

**Tuluksak Airport
AKSAS 51795
R&M Project No. 1247.01**

**Agency Letter Review
January 30, 2006
Minutes**

Meeting at ADOT&PF

This meeting was held with the agencies to discuss potential borrow sites and material haul routes.

Attendance:

Jim Amundsen, P.E., DOT&PF
Lynn Cason, P.E., DOT&PF
Dan Golden, DOT&PF
Tom Arminski, BEESC
Larry Dugan, Senior Environmental Specialist, BEESC
Ed Lightwood, P.E., R&M
Paula Winfree, E.I.T., R&M
Marcia Heer, Regulatory Specialist, CORPS
Dana Seagars, FWS
Larry Peltz, Marine Habitat Resource Specialist, NMFS

Introduction:

Jim Amundsen presented a project overview. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential borrow site locations and material haul routes. Agencies were present to comment on the alternatives and discuss potential impacts.

Potential Material Sites/Haul Routes:

Two handouts were distributed showing the material site and haul route alternatives. The agencies were also given a copy of the Wetland Delineation and the Scoping Report which included the Materials Report. The material site alternatives were discussed and it was determined Alternative 5, the southernmost sandbar, was the preferred material site location. Alternatives 1-4 have more vegetation and there are concerns with the proximity to the village of Tuluksak in the event the Kuskokwim River should flood. Concerns were also mentioned regarding bank erosion and fish getting trapped if a flood event brought water levels above the embankment.

The excavation limits for alternative 5 are anticipated to go below OHW. A ground survey of the preferred material site will be performed this summer and will include determining and recording the OHW elevation. In addition, effort will be placed to acquire mapping during low water conditions thus providing a good faith effort to record and model the sandbar as it will be found in low water winter conditions.

Excavation below OHW will require a 404 permit by the CORP.

Mr. Larry Peltz stated as long as the specifications were followed and excavation occurred during the winter, having the material site located at alternative 5 should not impact fish. A

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winter excavation would not only prevent fish from being impacted but also prevent turbidity in the river. Upon completion of the excavation, the finished grade should be convex in shape, high in the center and sloping to a lower elevation on the edges, preventing ponding that could trap fish. Excavating at any time other than winter is not preferable, however in the event that winter excavation is not possible modifications to the permits will be considered.

The River Haul Route was preferred over the Inland Haul Route. It was determined the River Haul Route would have the least impact to the environment. It avoided transporting material through the village of Tuluksak and minimal clearing is necessary. In the event the river does not freeze or cannot support the loads, the Inland Haul Route may be necessary. Any material hauled along the river or over wetlands will require a permits.

General Discussion:

Mr. Dana Seagars requested imagery that was more current than the spring 2003 aerial photography. He would also like a bald eagle survey performed during the appropriate time of year to confirm no nesting areas will be impacted.

Action: DOT&PF will work with R&M to obtain current photography ideally in low water conditions. Observation from Mr. Larry Dugan did not show any evidence of bald eagle nesting however, additional bald eagle survey during the appropriate season will be conducted. Any additional information requested in the letter by Mr. Seagars will be addressed by the design team.

The wetland delineation will need to be verified by the CORP. The agencies would like to have the areas of impacted wetlands for the airport access road alternatives. Ms. Marcia Heer stated she currently has the information she needs to create a preliminary jurisdictional determination. A final JD will not be issued until the EA has been completed.

Action: The impacted wetland areas have already been calculated and this information will be relayed to the agencies.

The ADNR office in Fairbanks will handle the Title 41 permit for the project.

Action: Bristol, with R&M's support, will prepare permit applications for DOT&PF review and approval. DOT&PF will transmit and lead the correspondence with the agencies.

SHPO had been contacted regarding the project but has not yet responded.

Action: Bristol will draft a letter to SHPO for DOT&PF's review and approval. DOT&PF will send the finalized letter to SHPO.

