

Coeur Alaska, Inc.

Kensington Mine

Marine Transportation Plan

April 2022



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
BMP	Best Management Practice
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
Coeur Alaska	Coeur Alaska, Inc.
ESA	Endangered Species Act
Forest Service	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
LOC	Letter of Concurrence
Mine	Kensington Mine
ML	Modified Landscape
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
POA 1	Plan of Operations Amendment 1
POO	Plan of Operations
PSO	Protected Species Observer
SEIS	Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard

1. Background

Coeur Alaska, Inc. (Coeur Alaska), operates the Kensington Mine (Mine), an underground gold mine and processing facility in the Berners Bay Mining District, located about 45 miles north-northwest of Juneau, Alaska (Figure 1). Coeur Alaska has operated the Mine since 2005 under a Plan of Operations (POO) that was approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service), following analysis in a 2004 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). In 2018, Coeur Alaska proposed expansion of the Kensington Mine under a Plan of Operations Amendment 1 (POA 1). The Forest Service analyzed POA 1 in another SEIS, published in July 2021.

The Mine is accessible by air or water, with primary access by ferry vessel or barge via Berners Bay and Lynn Canal. Under POA 1, activities in marine waters will not change from current operations. Employees are transported to the Mine via ferry vessel from Yankee Cove to the Slate Cove Marine Terminal. Between two and four round-trips are made by the ferry on a daily basis. In the event of inclement weather in Lynn Canal between October and April, the ferry runs from Echo Cove to Slate Cove Marine Terminal on the same daily schedule. Delivery of supplies and shipment of concentrate occur via barge between Slate Cove Marine Terminal and supply ports in Juneau or Seattle.

Both Lynn Canal and Berners Bay are popular recreational areas, sport and commercial fishing are common, and these waterways are inhabited by important, rare, and protected marine life. The 2005 POO included the *Berners Bay Transportation Policy and Mitigation and Best Management Practices Plan*, which listed measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to wildlife and marine recreation during construction and operation activities in marine waters. This *Marine Transportation Plan* (Plan) is an update to and supersedes the 2005 plan.

Figure 2 shows the location of the Mine, Slate Cove Marine Terminal, Yankee Cove, and Echo Cove. The primary marine transit route (Yankee Cove to Slate Cove Marine Terminal) is also highlighted on Figure 2.

