

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
FOR A  
MULTI-AGENCY CENTER  
IN SEWARD, ALASKA**

December 2001

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Kenai Fjords National Park

And

United States Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Forest Service  
Chugach National Forest

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## **Purpose and Need For Action**

Kenai Fjords National Park (KEFJ) and the Chugach National Forest (CNF) are considering the purchase and development of a multi-agency visitor and administration facility on two sites containing about 2.8-acres in Seward, Alaska (Figure 1). A 2.4 acre site containing the 5,900 square foot K.M. Rae Building would be rehabilitated and expanded to provide visitor services, administrative space, and parking for both agencies. A 0.4-acre site about 1/2 block northeast of the main parcel would be developed to provide supplemental parking.

The purpose of the action is to provide co-located administrative and visitor facilities for both Kenai Fjords National Park and Chugach National Forest that meets the current and future needs of both agencies in a location that is visible and readily accessible to the public. The facility would improve visitor services by providing a visitor contact facility with adequate space to conduct public business and/or where visitors can become informed about the varied recreational opportunities and resources available in the region at a single unified location. The facility would also reduce agency costs by providing operating efficiencies in cooperated reception services, mailroom functions, phone system, computer system, and other necessary services combined to improve visitor service.

The action is needed because the administrative and visitor service space requirements for both agencies currently exceed the capacity of the existing facilities resulting in reduced visitor service capabilities.

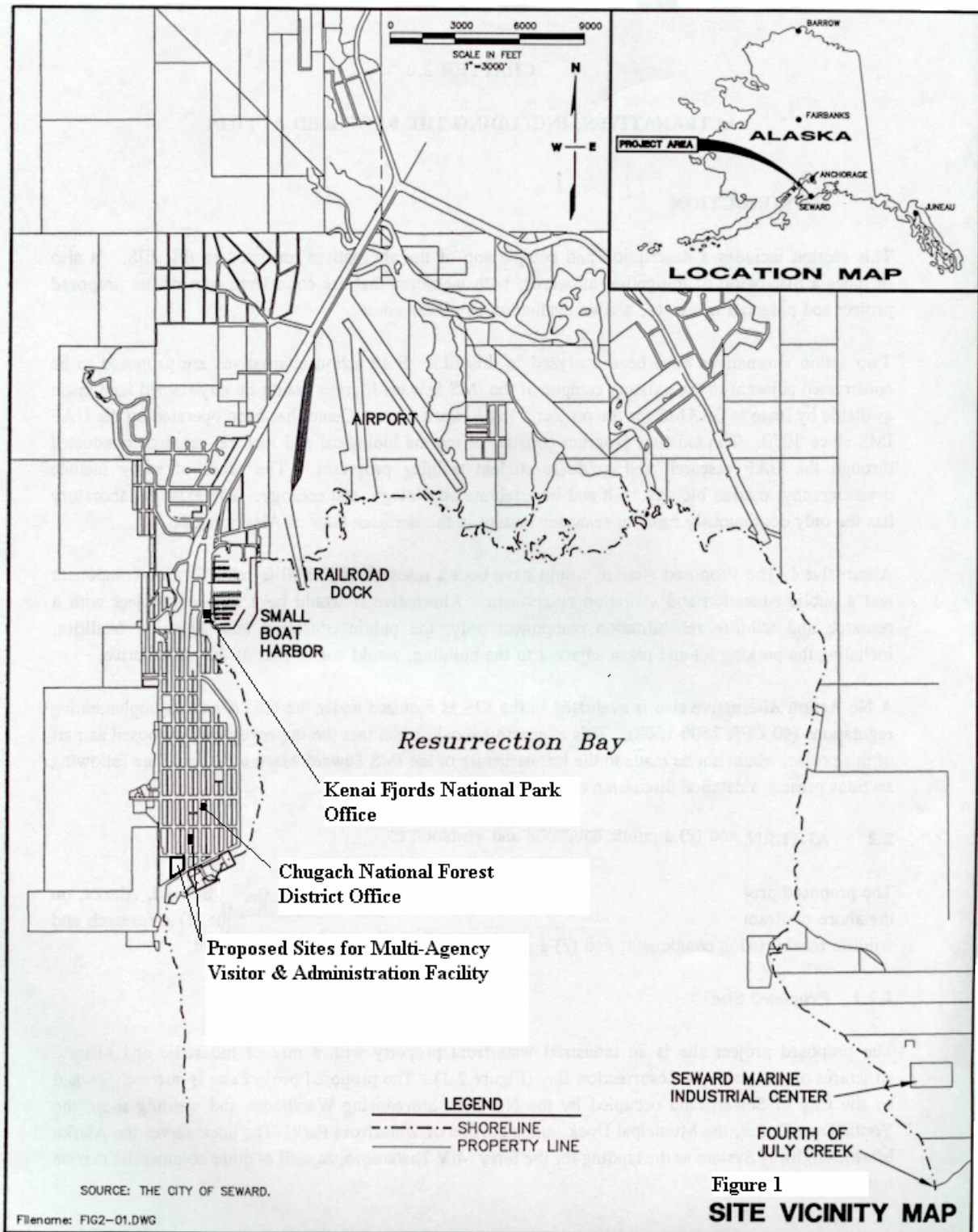
The existing National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) administrative office space capacity is exceeded by the staff required to manage the park and forest. The NPS office's lobby and auditorium experience frequent crowding during the summer season, particularly when cruise ships and charter vessels disembark visitors. Demand for seating often exceeds the capacity of the 30-person auditorium. Exhibit space to convey safety, outdoor ethics and park interpretation is minimal. Also parking adjacent to both buildings is limited. The Forest Service office is located outside of the more heavily traveled tourist and public travel routes and provides limited opportunity for disseminating public information.

The dramatic growth in visitation that the national park and national forest have experienced over the last 20 years is expected to continue. The anticipated rise in visitation will amplify the need for expanded visitor and administrative facilities.

The environmental assessment (EA) analyzes the proposed action and no-action alternative and related impacts. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and regulations of the Council of Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9).

## **Background**

In September 1995 the NPS completed the Frontcountry Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment (DCP/EA) for Kenai Fjords National Park which is incorporated by reference (NPS, 1995). The plan considered expansion of the visitor and administration



facilities since these facilities experience crowding during the summer season and the administrative space requirements exceeded the existing headquarters building capacity.

The DCP/EA evaluated 19 potential sites as possible building locations. Several Native-owned sites were considered in and near Seward. None of the Native-owned sites were considered satisfactory for the location of the visitor center (NPS, 1995). Fifteen sites were rejected from further consideration for environmental or physical reasons (NPS, 1995). The DCP/EA included 5 alternatives developed around 4 potential sites.

One of the preliminary sites rejected at the time was the University of Alaska's Institute for Marine Science property (K. M. Rae Building) on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Railroad Avenue. The property was considered as an administrative site with the visitor center being shared with the Alaska Sea Life Center at the Center site (NPS, 1995). Public response regarding common space partnering with the Alaska Sea Life Center was almost unanimously negative and this alternative and site were rejected. Note: The Institute for Marine Science property is now being considered as the site for the multi-agency center (See Alternative 2).

The DCP/EA considered five alternatives for a visitor center in Seward. Two alternatives proposed expanding the existing visitor center at its current location next to the boat harbor, with the administration functions in a separate building. Two alternatives combined the visitor center with the administration facility. A no-action alternative maintained the existing NPS visitor center/administration building. Of the action alternatives one proposed a NPS administration facility and three proposed an interagency administration facility. All proposed site locations were in or near the Seward small boat harbor.

Alternative A (no-action) retained the NPS visitor center and administration building at Seward's small boat harbor.

Alternative B expanded the existing headquarters/visitor center building and a new NPS administration building would be constructed on the corner of South Harbor Street and Fourth Avenue.

Alternative C expanded the existing NPS visitor center for use as a joint-agency interpretive center. A new interagency administration building would be constructed on the corner of Van Buren Street and Fourth Avenue. The building site was located next to the freshwater lagoon outlet.

Alternative D required construction of a new NPS visitor center/interagency administration building on the corner of Van Buren Street and Fourth Avenue. The building site was located next to the freshwater lagoon outlet.

Alternative E required the construction of a new visitor center and interagency administration building on a portion of Seward's waterfront park.