The project schedule was discussed. The public draft EA will be available in March after FAA approval. FONSI is expected in the summer of 2007 and construction is planned in 2007-2008.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, ALASKA
 P.O. BOX 8898
 ELMENDORF AFB, ALASKA 99506-0898

SEP 15 2005

Date: 9,19,05
 Proj. #: 51795

REPLY TO
 ATTENTION OF:

Regulatory Branch
 North Section
 POA-2005-1585-9

Mr. Jerry O. Ruehle
 Alaska Department of Transportation
 and Public Facilities
 Post Office Box 196900
 Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6900

Tuluksak Airport

Preliminary Design & Environmental	P	A	P
Section Chief			
Env. Coordinator			
Env. Tech. Leader			X
Env. Analyst			
Project File			
Central File			X

Dear Mr. Ruehle:

This is in response to your August 22, 2005, scoping letter concerning the proposed airport relocation project located within section 27, T. 12 N., R. 66 W., Seward Meridian, in Tuluksak, Alaska. The proposed project involves building a new runway and other airport and safety-related improvements.

Based on our review of the information you furnished and information available to our office, we have preliminarily determined that the above property may contain wetlands under Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulatory jurisdiction. Issuance of an individual DA permit may be required prior to conducting your proposed work. This is not a definitive delineation and should be used for planning purposes only. Once we receive further information about the project, including specific locations of proposed wetland fill areas, wetland fill acreage amounts, location of material sites, and information that supports your wetland determination in accordance with the Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Wetlands Delineation Manual (i.e., wetland report and data forms), we can send an approved jurisdictional determination.

Your proposed project was reviewed pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires that a DA permit be obtained for the placement or discharge of dredged and/or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, prior to conducting the work (33 U.S.C. 1344).

For regulatory purposes, the Corps of Engineers defines wetlands as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Please be advised that land clearing operations involving vegetation removal with mechanized equipment such as front-end loaders, backhoes, or bulldozers with shear blades, rakes, or discs; windrowing vegetation; land leveling; or other soil disturbance in areas subject to Corps jurisdiction are considered placement of dredged material under our jurisdiction.

Nothing in this letter shall be construed as excusing you from compliance with other Federal, State, or local statutes, ordinances, or regulations that may affect any proposed work.

For informational purposes, a copy of this letter is being sent to the agencies and individuals on the enclosed list.

We appreciate your cooperation with the Corps' Regulatory Program. Please refer to file number POA-2005-1585 in future correspondence or if you have any questions concerning this determination. You may contact me at the letterhead address, ATTN: Ms. Marcia Heer, CEPOA-CO-R-N, at (907) 753-2716, or by email at marcia.l.heer@pca02.usace.army.mil. For additional information about our Regulatory Program, visit our web site at www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/.

Sincerely,

Marcia L. Heer

Marcia L. Heer
Regulatory Specialist

Enclosures

Anchorage
Copies Furnished:

Ms. Mel Langdon
Alaska Department of Environmental
Conservation
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2617

Project Coordinator
Department of Natural Resources
Office of Project Management
and Permitting
Alaska Coastal Zone Management
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1660
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3568

Ms. Ann Rappoport
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Service Anchorage
605 West 4th Avenue, Room 62
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2249

Supervisor
Western Alaska Ecological
National Marine Fisheries Service
222 West Seventh Avenue, # 43
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7577

Ms. Judith Bittner
Department of Natural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1310
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565

Mr. Richard B. Thompson
State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Land
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 900C
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3577

Mr. Gary Prokosch
State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Water
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 900A
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3577

Ms. Robin Willis
Statewide Services
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99518-1599

Alaska Operations Office
Environmental Protection Agency
222 West Seventh Avenue, # 19
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7588

~~Office of Habitat Management & Permitting~~
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
555 W 7th Avenue, Suite 1430
Anchorage, AK 99501-3513

STATE OF ALASKA

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
CENTRAL REGION DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL

4111 Aviation Drive
P.O. Box 196900
Anchorage, Alaska 99519--6900
(907) 269-0542 Phone
(907) 243-6927 Fax

June 27, 2006

Mr. Don Rice, Team Leader
Department of the Army
U.S. Army Engineer District, Alaska
P.O. Box 6898 CEPOA-CO-R-S
Elmendorf AFB, AK 99506-0898

Re: Request for Jurisdictional Determination (POA-2005-1585)
Tuluksak Airport Relocation (DOT&PF Project No. 51795)

Dear Mr. Rice:

Please find the enclosed the proposed preliminary wetlands delineation for your review. Based on the information presented in the delineation, it is our opinion that the proposed project would affect areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army. The delineation was conducted by our environmental consultant, Bristol Environmental and Engineering, during the summer of 2005. The report covers the wetland delineation efforts as well as vegetation and habitat mapping for the Tuluksak Airport Relocation project located in Tuluksak, Alaska. The proposed airport site is located approximately one mile southwest of the community proper (see Figure 1 in enclosed Report). The proposed airport site lies in Sections 26, 34, 35, and 36 of Township 12 North, Range 66 West, Seward Meridian; USGS Quadrangle Russian Mission A-6 (Lat/Long: N 61°05.81', W 160° 58.17').

