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US Army Corps of Engineers
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Post Office Box 6898
JBER, Alaska 99506-0898
estrella.f.campellone@usace.army.mil

January 31, 2024

Re: POA-2023-00398 Proposed seaplane slips on Island Lake in Meadow Lakes

Dear Estrella Campellone:

The Meadow Lakes Community Council membership voted at their January 30, 2024, special meeting to formally oppose the proposed seaplane slips on Island Lake in Meadow Lakes.

The membership's primary concerns were:

1. Impacts from the proposed facility are not possible to mitigate. Material collapsing from the fill areas into the lake would increase turbidity. Fuel and oil spills would add up and contaminate the water and surrounding area. Potential flooding would increase. All of this leads to increased levels of harm to local fish, wildlife, and people.
2. Please keep the existing wetlands. Protecting greenbelts is part of the Meadow Lakes Comprehensive Plan.
3. Fish and wildlife habitat destruction would affect red-necked grebes (on the watch list), sandhill cranes, Arctic turns, swans, loons, and anadromous fish. This is the headwaters of the Little Meadow Creek, a cataloged anadromous waterway. See the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fish Passage Site 20501067 report for photos of juvenile salmon at the proposed location. <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/reports/FishPassage/rptSite.cfm?site=20501067&surveyID=1009>

The following topics summarize other concerns stated by the membership.

Design

- Members would like to see engineered design plans for the whole project. We don't feel the Corps of Engineers can make an informed decision without more details.
- The runway shown to the south of the slips does not currently exist as depicted in his plans. It exists further to the east. If it were to be extended, the culvert would have to be fish passage. A 12-inch diameter culvert would not be enough.
- The downstream culvert under Pittman Road will be replaced with a fish passage culvert under another project. The expectation is that the number of salmon in Island Lake will increase after replacement of the Pittman Road culvert. This would increase the potential harm caused by the proposed float plane project to a higher number of total fish.
- The lake material is not suitable for dredging and building. It will sluff back into the lake.
- The lake is too small for that amount of activity. Has a study been done to determine if this many planes can function safely on the lake? It is important to preserve the existing recreational uses of the lake and not have it end up like Lake Hood where no non-aviation use is allowed.

- Concern about how fuel and oil will be brought and stored (and cleaned up).
- Flooding if the culvert is too small or becomes blocked.
- Concern about vehicle access and parking. 0.7 acres would be needed for parking (it could be developed on the adjacent lot).
- Increased traffic on Pittman.
- No apparent plans for restrooms.
- Concern this might be a hazard class 2 dam.
- There are several hydrocarbon layers underground in the area (noted by a property owner drilling a well). It would be important to know where these layers are and not disturb them during dredging/construction.

Wildlife

- Unavoidable fuel and oil spills at this scale are an incompatible use with the existing wildlife habitat. It only takes a little pollution to kill a little creek and lake.
- Adverse effects on wildlife, especially birds nesting at the lake.
- Adverse effects on salmon, especially juveniles.
- Additional potential for invasive Elodia introduction.

Process

- More area residents and the Meadow Lakes Community Council should have received notice of this application.
- The Borough Planning Department and the Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission provided comments and a resolution opposing the project.
- Members were concerned the applicant will not follow the rules and disturb/construct in the wetland and creek without a permit. The applicant has already not applied for a Department of Conservation construction general permit for his clearing of more than 1 acre.

Safety and Recreation

- This is already a high-volume aviation traffic area.
- Adverse effects on recreation (kayaking, etc.) on Island Lake.

Other available facilities

- There are at least 16 other available facilities in the area. See the Mat-Su Borough Regional Aviation System Plan Study <https://matsugov.us/docs/plans/14341/raspstudy.pdf>.

Other

- Many property owners oppose the project.
- Potential reduction of property values.

Thank you for your consideration.

Camden Yehle
Meadow Lakes Community Council, President