



# STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
 Central Region-Division of Design and Engineering Services  
 Traffic, Safety, & Utilities Section

## 2013 Season Kenai & Kasilof Rivers Dipnetting Traffic Control Review



### Cannery Road Findings Summary

Concern	Suggestion	DOT/PF Review	DOT/PF Recommendation
Overall Traffic Impacts	Event sponsor or local entity charge	Large events run best with a short term traffic control plan to solve access impacts to main roads. Some examples include: Iditarod, State Fair, Fur Rondy, JBER Air Show, Parades.	DOT willing to issue permit to City or DNR for Special Events Traffic Control Plan <a href="http://www.dot.state.ak.us/permits/index.shtml">http://www.dot.state.ak.us/permits/index.shtml</a>
Traffic speed	Lower speed limit to less than 35 mph	Dipnet season speeds are in closer compliance with the 35 MPH limit, more so than off season traffic.	No change recommended. Speed Limit compliance good during fishery. Requires seasonal local traffic control plan and localized enforcement, to lower speeds.
Traffic speed	Install temporary speed humps	DOT does not have temporary speed bumps. Requires equipment, staffing, funding to place, move, notify, and maintain. DOT does not have a traffic calming program or funding to maintain and operate speed humps. Program is significant as seen in Anchorage.	As with Municipality of Anchorage, DOT defers low volume, low speed road traffic calming programs to the local government to fund and operate. We would consider a permit for local efforts on local, low volume residential roads.
Traffic speed	Install STOP signs at Cetacea	Cetacea Lane / Cannery Road intersection does not meet the MUTCD criteria for STOP signs in volume or crashes.	No change recommended. MUTCD 2B.04.05 says: <i>YIELD and STOP signs should not be used for speed control.</i>
Passing behavior	Restripe double yellow full length	Short trip destination. Leads to end of road. Visibility was rechecked against DOT/PF standards and adjacent development in March 2014.	Will restrict to Dunes Rd. Do not restrict from Dunes Rd to Old Cannery Rd. It has good visibility, no side streets, slow trucks starting out.
Children on or near road	Add Children At Play signs	No demonstrated safety prevention effect. Not an approved sign per federal and state standard. Not a state provided sign. Very young children need supervision if they are not "age able" to judge traffic, typically <12 years old.	Local government can sponsor and maintain these signs under permit on local low volume and residential roads, not main highways or most state roads.
Increase awareness	Use DOT or other message boards during fishery	DOT message boards are typically in use in summer, and are prioritized for Construction & Maintenance work. 511 web and phone notices can be arranged annually under local traffic control efforts.	Rent message boards as part of overall traffic control effort administered locally. DOT message boards can be supplemental when not in use elsewhere, and staff is available to place them.
Lack of shoulders, pathways	Build shoulders, pathways	Limited federal and state funds and many needs limits the projects available. Not currently competitive for available funds.	Nominate for federal work through the Planning Division or seek state or local funds.

## Bridge Access Road Findings Summary

Concern	Suggestion	DOT/PF Review	DOT/PF Recommendation
Boat launch traffic queue blocks main road traffic	Off-site storage / cueing	City of Kenai has worked on this. One-way in/out of launch road helps, as did the overflow parking area.	Apply for Special Event Permit. Traffic control plan for queuing truck & trailers on shoulder with delineation or at off-site location.
Overflow of bridge side parking	No Parking signs &/or barricades	Barricades and NO PARKING signs alone will not solve the problem. Requires enforcement.	Temporary barricades and NO PARKING signs & enforcement. This would be part of Traffic Control Plan.
Traffic speed vs. turning traffic	Temporary lower speed limit during fishery	This would require further review. If temporary in nature, and complemented with enforcement, a lower speed limit can be effective.	A temporary speed reduction during the dipnet fishery may be effective, pending further review.

### Dipnet Fisheries Traffic Safety Observations:

In general, from field observations taken Thursday 7-18-2013, most locations were handling the increased traffic, with very little spillover (if any) onto the major roads.

Other staff participating in the fishery on the weekend (Saturday 7-20-2013 and Sunday 7-21-2013) reported stop & go roadway congestion on some side streets (Spruce St.), and again very little spillover onto main roads & highways.

Possible spillover issues were observed at the Kenai River Bridge parking (Bridge Access Road). Maintenance staff also report this road can get blocked by boat launching traffic to the city's boat launch during the dipnet fishery. This road should be observed in 2014 during the fishery. Consider NO PARKING signs in the future, or some barricades to delineate the acceptable parking areas from where parking is not acceptable.

