

EVOSTC February 16, 2007

Cordova Center Project Summary

The Prince William Sound region has a strong need for a facility whose mission includes providing the venue and means for education of citizens, students, scientists, resource managers and stakeholders about the Prince William Sound and Gulf ecosystems and how best to manage its natural resources. The EVOSTC's goals of outreach, sharing research and providing educational opportunities correspond with needs of the City of Cordova.

In 1989 Cordova played a significant role as a vital supply, training, and dispatch center for the EVOS response, and the community facilities were overwhelmed by the process. In the event of another oil spill, we will again be called upon to provide response assistance. Adequate capacity to provide the needed service in a center located above tsunami risk, with sufficient back up generation, and space to train the thousands of responders expected is a definite need.

The Cordova Center also addresses the restoration points set in the 1994 Restoration Plan and specifically addresses the Human Services Injured by the spill. The injured human resource of tourism has not recovered in PWS as noted in the latest injured resources and services report.

Not only has Cordova been injured from depressed tourism, but the community has been severely impacted by the loss of fishing opportunities. Using numbers from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission records, 83% of herring gillnet, 60% of herring pound, 27% of herring seine, 80% of herring food and bait and 21% of herring hand harvest permits belonged to Cordova based fishermen. In the 12 years that fishing for herring has not occurred since EVOS, the fishermen have lost over \$44 million dollars. The city has lost \$3 million dollars in direct raw fish taxes. The total loss to the community is over \$45 million dollars just from the herring fishery.

The Cordova Center also addresses the restoration points set in the 1994 Restoration Plan and specifically addresses the Human Services Injured by the spill. These injured resources are not currently recovering in Cordova in large part due to the loss of the herring fisheries revenue.

Natural recovery.

The Cordova Center project will aid and assist the impacted community of Cordova to diversify and stabilize its failing economy. The city will gain economic benefits from the conference market the Center will access, bringing in increased sales tax, lodging tax and car rental tax. This will accelerate the recovery of the damaged human services.

The value of an injured resource to the ecosystem and to the public.

The replacement of lost ecosystem services suffered by Cordova from the collapse of the herring fishery, and reduced tourism has a "value" exceeding \$45 million, and the impact from the lost ecosystem service increases each year. Tourism is extremely valuable to the vitality of the community and to the public in general. Cordova's economy through its history has shifted from mineral extraction based to fishing based and now after EVOS is struggling to bring back the budding tourism economy that was lost to EVOS.

Duration of benefits.

Benefits gained from the project will last for the lifetime of the facility, estimated at least to a lifespan of 50 years. The Cordova Center is the centerpiece of the goal to increase economic diversification and to stimulate the local economy on a year-round basis. As the number of visitors increase, jobs will be created and opportunities for small business development will expand. Combined, these assets will encourage entrepreneurs, retirees, and families to move to Cordova, thereby adding to the growing number of beneficiaries of the Cordova Center Project.

Technical feasibility.

The proposed project is technically feasible using recognized design and construction standards. Use of state of the art design and construction techniques will reduce operating costs below those of the current, to be replaced, inadequate facilities, and actually reduce the carbon footprint of the community by reducing heating and electrical costs. A business and Economic Plan for the Cordova Center is complete. Construction documents are 85% complete.

Likelihood of success.

The project requires 50% of the estimated costs to be “in the bank” before foundation funders and other community support can be accessed. The EVOSTC contribution will trigger additional investment. Successful completion of the project will provide new revenue producing opportunities by increasing the capacity to provide support for symposiums, conferences, conventions, and other meetings. The “desirable destination” for individual and small tour visitors will increase through the development of a more robust museum that includes oil spill related displays. Revenues for visitors will help replace those lost from the herring fishery and tourism.

Will the project cause harmful side effects ?

No, the Cordova Center Project will not only work toward the recovery of the injured human services, but it will also not adversely affect the ecosystem by being constructed to meet LEEDS certification creating an energy efficient, environmentally friendly, state-of-the-art facility.

Will operation and maintenance support be required?

No, and there will be an overall reduction in operating costs through combining multiple “satellite service” centers into an integrated facility. The City of Cordova will own, operate and manage the Cordova Center. Operations and maintenance (O &M) costs for the new facility will be provided by combining O &M budgets for administrative offices, library and museum with income generated from the use of the civic center, theatre and leased space.

Will the project help a single resource or benefit multiple resources?

The expanded museum will be a destination for increasing tourism, a non-recovered service. The museum will include an educational exhibit which will develop ~ *Prince William Sound: Region in Transition*, the story of the 1989 spill and the science and research accomplished since. The “Discovery Room” will provide science and oil spill related programs for elementary students on a continuing basis. There will be seafood marketing information in a kiosk (commercial fishing is an injured resource). The library will provide a direct links to ARLIS, and provide a “satellite” repository for locally relevant Oil Spill research information.

Effects on health and human safety.

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Center will provide emergency services and respond to disasters. Our current facility has no emergency back up generator and is located in tsunami zone. Cordova has the largest local spill response fleet in Alaska, made up of contracted vessels from the local fishing fleet.

Consistency with applicable laws and policies.

The project meets the criteria in the EVOS settlement and is not unlike other capital construction project funded in the past for the communities of Seward, Kodiak, and Homer.

Duplication.

This proposed project does not duplicate other efforts, in fact; it provides an opportunity for efficient reduction. It is collaboration, engaging partnerships between the City, the Cordova Historical Society, U.S. Forest Service, Theater Groups, Cordova School District, Native Village of Eyak, Prince William Sound Community College, Prince William Sound Science Center, service groups, civic groups and the community.