DOT&PF has determined the following wetlands to be jurisdictional under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and is seeking concurrence in this determination. Jurisdictional areas under Section 404/10 comprise approximately 52 acres of the project (Material Site 5, see Figure 2-1 in enclosed report). None of the identified wetlands were determined to be non-jurisdictional.

We request your written concurrence of this delineation. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Dan Golden at (907) 269-0537 or by email at dan_golden@dot.state.ak.us.

Sincerely,

Bill Ballard

Bill Ballard
Statewide Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure: Wetland Delineation Report, June 2006

CC w/o enclosures:

Jim Amundsen, P.E., Project Manager, DOT&PF
Dan Golden, Environmental Team Leader, DOT&PF

WETLAND DELINEATION

TULUKSAK AIRPORT RELOCATION

Tuluksak, Alaska

BEESC Project No. 26036

June 2006

Prepared for:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
4111 Aviation Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6900



Bristol

ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING
SERVICES CORPORATION

111 W. 16th Avenue, Suite 301
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-5109
Phone (907) 563-0013
Fax (907) 563-6713



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, ALASKA
P.O. BOX 6898
ELMENDORF AFB, ALASKA 99506-0898

JUL 26 2006

Date: 7,27,06
Proj. #: 51795

Preliminary Design & Environmental	PAPER	PDF
Section Chief		
Env. Coordinator		
Env. Table Leader		X
Env. Analyst		
Project File		X
Central File		X

Regulatory Branch
POA-2005-1585-9

Mr. Dan Golden
Alaska Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities
Post Office Box 196900
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6900

Dear Mr. Golden:

This is in response to your June 27, 2006, request for a jurisdictional determination concerning your proposed project, to relocate the Tuluksak Airport. The site is located within sections 26, 34, 35, and 36, T. 12 N., R. 66 W., Seward Meridian; Latitude 61.0903° N., Longitude 160.9273° W.; in Tuluksak, Alaska.

Based on our review of the information you furnished and available to us, we have preliminarily determined that the above property may contain wetlands under Corps regulatory jurisdiction. We concur with your June 2006 Tuluksak Airport relocation wetland delineation.

Therefore, DA authorization may be required if you propose to place dredged and/or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires that a DA permit be obtained for the placement or discharge of dredged and/or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands (33 U.S.C. 1344). The Corps defines wetlands as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 requires that a DA permit be obtained for structures or work in or affecting navigable waters of the U.S. (33 U.S.C. 403). Section 10 waters are those waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide shoreward to the mean high water mark, and/or other waters identified by the Alaska District.

Please be advised that land clearing operations involving vegetation removal in wetlands with mechanized equipment and other soil disturbances are considered placement of fill material under our jurisdiction.

Nothing in this letter excuses you from compliance with other Federal, State, or local statutes, ordinances, or regulations.

You may contact me at (907) 753-2712, by email at marcia.l.heer@poa02.usace.army.mil, or by mail at the letterhead address,

ATTN: CEPOA-CO-R-N, if you have questions. For additional information about our Regulatory Program, visit our web site at www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg.

Sincerely,

Marcia L. Heer

Marcia L. Heer
Regulatory Specialist

Wetlands: Scoping materials indicate the proposed project will be developed and designed in accordance with the "2002 Memorandum of Agreement Among the Federal Aviation Administration, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Regarding Impacts to Wetland and Other Aquatic Resources, Mitigation and Airport Improvement Projects in Alaska" (Airport MOU). Review materials provided to date and the information presented at the meeting did not include specific details concerning the amounts of wetlands proposed to be affected by individual aspects and alternatives of the project. Subsequent environmental documents (e.g., the planned Environmental Assessment [EA]) will need to include detailed maps and accompanying tables clearly delineating and documenting the amount of wetland acres proposed to be affected by each component of each alternative. Such specifics are required early in the scoping process agreed to be followed under the Airport MOU in order to calculate compensation as prescribed by the MOU. For example, we call your attention to the clear, GIS based, documentation submitted for the Pilot Station Airport; that information greatly facilitated our review process. In order to facilitate an expeditious review, it may be beneficial to meet with representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers, the State's Office of Habitat and Permitting, and other resource agencies to work out information needs and revised alternatives with respect to wetlands and other outstanding issues prior to proceeding with the EA. If you agree this might be beneficial, please contact Mr. Dana J. Seagars of my staff to arrange for his participation.

