

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME HABITAT AND RESTORATION DIVISION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Lorraine Marshall
Project Review Coordinator
Division of Governmental Coordination
Juneau

DATE: February 12, 1998

FILE: AK 9801-01JJ

FROM: Ben Kirkpatrick
Habitat Biologist

SUBJECT: Skagway River 8

The Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has reviewed the applicant's proposal to place 42 cubic yards of riprap at pier 4 of the Skagway River bridge. This work is to be done without entering the river with any equipment. The gravel extraction portion of this project was reviewed and found consistent under a separate Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) State I.D. numbers AK921228-08J and AK911212-10J.

It is suspected that scour action around this pier has been exacerbated by previous gravel extraction operations in the Skagway River. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) is concerned that further gravel extraction could compromise public safety by further undermining the bridge supports. The purpose of this project is to reinforce pier 4 until such time as a permanent solution is in place. To further ensure there will be no further impacts upon the highway bridge, it will be necessary to restrict the amount of material removed from the project area. DOT is currently generating cross sections which will determine the elevation to which excavation will be allowed to proceed. It is expected to allow a maximum of approximately 5 feet of material removal over the proposed project area. This will be addressed on a separate Fish Habitat Permit being issued for removing material within the river bed.

Habitats in the project area which are subject to the ACMP standards include the Skagway River. These habitats must be managed so as to maintain or enhance the biological, physical and chemical characteristics of the habitat which contribute to its capacity to support living resources (6 AAC 80.130 [a] and [b]). In addition, rivers, streams and lakes must be managed to protect natural vegetation, water quality, important fish or wildlife habitat and natural water flow. Projects that do not meet the habitat standards may be allowed if a significant public need is demonstrated; there is no feasible or prudent alternative; and all feasible and prudent steps to maximize conformance with the standards will be taken.

ADF&G understands the significant public need related to this project and feels that all feasible and prudent steps have been taken to minimize impacts to fisheries habitat.

Therefore, pursuant to 6 AAC 50 of the Alaska Coastal Management Program, the department recommends the project be found consistent provided the following stipulations are incorporated in the state's consistency determination:

Fish Habitat Permit Stipulations:

1. Equipment shall operate outside of the active river channel.
2. Riprap placement shall be in the manner outlined by DOT.

ACMP Stipulations:

3. Streambank disturbance must be minimized to that necessary to perform the proposed work.
4. All disturbed stream banks will be recontoured to their original shape and stabilized and revegetated with native species after work is completed to prevent erosion which may occur both during and after the project.

Per 6 AAC 80.130, these stipulations are necessary to minimize impacts to natural vegetation and maintain rearing fish habitat.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Cc: Bill Hanson, ADF&G, Douglas
Staff, ADF&G, Haines
Dave Sturdevant, DEC, Juneau
Judy Hauck, DNR, Juneau
Randy Steen, COE, Anchorage
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