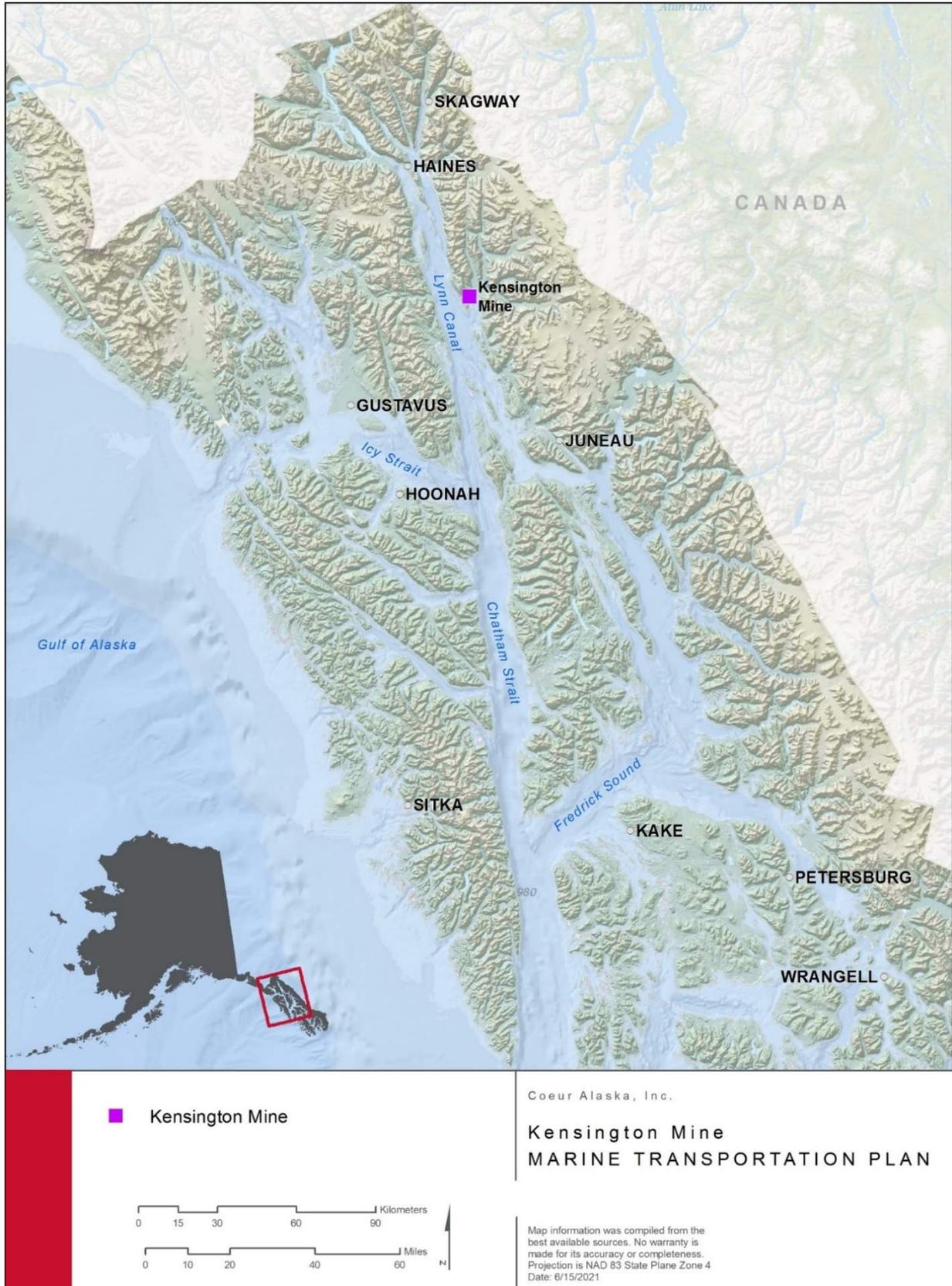


Figure 1. Kensington Mine Vicinity Map

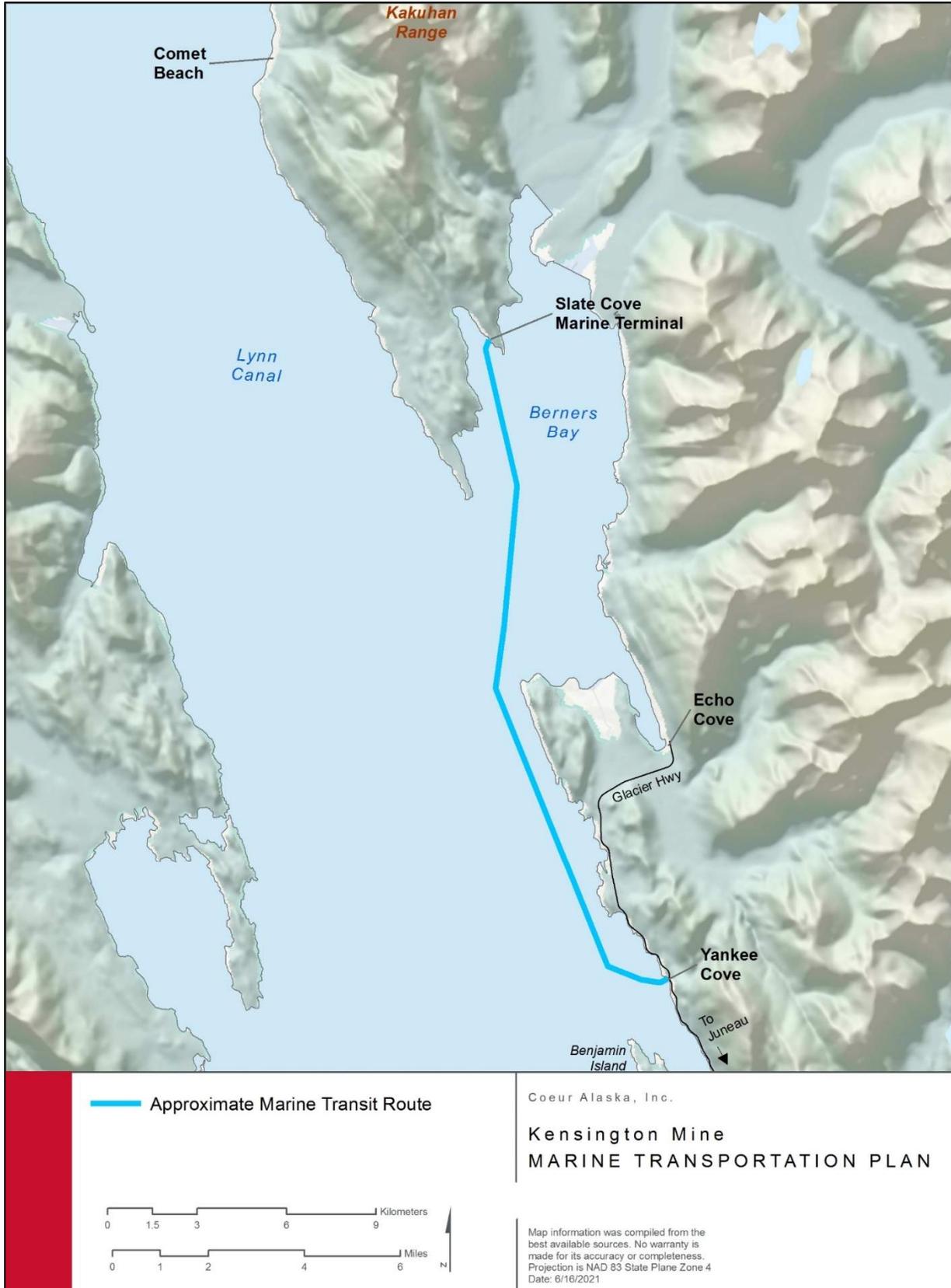


Figure 2. Marine Transit Route

2. Purpose and Need for Policy

During the environmental impact (National Environmental Policy Act) review process for the Kensington Mine Plan of Operations (Forest Service 2004) and Plan of Operations Amendment 1 (Forest Service 2021), stakeholders raised concerns regarding potential impacts on marine resources from operation of the Slate Cove Marine Terminal, use of supply barges, and operation of the crew ferry. Concerns included potential impacts on local spawning eulachon and Pacific herring spawning, humpback whale feeding activity, Steller sea lion populations, and recreational uses. Key concerns are summarized as follows, for the purposes of this Plan:

- Eulachon – Returning adult fish are found congregating in Berners Bay near Slate Creek Cove during April and May, before moving into fresh water at the mouth of the Lace, Berners, and Antler rivers. At this time, Steller sea lion abundance also increases. Concern exists over operational activities involving noise and dock traffic, and effects on fish spawning and sea lion feeding.
- Pacific herring – Returning fish are known to congregate in portions of Berners Bay during about a 2- to 3-week period between late April and early May when they spawn. Concern exists over operational activities involving noise from marine vessels and effects on fish spawning.
- Humpback whale – Humpback whales are common in Berners Bay during eulachon and herring spawning. Concern exists over operational activities involving noise and disturbance from marine vessels, which may interfere with humpback whale feeding.
- Steller sea lion – Excessive noise associated with marine vessel operations could potentially disturb sea lion populations, affecting foraging behavior and reproduction.