Traffic on Cannery Road:

Speed data taken in 2012 & 2013 shows that the majority of traffic during the dipnet fishery is closer to the speed limit than the average traffic speeds when the fishery is closed. DOT staff did not observe any passing or attempted passing during the field visits.

A local event coordinator can apply for a Permit from DOT to do traffic control on a state owned roadway for a specific event. The Alaska State Fair does this, as does the Iditarod, Fur Rhondevous, Mount Marathon Race in Seward, JBER / Elmendorf Air Force Base for the Airshow, Parades, etc.

Our experience with large traffic generating events such as these is that they work best if one entity is running all of the traffic control. An approved Traffic Control Plan would be required, and would be part of the Permit.

This could include: Changeable Message Signs, additional signs for the event, other traffic control such as temporarily reduced speed limits and other items. DOT places conditions on this type of Permit that may include (but are not limited to): requirements for increased police patrols, the use of certified flaggers, advance warning devices and an approved Traffic Control Plan.

## **History:**

In 1996, the Board of Fisheries amended the Personal Use Salmon Management Plan, and allowed Alaskan residents to collect salmon using dipnets at the mouths of several rivers. The most popular of these is the Kenai River and Kasilof River on the Kenai Peninsula. These two river fisheries have been increasingly popular in the most recent summer seasons, due to lower salmon returns on the more northerly streams in the Mat-Su Valley.

The peak timing of fish runs entering the rivers also means peak timing of fishers and traffic trying to get to the rivers. This has become even more acute in the last few years due to increased use of electronic methods of communication. Where hopeful dipnet fishers used to read about salmon run arrival in a newspaper or hear about it on the radio, today many get the news on a smartphone, read it in an online forum/blog, or on social media such as Facebook.

These faster forms of communication have “consolidated” the peaks of fishermen, campers, and traffic leading to increased problems. Those include: traffic congestion, lack of camping or parking spaces, litter and fish carcass removal issues, destruction of vegetation on the beaches and general concerns about safety.

This report reviews the vehicle traffic & safety issues.

## **Background:**

Letters from residents that live on Cannery Road in Kenai outline some concerns about speeding traffic on Cannery Road, unsafe passing, and increased traffic that the dipnet fisheries create.

Some residents have written about similar issues in years past.

Some similar concerns about Cannery Road dipnet fishery traffic were raised during a conference call with the City of Kenai and Kenai Peninsula Borough on 12-17-2013.

Cannery Road stats:

- The posted Speed Limit is 35 MPH. It was lowered from 45 MPH in 1997.
- The Functional Class is Local, and the CDS route #115525.
- Length: 1.24 miles.
- Serves: 7 subdivision streets (3 have other access also), 2 canneries, a pipeline station, 13 homes directly and provides public access to the beach near the Kenai River mouth.
- Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT): 667.
- Peak Daily Traffic recorded during dipnet fishery: 4694 on weekend day.

Our investigation into these concerns has included:

- Field trips during the dipnet fishery, July, 2013, and during March, 2014.
- Traffic counts for speed and volume taken during August 2012, and during July 2013.
- Checking the accident database for reported crash history.

While field investigating the Cannery Road traffic issues, staff also observed the Dipnet Fisheries traffic control at both Kenai and Kasilof Rivers’ at the public access points.

## Individual location reports

### Kenai River North side (Spruce St. access) on Thursday, July 18, 2013:



**Kenai River North Side:**  
Vehicle queue on  
Spruce Street for beach  
parking on July 18th.

The City of Kenai has taken up traffic control for this side, and I didn't observe anything spilling back onto Kenai Spur. There was overflow parking near the ball fields, and the lot at the beach was full when I got there with a line of around 7-8 vehicles at the booth. They still allow motorists on the beach, so others could still get in – if they are willing to drive on the sand (need 4wd, and towing is very expensive). The attendants were directing everyone to the overflow parking by the ball fields, however it was near capacity.

### Kenai River South side (Cannery Rd. access) on Thursday, July 18, 2013:



**Cannery Rd.:** Parking/Camping toll booth.



**Cannery Rd. Turnaround:** Sign / barrier.

The City of Kenai is handling parking and access to the beach. They have manned booths to charge users, and appear to be strict about compliance. There were signs for NO PARKING at

the end turn-around on Cannery Road. Also, the Cannery and the private business there both had NO PARKING and PRIVATE type signs on their property.