On March 22, 1996 the NPS approved a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the DCP/EA (NPS, 1996). The FONSI concluded that the NPS would proceed with the design of a multi-agency administrative and visitor facility. A facility site location was not determined

although the sites described in Alternatives C and D would be considered. The NPS determined that final site selection would depend on the number of partners, available lands, the complexity of the structure, and parking availability.

Upon completion of the DCP/ EA the City of Seward proposed use of a 4+-acre site on Ballaine Boulevard adjacent to Resurrection Bay between the boat harbor and downtown Seward. A concept planning and design study was conducted for the site (GDM Inc, 1997). This site was dropped from further consideration because it is located within an area of high seismic risk (City of Seward, 1985; R&M Consultants, 1994).

A more cursory and current review of other sites previously considered led to discussions with the University of Alaska concerning the availability of it's Institute for Marine Science property. The Institute for Marine Science property is now being considered as the site for the multi-agency center.

In May of 1999 the NPS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chugach National Forest, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska State Parks, the City of Seward, the Seward Chamber of Commerce, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The goal was to provide a framework for the coordination of activities working toward the approval, funding, design, construction, and operation of a co-located jointly managed visitor center and administrative facility in Seward, Alaska.

### **Summary of Public Involvement**

The NPS presented the proposed project to the City of Seward's Planning and Zoning Commission on December 6, 2000 and February 5, 2001. These meetings were open to the public.

The proposed project was published in the October 2001 version of the Chugach National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions which was mailed to about 300 people

### **Issues/Impact Topics**

The issues selected for impact analysis were identified based on agency and public concerns, regulatory and planning requirements, and known resource issues resulting from the 1995 Frontcountry Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment (DCP/EA) for Kenai Fjords National Park. A brief rationale for the selection of each issue is given below.

#### Natural Hazards (tsunamis and seismic activity)

Tsunamis: Facilities located in Seward are subject to potential risks from tsunamis. The Alaska Department of Emergency Services and the Pacific Rim Warning Center reference the 50-foot and 100-foot contours as marking the upper limit of potential coastal hazard areas subject to tsunamis. The proposed development site is below the 50-foot contour level and adjacent to the maximum height reached by waves from the 1964 tsunami.

**Seismic Activity:** Four earthquake zones are identified in Alaska based on potential damage to structures (University of Alaska, 1978). Seward is located in the zone of highest earthquake risk because of the frequency and magnitude of recorded earthquakes. Seward's southern waterfront in the vicinity of the proposed action appears to be more stable than other areas since it did not experience landslides during the 1964 earthquake.

**Visitor Experience:** Visitor experience would be directly affected by the continued use of existing facilities or the development of a new multi-agency visitor and administration facility with adequate interpretative and visitor orientation facilities.

**Cultural Resources:** Cultural resources may be affected by the development of a multi-agency visitor contact and administration facility and associated parking facilities.

**Land Use:** Development of a multi-agency visitor and administration facility and associated parking may affect existing land uses.

**Parking and Local Transportation:** Easy access, safety, and adequate parking are issues affecting any proposed development or the use of existing facilities.

**National Park and National Forest Management:** Development of a multi-agency visitor contact and administration facility or continued use of existing facilities would directly effect management and operations of Kenai Fjords National Park and Chugach National Forest with respect to interpretation, visitor information services, and staff coordination.

### **Issues Eliminated from Detailed Consideration**

**Air quality:** No long-term effects to air quality would be expected from the preferred alternative. There could be some minimal short-term, localized impacts to air quality during construction but these effects would be insignificant to the air quality in Seward.

**Water Resources and Wetlands:** No wetlands or water resources occur on the site proposed for the visitor and administration facility.

**Floodplains:** The project site is not located in the 100-year floodplain. The site is located in an area that was not flooded in October 1987 during an intense 3-day storm.

**Vegetation and Wildlife:** The site proposed for the visitor and administration facility is located in the developed portion of Seward. The 2.4-acre site contains a 5,900 square foot building and parking lots. Effects to vegetation and wildlife would not occur.

**Threatened and Endangered Species:** No threatened and endangered species occur on the proposed site.

**Subsistence:** The proposed site, located in the City of Seward, is not used for subsistence activities. See Appendix A for the ANILCA section 810 subsistence evaluation.

Coastal Zone Consistency: Acquisition and construction of the office facility is in a category of actions which normally do not affect the coastal zone and therefore do not require a consistency determination. Item C of the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Alaska and the Forest Service includes the following example of an action which normally does not require a consistency determination, as follows: Construction, reconstruction, operations, or maintenance of administrative sites located on National Forest System lands within areas that are subject to local zoning regulations.

This finding is based upon the findings that lands immediate to the coastal shoreline would not be disturbed. There would be no fill material placed on the shoreline. No surface water runoff would directly enter coastal waters. Runoff would be diverted into existing city storm drains.

Resources and values of Kenai Fjords National Park and Chugach National Forest: Development of a visitor and administration facility would have no effect on the resources and values of Kenai Fjords National Park or Chugach National Forest. The proposed facility would be located outside the boundaries of both units.

Effects on Minority and Low Income Populations: Executive Order 12898 requires federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing high and adverse human health or environmental effects in their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities. The proposed project would not result in adverse impacts on any minority or low-income populations or communities.

## **Description of Alternatives**

### **Alternative 1: No Action**

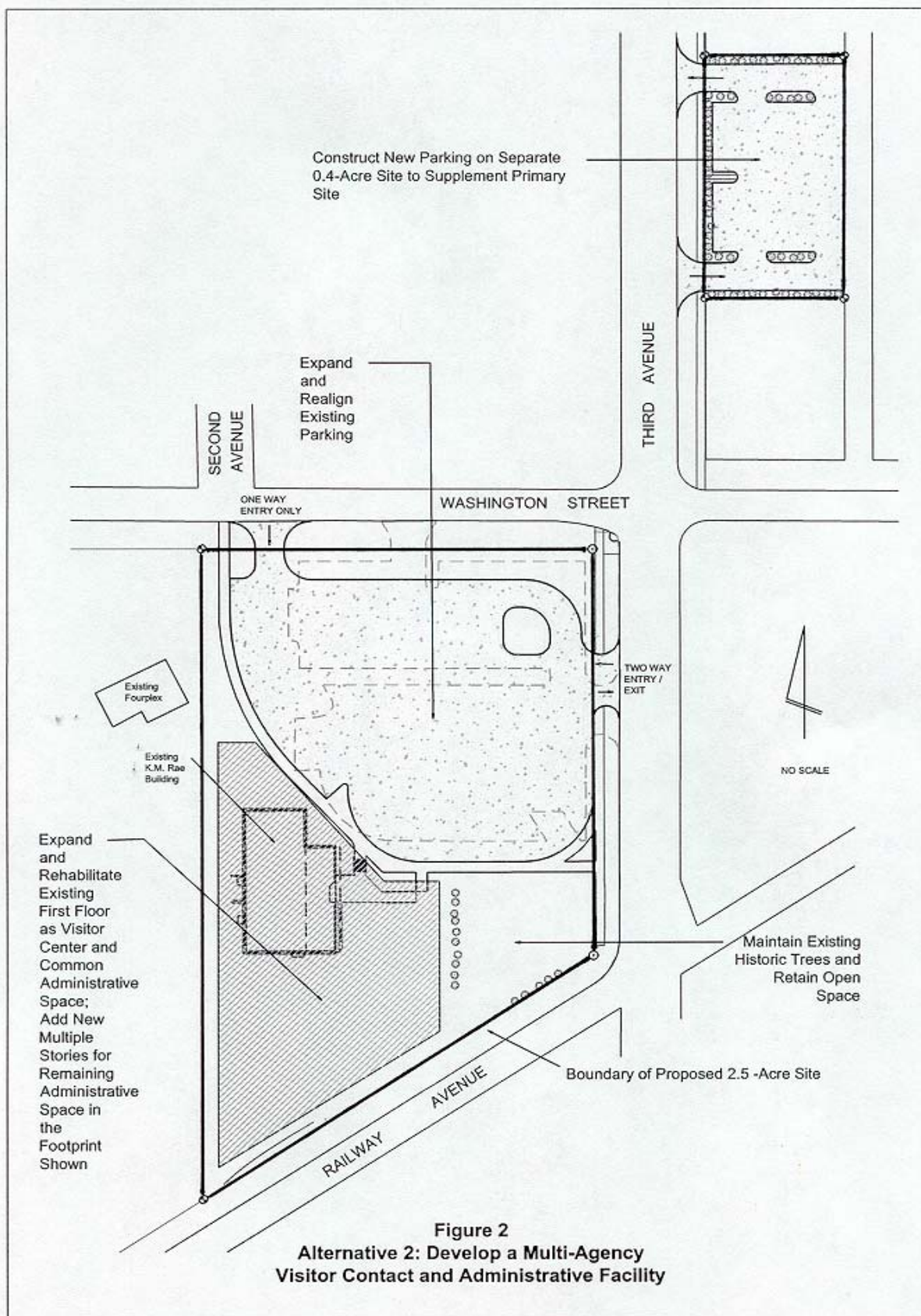
Under the no-action alternative the Kenai Fjords National Park (KEFJ) and Chugach National Forest (CNF) would continue to use existing administrative facilities in the City of Seward. The KEFJ would maintain a visitor center and administrative building at Seward's small boat harbor while the CNF would continue to use its offices in Seward and at the Kenai Lake Work Center for administrative purposes. There would be no expansion of existing facilities.