- Recreational users – Transportation use, such as the daily transport of Mine workers and barging of supplies and concentrate, could also impact recreation users. Regular announced schedules, limited trip schedules, and adherence to speed limits and wake control will largely offset these effects.

The effects of the dock facilities and marine traffic associated with operation of the Mine are difficult to predict. Resource managers indicate that they do not have enough information regarding specific habitat factors and potential environmental stressors from development projects such as the Mine. However, no recordable incidents have occurred during transit of the crew vessel since operation of the vessel and associated monitoring began in 2010. POA 1 does not propose any changes to current vessel activity, but simply an extension of current activities, including continuation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). These BMPs focus on limiting potential pollution from petroleum hydrocarbons and optimizing avoidance actions for marine mammals (including sea lions and humpback whales) congregating in the area, to the extent practicable.

3. Best Management Practices

For the purposes of this Plan, BMPs are activities, including passive treatment, operating procedures, and avoidance actions, that prevent or reduce the likelihood of discharging pollutants, and limit encounters with marine mammals and special fish species. The BMPs included herein



are also intended to provide mitigation, consistent with the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The Plan is also intended to be consistent with Coeur Alaska’s Environmental, Social, and Governance program, which includes the primary value to “protect people, places, and the planet.” Key provisions are intended to increase employee awareness of hazards and thereby improve worker safety and limit pollution liabilities and risks.

