

24.01.01
080800

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
Cordova Center Environmental Assessment



Cheri:

Signed copy
of the decision
notice and EA
for the Cordova
Center for Files.
Steve Zemke

July 2010

gach National Forest

1 C Street, Suite 300

orage, Alaska 99503

RECEIVED

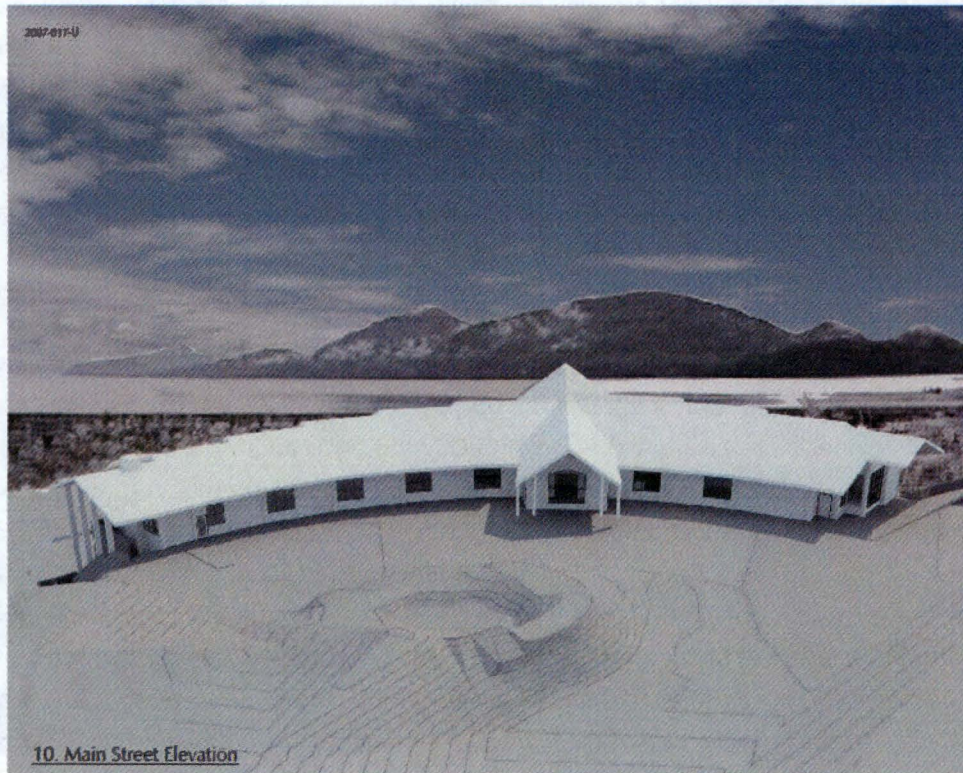
AUG 11 2010

EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL
TRUSTEE Council

080800

24.01.01
080800

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
Cordova Center Environmental Assessment



July 2010

Chugach National Forest

3301 C Street, Suite 300

Anchorage, Alaska 99503

RECEIVED

AUG 11 2010

EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL
TRUSTEE Council

Background and Location

The City of Cordova is located at the southeastern end of Prince William Sound in the Gulf of Alaska. It is 52 air miles southeast of Valdez and 150 air miles south east of Anchorage with a population of approximately 2,500. The City of Cordova is proposing to construct the Cordova Community Center within the city limits of Cordova. The proposed Cordova Community Center is a multiple use facility that will provide space for administrative offices, a museum, library, performing arts theatre/auditorium, meeting rooms, and work space. The Cordova Community Center was developed in collaboration between the City of Cordova and the Cordova Historical Society and is the result of an extensive planning process with community involvement. The Cordova Community Center is partially funded by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Settlement (EVOS) funds, thereby requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As a federal trustee agency represented on the EVOS Trustee Council, the Forest Service is the lead federal agency for NEPA compliance for this project.

Decision

It is my decision that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the construction of the Cordova Community Center as described in the *Cordova Community Center Environmental Assessment (EA)*.¹ My decision will allow the use of EVOS funding as approved by the EVOS Trustee Council on May 1, 2008, if all other conditions identified by the Council are met and the City of Cordova decides it will construct the Cordova Community Center, a 34,400 square foot multiple use facility. The Cordova Center will provide space for several municipal functions; including, the museum, visitor center, meeting room, library, municipal administrative offices, emergency communications and response center, the United States Forest Service/Prince William Sound Science Discovery Program, a performing arts center, a conference/convention and educational workshop center, and a public outreach center for the EVOS Trustee Council. Construction of the Cordova Community Center by the City of Cordova is expected to begin in August 2010 and be completed in December 2011.