### **Alternative 2: Develop a Multi-Agency Visitor and Administration Facility in Seward, Alaska (Preferred Alternative)**

The federal government would purchase about 2.8 acres in two parcels located at the southern end of the City of Seward, from the University of Alaska to serve as the home of a multi-agency visitor and administration facility (Figure 2). The U.S. Forest Service would purchase a 2.4-acre site located on the corner of 3rd Avenue and Railroad Avenue. The National Park Service would purchase a 0.4-acre site located on 3rd Avenue about 1/2 block northeast of the larger parcel.

The existing 5,900 square foot K.M. Rae Building located on the 2.4-acre parcel would be rehabilitated and expanded to provide visitor services and administrative space. The building would be enlarged to approximately 29,000 square feet and configured into a two- or three-story structure. The building would contain an interpretive exhibit space, multipurpose room, long-





distance learning classroom, and a refurbished auditorium. Administrative areas would consist of offices, work areas, conference/library, computer facilities, and storage. As much as possible, the existing building would be retained for occupancy, with the exception of the auditorium. The construction would comply with local and federal building code requirements pertaining to seismic activity and flood hazards. Emergency warning and evacuation procedures would be maintained. The building would comply with all requirements for access by the disabled.

Combined parking for the facility would contain 173 parking spaces including 5 handicap accessible spaces (see Appendix B). This total includes 104 vehicles on the 2.4-acre site to meet City regulations and at least an additional 34 spaces to accommodate peak loading. A combination of up to five buses or eight recreational vehicles would be accommodated as well. Existing parking areas on the 2.4-acre parcel would be reconfigured and expanded to better meet the increased use from the public and staff and Alaska SeaLife Center. Parking areas would also contain landscaped islands that visually break up the expanse of asphalt and provide a more appealing foreground to the multi-agency.

The 0.4-acre parcel located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue would be converted to parking to support the multi-agency visitor and administration facility. This parcel would accommodate at least 35 government and/or Alaska SeaLife Center employee vehicles. All existing structures on this parcel would be removed, converted to parking, and landscaped appropriately.

The facility would be occupied by staffs from Kenai Fjords National Park, Chugach National Forest – Seward District, University of Alaska Institute of Marine Science, Seward Chamber of Commerce, State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources – Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and National Marine Fisheries Service.

**Environmentally Preferred Alternative:** The development of a multi-agency visitor and administration facility (Alternative 2) is the environmentally preferred alternative since it would have a negligible affect on natural and cultural resources. The Alternative 2-site location provides a greater degree of environmental safety than the no-action alternative since it is located outside of the area of high seismic risk which corresponds to the area of fractured ground damaged by the 1964 earthquake. The project site is not within the area of wave run-up from the 1964 earthquake or area flooded in October 1986 by an intense 3-day storm.

## **Mitigating Measures**

Contaminants and hazardous substances: Groundbreaking activities (earthmoving, major landscaping, and geophysical or subsurface studies) would be visually inspected for evidence of any soil and/or groundwater contamination by pollutants, contaminants or hazardous substances. If contamination were encountered, appropriate notification and remedial action would be taken to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local government environmental statutes and regulations.

Cultural Resources: The proposed undertaking would proceed in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA). As lead federal agency, the NPS has initiated the Section 106 consultation process for the acquisition of the 0.4 acre parcel located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and the development of the multi-agency visitor contact center with the

Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In accordance with 36 CFR 800, the NPS, in consultation with the SHPO, would identify historic properties within the Potential Area of Effect and make an assessment of adverse effect on any identified properties. See the Cultural Compliance Schedule (Appendix C). The views of the public would be solicited and considered throughout the process. The USFS serves as lead federal agency for the acquisition of the 2.4-acre site. The USFS would acquire the parcel in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. If historic properties are discovered or unanticipated effects on historic properties found after the completion of the Section 106 process without an agreement document, the NPS would apply the requirement of 36 CFR 800.13 (b), Discoveries without prior planning. If the Section 106 process resulted in a Memorandum of Agreement, that agreement would define a process to resolve the discovery of historic properties or the unanticipated effect.

Land Use and Building Codes: The proposed development would meet all City of Seward Planning and Land Use Regulations in Chapter 15.10 of the Seward Zoning Code (City of Seward, 1999) and the International Building Code (Seismic Zone 4). Parking for the multi-agency visitor contact and administrative facility would meet Seward parking guidelines for office and public assembly buildings and American Disabilities Act requirements.

Site Features: "The Line" a north-south line of large trees marking the location where a group of 26 shacks existed along Alley B in Seward would be incorporated into the project's landscape.

#### **Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Study:**

The 1995 Kenai Fjords National Park Front Country Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment (DCP/EA) considered 19 potential locations for a visitor/administration facility in the Seward area. Fifteen sites were rejected for environmental and/or physical reasons (NPS, 1995). The EA contained 5 alternatives developed around 4 potential sites.

Two alternatives considered in the DCP/EA and slated for future consideration by the March 1996 DCP/EA Finding Of No Significant Impact were eliminated from further study for environmental reasons. The alternatives included:

- Construction of a new NPS visitor center interagency administration building on the corner of Van Buren Street and Fourth Avenue in Seward. The building site was located next to the freshwater lagoon outlet. This parcel in private and city ownership is divided by a stream draining a freshwater lagoon.
- Construction of a new visitor center and interagency administration building on a portion of Seward's waterfront park. This site is currently in city ownership.

The two sites were dropped from further consideration because they are located within an area of high seismic risk (City of Seward, 1985; R&M Consultants, 1994). The area of high seismic risk corresponds to the area of fractured ground damaged by the 1964 earthquake. Both potential sites are within the area of wave run-up from the 1964 earthquake. The sites are not located in the 100-year floodplain but are located in an area flooded in October 1986 by an intense 3-day storm. Both sites were also too small to accommodate the visitor and interagency administration building.

The NPS also considered a facility site owned by the City of Seward located on Ballaine Boulevard adjacent to Resurrection Bay between the boat harbor and downtown Seward. This site was dropped from further consideration because it is located within an area of high seismic risk (City of Seward, 1985; R&M Consultants, 1994).

### Summary and Comparison of Effects of Alternatives

Table 1 presents a summary and comparison of potential effects for Alternatives 1 and 2.

<b>Table 1: Summary and Comparison of Effects for Alternatives 1 and 2</b>		
<b>Impact Topic</b>	<b>Alternative 1: No-Action</b>	<b>Alternative 2: Develop a Multi-Agency Visitor and Administration Facility</b>
Natural Hazards	The potential threat from natural hazards such as flooding, tsunamis, & seismic activity on visitors, NPS/USFWS offices & personnel would continue.	The environmental risk from natural hazards on humans and property at the proposed location would probably not be as great as at the existing facilities.
Visitor Experience	Projected increases in tourism coupled with undersized visitor facilities would make it increasingly difficult for the NPS & USFS to provide adequate visitor services for tourists. The optimum visitor experience may not be achievable.	The multi-agency center would greatly expanded visitor opportunities to obtain information about local public lands, facilities and, programs,
Land Use and Land-Use Plans	Existing land uses would not change. The continued use of NPS & USFS offices would be consistent with the Seward Comprehensive Plan.	The alternative would be consistent with the Seward Comprehensive Plan that zoned the project sites as I Institutional & Central Business District.
Parking & Local Transportation	Accessibility of the NPS visitor center & USFS district office could be hindered due to increased competition for parking spaces. These limitations could be exacerbated by the general increase in tourism in Seward.  Existing traffic congestion during the summer near the Small Boat Harbor would continue.	Vehicle parking would be expanded to meet City parking regulations. Parking for 104 vehicles needed to meet City regulations & at least an additional 34 spaces to meet peak loading.  The alternative would result in an increase of about 3 percent in the average daily traffic at intersection Jefferson St. & Third Ave.
Cultural Resources	The continued use of the NPS & USFS offices would have no effect on cultural resources.	The multi-agency visitor & administration facility & associated parking would have no adverse effect on cultural resources.
Management	The current NPS & USFS offices would continue to be inadequate for the current and future needs.	The new facility would improve the efficiency of both agencies by providing adequate work and storage spaces, meeting accessibility standards, & providing adequate parking for employees & visitors.