4. Goals and Objectives

Coeur Alaska has developed environmental management policies, guidelines, and practices included in this document to ensure that impacts to the marine environment are minimized and mitigated during operation of the Mine.

The following primary goals and objectives are identified for the Plan:

Goal #1: The overall policy and direction of this Plan is comprised of “standard operating procedures” (SOPs) to be followed by Coeur Alaska and all its contractors, service providers, and consultants as part of the marine facilities construction and operating plans. These SOPs will be included in all related construction and service contracts.

Goal #2: The primary overriding goal is “to protect the Berners Bay environment as part of a coordinated and comprehensive transportation and environmental management plan, consistent with current objectives of a Forest Service Land Use Classification of Modified Landscape (ML) with a minerals overlay, and the stated goals and objectives of the Kensington Berners Bay Consortium. The stated goals of the ML minerals designation are to encourage the prospecting, exploration, development, mining, and processing of locatable minerals in areas with the highest potential for mineral development.

Goal #3: Other key objectives of the Plan are:

- Avoid incremental water quality impacts to Berners Bay.
- Commit to one coordinated marine vessel fueling option involving one fueling location for transport of Mine workers from Yankee Cove to Slate Cove Marine Terminal.
- Mitigate potential effects of hydrocarbon inputs from gasoline and fuel on sensitive fish species through the implementation of a sound fueling plan and a responsible operational BMP program.
- Continue to financially support and participate in a coordinated/cooperative Berners Bay environmental monitoring program initiated by Coeur Alaska, Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR)/Alaska Department of Fish and Game, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)/Auke Bay Laboratory, and University of Alaska; the program could also be expanded, as appropriate and agreed upon.

Goal #4: Coeur Alaska will work with ADNR to develop effective monitoring and mitigation programs and appropriate environmental thresholds for mitigation for the Slate Cove Marine Terminal, as part of the State’s Tideland Leases for the facility.

5. Standard Operating Procedures

SOP #1: Coeur Alaska will identify and operate according to a “designated transportation routing” from Yankee Cove (or Echo Cove as needed) to Slate Cove Marine Terminal for the daily marine vessel transport of Mine workers.

SOP #2: Regular schedules will also be established for weekday and weekend workers’ transport (these will minimize the number of daily trips, to the extent practicable).

SOP #3: Routings and schedules will be strictly adhered to, except where unusual environmental or workers’ safety considerations dictate an alternative approach.

SOP #4: Designated routing and schedules will also be established for barge transport to the Slate Cove Marine Terminal.

SOP #5: Vessels will operate at low, constant speeds and regular scheduled intervals; vessels will not approach within 100 yards of Steller sea lions, humpback whales, and other sensitive marine mammal species. Crew shuttles speeds will be limited to 13 knots within Berners Bay during the eulachon run/herring spawning period (typically occurs for 2–3 weeks between April 15 and May 15).

SOP #6: Marine fueling of Coeur Alaska transport vessels will occur only in Auke Bay, or another approved U.S. Coast Guard facility. Marine vessel fueling will not take place at Slate Cove Marine Terminal, except for emergency environmental situations and/or conditions involving worker safety that dictate such limited use.

SOP #7: Coeur Alaska will implement the following special measures during the spring forage fish spawning season (typically between April 15 and May 15) to protect ESA-listed species that may be seasonally present in the area:

- Coeur Alaska will continue to use its “Steller sea lion awareness training” manual in its Environmental Training Program.
- Marine vessel encounters with special fish species, marine mammals and important bird species will be recorded and reported, as part of the overall monitoring plan.
- Coeur Alaska and NMFS will annually mutually agree to that year’s “eulachon spawning season” to encompass 3 weeks, during which a “transportation action strategy” will be implemented by Coeur Alaska as part of an overall traffic plan.
- During this period, marine transport vessels for the Mine will be fueled outside of Berners Bay, at a U.S. Coast Guard approved facility.
- During the designated forage fish spawning season, Coeur Alaska will hire a qualified protected species observer (PSO) to accompany the designated vessel pilot and take part in determining the best daily routing from Yankee Cove to Slate Cove Marine Terminal, so as to minimize potential encounters with ESA-listed species, and avoid incidental take.