We believe it important to point out the "Alternatives Map" (Figure 2) and the "BEESC Wetland Delineation" map (un-numbered) provided with your request for comments are incomplete and do not address the full scope of the project area or the proposed actions (e.g., do not show all potential materials sites). Acreages of materials sites polygons or of wetlands crossed by proposed access road routes are not provided in the material supplied. These two maps are based on acquired imagery of the region of unknown resolution and date. In addition, the "Potential Materials Sites" Map (Figure 3) is based on a USGS topographic map over 30 years old. As this region is hydrologically dynamic, relatively modern day (e.g., recent) imagery is necessary to show accurately the location of wetlands, sand bars (potential materials sites) and river bank locations (potential barge landing sites) in relation to proposed materials sites, access roads, and the new airport facilities.

The high value of such wetlands to migratory birds and fishery resources has been noted above and in numerous other documents. We anticipate the Draft EA will include a precise and thorough assessment of impacts to wetlands based on updated, precise imagery with clear overlays of proposed project elements. The Draft EA should propose and discuss appropriate steps to be taken for avoiding, minimizing, and or compensating for any adverse project effects, in accordance with the Clean Water Act. Therefore, with respect to wetlands, the Service recommends the ADOT provide:

- an accurate estimate of the acreage to be affected (wetlands and uplands) by each project alternative and element (e.g., options for materials sites, roads, debris dumps, and airport facilities) in order to calculate any potential compensation under the MOA; and
- a clear description of how compliance with the Avoidance and Minimization Procedures (included as Appendix 1 to the MOA) will be achieved.

In addition we wish to commend the ADOT and the Community of Tuluksuk for their collaborative work to devise alternatives such as the "Inland River Alternative" for the access road. Such an alternative appears to avoid specific wetlands impacts and should be given serious consideration for selection as the preferred alternative. Similar attention may need to be given to selection of a materials site, dependant on the wetlands determination to be made by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Land Ownership Issues: Portions of the "Airport Access - Village Selection Route", reflected in light blue on the Alternatives Map Figure 2, are located within Sections 34 and 35 of Township 12 North, Range 66 West, Seward Meridian and would involve the following lands:

- Land selected, but not yet conveyed to the Village Corporation. This selected land is managed by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge until such time as it is conveyed. A right-of-way permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be required before a road could be constructed on this land. Regulations governing the issuance of right-of-way permits prohibit the approval of a permit if there is an economically feasible and prudent alternative route (16 U.S.C. 3165). Therefore, consideration of the other alternate airport access routes is recommended.
- Another option would be to meet with the Village Corporation to discuss if they would be interested in contacting the Bureau of Land Management to explore the possibility of an expedited conveyance of the land.

At the September 8, 2005, meeting and as described in your letter, a Potential Material Site located on a sand bar on the eastern shore of the Kuskowim River has been identified as a possible source of fill for this project. The proposed material site is reflected on the map entitled "Potential Materials Sites Map, Figure 3" in the upper left corner. The subject site is found within Section 27, Township 12 North, Range 66 West, Seward Meridian and is located on land conveyed to Tulkisarmute Incorporated by IC 542, as to surface estate and to Calista Corp. by IC 543, as to subsurface estate. The IC contains a provision that excludes from the conveyed lands, the submerged lands up to the ordinary high water mark. One option that was discussed at the meeting was to mine fill material out of this sand bar below the level of high water.

Aquatic Resources: We are concerned the proposed use of the in-river gravel bar for fill has the potential for adversely affecting the anadromous fish resources of these river systems. Such a proposed action and its subsequent effects will likely need to be considered in the upcoming

Draft EA and require review by and evaluations of permit applications submitted to the State of Alaska. If it is determined use of this proposed materials site will affect aquatic resources, additional consideration and compensation under the Airport MOU may be required (see "Wetlands Issues," above).