## Affected Environment

Detailed information on the City of Seward including the socioeconomic environment, existing land uses, access and transportation, and the areas natural hazards are included in the Kenai Fjords National Park Frontcountry Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment (NPS, 1995) and Proposed IMS Infrastructure Improvement Project FEIS (USDOI, 1994) which are incorporated by reference. Brief summaries of the two proposed administrative sites and existing NPS and USFS offices are provided below.

**Proposed 2.4 Acre Administrative Site:** This site on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Railroad Avenue is located at the southern end of the city of Seward, amidst commercial and residential



Photo 1: View of Institute of Marine Science Building

development (Photo 1). The University of Alaska owns this site. Although the site is separated from the waterfront by a public street and other property, the local maritime influence is apparent. Views out into Resurrection Bay are framed by the Alaska SeaLife Center and University of Alaska waterfront facilities. The topography gently slopes from northeast to southwest. The parcel is part of a larger land holding that is very open, without many trees or understory vegetation. Manicured lawn area is the prevalent treatment for landscaping. Figure 3 depicts existing conditions on the site.

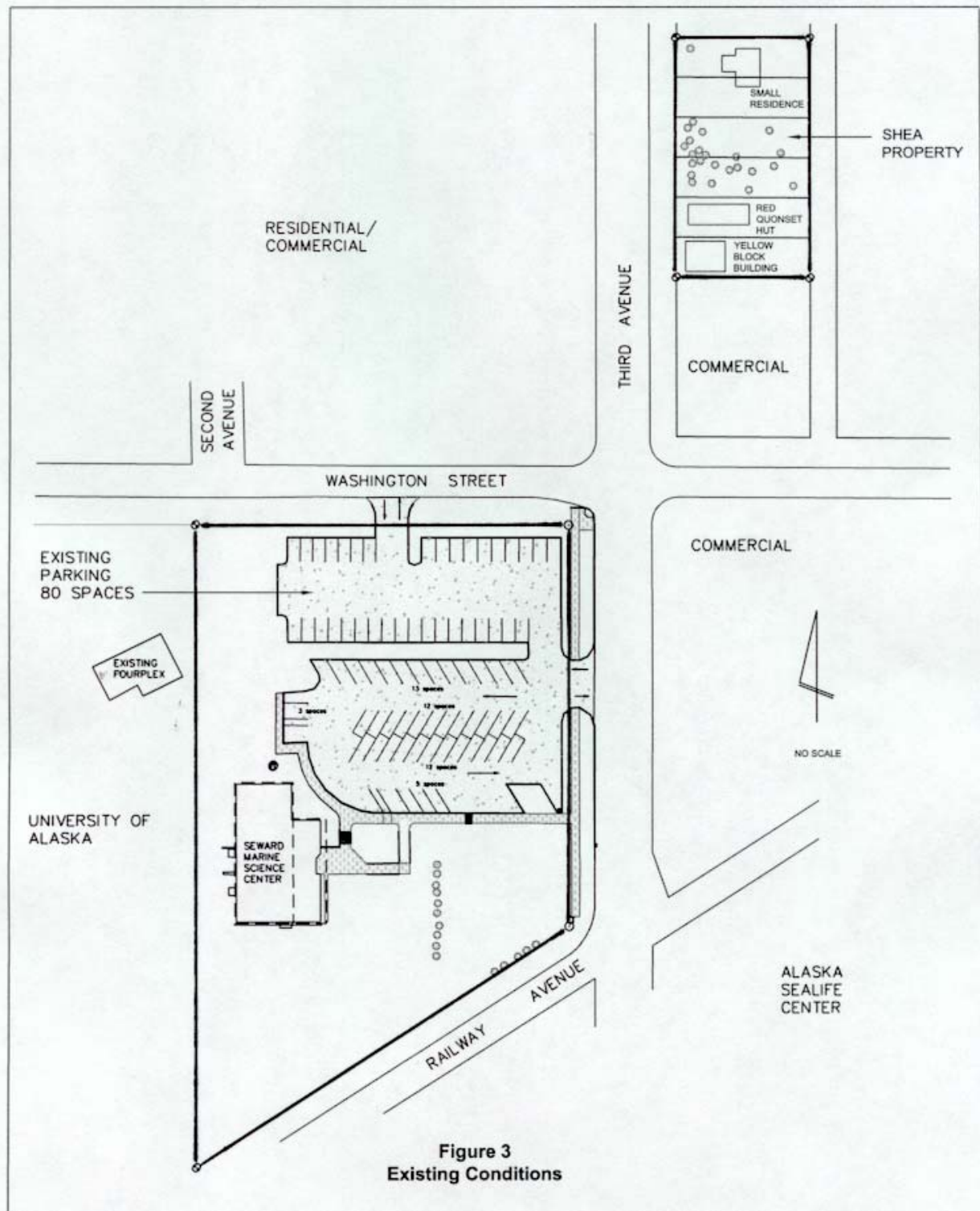
A 5,900 square foot, one-story building exists on the proposed 2.4-acre site. Constructed in 1982, the K.M. Rae Building has served as a public educational facility for the University of Alaska's Institute of Marine Science. A 100-seat auditorium, offices, reception area, and multi-purpose space make up the majority of the interior.

**Parking:** Paved parking areas provide for vehicular access and approximately 80 parking spaces used by the Institute of Marine Science (IMS) and the nearby Alaska SeaLife Center (ASC). Forty-five (45) spaces serve the IMS and 35 spaces are designated to meet ASC staff parking needs for a total capacity of 80 spaces.

When the IMS building was constructed in 1981 it originally included 45 parking spaces. The ASC received a conditional use permit in 1996 to construct a parking lot with 35 parking spaces in the northeast corner of the IMS site. A parking agreement between the University of Alaska and the ASC currently remains in effect until the year 2025. At the time of its approval and construction, the ASC was not able to meet the required local parking regulations on its own site and so it constructed these spaces for some of its staff on the IMS site.

On-street parking is available on Third Avenue and Washington Street, but is intended to serve local businesses and residents. Pedestrian traffic onto and off the site is very minimal. Other than the occasional ASC staff walking to and from their parked vehicles, very few people visit the site on foot.





The remaining areas not covered with building, parking lot, or walkways consist of landscaped open space. Two rows of mature cottonwood trees are located in the southwest corner of the site. This vegetation is a natural remnant from the Lowell Homestead, a site occupied by one of the founders of the community.

**Existing Traffic Conditions:** The State of Alaska Department of Transportation has collected peak daily traffic data and average annual daily traffic data for the area.

Two blocks north on Third Avenue, at the Jefferson Street intersection, peak daily traffic on June 23, 2000 reached 5,314 trips. These trips were combined travel north and south. The peak hour was between 1:00 and 2:00 P.M. when 424 trips were recorded. The traffic data was collected from June 22 to June 29, 2000 with a median average daily traffic count of 4,725 trips.

Average annual daily traffic records at the intersection of Railway Avenue and Third Street between 1996 and 1999 varied between 2,497 and 2,900. The four-year average was about 2,700.

**Land-Use Plans:** The 2.4-acre parcel is zoned as Institutional by the City of Seward Comprehensive Plan (City of Seward, 1985; 1990). The institutional classification allows for public and private educational, administrative, government, and health care, and uses including public land reserves for future public development.

**Cultural Resources:** Completed historic research and preliminary archeological assessment identified the following themes that may be applicable to this site: the Lowell Homestead; the Cribs; Russian-American period; and prehistoric. There are no historic buildings, objects, or structures as defined by the NHPA remaining. Possible subterranean remains would be assessed for their historical and archeological significance. Archeological survey and historic research would occur in accordance with the Cultural Compliance Schedule, Appendix C.

