



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SEATTLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 3755
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-3755

August 25, 2004

CENWS-PM-PL-ER

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Quillayute River Federal Navigation Project
Routine Operation and Maintenance

Background. The Quillayute River Navigation Project was authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 3 July 1930 and modified by the River and Harbor Acts of 2 March 1945 and 3 September 1954.

The purpose of the project is to provide and maintain depth within the small boat basin at the town of La Push and maintain passage from the boat basin to the Pacific Ocean while maintaining the spit that protects the channel and boat basin. This harbor of refuge has the only Coast Guard search and rescue station along 100 miles of coast between Grays Harbor and Neah Bay. The Quileute Reservation where the project occurs offers livelihood for approximately 300 Quileute Tribal members (fishing) and approximately 50 non-Indians, including Tribal staff, businesses, and Coast Guard personnel.

Proposed Action. The Quillayute River Navigation Channel is dredged and maintained by the Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) on an as needed basis to maintain an entrance to the Quillayute Marina at La Push, Washington. Without this maintenance dredging, shoaling would reduce the ability of boats (fishing and pleasure craft) and Coast Guard ships to enter and leave safely during low tide conditions. In accordance with Public Notice CENWS-OD-TS-NS-19 dredging will occur in the navigation channel when shoaling becomes critical to the navigable water way.

The last dredging cycle was January-February 2003 when 23,832 cy was dredged and placed on the ocean side of the spit to assist in maintaining the shore line and to provide habitat for surf smelt. There were 5,000 cy of material placed on the upland disposal site. The same methodology for dredging in 2005 that was used in 2003 will be used (hydraulic and mechanical).

Summary of Impacts. The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) describes the expected environmental impacts of the proposed action. The dredging, and disposal activities will result in temporary disruption of water quality, air quality, and noise. All of these impacts will be minor. Construction will occur at times to avoid surf smelt spawning and juvenile salmonid out-migration. No threatened and/or endangered species use the project site to the extent that they would be adversely impacted. Commercial and sport fishing would not be affected significantly by the project. Cultural resources and Native American concerns would not be affected significantly by the project. The draft section 404(b)(1) evaluation prepared for the project determined that the project includes appropriate and practicable steps to minimize adverse impacts to the aquatic ecosystem, and that there is no practicable alternative that would have less impact on the aquatic environment.

Past historical photographs, local historians, and the attached EA have given evidence that the spit was highly erodable due to the sometimes sever wave action during storms. This was evidenced by a breach in the spit in 1996 that blocked the navigation channel. To reduce the cost of the project and to stabilize the spit the Corps riveted the entire spit covering approximately 7.6 acres of beach type habitat. As addressed in the draft EA the Corps will work with the Quileute Tribe and agencies by means of the already formed work group to determine the type and location of mitigation for those lost acres. Since there are no areas within the Quillayute Estuary to replicate a beach type habitat the Quileute Tribe would like the mitigation to benefit fisheries of the Quileute Estuary.

Findings. Based on the attached environmental documentation, coordination and analysis conducted by the project sponsor and Corps environmental staff, I have determined that the proposed action will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. The proposed action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, and therefore does not require preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Date

Debra M. Lewis
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