Migratory Birds and other Avian Resources: The FWS bald eagle nest database does not contain any known nests for the project area. However, the lack of such data does not mean no bald eagle nests are present. Palustrine and scrub-shrub wetlands and upland shrub habitat in the project area likely provide nesting and feeding habitat for shorebirds, waterfowl, and passerines. Migratory birds, are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (*16 U.S.C. 703-712*). Pursuant to the MBTA it is illegal to "take" migratory birds, their eggs, feathers or nests. "Take" includes by any means or in any manner, any attempt at hunting, pursuing, wounding, killing, possessing or transporting any migratory bird, nest, egg, or part thereof. The MBTA does not distinguish between "intentional" and "unintentional" take. In Alaska, all native birds except grouse and ptarmigan (which are separately protected by the State of Alaska) are protected under the MBTA. Exceptions such as legal hunting exist under the MBTA, of course, but in general there is no exception for "take" associated with land development activities.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the federal agency responsible for administering the MBTA. Besides protection, this includes providing information to the public about birds and the law, and providing recommendations and guidelines for compliance. The Service does not issue permits for incidental take of migratory birds under the MBTA. It is important to remember that final responsibility for compliance rests with the individual conducting the potentially lethal activity.

If you follow the accompanying timing recommendations, the Service will generally concur that you are in compliance with the MBTA, even if some early or late nests are inadvertently destroyed. However, flagrant violations, such as purposely destroying a known nest or chicks, may still face prosecution, so do not hesitate to contact the Service for advice or assistance if you have any questions or believe you have an unusual situation not addressed by the guidelines provided in this letter.

Vegetation clearing during the nesting period of a species would be likely to harm or kill adults and nestlings. Note that nesting periods may vary according to region, species and annual conditions. For the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region, the nesting periods for most birds using shrub or open wetlands habitat are: May 5 – July 25, except for Canada geese and swans the nesting period is April 20 – July 15. Therefore, the Service recommends the following be included as a mitigation measure in the upcoming Draft EA and in any subsequent contract provisions:

- To prevent impacts to nesting migratory birds, no vegetation clearing, fill placement, excavation, or other construction activities shall be conducted between May 5 and July 25, except at sites which have been sufficiently disturbed or altered (e.g., with fill, plastic,

or other materials that will cover nesting habitat) by May 5 to eliminate suitable nesting habitat (except note exceptions for swans and Canada geese, above).

- We understand site visits have not turned up any anecdotal observations of bald eagle nests. We recommend you conduct a bald eagle nest survey to a distance of a ¼ mile of the outer boundaries of the overall project area to determine if bald eagle nests are present. If any are located, you should notify our office to relay these data and to discuss any measures that may be needed to protect nesting eagles.
- The specific amount of acreage of wetlands habitat to be lost to migratory birds as a result of this project must be clearly identified and detailed in the EA (see Wetlands," above).

Revegetation and Buffer Strips: Areas where terrain obstructions are removed should be revegetated to reduce erosion. If vegetation along road corridors and the airport facilities is disturbed to eliminate terrain obstructions, these areas should be immediately stabilized and then revegetated with native vegetation. The Service recommends that the following be included as a mitigation measure in the final EA and in contract provisions:

- All bank cuts, slopes, fills, or other exposed earthwork attributable to this project shall be immediately stabilized, and revegetated with vegetation native to the local area selected to avoid introduction of non-Native invasive plant material. This will help to prevent erosion which may occur both during and after the project.
- Sediment prevention measures (silt fences) shall be placed and maintained along the toe of all fill areas adjacent to waters of the United States, including wetlands, to prevent the introduction of sediments. These devices shall remain in place until fill and other exposed earthwork attributable to the project are stabilized and revegetated.

Endangered and Threatened Species: Our records indicate that there are no federally listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat within the action area of the proposed project. In view of this, requirements of section 7 of the Act have been satisfied. However, obligations under section 7 of the Act must be reconsidered if new information reveals project impacts that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered or if this action is subsequently modified in a manner which was not considered in this assessment.