**Proposed 0.4-Acre Administrative Site:** This site on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue contains a small residence, Quonset Hut, and a cement block storage building (Photos 2 & 3) (Figure 3).



Photo 2: View of Small Residence



Photo 3: Quonset Hut & Block Building

**Land-Use Plans:** The parcel is zoned as Central Business District (City of Seward, 1985; 1990). This classification is designed to offer a full range of commercial business services, specialty retailing and convenience goods.

Cultural Resources: The identification of historic properties and an assessment of adverse effect, should any historic properties be found, would occur in accordance with the Cultural Compliance Schedule, Appendix C.

**Existing Kenai Fjords National Park Headquarters:** The Kenai Fjords visitor center and headquarters is located at the south end of the boat harbor between Fourth Avenue and the water's edge (Figure 1). The current 5,150 square foot facility offers information to travelers, a small exhibit and sales area, a 30-person multipurpose auditorium and restrooms. Visitor functions occupy an area of about 2,400 square feet. The remainder of the building is used for staff offices, a small library, a conference and lunchroom, storage, and circulation and mechanical space. Administrative and visitor service space requirements currently exceed the capacity of the existing facility. The NPS has a maintenance facility on Exit Glacier Road and rents 2 other offices because of the lack of sufficient space in the visitor center complex.

**Existing Chugach National Forest District Office:** The district office located at 334 Fourth Avenue is a 3,568 square foot wood frame structure built in 1964. Due to the increased number of district personnel, the district placed two mobile units (384 ft<sup>2</sup> each) behind the main building to use as additional office space. The total office space is not adequate for the district's current and future needs, does not meet accessibility standards, and has limited parking space. The office contains a public information area where maps, brochures, and historic photos are on display.

The Seward Ranger District also maintains and operates the Kenai Lake Work Center, about 23 miles from Seward, near Moose Pass. This large facility consists of administrative offices, warehouse, various shop facilities, storage, dining hall, and crew quarters. The Forest is currently refurbishing and upgrading various parts of the facility. Approximately one third of the workforce will continue to operate out of the work center.

## **Environmental Consequences**

### **Alternative 1: No-Action**

Effects from Natural Hazards: The potential threat from natural hazards such as flooding, tsunamis, and seismic activity on visitors, NPS/USFWS offices and personnel would continue.

The existing NPS visitor center and USFS office are not located in the 100-year floodplain but the NPS visitor center was within the flood zone of the 1986 flood and was damaged. The potential for flooding impacts on the NPS visitor center and Forest Service District office would be minimal.

Both offices are at risk from tsunamis. Both offices are within the 50-foot and 100-foot contour lines that mark the upper limit of potential coastal high hazard areas subject to tsunamis. Many south-central Alaska communities experienced wave “run-up” between the 50-foot and 100-foot elevations after the 1964 earthquake. The existing NPS office and a large portion of Seward were within the area of wave “run-up”.



Seward is located in a zone of highest seismic risk because of the frequency and magnitude of recorded earthquakes. The NPS office is located within an area of high seismic risk identified in the City of Seward's Comprehensive Plan (City of Seward, 1985; 1990). This area corresponds to the area of fractured ground damaged by the 1964 earthquake.

The risk of potential impacts from natural hazards on humans and property would continue with the NPS facility being at greater risk than the Forest Service office.

Effects on Visitor Experiences: The general increase in visitation to Seward would increase the number of tourists at the NPS visitor center. The NPS visitor center would experience greater and more frequent seasonal crowding in the next decade with the expansion of tourism in Seward. However, due to the existing facilities space limitations, the average length of visit or the proportion of area visitors stopping at the center would not be expected to increase. Visitors could find it more difficult to obtain information and many may be unable to attend special programs or view audio-visual presentations in the visitor center. In-depth information on the Kenai Peninsula and park resources would be limited, as space limitations hamper interpretive exhibits and joint-agency visitor services. Facility crowding could make the experience unpleasant during peak summer periods. Parking in the area would continue to be a problem in the area.

The close proximity of the visitor center site to the boat harbor provides optimum access to fjord sightseers. Interpretation can build on visitor's actual experience of the park. This site is also most convenient for recreational boaters using the boat harbor and people who arrive in Seward by rail.

The Forest Service District office has a reception/public information area available for displays, providing brochures or other public information. With the increased demand for hiking, fishing, and recreation cabins the USFS may lack the optimal space needed to inform the public of its programs and the recreational opportunities offered by the national forest's resources. Parking problems would continue.

Projected increases in tourism coupled with undersized visitor facilities would make it increasingly difficult for the NPA and USFS to provide adequate visitor services for tourists. The optimum visitor experience may not be achievable.

Effects on Land Use and Land-Use Plans: Land uses associated with the No-Action alternative would not change. The continued use of NPS and Forest Service offices would be consistent with the Seward Comprehensive Plan (City of Seward, 1985; 1990).

Effects on Parking and Local Transportation: Existing traffic congestion during the summer near the small boat harbor would continue. Accessibility of the NPS visitor center and Forest Service district office could be hindered due to increased competition for available parking spaces and the district office's location. These limitations could be exacerbated by the general increase in tourism in Seward.

Many visitors stop by the visitor center as they tour the harbor area on foot. Visitors combine stops at shops, restaurants, harbor sightseeing, and fishing charters. Visitors would likely park in public parking for period longer than their stay at the visitor center as they tour harbor attractions. Parking availability for visitor center guests, as well as visitors participating in other activities would become increasingly more difficult with increased visitor activity in Seward.

Effects on Cultural Resources: The continued use of the NPS and Forest Service offices would have no effect on cultural resources.

Effects on Management: Administrative and visitor service space requirements would continue to exceed the capacity of the Kenai Fjords visitor center and headquarters facility for current and future needs. The continued separation of park offices between four buildings would make communication among park staff more difficult than if all offices were located in the same building. Parking space for employees and the public would continue to be limited.

The current Forest Service offices would continue to be inadequate for the district's future needs. Currently offices are scattered between small offices on two floors, two annex buildings and offices at the Kenai Lake Work Center some 23 miles north of Seward. Staff coordination and management would continue to be hampered and time would continue to be lost due to travel between the two offices. Parking space for employees and the public would continue to be limited. The offices would continue to not meet accessibility standards for the disabled. The current office is located in an area of Seward that is not optimally visible to the public.

Interactions with the public and coordination with other Federal and State agencies would continue to be at less than optimum levels.

Conclusion: The No-Action alternative would have no effect on natural and cultural resources. Continued use of NPS and USFS facilities in the City of Seward would continue to be inadequate for both agencies' needs.

## **Alternative 2: Develop a Multi-Agency Visitor and Administration Facility (Preferred Alternative)**

Effects from Natural Hazards: The proposed office location is not located in the 100-year floodplain nor was it within the flood zone of the 1986 flood. The potential for flooding impacts at this site would be minimal.

The proposed site is at risk from tsunamis. The site is within the 50-foot and 100-foot contour lines that mark the upper limit of potential coastal high hazard areas subject to tsunamis. The site was not within the area of wave “run-up” from the 1964 earthquake.

Seward is located in a zone of highest seismic risk because of the frequency and magnitude of recorded earthquakes. The proposed office location is not located within the area of high seismic risk identified in the City of Seward’s Comprehensive Plan (City of Seward, 1985; 1990). This area corresponds to the area of fractured ground damaged by the 1964 earthquake. A number of small active faults are located in the region.

The risk of potential impacts from natural hazards on humans and property at the proposed location would probably not be as great as the risk at the existing NPS facility.

Effects on Visitor Experiences: The development of a multi-agency visitor center would provide a larger number of visitors greatly expanded opportunities to obtain information about local public lands, facilities and programs, watch audio-visual presentations, participate in educational programs and engage in interpretive exhibits. The experience could increase their awareness and inspire them to take greater care of local resources. This facility would provide visitors with greater comfort and eliminate seasonal crowding.

The USFS's ability to inform the public about its programs and the recreational opportunities available in the Chugach National Forest would be greatly expanded. The existing office may lack the optimal space needed to inform the public of its programs and the recreational opportunities offered by the national forest's resources.

This alternative would provide more opportunities for a greater number of visitors and improve the quality of the visitor experience. The visitor experience at this location would be less related to the boat harbor and associated activities. However, its close proximity to the Alaska SeaLife Center with its focus on local marine habitats would nicely complement the experience received at the visitor center. Visitors would have to drive to the site rather than just "drop in" since this facility is well removed from activities in the boat harbor area.

