

We anticipate that the Coast Guard's contributions under the proposed CRADA will include the following:

(1) Provide the ECS manufacturers with summaries and formats of the information that will be distributed in the Ohio River eNav Technology Demonstration.

(2) Test the ECS equipment with the format upgrades in the RDC Test Laboratory prior to the Demonstration and provide feedback to manufacturers. Also, provide non-Federal participants with access to the RDC Test Laboratory data output stream to evaluate the data displays on their equipment.

(3) Deploy an eNav system that distributes navigation and safety information to marine users in the Technology Demonstration Test Area on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

(4) Conduct the Ohio River eNav Technology Demonstration. During the Demonstration, record the information distributed through the AIS and the information received by participating mariners' AIS receivers. Collate and analyze the information collected by participating vessels to quantify system performance. Collect anecdotal information on mariners' responses to the technology and its benefits.

We anticipate that the non-Federal participants' contributions under the proposed CRADA will include the following:

(1) Configure their software to enable the receipt and display of eNav information on ECS devices located on vessel bridges of customers who are participating in the Ohio River eNav Technology Demonstration.

(2) Provide the Coast Guard with the latest version of its ECS software to support the RDC Test Laboratory evaluation.

(3) The RDC and its federal partners may finalize some AIS message types after the Ohio River Technology Demonstration has started. As their resources permit, the non-Federal participants will update their software and distribute them to their customers and the RDC after the Demonstration has started.

(4) At the conclusion of the Demonstration, the RDC and the non-Federal participants will jointly document the CRADA effort in a white paper format, to document the features developed by the ECS manufacturers, their installation on the test vessels, and the results of the Ohio River eNav Technology Demonstration.

The Coast Guard reserves the right to select for CRADA participants all, some, or no proposals submitted for this CRADA. The Coast Guard will provide no funding for reimbursement of

proposal development costs. Proposals and any other material submitted in response to this notice will not be returned. Proposals submitted are expected to be unclassified and have no more than five single-sided pages (excluding cover page, DD 1494, JF-12, etc.). The Coast Guard will select proposals at its sole discretion on the basis of:

(1) Existence of commercial customers who routinely operate in the Ohio River eNav Technology Demonstration study area, who are equipped with an ECS capability that accept AIS inputs to navigate, and who are willing to participate in the Demonstration.

(2) How well respondents address the following criteria:

(a) Technical capability to support the non-Federal party contributions described; and

(b) Resources available for supporting the non-Federal party contributions described.

Currently, the Coast Guard is considering CNS and Rose Point for participation in this CRADA. This consideration is based on the fact that the Coast Guard has identified CNS and Rose Point as customers in the Demonstration area that use ECS with AIS input capability. However, the Coast Guard does not wish to exclude other viable participants from this CRADA.

This is a technology transfer/development effort. Presently, the Coast Guard has no plan to procure an ECS capability. Since the goal of this CRADA is to identify and investigate the advantages, disadvantages, required technology enhancements, performance, costs, and other issues associated with using ECS capabilities, non-Federal CRADA participants will not be excluded from any future Coast Guard procurements based solely on their participation in this CRADA. Special consideration will be given to small business firms/consortia, and preference will be given to business units located in the U.S.

This notice is issued under the authority of 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 15 U.S.C. 3710(a).

Dated: January 26, 2015.

**Dennis C. Evans,**

*Captain, USCG, Commanding Officer, U.S. Coast Guard Research and Development Center.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Coast Guard

[USCG-2014-0941]

### Port Access Route Study: In the Chukchi Sea, Bering Strait and Bering Sea

**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DHS.

**ACTION:** Notice of study; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This study is a continuation of and an expansion of scope to the Port Access Route Study (PARS) the Coast Guard announced in 2010. Based on comments received from the 2010 notice the Coast Guard has developed a potential vessel routing system for the area. The Coast Guard requests comments on how consolidating vessel traffic into a defined vessel routing system may impact or benefit the region. The goal of the study is to help reduce the risk of marine casualties and increase the efficiency of vessel traffic in the region. The recommendations of the study may lead to future rulemaking action or appropriate international agreements.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before August 18, 2015.

#### ADDRESSES:

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** If you have questions on this notice of study, call or email LT Kody Stitz, Seventeenth Coast Guard District (dpw); telephone (907) 463-2270; email [Kody.J.Stitz@uscg.mil](mailto:Kody.J.Stitz@uscg.mil) or Mr. David Seris, Seventeenth Coast Guard District (dpw); telephone (907)463-2267; email [David.M.Seris@uscg.mil](mailto:David.M.Seris@uscg.mil). If you have questions on viewing or submitting material to the docket, call Cheryl F. Collins, Program Manager, Docket Operations, telephone 202-366-9826.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Public Participation and Request for Comments

We encourage you to participate in this study by submitting comments and related materials. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided.

*Comment submission:* You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-2014-0941 using any one of the following methods:

(1) Federal eRulemaking Portal:

<http://www.regulations.gov>.

