that apply to the entire action):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pile installation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pipe pile removal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dredging/Screening
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intertidal Fill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project-specific vessel

Project Information

Name of Project			
Corps POA Number			
Corps POC Name			
POC Phone		Email	
Anticipated Project Start Date		Anticipated Project End Date	
Project Latitude			
Project Longitude			
Nearest Town/Village			
Cove, Bay, Inlet, or other waterbody			
Project Description and Purpose (you may also append a project description to this form)			

ESA Listed species and or critical habitats in the action area (Check all that apply).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bowhead whale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fin whale
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue whale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sei whale
<input type="checkbox"/>	North Pacific right whale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Western North Pacific DPS gray whale
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sperm whale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Western North Pacific DPS humpback
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mexico DPS humpback whale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arctic ringed seal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Beringia DPS bearded seal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Western DPS Steller sea lion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Western North Pacific DPS humpback whale critical habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mexico DPS humpback whale critical habitat
<input type="checkbox"/>	North Pacific right whale critical habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arctic ringed seal critical habitat
<input type="checkbox"/>	Beringia DPS bearded seal critical habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steller sea lion critical habitat
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunflower sea star (proposed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

* Please consult AK PRD’s ESA Section 7 Mapper for ESA-listed species and critical habitat information for your action area at:

<https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=446543503a2e4660b0f5ee55e6407d27>

The following stressors are applicable to the action:

- Underwater noise
- Water quality/turbidity
- Habitat alteration
- Vessel traffic
- Human/vessel presence or visual disturbance
- Other (specify)

Protected Species Observers (PSOs) and Project Lookouts

If the project requires marine mammal monitoring (e.g., any project involving pile driving and dredging/screeding) indicate whether a PSO or Project Lookout will be used. If more than one PSO or Project Lookout is needed for full coverage of the shutdown zone, indicate the number of PSOs or Project Lookouts that will be used.

- PSO(s)
- Project Lookout(s)

Project Design Criteria (PDC) Checklist

The Corps shall incorporate all general PDCs and all applicable PDCs in the appropriate project categories. The Corps shall check the corresponding box for each PDC that will be incorporated into the project or indicate if not applicable.

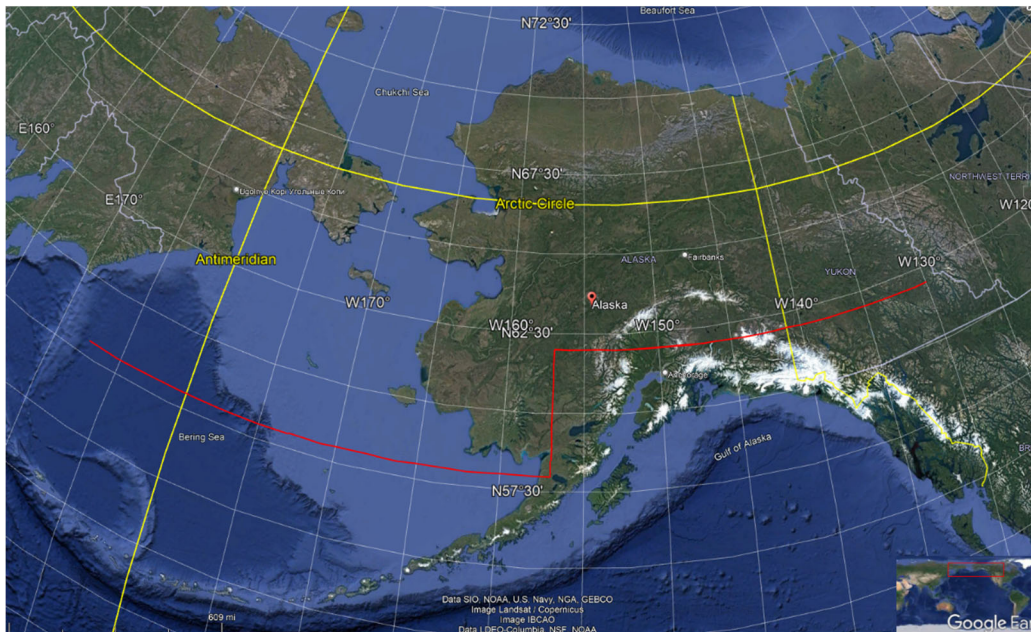
General Project Design Criteria			
Yes	No	N/A	PDC Description
			Ensure all operators, employees, and contractors are aware of all Corps environmental commitments, including these PDCs, when working in critical habitat or in areas where ESA-listed species may be present. Refer to Section 3.5 in LOC for activities that are excluded from the AK-SLOPES programmatic.