Effects on Land Use and Land-Use Plans: There would be a modification in land ownership status at the proposed project sites. The land currently owned by the University of Alaska and a private individual would be purchased by the federal government for construction and operation of the multi-agency visitor center and administration facility. Conversion of the 0.4 acre site on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to facility parking would remove a housing unit (see Photo 3) from the City of Seward's housing supply. The preferred alternative would be consistent with the Seward Comprehensive Plan that zoned the project sites as Institutional and Central Business District.

Effects on Parking and Local Transportation:

*Parking:* The existing area designated for vehicle parking would be reconfigured and expanded to meet City parking regulations. Figure 2 depicts the degree of change required to accommodate at least the 104 vehicles on this site to meet City regulations and at least an additional 34 spaces to accommodate peak loading (Appendix B). A separate parcel depicts the introduction of a new parking lot to accommodate at least 35 government and/or Alaska SeaLife Center employee vehicles. It should be noted that the figure does not represent any particular design solution or the final design solution. It is merely provided to ascertain potential parking capacity and possible traffic flow patterns. Due to proposed changes in traffic flow patterns within the parking lots and spaces striped according to City regulations, significant efficiency can be gained. The required number of accessible parking stalls can easily be accommodated within 200 feet of the building entrance. A combination of up to five buses or eight recreational vehicles can be accommodated as well.

Although not specifically addressed by this assessment, some parking may be accommodated within the footprint of the building expansion. If a multiple story structure is constructed, there may be an opportunity to create a parking structure below the upper levels to facilitate accessibility and convenience to the visitor center and administrative offices.

*Local Transportation:* The addition of the multi-agency center would result in an increase of approximately 160 trips or about 3 percent higher than the 5,314 average daily total at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Third Avenue. Half of these trips may occur at the peak hour of that day, with an additional 80 trips added to 424 trips cited earlier. This would represent a 19% increase in the peak traffic hour. Proportionately, about 80 AADT would be added to the previously mentioned 2,700 AADT (yearly totals) at the intersection of Railway and Third Avenue (See Appendix B).

Pedestrian traffic would likely increase between the site and the Alaska SeaLife Center. Some increase in pedestrian traffic would occur between the multi-agency center site and the remote-parking site one-half block away. Traffic flow in all other directions would probably continue to remain low or non-existent.

Effects on Cultural Resources. The expansion of the Rae Building into a multi-agency visitor and administration facility and development of associated parking would have no adverse effect on cultural resources. Development and compliance activity would follow the Cultural Compliance Schedule, Appendix C. Historic research and archeological survey identified the following relevant historic themes: Lowell Homestead; the Cribs; the Russian-America period, and prehistoric. There are no historic buildings, objects or structures extant on Block 2 (Patrick, NPS, 1999). There is a potential for archeological resources associated with the themes (Yarborough, NPS, 1999). Archival research, the gathering of oral history, and archeological survey would coordinate throughout FY 2002 to determine if significant resources are present in the Area of Potential Effect.

The proposed site contains a north-south line of large trees ("The Line") marking where Alley B once stood (Figure 2). "The Line" marks the location where a group of 26 shacks along Alley B traditionally housing prostitutes in Seward. The site is now sodded lawn with no structures left from "The Line". The site would be assessed for the presence of archeological resources eligible to the National Register of Historic Places in FY 2002. "The Line" would be incorporated into the project's landscape.

Should it be determined that historic resources are present, the NPS in consultation with the SHPO would make an assessment of Adverse Effect. If they find that there is an adverse effect, consultation would result in a Memorandum of Agreement that would outline agreed upon measures to resolve the adverse effect. See Cultural Compliance Schedule, Appendix C.

If historic properties are discovered or unanticipated effects on historic properties found after the completion of the Section 106 process without an agreement document, the NPS would apply the requirement of 36 CFR 800.13 (b), Discoveries without prior planning. If the Section 106 process resulted in a Memorandum of Agreement, that agreement would define a process to resolve the discovery of historic properties or the unanticipated effect.

Effects on Management: Under this alternative, all visitor center and office space requirements would be provided in one building. The consolidation of National Park Service and Forest Service offices would facilitate better communication and coordination among and between the agencies. The new facility would improve the efficiency of both agencies by providing adequate work and storage spaces, meeting accessibility standards, and providing adequate parking for employees and visitors.

The facility would also reduce both agency costs by eliminating the duplication of facilities and providing operating efficiencies in co-operated reception services, mailroom functions, phone system, computer system, and other necessary services combined to improve visitor service.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects from the proposed project when combined with existing trends in tourism and increased development in Seward would be minimal. The proposed project would probably not attract additional visitors to Seward but enhance the visit of those seeking information on the resources of the area. The project could add to traffic congestion and noise on downtown streets near the project site when added to other planned projects and tourist-related activities, particularly the Seward SeaLife Center. However, the project's inclusion of additional parking for the SeaLife Center would free-up parking for other activities.

Conclusion: The development of a multi-agency visitor/administration facility and associated parking would have negligible effects on natural and cultural resources. The consolidated facility would improve the efficiency of both agencies, foster better interagency coordination and communication, and provide operating efficiencies through co-operated office and visitor services. The preferred alternative would be consistent with the Seward Comprehensive Plan however one housing unit would be removed from the City of Seward's housing supply.

### **Consultation and Coordination**

Anne Castellina, Superintendent, Kenai Fjords National Park  
Jeff Troutman, Resource Manager, Kenai Fjords National Park  
Joan Darnell, Team Manager, Environmental Resources, NPS, AKSO  
Diane Wohlwend, Realty Specialist, NPS, AKSO  
Tylen Schrock, Executive Director, Alaska SeaLife Center  
Rachel James, City of Seward  
Don Rivers, Chugach National Forest  
Chuck Frey, Planning Staff Officer, Chugach National Forest  
Joel Little, Facilities Development Manager, Chugach National Forest

### **List of Preparers**

Glen Yankus, Environmental Protection Specialist, NPS, AKSO  
Paul Schrooten, Landscape Architect, NPS, AKSO  
Sandra Anderson, Senior Historian, NPS, AKSO  
Clarence Summers, Subsistence Coordinator, NPS, AKSO

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **ANILCA SECTION 810(a) Summary of Evaluations and Findings**

#### **I. Introduction**

This evaluation and finding was prepared to comply with Title VIII, section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). It evaluates the potential restrictions to subsistence uses which could possibly result from the proposed development of a multi-agency visitor center, administration office and parking lot in the City of Seward, Alaska.

#### **II. The Evaluation Process**

Section 810(a) of ANILCA states:

"In determining whether to withdraw, reserve, lease, or otherwise permit the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands . . . the head of the Federal agency . . . over such lands . . . shall evaluate the effect of such use, occupancy, or disposition on subsistence uses and needs, the availability of other lands for the purposes sought to be achieved, and other alternatives which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes. No such withdrawal, reservation, lease, permit, or other use, occupancy or disposition of such lands which would significantly restrict subsistence uses shall be effected until the head of such Federal agency :

1. gives notice to the appropriate State agency and the appropriate local committees and regional councils established pursuant to section 805;
2. gives notice of, and holds, a hearing in the vicinity of the area involved; and
3. determines that (A) such a significant restriction of subsistence uses is necessary, consistent with sound management principles for the utilization of the public lands, (B) the proposed activity would involve the minimal amount of public lands necessary to accomplish the purposes of such use, occupancy, or other disposition, and (C) reasonable steps would be taken to minimize adverse impacts upon subsistence uses and resources resulting from such actions."

ANILCA created new units and additions to existing units of the national park system in Alaska. Kenai Fjords National Park, containing approximately five hundred and sixty-seven thousand acres of public lands, was created by ANILCA, section 201(5) for the following purposes:

"The park shall be managed for the following purposes, among others: To maintain unimpaired the scenic and environmental integrity of the Harding Icefield, its outflowing glaciers, and coastal fjords and islands in their natural state; and to protect seals, sea lions, other marine mammals, and marine and other birds and to maintain their hauling and breeding areas in their natural state, free of human activity which is disruptive to their natural processes. In a manner consistent with the foregoing, the Secretary is authorized to develop access to the Harding Icefield and to allow use of mechanized equipment on the icefield for recreation."

