

7.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

On January 3, 2000, EPA sent a scoping notice packet to interested parties to determine if there were significant public concerns with the project. The comment period ended on February 14, 2000. Comments were received from: City of Soldotna; Kenaitze Indian Tribe I.R.A.; Alaska Support Industry Alliance; Cook Inlet Keeper; Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council; and Nancy Lord/Ken Castner.

The comment letters revealed that there were public concerns with potential impacts to set net fishery operations, water quality issues, and cultural resources. Issues raised by commenters were used in defining the scope of this EA.

In January 2000, Matthew Harrington of EPA requested information on the potential occurrence of listed threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Action (ESA) in the action area from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

On January 12, 2000, Arthur Davenport of USFWS responded to EPA's request for information and identified Steller's eider and short-tailed albatross as threatened and endangered, respectively, under the ESA. According to USFWS, these species are anticipated to occur in the action area.

On February 14, 2000, Steven Pennoyer of NMFS responded to EPA's request for information and identified Steller sea lions, fin whales, and humpback whales as endangered species that may occur in Cook Inlet. The beluga whale was also identified as being of particular concern because of its depleted status under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and its sensitivity to disturbance.

On August 28, 2000, correspondence between Matthew Eagleton (NMFS) and Matthew Harrington (EPA) provided additional information on the ESA status of marine mammals that may occur in the project area. The Cook Inlet population of beluga whales was identified as a candidate species under the ESA. The following species were identified as endangered under the ESA and potentially occurring in Cook Inlet: humpback, fin, blue, and right whales; and Steller sea lions.

In January 2001, EPA sent a draft Biological Assessment to NMFS and USFWS for review. A response was received from Terry Antrobus of USFWS on February 22, concurring with EPA's assessment that the wastewater discharges from the Osprey Platform are not likely to adversely affect listed species. On July 12, 2001, a letter concurring with the finding of the Biological Assessment was received from Ronald J. Berg of NMFS. The concurrence letters are provided in Appendix D.

In January 2001, EPA sent a draft Essential Fish Habitat Assessment to NMFS for review. A response was received from Matthew Eagleton of NMFS indicating that the EFH Assessment is satisfactory and that NMFS had no comments on the document. The NMFS concurrence correspondence is provided in Appendix D.

On March 13, 2001, Mark Pipkin of Walking Dog Archaeology, acting on behalf of Forest Oil, submitted to EPA a preliminary draft of a Programmatic Agreement regarding the protection of historical, cultural, and archaeological resources during implementation of the Redoubt Shoal Unit Development Project. Following a series of meetings and negotiations between EPA, the Alaska SHPO, Forest Oil, and affected Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations, a Programmatic Agreement was prepared in December 2001. The Programmatic Agreement (Appendix E) had not been signed by all parties at the time this EA was prepared.