

# RUS Environmental Questionnaire

## Akhiok Electric Distribution Infrastructure Replacement

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### **Project Description and Location**

The proposed project is to rebuild and upgrade the failing and aging power distribution system wholly located within the small village community of Akhiok, Alaska. Akhiok is located at approximately 56.9° North Latitude and -154.2° West Longitude; roughly 98 air miles from the City of Kodiak and 340 air miles from the City of Anchorage.

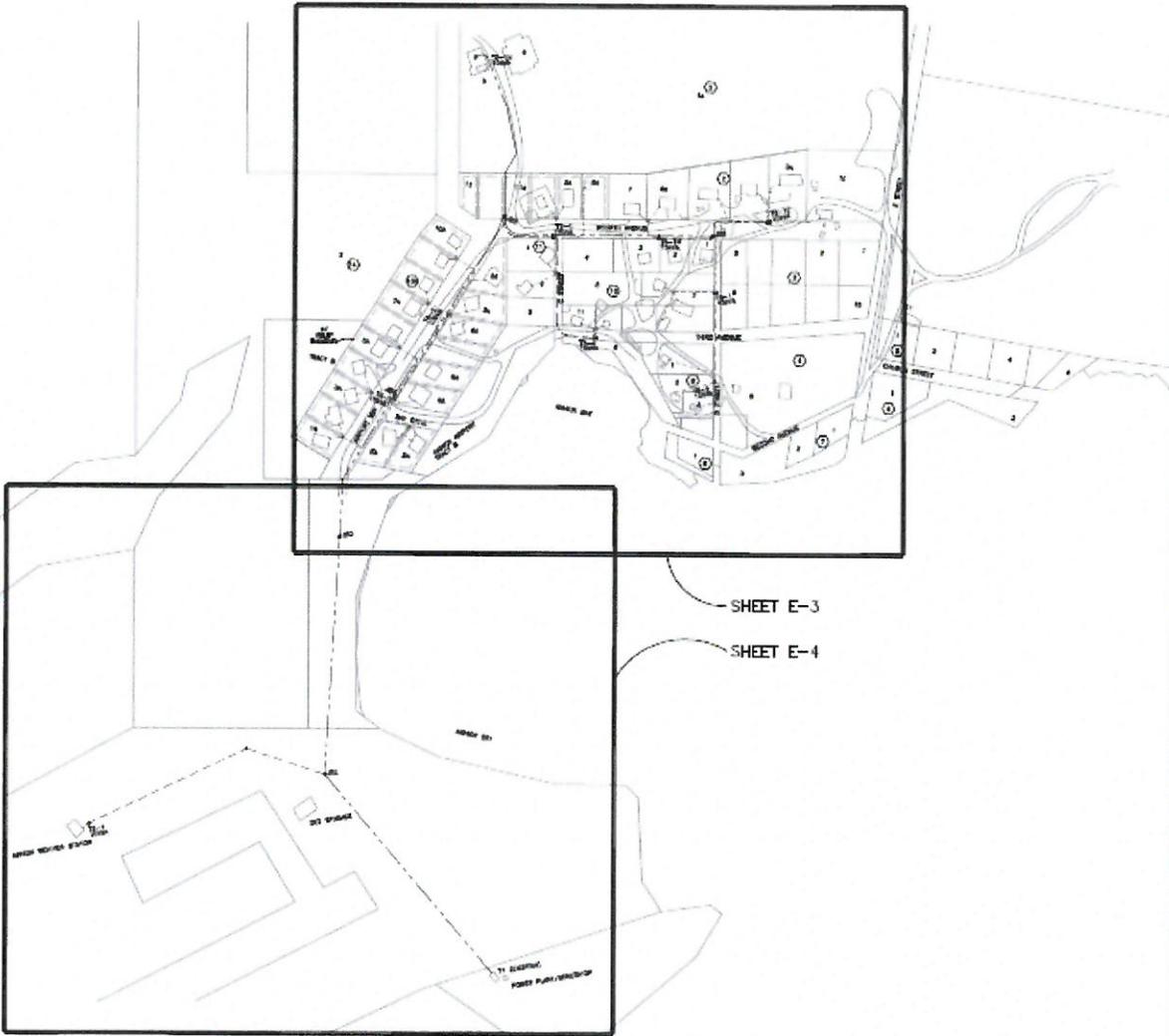
The proposed project design shows that new electrical distribution lines (Main, lateral, and secondary) will require just over 10,000 feet of trenching. The main line trench will be 48 inches deep, while the secondary line trenches will be 30 inches deep. This trenching work will be completed in the already occupied residential and commercial locations within the city of Akhiok and will occur alongside the existing electrical distribution infrastructure.