There was a “speed cart” about the middle of Cannery Rd. facing the inbound traffic. I did not observe any speeding traffic and really no congestion at all. No passing was observed. I was trying to get photos of the congestion – but there was none on Cannery Rd. to take photos of. Traffic levels increased over the weekend.

Here, I did not drive onto the beach. The actual fishery is several miles up the beach, and most users were choosing to drive up there. There is very little parking in the lot before the beach.

### **Cannery Rd. Speed Data:**

Speed data was collected for the 2013 Dipnet Fishery, from July 15-31, weekdays and weekends.

Speed data was also collected a year before, from August 2-9, 2012.

The data is graphed in Appendix B.

Some items of note:

1. This year’s data (during the Fishery) shows the traffic “pace” (or median speed) is near the posted 35 mph limit at the near Captain’s Court Circle location.
2. This year’s data (again during the Fishery) shows pace speeds grouped (64%) in the 33-42 mph range at the near Biscayen Drive location.
3. Last year’s data (NOT during the Fishery) shows pace speeds 7 mph higher at 42 mph at a near the Biscayen Drive location, with 9% exceeding 50 mph.
4. A comparison of the data sets shows that Dipnet Fishery traffic is following the speed limit more closely, as opposed to when the Fishery is closed.
5. Speed Limit Policy & Procedure allows Speed Limits to be no lower than the median of the pace, which is approx. 35 mph during the fishery.

### **Cannery Road Accident Data:**

Checking the accident database for Cannery Road showed no patterns of accidents in the last 10 years of available data, 1-1-2000 through 12-31-2009.

- There were 5 total accidents in that 10 years of time.
- Two happened during the Dipnet Fishery openings, in July 2001 and 2008.
- Two were property damage only, two had minor injuries, and one had a severe injury.
- The severe injury accident was a single vehicle “run off road” type. The 19 year old driver was severely injured and was not wearing a seatbelt. That accident occurred near the intersection of Cannery Road and Kalifornsky Beach Road. The police report listed the cause of the accident as “loss of control”, and cited “excessive speed”. The roadway surface was clear and dry.

## Kenai River boat launch (off of Bridge Access Rd.) on Thursday, July 18, 2013:



**Kenai River boat launch:**  
One-way entrance signs.  
(From Bridge Access Rd.)



**Kenai River boat launch:**  
Truck/trailer queue to launch (Boat Launch Road) at the City of Kenai's boat ramps.

The City of Kenai has done some practical work at this location. There are some TEMPORARY NO PARKING, JULY 10 – JULY 31 signs along Bridge Access Rd. near the launch road, and they have the launch set up as one-way in and out. That was useful, even though it makes the “overflow” parking go around and back out onto the main road. (They are turning RIGHT both times – exiting onto Bridge Access Rd., and again into the launch road again.)

There was a line for the boat launch – even at about noon when I was there (see photo), but it was well contained internally to their facility. Maintenance personnel have noticed the boat launch traffic blocking road traffic on Bridge Access Road in the past. A 2013 drive through by DOT engineers also observed boat launch traffic backing traffic into & blocking the through lanes on Bridge Access Road.

### **Kenai River by the bridge (small parking lot right off of Bridge Access Rd.):**

The parking lot was almost full, but there were no cars parked on the road related to the dipnetting when I was there. (Several cars were pulled off watching some caribou.) Maintenance personnel have said that this can get bad with people parking on the shoulder of the road, on either side of the bridge. We would need more data, observing the extent of the issues at these locations. That could possibly be collected during the 2014 dipnet season. This may lead to TEMPORARY NO PARKING signs along the road here in the future, or some kind of temporary barricades for delineation of acceptable parking vs. non-acceptable parking areas.