This letter relates only to federally listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat under our jurisdiction. It does not address species under the jurisdiction of National Marine Fisheries Service. In future correspondences regarding this consultation please refer to consultation number 2005106.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations. If you have any questions regarding these recommendations, please contact project biologist Dana J. Seagars at 271-2871, or by email at dana_seagars@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Ann G. Rappoport
Field Supervisor

Attachment

cc: Marcia Heer, ACOE
Jeanne Hanson, NMFS
Pat Oien, FAA
Mac MacLean, DNR
Michael Rearden, YDNWR



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

October 17, 2005

Lawrence Dugan
Bristol Environmental Services
2000 W. International Airport Road
Anchorage, AK 995-2-1117

Dear Mr. Dugan:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letter requesting information on threatened or endangered species.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA directs Federal interagency cooperation "to insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species" or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. NMFS is responsible for the administration of the ESA as it applies to listed cetaceans, pinnipeds, fish, and reptiles (sea turtles) in Alaska. Further information on NMFS ESA species can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/esa_species.htm

Endangered Species

NMFS designates those species or distinct stocks of species, which are in jeopardy of extinction as endangered under the ESA. An endangered species is defined in the law as "any species, which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range." Marine mammal species occurring in Alaska currently listed as endangered under the ESA include, blue, bowhead, fin, humpback, northern right, sei, and sperm whales and Steller sea lion (western stock, west of 144 degrees w. longitude). The endangered leatherback turtle is uncommon but recorded in the Gulf of Alaska. All other marine turtles are rare or "casual visitors" to Alaskan waters.

Threatened Species

Similar to an endangered species, a threatened species (under the ESA) is "any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range." Marine mammal species occurring in Alaska currently listed as threatened under the ESA are the Steller sea lion (eastern stock, east of 144 degrees w. longitude).



Marine/Anadromous Fish

Several ESA-listed stocks of Pacific salmon may occur within Alaska's waters. These include the following Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESU): Snake River fall Chinook (T), Snake River spring/summer Chinook (T), Puget Sound Chinook (T), Upper Columbia River spring Chinook (E), Lower Columbia River Chinook (T), Upper Columbia River steelhead (E), Upper Willamette River steelhead (T), Middle Columbia River steelhead (T), Lower Columbia River steelhead (T), and Snake River basin steelhead (T).

Species of Concern

A Species of Concern is a species that NOAA Fisheries has concerns regarding its population status and harmful threats, but for which insufficient information is available to indicate a need to list the species under the ESA. Species of Concern occurring in Alaska include the beluga whale (Cook Inlet population) and several Evolutionarily Significant Units of west coast Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, and Steelhead trout.

Depleted Marine Mammals

Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) a species is designated as depleted when it falls below its optimum sustainable population. Species listed under the ESA are also considered depleted under the MMPA. Marine mammal species occurring in Alaska currently designated as depleted, in addition to those listed above, include North Pacific fur seal; Cook Inlet beluga whale; and killer whales of the AT-1 group.

A detailed stock assessment report providing information (geographic range, a minimum population estimate, current population trends, current and maximum net productivity rates, optimum sustainable population levels and allowable removal levels, and estimates of annual human-caused mortality and serious injury through interactions with commercial fisheries and subsistence hunters) on the marine mammals of Alaska under jurisdiction of NMFS can be found at:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/readingrm/MMSARS/sar2003akfinal.pdf

Additional information regarding the ESA is available on our website at:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/default.htm>.

Project-Specific Information

We do not have specific information on the occurrence of any of these species within the project areas you describe. Your assessment should determine whether these species exist within the project area and whether the proposed action "may affect" or "will not affect" endangered and threatened species. If more than 90 days elapses between this letter and such a determination, please check with us to ascertain whether additional species have been listed or critical habitat designated.

We hope this information is useful in fulfilling your requirements under section 7 of the ESA.
Please direct any to Brad Smith at (907) 271-3023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaja Brix". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "B".

Kaja Brix
Assistant Administrator
for Protected Resources

Tuluksak Airport Relocation Project No. 51795.txt

From: Lawrence R. Peltz [Lawrence.Peltz@noaa.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2005 11:16 AM

To: Jerry Ruehle

Subject: Tuluksak Airport Relocation Project No. 51795

Attachments: lawrence.peltz.vcf

Jerry,

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the Project Scoping Letter for the Tuluksak Airport Relocation, Project No. 51795.

NMFS has no comments or concerns at this time. As mentioned in the scoping document, an EFH Consultation will be required if a material site is selected that may adversely affect EFH. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thanks.

Luetters, Susan

From: Luetters, Susan
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2007 12:01 PM
To: 'Frank Rast'
Subject: RE: [Fwd: Tuluksak Project -Agency meeting Jan 30, 2006 -Material Site 5 impacts review]

Frank

I just got off the phone with Jeanne Hanson w/NMFS. As far as they [NMFS] are concerned the response we received from Larry Peltz is all we are going to get from them. As far as she is concerned it is our responsibility to determine if there will be any negative impacts on EFH and report them to the client (FAA) and then they will comment/provide mitigation measures etc. NMFS will not provide any further assistance unless it is determined that there will be a negative impact.