- During this period, Coeur Alaska will attempt (to the extent practicable) to limit the number of crew vessel transits to three round trips per day (except for emergency environmental or safety situations). Coeur Alaska will build up onsite fuel inventories in advance of the eulachon spawning season to a level that would support operations for a 21-day period, in order to reduce or eliminate mining operation fuel barging during the eulachon spawning period.
- Coeur Alaska will, to the extent practicable, limit concentrate barging during this 3-week period (similar to reduced fuel shipments).
- Other chemical and supplies shipments will be curtailed during that period, to the extent practicable, so as to further limit all barging and reduce Steller sea lion and humpback whale encounters.
- During the herring spawning season, Coeur Alaska and/or their transportation contractor will adjust regular Yankee Cove to Slate Cove Marine Terminal routing so as to avoid large congregations of surface spawning forage fish (the PSO and Coeur Alaska will determine appropriate routes).
- PSO will attempt to capture photographic images of the ventral side of humpback whale tail flukes and will submit them to the Happy Whale website or mobile app at Happywhale.com.

SOP #8: Coeur Alaska will implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP; including stormwater management control practices, measures to reduce pollutants in stormwater, Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan, preventive maintenance programs, employee education programs, record-keeping and audits, annual plan revisions) at the Slate Cove Marine Terminal.

SOP #9: Controls for erosion and sedimentation; containment of petroleum products, oils, and grease separation; stormwater diversions; and covered storage areas will be employed by Coeur Alaska and its contracting operators at Slate Cove Marine Terminal and by boat operations serving the Mine.

SOP #10: Specific BMPs for marine vessels and the Slate Cove Marine Terminal required by Coeur Alaska include the following commitments by Coeur Alaska. Coeur Alaska or its contractor(s) will:

- Require (contractually) that vessel service providers and users abide by approved BMPs at the two docks;
- Provide designated work area(s) for outside boat repairs and maintenance; no maintenance will be permitted outside of these areas;
- Prohibit bottom cleaning and sanding in or near the Slate Cove Marine Terminal area; upland area(s) are required for these activities;
- Perform maintenance over tarps to ease cleanup at these upland maintenance areas;

- Provide upland cleanup areas with adequate stormwater management facilities;
- Follow the applicable State of Alaska approved SPCC, SWPPP, and/or Response Plan for stormwater collection and treatment at the dock facilities and parking areas;
- Inspect stormwater drainage and washing systems regularly in upland areas adjacent to marine terminal;
- Develop and implement SOPs and BMPs for the management of all solid waste associated with the marine facilities, including recycling, compacting, and reuse as appropriate;
- Use flyers, pamphlets, and newsletters to raise operators' and passengers' awareness of need to implement BMPs;
- Provide and maintain appropriate storage, transfer, containment, and disposal facilities for all liquid and solid wastes generated by Mine transportation operations;
- Separate containers for disposal and clearly mark those containers for used antifreeze, oils, greases, solvents, and other materials;
- Store and dispose of incompatible or reactive materials in accordance with the City and Borough of Juneau Fire Code. Designated storage areas should be covered and the inside area sloped to a dead-end sump with total containment provided (all drains to be equipped with positive control valves or devices);
- Leaking containers must be emptied promptly upon detection, either by transferring the material into a non-leaking container or by disposing of it in a proper waste container;
- Coeur Alaska, its employees, and contractors will adhere to the waste management and spill response plan;
- Annual training of employees and contractors on appropriate waste management and spill response will be provided by Coeur Alaska; attendance will be mandatory;
- An adequate supply of spill containment and response equipment will be maintained by Coeur Alaska at the following locations: 1) Slate Cove Marine Terminal, and 2) the Mine site (supplies are described in the Spill Contingency Plan);
- Regular inspection and cleaning of bilges will be required, including the installation and maintenance of oil/water separators and filters;
- Regular inspection of fuel lines and hoses for chaffing, wear and general deterioration is required (replace with USCG Type A);
- Non-spill vacuum systems for spill proof oil changes or to pump out oily bilge water is required;
- Marine vessel engines must be regularly tuned and operating at peak efficiencies;
- Waste oil must be removed from the maintenance site by a permitted waste oil transporter;

- Use of oil-absorbing materials in the bilges of transport boats is required, along with replacement and proper disposal as necessary;
- All sewage must be disposed of at approved land-based facilities;
- Use of biodegradable treatment chemicals in holding tanks is required; and
- Use of low phosphate detergents to reduce phosphorous loads to approved treatment systems is required.

SOP #11: Coeur Alaska will continue to sponsor a “Berners Bay Working Group” to include: NMFS, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ADNR, Coeur Alaska, a commercial fisheries organization, commercial crabbers association, and Goldbelt.