**Kasilof River North side (Kasilof Beach Rd.) on Thursday, July 18, 2013:**

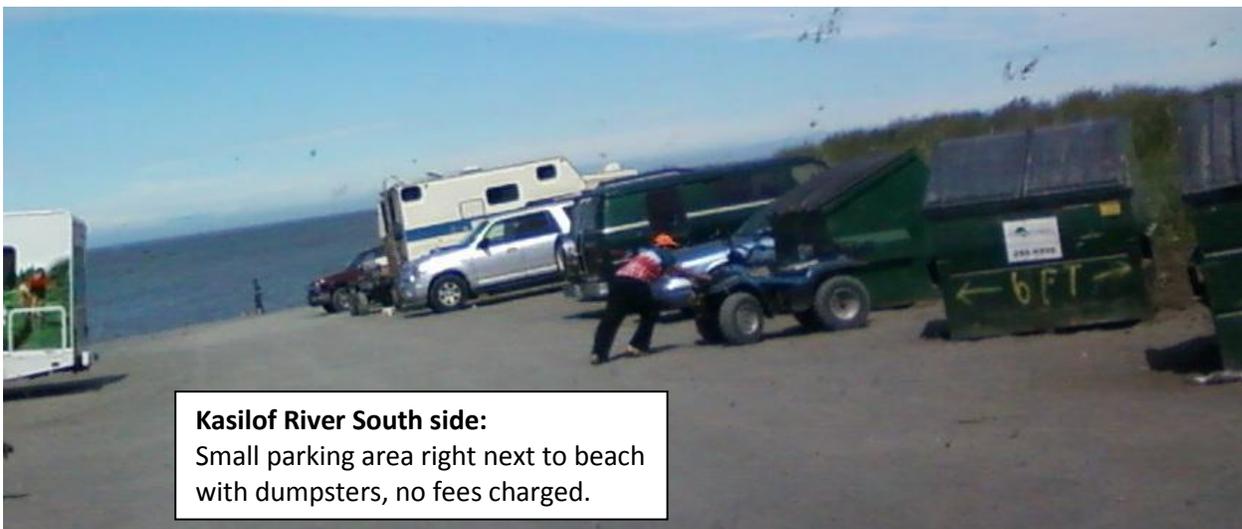


**Kasilof River North side:**

On-street parking near the beach access point. Cannery gate/entrance is on the left. Vehicles parked after the cannery entrances are on the beach.

There was a little on-street (such as it is – unpaved road/beach) overflow parking happening here, but it was right at the end of the road, and this road only serves the beach and one cannery. The cannery’s access was not blocked, and it was well signed to keep motorists out & to keep them from blocking the gate. I saw no booths for collection of fees here, so it wasn’t clear if an agency was in charge. According to maintenance personnel, it is DNR managed land. There were some portable outhouses there. There were also lots of campers using the grass areas for camping, which in Kenai they specifically prohibit. The area did look like it could still handle more users, although there is far less available area than in Kenai.

**Kasilof River South side (North Coho Loop, then straight ahead) on July 18, 2013:**



**Kasilof River South side:**

Small parking area right next to beach with dumpsters, no fees charged.

There were two vehicles parked on the road near the very small parking area right at the access. There were also 3 dumpsters there, but again I saw no fee station for camping or for parking. Most users drove down the beach to the mouth of the Kasilof. I drove down that road/beach, and it is definitely a 4wd only road, and 1 lane only, but quite usable for 4wds. Again, the area could still handle more users than were there today.

## **Off duty staff report of Kenai River Dipnetting traffic issues over weekend of July 20-21, 2013.**

Kenai / Soldotna:

"I did make a few observations aside from the fact that many side streets and roads were certainly at capacity.

Although I'm not sure if S Spruce St is a State road or not I did observe an issue on this street on Saturday when I'm sure traffic was at its worst. There was someone who was attempting to do traffic control at the intersection coming from the overflow parking at the ball fields and Spruce St. The issue was that the traffic control was done very poorly and was unsafe in my opinion. There was no advanced warning of a flagger ahead or any other signing or warning, and the flagger was using his hands and no board. The Flagger was also quite obviously untrained as he was very unsure of himself, giving me several different instructions within a few seconds (stop, no go, no stop). Without advanced warning the flagger was very suddenly on the road and you came to an unexpected sudden stop. What they were attempting to do, I believe, was stop traffic on spruce to allow people in and out of the ball park. They had one lane on Spruce coned off, so there was a one way traffic situation across that intersection (also don't think that was appropriate). If Spruce is a state road I would certainly recommend that if the city intends to use the ball parks as overflow parking in the future that the intersection there with Spruce use proper traffic control.