The following diagrams show: 1) Overview - Existing Underground Distribution & 2) Keyplan - Rebuild Underground Distribution.



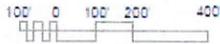
NOTES:

- DRAWING IS PREPARED FROM AVAILABLE INFORMATION AND IS NOT BASED ON SURVEY DATA.
- THE ABOVE GROUND EXISTING UTILITY STRUCTURES SHOWN ARE ESTIMATED. FIELD LOCATES WILL BE REQUIRED PRIOR TO ANY DIGGING.



**KEYPLAN - REBUILD UNDERGROUND DISTRIBUTION**

SCALE: SEE GRAPHIC SCALE



PROJECT: <b>AKHIOK POWER DISTRIBUTION</b>		
DESIGNER/PROJECT ENGINEER: <b>RES, LLC</b>		W.O. #: <b>E-2</b>
NO.	DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/ASBUILT REVISION	OWN BY/DATE
A	EXISTING AND PROPOSED UPGRADES	GE 12-8-17

**RES, LLC**

PO Box 220471  
Anchorage, AK 99522  
(907) 345-6168  
Cell (907) 242-7689  
Email: [res2200@res1.com](mailto:res2200@res1.com)

DRAWING NAME  
**AKHIOK POWER DISTRIBUTION  
KEYPLAN - REBUILD  
UNDERGROUND DISTRIBUTION  
AKHIOK, AK**

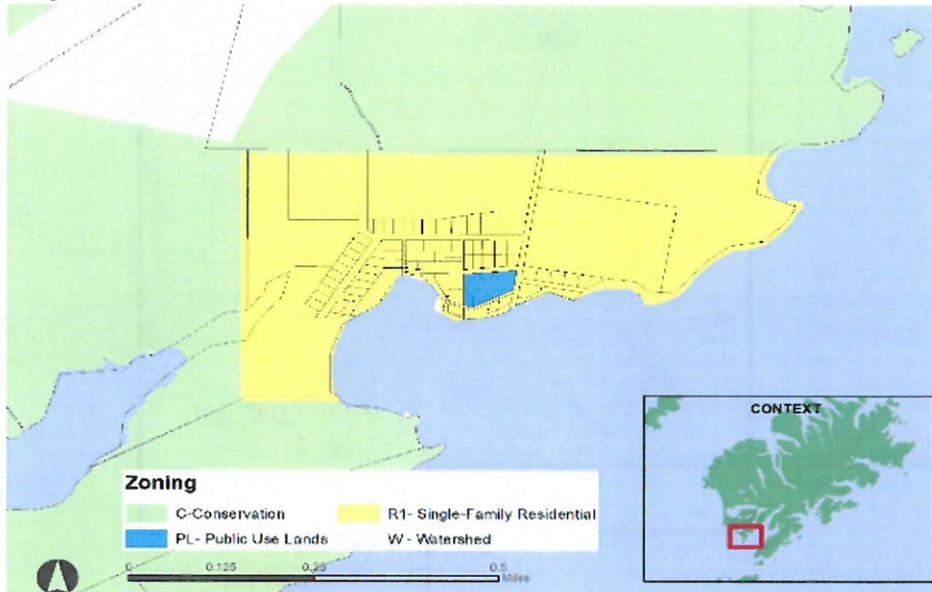
FILE NAME  
**E-2**

SHEET NO. **E-2** OF **4**

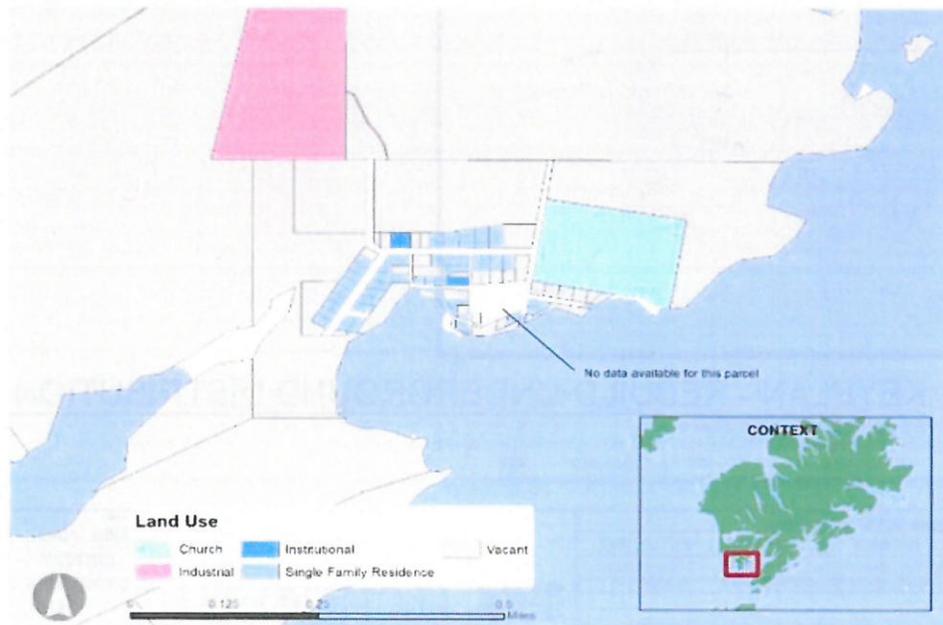
## Land Ownership and Use

There will be limited amount of property to be cleared through this project. The project is wholly located within the city of Akhiok on lands that are zoned Single-Family Residential, Public Use Lands, and Conservation. The replacement electrical distribution infrastructure will be placed in the same location as the current infrastructure, limiting any net new development.

**City of Akhiok**



**City of Akhiok Land Use**



## Farmlands

The Web Soil Survey (WSS - <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>) reported that “No Data Available in the Web Soil Survey for your Area of Interest.” The entire village community was selected as the Area of Interest.

There are no farms or agricultural areas in or around the village of Akhiok, Alaska.

## Wetlands

The image below encompasses the village of Akhiok and surrounding areas. The project areas include the airstrip that is at the center of the image and the residential area on the upper right of the image. Wetlands do appear on this image. At the time of developing this grant application, the Village of Akhiok does not maintain the internal capacity to pre-apply for a permit. However, the proposed project involves buries cable, so the intention will be to apply to utilize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nationwide Permit Number 12, Utility Line Activities.



## Floodplains

The Village of Akhiok, Alaska is unmapped by FEMA. Per § 1970.257(c)(5), the applicant is responsible to search for alternative floodplain mapping by contacting another agency as listed.

Referencing the Community Emergency Response Plan for Akhiok, written in August 2000, the most significant threat of a flooding event would be from coastal waters in the event of a tsunami. This would most likely occur from an earthquake of between 6.0 and 9.0 on the Richter scale. The 1964 Alaska earthquake and resultant tsunami provided an example of this threat when an estimated 2 to 2.5 feet of water reached the city of Akhiok.

Note on effects of erosion on coastal areas: These effects are generally gradual, although dramatic coastal erosion may occur following a storm or flood event. Coastal erosion does not currently threaten any business or residential development in Akhiok.

## Coastal Areas

The website for the Coastal Zone Management Program states that “Alaska withdrew from the voluntary National Coastal Zone Management Program on July 1, 2011. Contact NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management for additional information.”

The following online request for additional information was made to the NOAA Office:

“I am working on a grant application that requires an Environmental Questionnaire. This includes determining whether the proposed project is within the boundaries of a coastal zone management area (CZMA). The Coastal Zone Management Program website states the “Alaska withdrew from the voluntary National Coastal Zone Management Program on July 1, 2011. Contact NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management for additional information.” Please advise me on how to proceed. Do we need to initiate a Consistency Determination with the State of Alaska? Thank you.”

The following is the response from the online inquiry:

“If the project is in AK, then no, no consistency determination is needed. As you noted, AK withdrew from the National CZM Program so federal consistency no longer applies to that state. You would check “no” the project is not within the boundaries of a coastal zone management area.”

## Protected Specie

An inquiry was made to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS), with the proposed project areas provided, to identify potential protected species and/or critical habitats that may be impacted:

Consultation Code: 07CAAN00-2018-SLI-0044

Event Code: 07CAAN00-2018-E-00156

Project Name: Akhiok Electric Distribution Line Replacement

The report indicates that there is a total of 3 threatened, endangered, or candidate species in the area of the proposed project. One mammal (Northern Sea Otter – Threatened) and two birds (Short-tailed Albatross & Steller’s Eider) were listed. There is also one critical habitat wholly or partially within the project area (habitat for the Northern Sea Otter).