SOP #12: Coeur Alaska has developed a Spill Response Plan that has been implemented at both the Slate Cove Marine Terminal, and at the Mine, in order to prevent fuel and chemical spills, and minimize their environmental impacts in the event of an accidental spill. The Spill Response Plan is a key component of this Plan. The primary objective of the Spill Response Plan is to:

- Reduce the risk for accidental spills and environmental degradation,
- Provide the operating facility with the necessary information to properly respond to a fuel or oil spill or chemical spill event,
- Clearly define line of function responsibilities for a spill situation, and
- Provide a concise response and clean-up program which minimizes environmental impacts.

SOP #13: The effectiveness of this Plan and related contingency plans and monitoring programs is evaluated every third year in order to facilitate the goals and policies of the program. The findings of the review or “environmental audit” are conducted by a qualified third-party contractor commissioned by Coeur Alaska and will be presented to the Berners Bay Working Group and key resource management agencies during the fourth quarter of that year in order to evaluate programs and recommend modifications and/or realignments to policies, where necessary.

Coeur Alaska will commit to these policies, BMPs, mitigation activities, and monitoring programs to be incorporated into the overall mitigation component of the Final Plan of Operations Amendment 1, to be approved by the Forest Service. It is understood that approval of this Plan by the Forest Service does not relieve Coeur Alaska of its responsibilities to comply with other federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

SOP #14: Protected Species Observer Requirements are as follows:

- PSOs must be independent and have no other assigned tasks during monitoring periods.
- PSOs will complete PSO training prior to deployment. The training will include:
 - Field identification of marine mammals and marine mammal behavior;

- Ecological information on Alaska’s marine mammals and specifics on the ecology and management concerns of those marine mammals;
- ESA and Marine Mammal Protection Act regulations;
- Mitigation measures outlined in this Plan and NMFS letter of concurrence (LOC).
- Proper equipment use;
- Methodologies in marine mammal observation and data recording and proper reporting protocols; and
- An overview of PSO roles and responsibilities.
- PSOs will have the following skills/attributes:
 - Vision correctable to 20-20;
 - The ability to effectively communicate orally with the captain;
 - Prior experience collecting field observations and recording field data accurately and in accordance with project protocols;
 - The ability to identify to species all marine mammals that are endemic to the action area;
 - The ability to record marine mammal behavior; and
 - Technical writing skills sufficient to create understandable reports of observations.
- PSOs will have the ability and authority to order appropriate mitigation response, including vessel slowdowns and direction changes, to avoid takes of all listed species.
- PSOs will have the following equipment to address their duties:
 - Tools that enable them to accurately determine the position of a marine mammal in relationship to the transportation vessel:
 - A watch or chronometer;
 - Binoculars (7x50 or higher magnification) with built-in rangefinder or reticles (rangefinder may be provided separately);
 - A legible copy of the NMFS LOC and all appendices; and
 - A legible and fillable observation record form allowing for required PSO data entry.
- PSOs must keep Daily Observation Records:
 - PSOs will record observations on paper data forms or into electronic data sheets.

- Paper data sheets will be scanned and submitted weekly via email to AKR.section7@noaa.gov.
- PSOs will record, at a minimum, the following information:
 - The date, shift start time, shift stop time, PSO name, weather, visibility, and wave height;
 - Counts by species of marine mammals observed in transit;
 - Estimated points on map and associated Lat/Long coordinates of observed marine mammals;
 - Estimated route of transportation vessel; and
 - Estimated distances of observed marine mammals from transportation vessel.
- PSO Annual Report – An annual report will be submitted to NMFS within 90 calendar days of the completion of that year’s Transportation Action Strategy summarizing the data recorded and submitted to AKR.section7@noaa.gov. The report will summarize all PSO observations conducted during that year’s 3-week forage fish spawning period. The annual report will include:
 - Summaries of monitoring efforts including dates of implementation of the special measures for the forage fish spawning period, description of methods, tables and descriptive summaries of daily observations, and other pertinent information; and
 - A spreadsheet in electronic format of all PSO data collected.