Another area I saw issues (although I don't know if we can ask the city to do anything about it because it is outside city limits), was on the commute back on Sunday. There was so much traffic coming back that at the Seward/Sterling 'Y' there traffic was backing up due to people trying to get onto the Seward Hwy (not enough gaps for the volume coming from Soldotna) that the troopers had set up at that intersection and were flagging traffic. They were doing a great job, but I was all because of the dip netting traffic I'm sure. "

Traffic Design Engineer

## **Comments from the Businesses using Cannery Road:**

There are three commercial properties or businesses that were contacted:

1. An operational cannery at the end of Bowpicker Lane.
2. A combination RV Park / hotel / motel / special event avenue / restaurant facility that is expanding into oilfield services located at the intersection of Cannery Road & Old Cannery Road.
3. A pipeline vault / access point / maintenance pad at the same intersection.

In general, the business representatives all said they wanted “safety first”. All were O.K. with a temporary speed reduction, although one thought less than 30 mph would be excessive. All were fine with elimination of some or all of the passing zones along the road.

The cannery representative expressed concern about their trucks possibly causing backups if BOTH of those were implemented, because they were confident that the commercial truck drivers would drive the speed limit, regardless of what it was posted at. They have approximately 15 semi-truck round trips, and about a dozen smaller box truck round trips a day during their busy season. Their busiest season would coincide closely with the dipnet fishery’s busiest time period.

The combination RV Park / hotel facility is expanding, and they have over 60 acres of commercial property. They expect to be providing some oil field services from a future gravel pad.

The representative of the pipeline company said they normally only access the facility a few times a week, and didn’t think any of the proposed changes would have much effect on them.

