



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, ALASKA  
P.O. BOX 6898  
ELMENDORF AFB, ALASKA 99506-0898

Project Management Civil

May 15, 2007

Mr. Patrick Whitesell  
DOWL Engineers  
4041 B Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5945

Dear Mr. Whitesell:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District (Corps), Project Management and Civil Works Branch-Environmental Section recently participated in a meeting with the Corps' Regulatory Division, DOWL Engineers, Alaska Department of Natural Resources-Office of Habitat Management Permitting and Office of Project Management & Permitting, the Municipality of Anchorage, and Alaska Aggregate Products (AAP). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the status of the gravel mining project proposed for the area delineated by a dirt road located in the Native Village of Eklutna (NVE) property to the north, the Glenn Highway to the east, the railroad tracks to the west, and the Eklutna River to the south (T16N, R1W, Section 25, Seward Meridian, Alaska). The area, co-owned by Eklutna Inc. and CIRI, will be mined by AAP with field work to start early this summer.

The discussion focused on concerns the Corps, state agencies and the Municipality have about potential impacts gravel extraction activities could have on the integrity of the Eklutna River and the fish passage and habitat value this reach provides to anadromous salmon species. Several participants agree that the gravel revetment proposed by AAP may not be adequate for the current meandric character of the stream and that winter overflows may undermine the revetment. This structure also may not be consistent with the goal of improving stream habitat along the Eklutna River due to the risk of the stream migrating toward mined areas with lower topography. Therefore, a more detailed mitigation plan addressing this issue and incorporating specific restoration alternatives would be required if the current river floodplain is to be mined.

As Project Manager for the Eklutna Ecosystem Restoration study team, I favor AAP's decision not to start any gravel mining activities within the 100-year floodplain (Figure 1: 18,323 acres-clear and grub area) until a more detailed reclamation plan has been developed. DOWL Engineers and APP's decision to postpone gravel extraction activities within the Eklutna River floodplain until such reclamation plan is developed is an important step toward preventing changes in the stream channel that would jeopardize the capacity of this river's reach to provide fish passage.

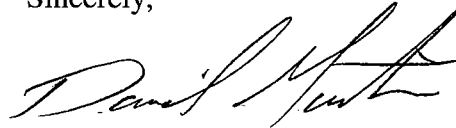
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Since 2002, the Corps' Civil Works Branch has conducted several reconnaissance and environmental assessments to evaluate the feasibility of restoration activities in the lower reaches of the river. These efforts have been aimed at improving habitat complexity for anadromous fish species present in the stream. Currently, we are completing a habitat assessment based on data

collected last summer and plan to start evaluating specific fish habitat restoration alternatives in the near future. We are also working with the Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc., Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other federal and state agencies toward developing a watershed management plan for the Eklutna Watershed.

The success of these initiatives could be affected by any gravel extraction activities along the Eklutna River; therefore, it is of paramount importance that APP's activities are conducted in a manner that does not adversely affect restoration efforts above and below the proposed extraction site. We are pleased with DOWL Engineers and AAP's commitment to postpone gravel mining activities until further evaluation of environmental impacts, and support their interest in looking for potential restoration actions to maintain the integrity of the Eklutna River system. We look forward to the opportunity of cooperating with you as this project effort continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Martinson".

David Martinson  
Project Manager

Enclosure

cf: Mr. Charles Bates, APP  
Mr. Daniel Alex, NVE  
Mr. Jim Arnesen, Eklutna Inc.  
Ms. Tracy Degering, Regulatory, USACE-Alaska District  
Mr. James Renkert, ADNR-ACMP  
Mr. Ed Weiss, ADNR-OHMP  
Mr. Scott McLean, ADNR-OHMP  
Mt. Steve Ellis, Municipality of Anchorage, Project Management & Engineering

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