



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
Office of History & Archaeology

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March 20, 2020

Subject: **COVID-19**

Guidance from the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer

Dear Colleagues,

As you may be aware, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) has determined that it may be appropriate for the SHPO or THPO response to be considered tolled while an office is closed or work conditions are such that the SHPO or THPO is unable to carry its Section 106 duties (e.g., staff unavailability due to health reasons or restricted access to records or communication capability) due to the coronavirus outbreak. Tolling means "pausing or delaying of the running of the period of time set forth by statute".

The Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer has conferred with the ACHP and will invoke tolling effective March 19, 2020 regarding the timelines outlined in 36 CFR 800. This means that the 30-day regulatory clock that would allow agencies to proceed with their undertaking following non-response does not apply and that SHPO will be allowed to comment beyond the 30 days. For the foreseeable future and as their situations permit, the Alaska State Historic Office (AK SHPO) staff may be working from home. Our office will endeavor to provide timely reviews, but we acknowledge that comment from the AK SHPO may take longer than 30 days.

Phone and Mail Service:

The Review and Compliance Unit may not have access to documentation sent by mail and will have only sporadic access to their SOA phones. Our office recommends that people contact Review and Compliance staff by email.

Review and Compliance Staff:

After over six years of service with the State of Alaska's Office of History and Archaeology, Sylvia Elliott has elected to enter retirement earlier than planned in light of the COVID19 situation. Her last day will be March 31, 2020. We unfortunately will not be able to open a celebration of her retirement to the public, but we encourage those who have worked with her to reach out by email.

Mckenzie Johnson mckenzie.johnson@alaska.gov

Sylvia Elliott sylvia.elliott2@alaska.gov (retirement effective April 1, 2020)

Sarah Meitl sarah.meitl@alaska.gov

Current Project Reviews:

Our staff will continue to process reviews on a first-come, first-served basis; however, requests to expedite reviews to accommodate emergencies or urgent needs will be considered. Please contact the individual assigned to your review by email or Sarah Meitl (sarah.meitl@alaska.gov) if you have any questions on the status of your review.

New Submissions:

Documentation sent by mail may experience a delay in receipt and/or processing if the building is closed. Our office recommends that any requests for project reviews be sent electronically. For attachments smaller than 10MB please send to oha.revcomp@alaska.gov. Any documents or photographs larger than 10 MB must be sent through ZendTo (<https://drop.state.ak.us/drop/>) or a comparable system vetted by the State of Alaska. Our office will provide receipt notification once the documentation is processed and logged into our review system.

Consultation Meetings:

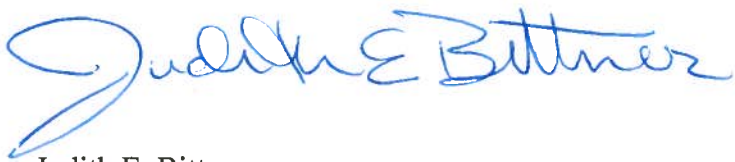
We request that consultation meetings with our office be limited for the foreseeable future. For currently scheduled meetings, we request that the agency assess whether the issue(s) can be addressed through email or other means. Our staff will assess their ability to participate in new meetings, but we recommend that meeting requests be reserved for urgent and pressing needs that cannot be addressed through email and that all in-person meetings transition to teleconference.

Alaska Historic Preservation Act:

Our office's ability to comment on and review AHPA compliance will be similarly limited and will follow the above guidance.

Our office will be monitoring our ability to respond to Section 106 and AHPA reviews and we will provide similar notice to all our agency partners and stakeholders should circumstances change. Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Judith E. Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer

JEB:sjm