*Cook Inlet*

*Kenai River*



Beach Access & Dipnetting / River Mouth  
Beach Access & Dipnetting

Inlet Fish Cannery

Kenai Landings

Pipeline pad

Old Cannery Rd

SPEED LIMIT 35

Bowpicker Lane

Dunes Rd

**ROAD**

Passing

Captains Ct

Sand

Dollar Lane

Drive

SPEED LIMIT 35

Current

Cetacea Lane

Lane

**CANNERY**

**RESIDENTIAL HOUSING**

Biscayne Dr

Chinulna Ct

SPEED LIMIT 35

Chinulna Dr

Kalifornsky

Beach

Road

# CANNERY ROAD

Kenai Peninsula  
Existing Conditions

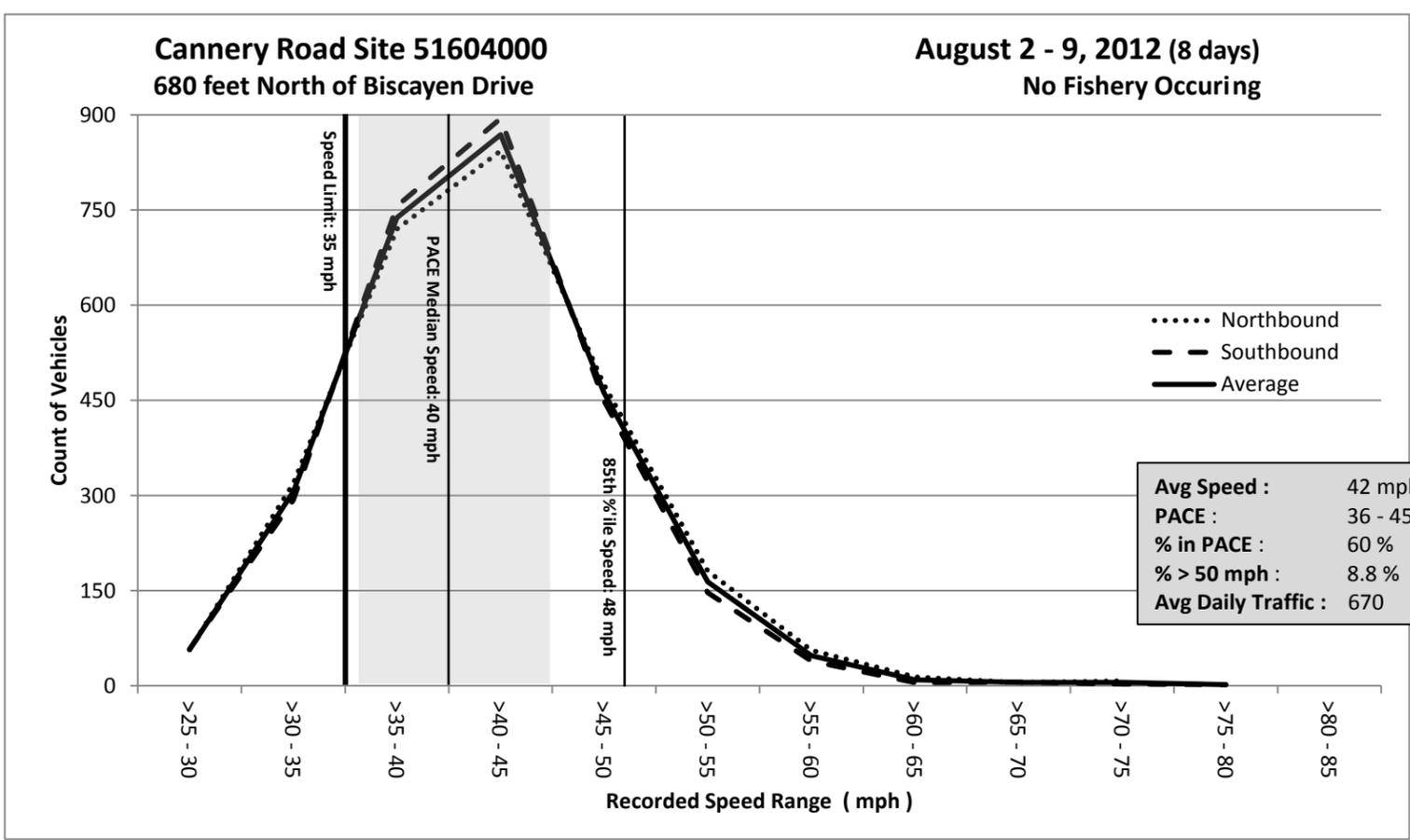
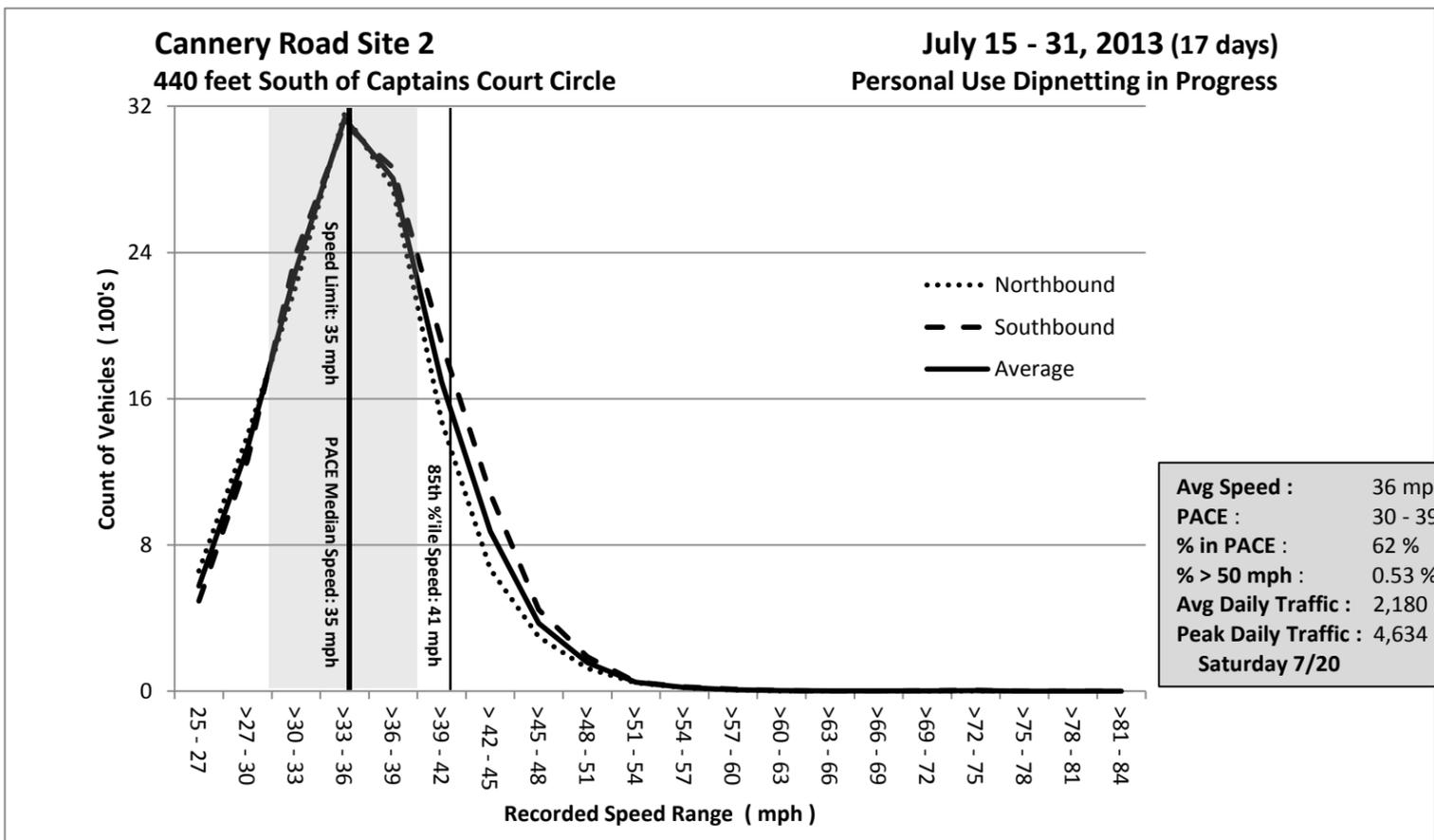
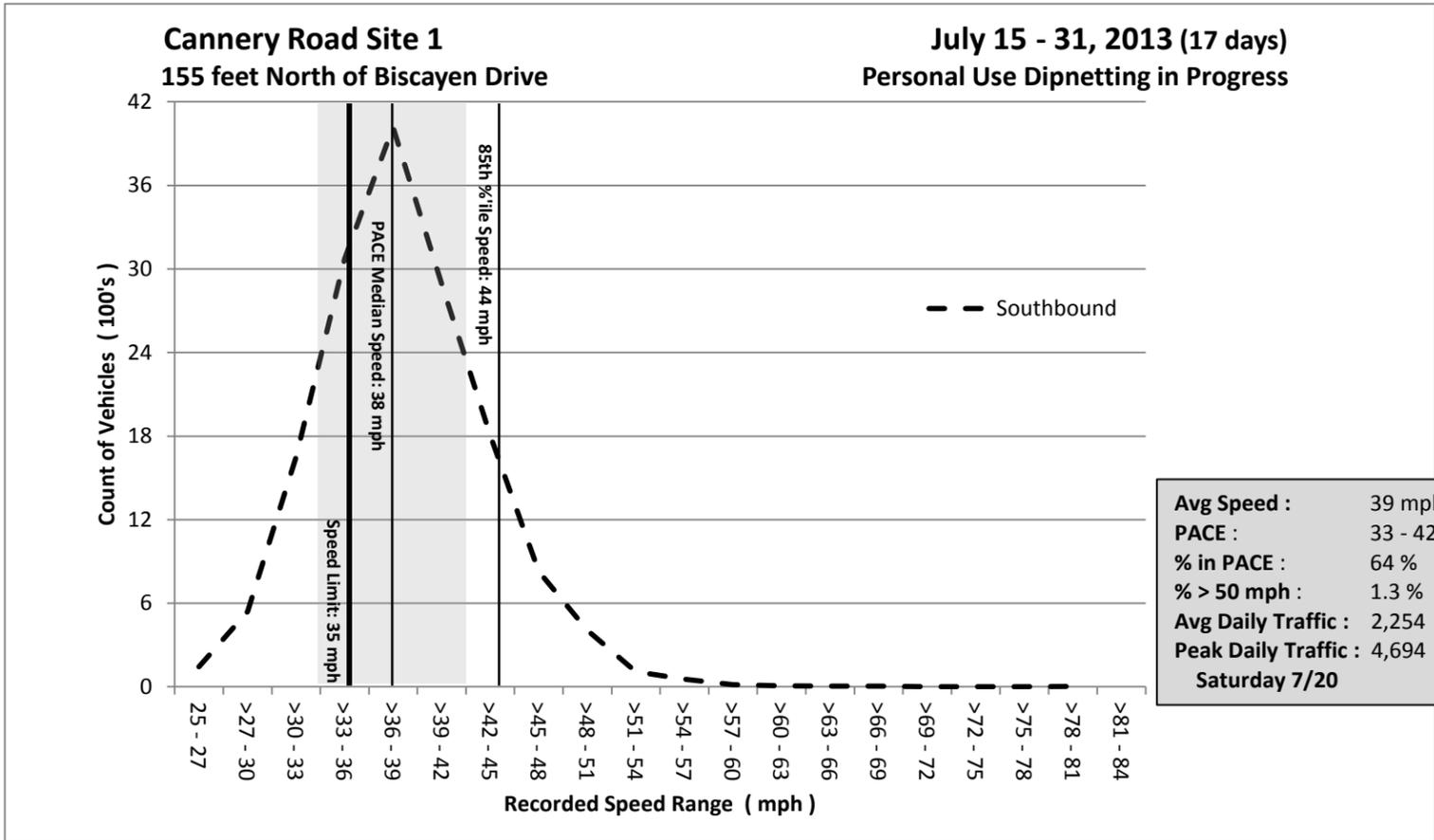
# MAP