Pile Driving PDCs			
Yes	No	N/A	PDC Description
			All cylindrical piles will be 18” in diameter or less
			Piles will be steel or untreated wood
			Project will use 40 piles or less
			Pile driving will occur on 7 or fewer non-consecutive days OR pile driving will not exceed 30 days.
			Project Proponent will implement all mitigation measures for pile driving

Pile Driving Details

Pile material (e.g., steel, untreated wood)	Pile diameter/width	Number of piles	Installation method (e.g. impact hammer, vibe start and then impact hammer to depth, vibe only, helical piles)

Dredging/Screeding PDCs			
Yes	No	N/A	PDC Description
			Project is east of 157 degrees W and north of 62 degrees N, OR Project is west of 157 degrees W and north of 58 degrees N. (N of red line on map below)
			Dredged material will be less than 50,000 cubic yards annually
			Dredged area is less than 10 acres
			Spoils will be placed in upland area or Corps-authorized marine area
			Project Proponent will implement all applicable mitigation measures for dredging/screeding



Dredging/Screeding Details

Number of acres to be dredged/screeded	
Width and length of area to be dredged (ft)	
Permit covers what length of time?	
Is annual dredging permitted?	

Intertidal Fill PDCs			
Yes	No	N/A	PDC Description
			Project is east of 157 degrees W and north of 62 degrees N, OR Project is west of 157 degrees W and north of 58 degrees N. (N of red line on map above)
			≤ 1 acre below High Tide Line will be filled
			Project Proponent will implement all applicable mitigation measures for intertidal fill

Intertidal Fill Details

Number of acres to be filled	
Width and length of area to be filled (ft)	
Fill material	

Vessel Traffic PDCs			
Yes	No	N/A	PDC Description
			All mitigation measures applicable to vessel transit will be followed

Additional Vessel Details

Project specific vessel needed? (Y or N)	
Vessel departure port	
Vessel destination	
Will project lead to increased vessel use?	
If answer to prior question was “yes”, describe increase in commercial/private vessel number upon project completion (i.e. additional ports of call per year, increase in private use in boats/day)	
Will project result in larger vessels being able to dock at this location?	

Corps Verification of Determination (To be filled out by Corps staff only)

By submitting this Verification Form, the Corps indicates that they determined that the proposed activity described above is not likely to adversely affect (NLAA) ESA-listed species or designated critical habitat under NMFS jurisdiction in accordance with the AK-SLOPES program, and all effects (direct and indirect) are either insignificant (so small they cannot meaningfully be measured, detected, or evaluated) or discountable (extremely unlikely to occur).

	In accordance with the 2023 AK-SLOPES Program, the Corps has determined that the proposed action complies with all applicable PDCs.
	In accordance with the 2023 AK-SLOPES Program, the Corps has determined that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect listed species.
	In accordance with the 2023 AK-SLOPES Program, we have determined that the action is not likely to adversely affect listed species per the justifications and/or special conditions provided above. Check only if departing from PDCs or mitigation measures.
Corps Signature	Date

By providing your determination and signature, you are certifying that to the best of your knowledge the information provided in this form is accurate and based upon the best available scientific information. If a non-federal representative has been designated for the proposed project by the Corps, such representative must complete and sign this form.

AK PRD Concurrence (To be filled out by AK PRD biologist)

After receiving the Verification Form, AK PRD will contact the Corps with any concerns and indicate whether AK PRD concurs with the Corps' determination.

	In accordance with the 2023 AK-SLOPES Program, AK PRD concurs with the Corps' determination that the proposed action complies with all applicable PDCs.	
	In accordance with the 2023 AK-SLOPES Program, AK PRD concurs that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat.	
	In accordance with the 2023 AK-SLOPES Program, AK PRD concurs with the Corps' determination that the action is not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat per the justifications and/or special conditions provided above. (For PDC/MM deviations)	
	AK PRD DOES NOT CONCUR with the Corps' determination that the action complies with the applicable PDCs (with or without justifications), and recommends an individual Section 7 consultation to be completed independent from the SLOPES Program.	
AK PRD Biologist Signature		Date: