The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Alaska State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities are reporting on the first year (2012) of their co-sponsored three-year study to enhance the Alaska Deep-Draft Arctic Port System.
The Alaskan Arctic has many existing ports, from rudimentary barge landings and community docks to ingenious solutions for bulk export of lead-zinc at Red Dog and international trans-shipment at Dutch Harbor.

There is a need to invest further in port development for the Alaskan Arctic to be able to respond to the changes in conditions noted below.

- Large-vessel traffic past Alaska shores is increasing and more than 60 percent of these vessels are foreign flagged.
- Increased interest in the Arctic is documented daily in the global media, and the number of international meetings focused on Arctic marine traffic and resources.
- Foreign trade and resource development in international waters highlight the need to support federal sovereignty.
- The U.S. entered into an international agreement on May 12, 2011 through the Arctic Council to support Search and Rescue in the Alaskan Arctic.
- Increased traffic means increased risk of incidents calling for response by the U.S. Coast Guard and other available vessels.
- Environmental protection is important as marine traffic increases and oil and gas development grows in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas.
- Community resupply costs are high due to lightering, fuel costs, limited infrastructure and multiple handling. At the same time, rural communities are reliant on a subsistence lifestyle. Food resources could be jeopardized by increased traffic.

- The State of Alaska policy calls for increased development of mineral and oil and gas resources in the Arctic.
- The U.S. has expressed interest in more national sufficiency in energy resources and has selected the Arctic offshore region as one answer to this quest.
- Section 721 of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012 directs the Commandant to complete a study on the feasibility of establishing a deepwater seaport in the Arctic to protect and advance strategic United States interests within the Arctic region.
Study Area

Federal and State stakeholders met in May 2011 and resolved that for purposes of this study, the geographic region in the greatest need of marine infrastructure is the area from Bethel west and north and then east to the Canadian border. The study area includes more than 3,000 miles of coastline, which is one and half times the distance of the eastern coast of the US from Canada to the tip of Florida.

Study Process

The Northern Waters Task Force (NWTF) Proposal for Key Changes to Arctic Policy, Infrastructure, and Resource Development, published in January 2012 provided the initial list of sites for consideration.

The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA), published in cooperation with the Arctic Council and the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) in 2009 provided key information for future Arctic scenarios.

The Governor’s program for Roads to Resources for unlocking the State’s resources for the benefit of all Alaskans provided additional sites for consideration in this study.

Candidate Sites include: St. Paul Island, St. Lawrence Island, Nome, Port Clarence/Teller, Kotzebue/Cape Blossom, Mekoryuk, Cape Thompson, Wainwright, Point Franklin, Barrow, Prudhoe Bay, Mary Sachs Entrance, Bethel, and Cape Darby.

The primary criteria for evaluation of each site’s physical suitability were:

- Port Proximity to Mission (mining, oil and gas)
- Intermodal Connections
- Upland Support
- Natural Water Depth
- Navigation Accessibility

Based on the physical criteria, the analysis of candidate sites yielded a short list of four sites: Nome, Port Clarence, Cape Darby, and Barrow. The ranking of these sites varied depending on the weighting of the criteria.
Timeline 2008-2015

The following graphic summarizes some of the recent activities addressing Arctic needs.

Alaska Arctic Port System Development

2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014

1st USACE/DOTPF Alaska Regional Ports & Harbors Conference
2nd USACE/DOTPF Alaska Regional Ports & Harbors Conference
USACE/DOTPF Alaska Deep-Draft Arctic Ports Planning Charrette
Alaska Partnership for Economic Development - Mining and Infrastructure
Arctic Marine Science Symposium
Alaska State Legislature Alaska Northern Waters Task Force Report
Institute of the North, North America and the Arctic
State Committee on Research
Commonwealth North - Energy/Power
K&L Gates Alaska Shale Conference
USACE/DOTPF Alaska Deep-Draft Arctic Ports Study - Year 1
Commonwealth North - Infrastructure Study
Alaska Mining Association
State Committee on Research
Renewable Energy Alaska Project
World Affairs Council - Oil & Gas
Arctic Council Strategic Plan, ION Workshop
Northern Energy Science Fair
North Slope Science Initiative
Bering Strait Management Authority, ION Workshop
National Ocean Policy
Senator Begich - Alaska Gas Roundtable
Arctic Imperative
Alaska Mining Convention
USACE/DOTPF Alaska Deep-Draft Arctic Ports Study - Year 2
USACE/DOTPF Alaska Deep-Draft Arctic Ports Study - Year 3