Rationale for the Decision

Currently, municipal facilities in Cordova are inefficient or deteriorated resulting in high maintenance costs and non-compliance with City of Cordova building codes. This includes the museum, library, municipal offices, performing arts, visitor center services, and after-school and science discovery education programs. In addition, none of the facilities meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards which limit access to disabled members of the public. Furthermore, many of these facilities are too small to adequately accommodate public demand.

The construction of the Cordova Community Center will replace these existing facilities with more efficient, modern, and less costly ADA accessible facilities. The Cordova Community Center will remedy many of the problems with the existing facilities and will provide more space to adequately meet public

¹ The *Cordova Community Center Environmental Assessment* is the supporting environmental document for this decision and is incorporated by reference. This document describes the environmental impacts associated with the construction of the Cordova Community Center.

demand. The Cordova Community Center will also comply with City of Cordova building codes and result in less maintenance costs. Furthermore, the Cordova Community Center will provide a safe pedestrian link for tourists and residents to promote business in Cordova between the historic Main Street and the business frontage along the harbor.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The EA did not identify any natural resource concerns with the construction of the Cordova Community Center. This is primarily because the location of the Cordova Community Center is within the city limits of Cordova which does not contain any habitat value for any plant or animal species and is not known to contain any heritage resources or be of any value for subsistence purposes. Furthermore, the Cordova Community Center is not located in any wetlands, floodplains, or other unique areas.

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for "significance" (40 C.F.R. §1508.27) and I have determined that this decision is not an *action* that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively; nor would this decision affect the quality of the human environment in either context or intensity. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) will not be prepared.

Public Involvement and Agencies and Persons Consulted

Thirty public meetings have been held to gather ideas and share information about the project from 2002 to 2010 for the Cordova Community Center. Community surveys and box holder mailings were also used to solicit public comments and to inform residents. In accordance with 36 CFR §215.5 a legal notice offering a thirty day comment period was posted in the Cordova Times on May 27, 2010. No comments were received.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

Consistency with Chugach National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan (Forest Plan) Direction

The Cordova Community Center project is consistent with the desired future condition in the Forest Plan. As the proposed location for the facility is on non-National Forest System Lands, there is no applicable Forest Plan management area prescription.

Endangered Species Act of 1993

The proposed community center would have no effect upon any federally listed endangered, threatened, or sensitive species of plants or animals because no habitat for these species exists within the project area (USDA Forest Service 2010).

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Items of historic, prehistoric, or paleontological value are protected under various Federal laws, including the Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 USC 433) and the Archeological Resource Protection Act of

1979 (16 USC 470ee) and Federal regulations. A cultural review has been conducted by the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer and determined a finding of "No Historic Properties Affected" (State of Alaska, 2004)

ANILCA Section 810, Subsistence Evaluation and Finding

The effects of this project have been evaluated to determine potential effects on subsistence opportunities and resources. Since no vegetation or wildlife are located within the project area, this project will have no effect on subsistence resources (USDA Forest Service 2010).

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended

The Coastal Zone Management Act requires the Forest Service, when conducting or authorizing activities or undertaking development directly affecting the coastal zone, to ensure that the activities or development to be consistent with the approved Alaska Management Program to the maximum extent possible. This project will not have any significant impact on the environment, and therefore no significant impact on coastal resources or uses. Accordingly, we have reviewed the applicable standards of the Alaska Coastal Management Plan (ACMP) found in 6 AAC 80, and have determined that the project is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the ACMP.

Flood Plain Management (E.O. 11988) and Protection of Wetlands (E.O. 11990)

The proposed action is not located within flood plain as defined by Executive Order 11988 and is not located within wetlands as defined by Executive Order 11990.

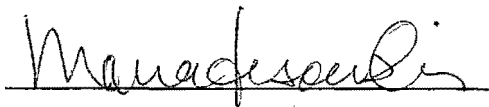
Administrative Appeal Opportunities and Implementation Date

As required by Forest Service appeal regulations found at 36 CFR §215.5, a legal notice of the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Action was published in the Anchorage Daily News newspaper in Anchorage, Alaska on May 27, 2010. No comments expressing interest were received. Pursuant to Forest Service appeal regulations at 36 CFR §215.12(e)(1) this decision is therefore not subject to appeal.

Implementation of this action may occur immediately upon publication of legal notice of this decision in Cordova Times, the newspaper of record for the Cordova Ranger District.

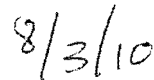
For further information please contact:

Joshua Milligan
Seward Ranger District
PO Box 390
Seward, Alaska 99664
Phone: 907-224-3374

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Manadepudi", written over a horizontal line.

Maria Lisowski

Acting Chugach Forest Supervisor

A handwritten date "8/3/10" in dark ink, written over a horizontal line.

Date