

Table 11.4-1. Summary of consultation on Botanical Resources study plans.

Comment Format	Comment Date	Licensing Participant Name	Licensing Participant Affiliation	Comment	Response
Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat Mapping Study (Section 11.5)					
Terrestrial Resources TWG Meeting	08/09/2012	Various	USFWS, ADF&G, FERC	The general consensus was that the large (5-mile buffer) size of the mapping area was more than sufficient to account for the indirect wildlife habitat alteration effects likely to occur from Project development.	In Section 11.5.3 in the RSP, the study area for the mapping of vegetation and wildlife habitats has been reduced to a 4-mile buffer, which remains twice the size of the buffer (2 miles) used in the wetland mapping study.
Terrestrial Resources TWG Meeting	08/09/2012	Bob Henszey	USFWS	The USFWS requested a comparative analysis of the changes in vegetation between the 1980s and present, if such a comparison would not involve a large amount of extra work.	The draft RSP does not propose this comparative analysis. AEA does not believe that such a comparison can be readily prepared, because a different version of the Alaska Vegetation Classification was used in the 1980s. In addition, the purpose of the vegetation mapping proposed in the draft RSP is to obtain current baseline information on vegetation; possible changes in vegetation coverage since the 1980s would not yield any information related to project effects.

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Landbirds and Shorebirds Study Plan Meeting	09/06/2012	Maureen de Zeeuw	USFWS	The USFWS (Maureen de Zeeuw) requested that for the habitat mapping study, Kessel's bird habitat classification system for Alaska (Kessel 1979) be compared to the Level IV vegetation types of Viereck et al. (1992). The concern is that the habitat classification used for the Project should appropriately represent the habitats used by landbirds and shorebirds, and not be limited to plant species composition. The USGS prepared a report comparing the two classification systems; USFWS indicated they would provide the report.	It was confirmed that the proposed methodology (Viereck et al. 1992 Level IV vegetation types, plus ABR's landscape feature additions), addresses habitat parameters beyond plant species composition (e.g., vegetation structure, landscape position, disturbance level, etc). The habitat mapping approach is further described in Section 11.5.4.2 of the draft RSP. After USFWS provides the USGS report they referenced, AEA will review the USGS report and further confirm that the proposed methodology (Viereck et al. 1992 Level IV vegetation types, plus ABR's landscape feature additions) addresses USFWS' concerns. The USFWS has not located the USGS report. In the absence of this material, AEA will prepare a "crosswalk" between the two classification systems and outline the habitat types most likely to be mapped in the Project area.

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Riparian Study (Section 11.6)					
Terrestrial Resources TWG Meeting	08/09/2012	Various	USFWS, ADF&G	The lateral boundary of the riparian study area needs to be determined. In the PSP, the 100-year floodplain limit was proposed. There were agency concerns, however, about how the flood limit would be determined.	Comment addressed in Section 11.6.3 in the RSP. Preliminarily, riverine physiographic boundaries will be used to define the lateral extent of the study area. Riverine physiography (areas directly influenced by semi-regular to irregular overbank flooding [~5–25 year intervals] including off-channel waterbodies) will be mapped from recent aerial imagery. The riverine physiography map will be sent out for review and agency input (late October/early November 2012) before the final riparian study area boundary is defined and described in the RSP.

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Terrestrial Resources TWG Meeting	08/09/2012	Various	ADF&G, ARRI, BLM, OPMP, NHI, USFWS	The length of the Riparian Vegetation Study area downstream needs to be determined.	Comment addressed in Section 11.6.3 in the RSP. The downstream extent of the study area will be defined as the point at which the effects of altered flow regimes expected in the Susitna River would not be significant (i.e., where expected flow changes would be overridden by input from other rivers, are within the range of natural variability, and/or overridden by the effects of Cook Inlet tides). The potential Project-induced changes to flow will be attenuated downstream of the confluence of the Susitna and Chulitna rivers near Talkeetna. The length of the study area below the confluence will be defined following analysis of data from the 2012 instream flow study, ice processes study and further refinement of the range of potential Project operations.
Wetland Mapping Study (Section 11.7)					
Wetlands Functions Meeting	09/18/2012	Various	USACE, EPA, USFWS, ADEC	The general consensus was that the water quality wetland function would not need to include subfunctions like sediment retention and nutrient/toxicant removal, although an exception was noted by the USACE wherein they would need, as part of the evaluation of the wetlands permit application, to assess these possible functions for wetlands that would be adjacent to proposed gravel pads and roads.	The water quality function listed in Section 11.7.4.3 in the RSP notes that these wetland functions will be evaluated individually.

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Wetlands Functions Meeting	09/18/2012	Various	USACE, EPA, USFWS, ADEC	Fish habitat should be assessed as a subfunction of the abundance-and-diversity-of-wetland-fauna function. Data collected by the fish studies should be incorporated into the wetlands functional assessment to determine whether wetland polygons are performing a fish habitat function.	Section 11.7.4.3 in the RSP notes that fish occurrence information for lacustrine waterbodies (from the fish and aquatics resources studies, Section 9 in the RSP) will be applied in the evaluation of the abundance-and-diversity-of-wetland-fauna wetland function. The wetland functional analysis will include a spatially explicit component in which particular waterbodies will be noted as providing a fish habitat function (pending adequate data from the fish studies).
Wetlands Functions Meeting	09/18/2012	Various	USACE, EPA, USFWS, ADEC	Wildlife abundance and diversity should be assessed as a subfunction of the abundance-and-diversity-of-wetland-fauna function.	Section 11.7.4.3 in the RSP notes that wildlife occurrence information will be applied in the evaluation of the abundance-and-diversity-of-wetland-fauna wetland function.
Wetlands Functions Meeting	09/18/2012	Various	USACE, EPA, USFWS, ADEC	Wildlife habitat work should be incorporated into the wetlands functional assessment to determine whether wetland polygons are performing a wildlife diversity and abundance function.	Section 11.7.4.3 in the RSP notes that wildlife habitat-use information (similar to that used in the evaluation of wildlife habitat use study, Section 10.19 in the RSP) will be assessed for the mapped wetland types. The wetland functional analysis will include a spatially explicit component, if necessary, in which wetland types in different sections of the Project area will be noted as providing a wildlife habitat function for various wildlife species.

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Wetlands Functions Meeting	09/18/2012	Various	USACE, EPA, USFWS, ADEC	The consumptive uses wetland function should be evaluated for both actual uses (e.g., known hunting, berry picking areas) and potential uses (e.g., suitable wetland habitats for consumptive uses if access was increased).	In Section 11.7.4.3 of the RSP, the consumptive uses function is described to indicate that actual and potential uses will be assessed (pending adequate data from the recreation and subsistence studies). The wetland functional analysis will include a spatially explicit component, pending adequate data (as above), in which particular wetland types in different sections in the Project area will be noted as providing actual or potential consumptive uses.
Wetlands Functions Meeting	09/18/2012	Various	USACE, EPA, USFWS, ADEC	The effects of permafrost on wetland functions should be addressed, especially in light of the known degradation in permafrost associated with climate change.	Section 11.7.4.3 in the RSP notes that the existence of permafrost in wetlands in the Project area will be addressed in the wetland classification by categorizing wetlands as associated with permafrost or not. In this way, the functional capacities of permafrost and non-permafrost wetlands will be addressed.
<u>Rare Plant Study (Section 11.8)</u>					
				(No comments to date)	
<u>Invasive Plant Study (Section 11.9)</u>					
				(No comments to date)	