Nome meeting with Mayor DeniseMichels
Kotzebue meeting with Mayor EugeneSmith & staff
Alaska Oil & Gas Congress
North Slope Science Initiative Meetings
Barrow meetings with Mayor CharlotteBrower, NSB, Jake Adams and other ASRC Raps

Timeline 2008-2015

The following graphic summarizes some of the recent activities addressing Arctic needs.
**Investment Context**
Recognizing the need to go beyond physical parameters and to deal with the real world, the study team engaged in multiple Arctic meetings to help shape the political and investment climate. Representatives of local communities and private industry provided the team with the status of investment and infrastructure planning.

**ALASKA DEEP DRAFT ARCTIC PORT STUDY PROCESS**

**PORT SITING APPROACH**
- Define Study Area
- Identify Agency Studies
- Develop P3/Port Authority Potential
- Evaluate Sites on Technical Basis: (Proximity, Intermodal Connections, Upland Support, Water Depth, Navigation-Accessibility)
- Shortlist Potential Deep-Draft Port Sites
- Perform Future Scenario Analysis
- Engage Stakeholders and Public
- Report and Recommendations

**INVESTMENT CONTEXT**
- International (e.g., Russia, Canada)
- Federal (Developying, Permitting, Navigation and Flood Protection)
- State (FY 2013 Port Bonds)
- Local Communities (e.g., Nome, Kotzebue, Unalaska and Barrow)
- Private Sector (e.g., Crowley, ASRC)
- Technical Innovation (e.g., Airships)

**2013 STUDY SCOPE**
- Feasibility Analysis of Shortlisted Sites Aligned with Technical Criteria AND Investment
- P3 Development/Financing Approach
- Management Development: Port Authority

**ENHANCED ALASKA ARCTIC PORT SYSTEM**
Federal Sovereignty, Economic Development, Search and Rescue, Community Resupply and Oil Spill Response

**Future Scenarios**
The study period of analysis is 50 years. Scenarios were developed in order to test candidate port sites with the scale and character of unknown and accelerating changes in the Arctic. The two driving forces for changes related to ports are defined as Resource Development and Collaborative Investment.

**WILD WEST**
High demand and isolated investments set the stage for the unbridled world of boom and bust with everyone for himself.

**FOGGY FRONTIER**
Low demand and low level of collaboration herald a murky and uncertain future.

**GOLDEN DAYS**
High demand and active collaboration lead to productive development with a healthy social, cultural, environmental and economic future.

**GETTING READY**
Low demand and active collaboration support "neverending" planning while preparing for resource prices to rise.
Recommendations

1. Invest strategically to enhance the Arctic Ports System. Include deep-draft solutions for resource export and support, as well as improvements appropriate for USCG, environmental protection, SAR, and community resupply.

2. Assign lead Federal agency responsibility to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for permitting, design, and construction of the Alaska Deep-Draft Arctic Port system.

3. Encourage private entities/banks and authorize other public agencies to collaborate in funding and constructing marine infrastructure. Use the strengths of each sector to achieve success through Public/Private Partnerships (P3).

4. Increase funding to NOAA and other agencies to provide hydrographic and bathymetric mapping and needed data to support marine infrastructure development.

5. Explore and develop navigational aids, such as ship routing, vessel tracking, traffic separation, and identification of areas of concern.

6. Conduct feasibility analysis of shortlisted sites (Nome and Port Clarence) using physical criteria and alignment with potential investors; P3 development; and Port management authority. These two highest ranked sites will be the focus of the feasibility work for 2013-14.

These recommendations for further study of the Alaska Deep-Draft Arctic Port system reflect the policies governing formulation of projects. They do not necessarily reflect the program and budgeting priorities inherent in the local/State and Federal programs or the formulation of a national Civil Works water resource program. Consequently, the recommendations may be changed at higher review levels of the local/State and Federal government.

Project Team

Don Fore, USACE
Lorraine Cordova, USACE
Jeff Ottesen, DOT&PF
Mike Lukshin, DOT&PF
Eric Taylor, DOT&PF
Ethan Birkholz, DOT&PF
Sarah Barton, ARCADIS
Cynthia Oistad, ARCADIS

Contact: For information requests and questions, please contact Lorraine Cordova with the USACE at 907-753-2672 or Michael Lukshin with DOT&PF at 907-465-3979. Additional information can be found on these websites:

www.dot.state.ak.us/stwddes/desports/arctic.shtml.