

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Denali Commission (DC), is issuing this notice to inform the public that the DC has issued a Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Williamsport Dredging Project in Iliamna Bay, Alaska. The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA regulations set forth in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500 to 1508, including the guidelines for determining the significance of proposed federal action (40 CFR 1508.27), and with DC Regulations contained in 45 CFR 900.

Lead Agency: Denali Commission

For further information contact: John Whittington, General Counsel at jwhittington@denali.gov or 907-271-1640. Copies of the Draft FONSI and EA are available for viewing or download from <https://www.denali.gov>.

Supplementary Information: The purpose of the project is to dredge the sediment that has deposited within the barge unloading area. Iliamna Development will remove approximately 9,000 cubic yards of material from the permitted dredge area (150'x500'). The dredged material will be deposited on either side of the channel on existing stockpiles. Due to the tidal action, the deposition of sediment from Williams Creek and surrounding area, there is a large deposition of sediment that has built up at the unloading zone. This limits the number of barges that can unload in a timely manner.

Written comments on the Draft FONSI will be accepted until May 26, 2023. Comments can be emailed to John Whittington at jwhittington@denali.gov or mailed to the address listed below.

John Whittington
Denali Commission
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1230
Anchorage, AK 99501

Issued on May 11, 2023 by John Whittington, General Counsel, DC, Anchorage, Alaska.

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Williamsport Dredging Project

This Finding of No Significant Impact is submitted pursuant to:

45 CFR Part 900

Decision

The DC has determined that the selected course of action of dredging Williamsport will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. The selected course of action is described as the Proposed Action in the Williamsport Dredging Project Environmental Assessment (EA), hereafter referred to as the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative meets the stated purpose and need of the project while minimizing impacts to the human and natural environment.

The EA was prepared in compliance with NEPA, which considers the effects of federally-funded projects on the quality of the human and natural environment. The DC is the federal lead agency for NEPA compliance.

Selected Alternative

The DC is proposing to dredge the sediment that has deposited within the barge unloading area. Iliamna Development will remove approximately 9,000 cubic yards of material from the permitted dredge area (150'x500'). The dredged material will be deposited on either side of the channel on existing stockpiles. Due to the tidal action, the deposition of sediment from Williams Creek and surrounding area, there is a large deposition of sediment that has built up at the unloading zone. This limits the number of barges that can unload in a timely manner.

Environmental Consequences of the Selected Alternative

The EA analyzed the effects of the Selected Alternative on numerous resources. No significant impacts to these resources were identified. These findings are based on the evidence and conclusion set forth in the EA, which is incorporated by reference.

Public Involvement

The Draft FONSI and EA were published on May 11, 2023 and was available for public comment for 15 calendar days.

Approved by:

John Whittington, General Counsel

Date

Environmental Assessment
Williamsport Dredging Project, Iliamna Bay Alaska

April 24, 2023

Prepared by Andrew Walsh, Project Manager, Advanced Management of Alaska, LLC.

I. Introduction

The Iliamna Development Corporation is pleased to perform a basis for determination for the Categorical Exclusion Requirements for the Denali Commission for the Williamsport dredge project #1754.

II. The Project Environment

a. Overview of area

Williamsport is located approximately 182 miles from Anchorage and 82 miles from Homer Alaska. It is the gateway to Lake Iliamna, Lake Clarke and several villages in the region.

b. Description of the project Site

The project site is located where Williams Creek enters Iliamna bay off the Cook Inlet. Currently there is a small area where barges unload containers and other goods. These items are then transported to their destination from this location. This is the main unloading point for the entire area. From Williamsport there is an established State Road in a dedicated Right of Way that leads to Pile bay in lake Iliamna.

III. The Proposed Action

The proposed action is to dredge the sediment that has deposited within the barge unloading area. Iliamna Development will remove approximately 9,000 cubic yards of material from the permitted dredge area (150'x500'). The dredged material will be cast either side of the channel on existing stockpiles. Due to the tidal action, the deposition of sediment from Williams Creek and surrounding area, there is a large deposition of sediment that has built up at the unloading zone. This limits the number of barges that can unload in a timely manner.

IV. No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative dredging of Williamsport would not occur. This would significantly reduce the number of barges that could unload at the port reducing the economic viability of community. Furthermore, the port availability would continue to worsen as sedimentation would continue to be deposited.

V. Purpose and Need

The purpose for dredging is to allow for a larger time frame for barges to land and unload goods. Currently barges can only anticipate to land about 4 times per year. Deliveries must be timed with the extreme high tides. Dredging this area will allow more space for the barges to utilize for landing. With a wider time window, this should allow for increased number of barge deliveries, and increased deliveries of goods and services to the area.

Residents depend on the deliveries made by barge as it is the more cost effective method of delivery. Anything brought by plane is much more expensive.

VI. Environmental Concerns

1. Public Health, Safety or Environment

- There will be no negative impact to public health, safety or the environment. This project will improve public health with increased access to goods, services and medicine that the community residents rely on.

2. Controversy on Environmental Grounds

- There are no anticipated effects on the environment that are likely to be highly controversial.

3. Uncertain, Unique or Unknown Risks

- There are no anticipated effects on the human environment that are uncertain within this project.

4. Precedent for Future Action

- There are no anticipated actions within this project that will create a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant impacts.

5. Cumulative Impacts

- This project does not coincide with any other projects that can create cumulative significant impacts.

6. Scope and Size

- The scope and size of this project is limited to the permitted area and cannot vary outside of the defined limits as established in the Corps of Engineer Permit.

7. Environmental Conditions

- There are no anticipated actions from this project that have the potential to degrade already existing environmental conditions.

8. Environmental justice

- This project will not have an high and adverse impact on low and minority populations. This project will increase the ability to provide better goods and services to the communities.

9. Indian Sacred Sites

- There are no anticipated impacts to access of ceremonial sacred Indian sites from this project.

b. Sensitive Resources

10. Section 106 Historic Properties

- There are no anticipated adverse impacts to historic properties from this project.

11. Endangered Species

- There are no anticipated adverse impacts to any endangered species from this project.

12. Historic or Cultural Resources

- There are no anticipated adverse impacts to any historic or cultural environment to the nation from this project.

13. Park, Recreation or Refuge Lands

- There are no anticipated significant adverse direct and indirect effects on National or State Parks, Recreation or Refuge Lands.

14. Wilderness Area

- There are no anticipated adverse impacts to Wilderness areas by this project.

15. Wild and Scenic River

- This project is not a project that will impact a wild scenic or recreational river area, and it is not anticipated to create conditions inconsistent with the character of the river.

16. National Natural Landmarks

- This project will not impact any National Natural Landmark.

17. Sole Source Aquifers

- According to the EPA website, as of 08/05/04 there are no sole source aquifers in Alaska.

18. Prime Farmlands

- This project does not impact any agricultural lands.

19. Wetlands

- According to National Wetlands Inventory Website this area is considered a E2USN Estuarine and marine Wetland. This project will not adversely affect this wetland.

20. Floodplains

- According to the FEMA Website Flood map service area, this project is not located within a floodplain.

21. National Monuments

- This project will not impact any national monuments.

22. Ecologically Significant or Critical Areas

- There are no anticipated adverse impacts to ecologically significant or critical areas from this project.

23. Other Known Reasons

- There are no other known reasons for an environmental assessment for this project.