The potential for significant restriction must be evaluated for the proposed action's effect upon "subsistence uses and needs, the availability of other lands for the purposes sought to be achieved and other alternatives which would reduce or eliminate the use." (Section 810(a), ANILCA).

### **III. Proposed Action on Federal Lands**

Kenai Fjords National Park and the Chugach National Forest are considering the purchase and development of a multi-agency visitor center and administration facility in Seward, Alaska.

*The Environmental Assessment For a Multi-Agency Center in Seward, Alaska, December 2001* describes Alternative 1: No Action and Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) in detail.

#### Alternative 1: No Action

Under the no-action alternative the National Park Service (NPS) and Chugach National Forest would continue to use existing administrative facilities in the City of Seward. The NPS would maintain a visitor center and administrative building at Seward's small boat harbor while the CNF would continue to use its offices in Seward and at the Kenai Lake Work Center for administrative purposes. There would be no expansion of existing facilities.

#### Alternative 2: Develop a Multi-Agency Visitor and Administration Facility in Seward, Alaska (Preferred Alternative)

The federal government would purchase about 2.8 acres in two parcels located at the southern end of the City of Seward, from the University of Alaska to serve as the home of a multi-agency visitor and administration facility. A 2.4-acre site is located on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Railroad Avenue. A 0.4-acre site is located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue about 1/2 block northeast of the larger parcel ).

### **IV. Affected Environment**

A summary of the affected environment pertinent to subsistence uses is presented here.

The proposed development sites are located within the City of Seward. Current regulations prohibit the discharge of firearms within the City of Seward. Federal subsistence regulations do not apply to State or private lands.

Section 803 of ANILCA defines subsistence uses as, "the customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents of wild, renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of non-edible by-products of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption; for barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption; and for customary trade."

ANILCA and National Park Service regulations authorize subsistence use of resources in all Alaska national parks, monuments and preserves with the exception of Kenai Fjords National



Park, Glacier Bay National Park, Katmai National Park, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, “old” Mount McKinley National Park, and Sitka National Historical Park (Codified in 36 CFR part 13, Subparts A, B, and C). Consequently there are no Federal subsistence open seasons for wildlife harvest within Kenai Fjords National Park.

Kenai Fjords National Park was established by ANILCA in 1980. Located on the Kenai Peninsula in Game Management Unit 7, Kenai Fjords National Park contains superlative geologic features, scenery, wildlife and human history.

In accordance with Title VIII of ANILCA, subsistence uses are allowed on adjacent federal public lands within Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and Chugach National Forest. Federal regulations allow qualified rural residents to use fish and wildlife population for subsistence purposes on U.S.D.A. National Forest and Fish and Wildlife Service lands. The region’s subsistence resource harvest activities include hunting, trapping, fishing, marine mammal harvest, digging for clams, catching shellfish, gathering firewood, berries, wild plants and bird eggs. Historical resource utilization patterns, such as fish camps or communal hunts, are linked to traditional social and subsistence use patterns. Sharing of resource occurs between communities, as well as within communities throughout the region.

Some of the major resources used for subsistence are black bear, brown bear, moose, mountain goat, beaver, snowshoe hare, fox, lynx, mink, wolf, wolverine, ptarmigan, waterfowl, otter, marine mammals, salmon, trout, halibut, crab, clams, berries, wild edible plants, and other wood resources.

The following documents contain additional descriptions of the affected subsistence environment of the region: Kenai Fjords National Park, Final General Management Plan, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service, 1984 and Kenai Fjords National Park, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness Recommendation, National Park Service, 1988.

The NPS recognizes that patterns of subsistence activity vary from time to time and from place to place depending on the availability of wildlife and other renewable natural resources. A subsistence harvest in a given year may vary considerably from previous years because of weather, migration patterns, and natural population cycles.

## **V. Subsistence Uses and Needs Evaluation**

### **Potential Impacts to Subsistence Users**

To determine the potential impacts on existing subsistence activities for the preferred alternative, three evaluation criteria were analyzed relative to existing subsistence resources.

- the potential to reduce important subsistence fish and wildlife populations by (a) reductions in number, (b) redistribution of subsistence resources, or (c) habitat losses;
- what affect the action might have on subsistence fisherman or hunter access;

- the potential for the action to increase fisherman or hunter competition for subsistence resources.

## 1. The potential to reduce populations:

### (a) Reduction in Numbers:

The preferred alternative (Alternative 2) is not expected to manipulate subsistence habitats or result in any measurable reduction in or redistribution of wildlife or other subsistence resources. Provisions of ANILCA, Federal Subsistence Board, USDA Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and NPS regulations provide the tools for adequate protection of fish and wildlife populations within region while ensuring a subsistence priority for local rural residents. In addition, the Federal managers may enact closures and/or restrictions if necessary to assure the continued viability of a particular fish or wildlife population.

### (b) Redistribution of Resources:

The preferred alternative is not expected to cause a significant disturbance to habitat thereby reducing certain subsistence wildlife resources.

### (c) Habitat Loss:

The preferred alternative (Alternative 2) is not expected to significantly impact critical habitat for moose, furbearers, waterfowl and other subsistence resources.

## 2. Restriction of Access:

The preferred alternative is not expected to significantly change regional subsistence use patterns. Access for subsistence uses within National Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service areas are granted pursuant to ANILCA, sections 811(a)(b) and 1110(a). ANILCA allows access within Kenai National Park by certain specified means, including motorboats, for traditional activities.

## 3. Increase in Competition:

The preferred alternative is not expected to result in an increase in competition for subsistence resource on federal public lands, which are open to eligible subsistence users. Federal regulations and provisions of ANILCA mandate that if and when it is necessary to restrict taking of fish or wildlife subsistence users are given a priority over other user groups. Continued implementation of the ANILCA provisions should mitigate any increased competition from resource users other than subsistence users. Federal managers may enact restrictions if necessary to protect the continued viability of a particular fish or wildlife population.

## **VI. Availability of Other Lands**

The referred alternative is consistent with NPS mandates and the Kenai Fjords General Management Plan.

## **VII. Findings**

This analysis concludes that the preferred alternative would not result in a significant restriction of subsistence uses.

## APPENDIX B PARKING ANALYSIS PER CITY OF SEWARD PLANNING AND LAND-USE REGULATIONS

### Regulatory Requirements:

City land use regulations will require a minimum of 104 parking spaces (see table) for the expanded multi-agency center. The potential exists to share parking areas between user groups. Administrative parking normally will be needed from 8 AM to 5 PM. These spaces could be utilized for other activities during evening or weekend hours.

### Parking Layout Requirements:

Dimensional standards per City land-use regulations require that spaces be at least 8.5 feet wide by 18 feet long. The minimum widths of traffic aisles providing access to parking lot spaces vary from 11 feet to 20 feet in width depending on direction and angle of the spaces. No requirements regarding recreational vehicles or other such larger conveyances are mentioned, but for purposes of this project, these spaces will be at least 10 feet wide by 36 feet long.

### Accessible Parking Requirements:

City land use regulations require that spaces must be at least 12 feet wide. Although no adjacent access aisle is mentioned, ADA requires one that is at least 60 inches wide. Accessible spaces will be designated for a certain percentage of spaces according to City regulations or ADA, whichever is more stringent. Accessible van spaces will require a 96-inch aisle and at least one will be provided for each separate parking area. As per City regulations, all accessible spaces shall be within 200 feet of an accessible building entrance.