(2) Fax: 202-493-2251.

(3) Mail: Docket Management Facility (M-30), U.S. Department of

Transportation, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590-0001.

(4) *Hand delivery*: Same as mail address above, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is 202-366-9329.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods. See the "Public Participation and Request for Comments" portion of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below for instructions on submitting comments.

#### Privacy Act

Anyone can search the electronic form of comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review a Privacy Act notice regarding our public dockets in the January 17, 2008, issue of the **Federal Register** (73 FR 3316).

#### Public Meeting

The Coast Guard will hold public meeting(s) if there is sufficient demand to warrant holding a meeting. You must submit a request for one on or before Month Day, Year (30 days from publish date) using one of the four methods specified under **ADDRESSES**. Please explain why you believe a public meeting would be beneficial. If we determine that a public meeting would aid in the study, we will hold a meeting at a time and place announced by a later notice in the **Federal Register**.

#### Definitions

The following definitions (except "Regulated Navigation Area") are from the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) publication "Ships' Routeing" Tenth Edition 2010 and should help you review this notice:

*Area to be avoided (ATBA)* means a routing measure comprising an area within defined limits in which either navigation is particularly hazardous or it is exceptionally important to avoid casualties and which should be avoided by all ships, or certain classes of ships.

*Deep-water route* means a route within defined limits, which has been accurately surveyed for clearance of sea bottom and submerged obstacles as indicated on the chart.

*Inshore traffic zone* means a routing measure comprising a designated area between the landward boundary of a traffic separation scheme and the adjacent coast, to be used in accordance with the provisions of Rule 10(d), as

amended, of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS).

*Precautionary area* means a routing measure comprising an area within defined limits where ships must navigate with particular caution and within which the direction of traffic flow may be recommended.

*Recommended route* means a route of undefined width, for the convenience of ships in transit, which is often marked by centerline buoys.

*Recommended track* is a route which has been specially examined to ensure so far as possible that it is free of dangers and along which vessels are advised to navigate.

*Regulated Navigation Area (RNA)* means a water area within a defined boundary for which regulations for vessels navigating within the area have been established under 33 CFR part 165.

*Roundabout* means a routing measure comprising a separation point or circular separation zone and a circular traffic lane within defined limits. Traffic within the roundabout is separated by moving in a counterclockwise direction around the separation point or zone.

*Separation zone or separation line* means a zone or line separating the traffic lanes in which ships are proceeding in opposite or nearly opposite directions; or separating a traffic lane from the adjacent sea area; or separating traffic lanes designated for particular classes of ship proceeding in the same direction.

*Traffic lane* means an area within defined limits in which one-way traffic is established. Natural obstacles, including those forming separation zones, may constitute a boundary.

*Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS)* means a routing measure aimed at the separation of opposing streams of traffic by appropriate means and by the establishment of traffic lanes.

*Two-way route* means a route within defined limits inside which two-way traffic is established, aimed at providing safe passage of ships through waters where navigation is difficult or dangerous.

*Vessel routing system* means any system of one or more routes or routing measures aimed at reducing the risk of casualties; it includes traffic separation schemes, two-way routes, recommended tracks, areas to be avoided, no anchoring areas, inshore traffic zones, roundabouts, precautionary areas, and deep-water routes.

#### Background and Purpose

##### *Requirement for Port Access Route Studies*

Under the Ports and Waterways Safety Act (PWSA) (33 U.S.C. 1223(c)), the Commandant of the Coast Guard may designate necessary fairways and traffic separation schemes (TSSs) to provide safe access routes for vessels proceeding to and from U.S. ports.

##### **Port Access Route Study to Date**

The Coast Guard announced a port access route study in the **Federal Register** on November 8, 2010 (75 FR 68568). The purpose of the PARS was to solicit public comments on whether a vessel routing system such as a fairway or TSS was needed and if it could increase vessel safety in the area. The 2010 PARS was limited geographically in scope to a section of water extending approximately 100 nautical miles north of the Bering Strait into the Chukchi Sea to approximately 30 nautical miles south of St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea. At that time the Coast Guard did not propose a specific vessel routing system, but instead sought more general comments about whether a vessel routing system was needed or advisable in the study area. The Coast Guard received twenty five comments, and after reviewing them, determined that a vessel route needed to be proposed so more specific comments and concerns could be gathered and evaluated before determining if a routing system would be beneficial. The Coast Guard further determined that the study area should include a larger geographic area than was initially studied before finalizing the study and publishing the results.

##### **Vessel Routing Comments to Date**

The Coast Guard received twenty five public comments during the open comment period associated with the 2010 announcement. Nearly all of the comments that addressed vessel routing were supportive of the Coast Guard creating and implementing some form of vessel routing measure in the area. Since no specific routing measure was proposed in 2010, the comments received did note that precise concerns and impacts could only be identified after a specific route or measure was proposed.