Vessel Transit Requirements

During all marine transports to and from the Mine, the following mitigation measures will be followed:

SOP #15: Vessel operators will:

- Maintain a watch for marine mammals at all times while underway;
- Not approach within 91 meters (100 yards) of listed marine mammals;
- Travel at less than 5 knots (9 kilometers/hour) when within 274 meters (300 yards) of a whale;
- Avoid changes in direction and speed when within 274 meters (300 yards) of whales, unless doing so is necessary for maritime safety;
- Not position vessel(s) in the path of whales, and will not cut in front of whales in a way or at a distance that causes the whales to change their direction of travel or behavior (including breathing/surfacing pattern);

- Check the waters immediately adjacent to the vessel(s) to ensure that no whales will be injured when the propellers are engaged;
- Reduce the vessel speed to 10 knots or less when weather conditions reduce visibility to 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) or less; and
- Adhere to the Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations when vessels are transiting to and from the project site (see 50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §§ 216.18, 223.214, and 224.103(b)). Specifically, the vessel operator will not:
 - Approach within 100 yards of any humpback whale by any means, including by interception (i.e., placing a vessel in the path of an oncoming humpback whale);
 - Cause a vessel or other object to approach within 100 yards of a humpback whale; or
 - Disrupt the normal behavior or prior activity of a whale by any other act or omission.

SOP #16: If a whale’s course and speed are such that it will likely cross in front of a vessel that is underway or approach within 91 meters (100 yards) of the vessel, and if maritime conditions safely allow, the engine will be put in neutral and the whale will be allowed to pass beyond the vessel.

SOP #17: Vessels will not allow lines to remain in the water, and no trash or other debris will be thrown overboard, thereby reducing the potential for marine mammal entanglement.

SOP #18: Vessels will not approach within 5.5 kilometers (3 nautical miles) of rookery sites listed in 50 CFR §224.103(d).

SOP #19: Vessels will avoid approaching within 914 meters (3,000 feet) of any Steller sea lion haulout or rookery.

Unauthorized Take

SOP #20: At any time, if a listed marine mammal is determined by the PSO or vessel captain to have been disturbed, harassed, harmed, injured, or killed as a direct or indirect result of this action, the PSO or captain will report the incident to NMFS within 1 business day, with information submitted to akr.section7@noaa.gov. These PSO reports will include:

- All information to be provided in the final report;
- Number of animals of each listed species affected;
- The date, time, and location of each event (provide geographic coordinates);
- A description of the event;
- The time the animal(s) was first observed and, if known, the fate of the animal;
- Mitigation measures implemented prior to and after the animal was taken;
- If a vessel struck a marine mammal, the contact information for the PSO on duty, or the contact information for the individual piloting the vessel if there was no PSO on duty;



- Photographs or video footage of the animal(s) (if available).

Stranded, Injured, Sick, or Dead Marine Mammals (not associated with the project)

SOP #21: If the vessel crew or the PSO observes an injured, sick, or dead marine mammal (i.e., stranded marine mammal), they will notify the Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline (see Contact Information in Table 1 of the NMFS LOC). The PSO will submit photos and available data to aid NMFS in determining how to respond to the stranded animal. If possible, data submitted to NMFS in response to stranded marine mammals will include date/time, location of the stranded marine mammal, species and number of stranded marine mammals, description of the stranded marine mammal’s condition, event type (e.g., entanglement, dead, floating), and behavior of live-stranded marine mammals.

Illegal Activities

SOP #22: If vessel crew or the PSO observes marine mammals being disturbed, harassed, harmed, injured, or killed (e.g., feeding or unauthorized harassment), these activities will be reported to NMFS Alaska Region Office of Law Enforcement (see Table 1 for contact information). Data submitted to NMFS will include date/time, location, description of the event, and any photos or videos taken.

Table 1. Contact Information

Reason for Contact	Contact Information
Consultation Questions and Unauthorized Take	Greg Balogh: greg.balogh@noaa.gov Consultation Biologist – Julie Scheurer: Julie.scheurer@noaa.gov
Reports and Data Submittal	AKR.section7@noaa.gov (please include NMFS AKRO tracking number in subject line)
Stranded, Injured, or Dead Marine Mammal (not related to project activities)	Stranding Hotline (24/7 coverage): 877-925-7773
Oil Spill and Hazardous Materials Response	U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center: 800-424-8802 and AKRNMFSspillResponse@noaa.gov
Illegal Activities (not related to project activities; e.g., observations of feeding, unauthorized harassment, or disturbance of marine mammals)	NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (AK Hotline): 800-853-1964
In the event that this contact information becomes obsolete	NMFS Anchorage Main Office: 907-271-5006 NMFS Juneau Main Office: 907-586-7236