## PARKING ANALYSIS PER CITY OF SEWARD PLANNING AND LAND-USE REGULATIONS

FACILITY	LAND USE	REQUIREMENT	REQUIRED SPACES
Auditorium (104 seats)	Auditoriums and places of assembly	1 Space/4 seats	26 Spaces
Visitor Center (12,351 GSF)	Public libraries, museums, galleries	1 Space/1000 GSF	12 Spaces
NPS Admin (8,363 GSF)	Office buildings	1 Space/500 GSF	17 Spaces
USFS Admin (6,799 GSF)	Office Buildings	1 Space/500 GSF	14 Spaces
Alaska SeaLife Center	Required from City Approval of Facility	35 Spaces	35 Spaces
Total			104 Spaces

## ACCESSIBLE PARKING ANALYSIS PER CITY OF SEWARD PLANNING AND LAND-USE REGULATIONS

FACILITY	TOTAL SPACES REQUIRED	CITY LAND-USE REQUIREMENT	ADA REQUIREMENT
Visitor Center	38	2 Spaces	2 Spaces
Admin	66	3 Spaces	3 Spaces
Total	104	5 Spaces	5 Spaces

### Projected Peak Need:

The Multi-Agency Center, of the size currently projected, is anticipated to receive up to approximately 400 visitors in any one hour (peak condition). This is based on historic visitation patterns at the existing Kenai Fjords Visitor Center and a projection of visitation related to the available programs and space in the proposed visitor center on this site. Although this condition will probably be limited to a few summer season days, it is important to recognize the potential parking impacts on any given day. The following assumptions are used for planning and programmatic purposes:

- average length of stay for visitors is one (1) hour
- visitor numbers will be distributed evenly between personal vehicles, buses, and pedestrians
- parking for public personal vehicles will be distributed so that 90% are designated for passenger vehicles and 10% for recreational vehicles (up to 35 feet in length)
- total need may vary depending on the amount of on street parking available and the number of Alaska SeaLife Center visitors who walk from that facility rather than drive
- public parking areas should be segregated from administrative spaces

Administrative facilities, as currently projected, will be occupied by up to 55 permanent staff. During the public visitation season up to 13 seasonal staff will also be present. The following assumptions are used for planning and programmatic purposes:

- not every employee will require a parking space for personal vehicle
- a predetermined number of government vehicles will be retained on site or at a nearby site on a seasonal basis
- administrative spaces will be segregated from public spaces as much as possible on site or by locating at a nearby site
- spaces will be designated by user group as much as the site will allow

### Projected Parking Impact

The existing area designated for vehicle parking will continue to be used as such, albeit somewhat reconfigured and expanded to meet City parking regulations. Figure 2 depicts the degree of change required to accommodate at least the 104 vehicles on this site to meet City regulations and at least 34 additional spaces to accommodate peak loading. A separate parcel depicts the introduction of a new parking lot to accommodate at least 35 government and/or Alaska SeaLife Center employee vehicles. It should be noted that the figure does not represent

any particular design solution or the final design solution. It is merely provided to ascertain potential parking capacity and possible traffic flow patterns. Due to proposed changes in traffic flow patterns within the parking lots and spaces striped according to City regulations, significant efficiency can be gained. The required number of accessible parking stalls can easily be accommodated within 200 feet of the building entrance. A combination of up to five buses or eight recreational vehicles can be accommodated as well.

Although not specifically addressed by this assessment, some parking may be accommodated within the footprint of the building expansion. If a multiple story structure is constructed, there may be an opportunity to create a parking structure below the upper levels to facilitate accessibility and convenience to the visitor center and administrative offices.

A reconfigured parking lot also emphasizes a broad display of landscaped islands that visually break up the expanse of asphalt and provide a more appealing foreground to the multi-agency center.

### Projected Traffic Impact

Since no specific vehicle traffic data exists for the site and projections need to be made to account for the increased use of the facility, a number of assumptions have been made regarding average annual daily traffic and peak traffic.

- the peak hourly visitation will be 400 persons.
- arrival to the site will be equally distributed by passenger vehicle, bus and on foot; this type of distribution is expected since 1) many visitors arrive by tour bus or community trolley and 2) many visitors who park at the Alaska SeaLife Center will have a desire or be encouraged to park vehicles once and walk between the two attractions.
- half of the visitors to this facility will already be in the area to visit the Alaska SeaLife Center or conduct business downtown.
- of the one-third visiting by passenger vehicle it is assumed that 2.5 persons will occupy each vehicle; of the one-third arriving by bus/trolley it is assumed that 30 persons will occupy each vehicle.

Using these assumptions and in relationship to the peak daily traffic cited for June 23, 2000, the addition of the multi-agency center would result in an increase of approximately 160 trips or about 3 percent higher than the 5,314 average daily total at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Third Avenue. Half of these trips may occur at the peak hour of that day, with an additional 80 trips added to 424 trips cited earlier. This would represent a 19% increase in the peak traffic hour. Proportionately, about 80 AADT would be added to the previously mentioned 2,700 AADT (yearly totals) at the intersection of Railway and Third Avenue.

Pedestrian traffic will likely increase dramatically between the site and the Alaska SeaLife Center. Some increase in pedestrian traffic will occur between the multi-agency center site and

the remote parking site one-half block away. Traffic flow in all other directions will probably continue to remain low or non-existent.

### Traffic Recommendations

A number of recommendations to minimize the increased traffic impact would include:

- maintain the primary ingress/egress at the Third Avenue driveway
- relocate the Washington Street driveway further from Third Avenue and restrict to ingress only
- create a trolley stop on Third Avenue or, if possible, on site
- emphasize use of the trolley to shuttle between the Alaska SeaLife Center and this facility
- develop visitor programs that spread the visitation load over the length of the day rather than concentrating at peak hours
- promote the ease and convenience of travelling between area venues on foot
- encourage pedestrian traffic flow by designing visual links and delineating preferred pathways
- optimize safety by maintaining the three-way stop at the intersection of Railway Avenue and Third Avenue, including improved crosswalk indicators
- create a four-way stop at the intersection of Washington Street and Third Avenue, including improved crosswalk.

**APPENDIX C**  
**CULTURAL COMPLIANCE SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Phase/Task</b>	<b>Cultural Compliance Activity</b>
FY 2000	Planning-NPS/USFS	<u>Initiate Section 106 Process - Construction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of historical themes: Lowell, Cribs, Russian period, prehistoric period (NPS: A. Castellina, S. Anderson, T. Birkedal)</li> <li>• Research/write historical report (NPS: A. Patrick) (Done)</li> <li>• Preliminary assessment of archeological resources (NPS: T. Birkedal, NPS Contractor: M. Yarborough) (Done)</li> </ul>
FY 2001 Acquire in Jan. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Acquisition (USFS)</li> <li>• Land Acquisition (NPS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Complete Section 106 - Acquisition:</u> Provide copies of documentation to NPS for inclusion in EA. (USFS: L. Yarborough)</li> <li>• <u>Complete Section 106 - Acquisition:</u> Shea Lots - Documentation to be included in EA. (NPS: S. Anderson, A. Castellina)</li> </ul>
FY 2002		
July 2001- Dec. 2001	Pre-design (NPS/USFS)  A/E Selection	<u>Identify Historic Properties - Construction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete GIS landscape reconstruction (Lowell, Cribs) (Russian period: J. Kesler, K. Wessels)</li> <li>• Identify historical themes for Shea lot: strategy in place for completing DOE for structures on Shea lot. (NPS: J. Clemens)</li> <li>• Scope of work completed for historical report: (Lowell, Cribs) Shea lot themes; develop strategy for completion (NPS: A. Castellina, S. Anderson)</li> <li>• Develop strategy for archeological work (NPS: A. Castellina, T. Birkedal, C. Spude) (USFS: L. Yarborough)</li> <li>• Consultation with SHPO and public (NPS: A. Castellina, T. Birkedal) (USFS: L. Yarborough)</li> </ul>



<b>Date</b>	<b>Phase/Task</b>	<b>Cultural Compliance Activity</b>
Dec. 2001- May 2002	Pre-Design A & E Program Review & Comment Design Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete draft of historic report; DOE criteria A,B,C</li> <li>• Complete faunal analysis (USFS: L. Yarborough)</li> <li>• Research design, organize field crews &amp; season (NPS: A. Castellina, T. Birkedal) (USFS: L. Yarborough)</li> <li>• Consultation with SHPO and general public (NPS: A. Castellina, S. Anderson, T. Birkedal) (USFS: L. Yarborough)</li> </ul>
May 2002- Sept. 2002	A&E Schematic Design Alternatives & Value Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archeological field season - identify resources present; make preliminary field determinations to assist in schematic design and value analysis</li> <li>• Evaluate historic significance, DOE criteria D</li> <li>• Artifact analysis for both archeological and interpretive purposes</li> </ul>
FY 2003		
Oct. 2002- Sept. 2003	Pre-Design/Design  Development Advisory Board  A/E Final Design	<u>Assess Adverse Effect</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of significant resources continues</li> <li>• Artifact analysis for both archeological &amp; interpretive purposes continues</li> <li>• Reports to final</li> </ul> <u>Resolve Adverse Effect (if any)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with SHPO; draft MOA</li> </ul>
FY 2004		
Jan. 2004	Bid Award	Complete MOA with SHPO
Spring 2004	Begin Construction	Complete compliance (NPS: A. Castellina)