##### **Reopening of the Comment Period**

This **Federal Register** notice announces the Coast Guard's intent to continue the PARS started in 2010, expand the study area and release the Coast Guard's proposed vessel routing system for comment. The Coast Guard's goal of the study remains the same in

that the study is focused on gathering factual and relevant information to aid the Coast Guard in reducing the risk of marine casualties and increasing the efficiency of vessel traffic in the region.

The study will assess whether the creation of a vessel routing system is advisable to increase the predictability of vessel movements, which may decrease the potential for collisions, oil spills, and other events that could threaten the marine environment.

Based on comments received to date there is a general sense that a designated traffic route could improve traffic predictability thereby reducing marine casualties and oil spills; however, a few comments received did note that a designated traffic route (depending on location) could adversely impact subsistence hunting, marine mammals and other wildlife more so than widely dispersed vessel traffic. Therefore, the Coast Guard puts forth a potential two-way route as a starting point for analyzing where to put a vessel traffic route should one be deemed needed and beneficial to the region.

The Coast Guard will analyze vessel traffic density, agency and stakeholder experience in vessel traffic management, navigation, ship handling, the effects of weather, impacts to subsistence hunting, impacts to marine mammals and other wildlife concerns into the decision making process of the study. We encourage you to participate in the study process by submitting comments in response to this notice.

The expanded study area is described as an area bounded by a line connecting the following geographic positions:

- 67°30' N, 168°58'37" W;
- 67°30' N, 167°30' W;
- 54°50' N, 164°40' W;
- 54°03' N, 166°25' W;
- 63°20' N, 173°43' W; thence

following the Russian Federation/ United States maritime boundary line to the first geographical position.

The proposed ship routing measures are described as follows:

(1) A four nautical mile wide, two-way route extending from Unimak Pass in the Aleutian Islands that proceeds Northward through the Bering Sea and Bering Strait before terminating in the Chukchi Sea.

(2) A four nautical mile wide, two-way route extending from a location North of the Western side of St. Lawrence Island and near the US/ Russian Federation maritime border, then proceeding Northeast to a junction with the first two way route located to the West of King Island.

(3) A total of four precautionary areas, each circular and 8 nautical miles wide in diameter. Three of these

precautionary areas will be located at the starting/ending points of the two-way routes, and the fourth will be located at the junction of the recommended two-way routes.

See the **ADDRESSES** section for where to obtain a copy of the chart showing the exact location of the proposed route.

Timeline, Study Area, and Process of this PARS: The Seventeenth Coast Guard District will conduct this PARS. The study will continue upon publication of this notice and may take 24 months to complete.

We will publish the results of the PARS in the **Federal Register**. It is possible that the study may validate the status quo (no routing measures) and conclude that no changes are necessary. It is also possible that the study may recommend one or more changes to enhance navigational safety and the efficiency of vessel traffic management. The recommendations may lead to future rulemakings or appropriate international agreements.

*Schematic of proposed vessel routing system:* A chart showing the Coast Guard's proposed two-way route can be downloaded from <http://www.regulations.gov>, type "USCG-2014-0941" into the search bar and click search, next to the displayed search results click "Open Docket Folder", which will display all comments and documents associated with this docket.

Dated: February 3, 2015.

**D.B. Abel,**

*Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### National Park Service

[NPS-ANRSS-17182; PPWONRADE2, PMP00E105.YP0000]

#### North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Washington

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** The National Park Service (NPS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) are jointly preparing a North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Plan/EIS) to determine how to restore the grizzly

bear to the North Cascades ecosystem (NCE), a portion of its historical range.

**DATES:** The FWS and NPS request that comments be submitted by March 23, 2015, or 15 days after the last public open house, whichever is later. Open houses will be announced in local media. For more information on submitting public comments, see *How To Provide Comments*, under Public Comment in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

**ADDRESSES:** Information will be available for public review online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/NCEG>; in the Office of the Superintendent, 810 State Route 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284 (360-854-7200, telephone); and in the Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, 510 Desmond Dr. SE., Suite 102, Lacey, WA 98503 (360-753-9440).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Denise Shultz, Public Information Officer, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, 810 State Route 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284 (360-854-7302, telephone), or Brent Lawrence, Public Affairs Specialist, FWS Pacific Regional Office, 911 NE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97232 (503-231-6211).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C) (NEPA), the National Park Service (NPS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) are jointly preparing a North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Plan/EIS) to determine how to restore the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) to the North Cascades ecosystem (NCE), a portion of its historical range.

### Background

Situated in the core of the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE), the North Cascades National Park Complex is surrounded by more than 2.6 million contiguous acres of federally designated wilderness, including protected lands and de facto wilderness in British Columbia, Canada. The United States portion of the NCE is contiguous with habitat north of the international border in British Columbia, Canada, but isolated from other grizzly bear populations in both the United States and Canada.

Research indicates that this wilderness landscape is capable of supporting a self-sustaining grizzly bear population. However, there has only been one observation of a solitary bear during the past 10 years. Given the low number of grizzly bears, very slow reproductive rate, and other recovery constraints, grizzly bears in the NCE are