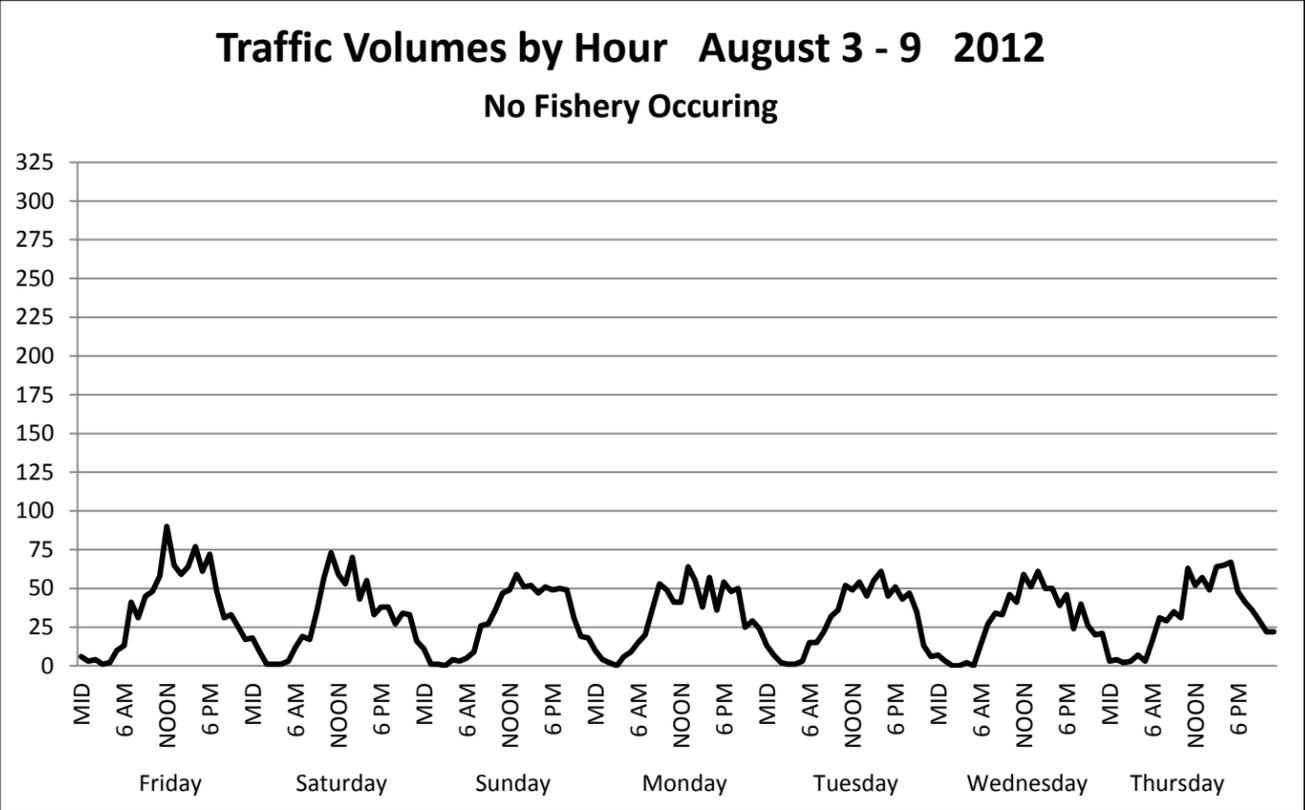
Drawn by: LKH 3-13-2014

NOT TO SCALE

# KENAI RIVER PERSONAL USE DIPNET FISHERY

## Cannery Road Traffic Speed Comparison





**Cannery Road - Kenai, Alaska**  
Comparison of Traffic Volumes during normal use to that experienced during Kenai River fishery opening

Data collected and provided by :  
State of Alaska  
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities  
Highway Data Section