While it is certainly possible that these threatened and endangered species could be impacted by the proposed project, the likelihood is minimal. The proposed project is to remove aging and failing electrical distribution infrastructure and replace with new, modern electrical distribution infrastructure. The physical work that will be conducted is within residential areas, in/among existing houses and lining existing roadways.

The threatened mammal is a sea dwelling species. The Northern Sea Otter, lives, feeds, and mates in waters and coastal areas in the proximity of the Village of Akhiok and the entire coastline of the Kodiak Archipelago. This project is on land, in the village community, away from this critical shoreline and sea water area.

Note: Report from United States Department of the Interior is attached at back of this Questionnaire Document.

### **Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Review**

Research into potential historic properties in the vicinity of the Village of Akhiok on the National Register of Historic Places revealed one result:

- “Cape Alitak Petroglyphs District” – This site is within the vicinity of the Village of Akhiok, but not in the Village of Akhiok. Disturbing this site would not occur while completing this proposed project.





## United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Anchorage Fish And Wildlife Field Office  
4700 Blm Road  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
Phone: (907) 271-2888 Fax: (907) 271-2786



In Reply Refer To:

November 30, 2017

Consultation Code: 07CAAN00-2018-SLI-0044

Event Code: 07CAAN00-2018-E-00156

Project Name: Akhiok Electric Distribution Line Replacement

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, and proposed species, designated critical habitat, and some candidate species that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Please note that candidate species are not included on this list. We encourage you to visit the following website to learn more about candidate species in your area:

[http://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/fieldoffice/anchorage/endangered/candidate\\_conservation.htm](http://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/fieldoffice/anchorage/endangered/candidate_conservation.htm)

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF>

Please be aware that bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 et seq.), and projects affecting these species may require development of an eagle conservation plan ([http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle\\_guidance.html](http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle_guidance.html)). Additionally, wind energy projects should follow the wind energy guidelines (<http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/>) for minimizing impacts to migratory birds and bats.

Guidance for minimizing impacts to migratory birds for projects including communications towers (e.g., cellular, digital television, radio, and emergency broadcast) can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/towers.htm>; <http://www.towerkill.com>; and <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/comtow.html>.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

## **Official Species List**

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

**Anchorage Fish And Wildlife Field Office**  
4700 Blm Road  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
(907) 271-2888

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## Project Summary

Consultation Code: 07CAAN00-2018-SLI-0044

Event Code: 07CAAN00-2018-E-00156

Project Name: Akhiok Electric Distribution Line Replacement

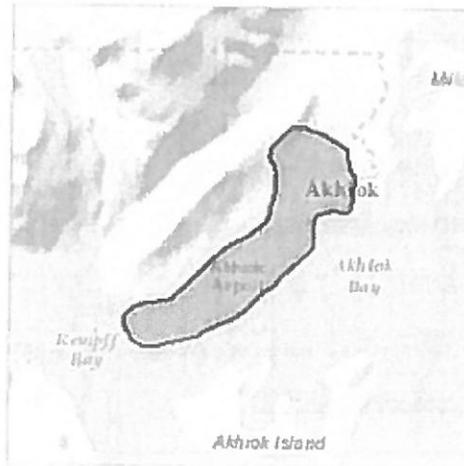
Project Type: \*\* OTHER \*\*

Project Description: The community of Akhiok is in the process of applying for a grant to fund the project. The project is to replace the aging electricity distribution infrastructure throughout the community. This includes removal of old distribution lines, placement of new distribution lines, and replacement of junction boxes and electrical transformers where necessary. No net new construction will be completed.

### Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/56.940524250911224N154.17707842329372W>



Counties: Kodiak Island, AK

## Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 3 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list. Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

### Mammals

NAME	STATUS
Northern Sea Otter <i>Enhydra lutris kenyoni</i> Population: Southwest Alaska DPS There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location overlaps the critical habitat.  <i>This species is also protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and may have additional consultation requirements.</i> Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2884">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2884</a>	Threatened

### Birds

NAME	STATUS
Short-tailed Albatross <i>Phoebastria (=Diomedea) albatrus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species.  Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/433">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/433</a>	Endangered
Steller's Eider <i>Polysticta stelleri</i> Population: AK breeding pop. There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat.  Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1475">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1475</a>	Threatened

### Critical habitats

There is 1 critical habitat wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction.

NAME	STATUS
Northern Sea Otter <i>Enhydra lutris kenyoni</i> <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2884#crithab">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2884#crithab</a>	Final