Is this going to suffice?

Susan

From: Frank Rast [mailto:frast@rmconsult.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 5:18 PM
To: Luetters, Susan
Subject: [Fwd: Tuluksak Project -Agency meeting Jan 30, 2006 -Material Site 5 impacts review]

Benson, Elizabeth

From: Nancy J Ihlenfeldt [nancy_ihlenfeldt-mcnay@dnr.state.ak.us]
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2005 1:43 PM
To: jerry_ruehle@dot.state.ak.us
Subject: Tuluksak Airport Relocation, No. 51795

Jerry:

The ADNR, Office of Habitat Management and Permitting (OHMP) has reviewed the Project Scoping letter for the above referenced airport relocation project. The only comments we have at this time would be in reference to the proposed material sites. If a material site is developed below the ordinary high water (i.e., gravel bar) of the Kuskokwim River, a Fish Habitat Permit from the OHMP would be required. Detailed mining plans, with type of equipment and mining methods used, would be information needed later in the planning process. The OHMP may have concerns regarding the potential material site (depicted on Figure 3) in the Kuskokwim River as a portion of the site is located immediately adjacent to the mouth of the Tuluksak River -- impacts to this reach of the river may have to be analyzed if the entire area outlined is selected to be mined, or a detailed/specific mining plan may need to be developed.

If you have any questions regarding the comments above, please call. Thank you for the opportunity to comment at this phase of the project.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ihlenfeldt
Habitat Biologist
AK Department of Natural Resources
Office of Habitat Management & Permitting
Fairbanks Office
907-459-7287

Luetters, Susan

From: Jeff Estensen [jeff_estensen@dnr.state.ak.us]
Sent: Thursday, May 03, 2007 4:20 PM
To: Luetters, Susan; Scott Maclean
Subject: Re: Tuluksak EA/EFH

Hi Susan,
ADNR OHMP does not have any objections to your proposal activity (subject to the current project description) of removing borrow material from a gravel bar located in the Kuskokwim River immediately downriver from the community of Tuluksak. The proposed activity will require a Fish Habitat permit from this office. Please feel free to call if you have eadditional questions.

--

Jeffrey L. Estensen
Office of Habitat Management and Permitting Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources 550 West 7th
Ave, Suite 1420 Anchorage, AK 99501
e-mail: jeff_estensen@dnr.state.ak.us

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STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
CENTRAL REGION DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR

4111 Aviation Drive
P.O. Box 196900
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6900
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September 28, 2006

Re: Project No. 51795

Ms. Judith Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer
Alaska Office of History and Archaeology
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1310
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565

Subject: Tuluksak Airport Relocation Project
Initiation of Consultation pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3

Dear Ms. Bittner:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), proposes to construct a new airport near Tuluksak, Alaska (Figure 2-1).

Tuluksak, Alaska is located at the confluence of the Kuskokwim and Tuluksak rivers, 350 miles west of Anchorage, and 35 miles northeast of Bethel, Alaska, in the lower Kuskokwim region. The proposed new airport is located approximately one mile east of the Village of Tuluksak, in Sections 26, 35 and 36, Township 12 North, Range 66 West, Seward Meridian (USGS Quadrangle, Russian Mission A-6, Alaska).

For purposes of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), we are initiating this consultation with you pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3 to assist us in identifying historic properties that may be affected by the proposed project.

The proposed project includes construction of an airport in undeveloped forested lands, including a runway operating surface that is 3,300 feet long and 60 feet wide. This runway is centered within a safety area embankment that is 3,780 feet long and 120 feet wide. An exit taxiway that is 250 feet long and 40 feet wide within a safety area embankment that is 250 feet long and 80 feet wide connects the runway with an apron that includes a 300 feet long by 200 feet wide aircraft parking area and a snow removal equipment building situated within a 300 feet long by 100 feet wide aviation support area. The runway and taxiway include lights to support night operations. Ancillary features such as rotating beacon, lighted wind cone and segmented circle stand close to the apron. An access road about 4,500 feet long and 20 feet wide connects the airport with the village. About

"Providing for the movement of people and goods and the delivery of state services."

157 acres of property will be acquired for the airport and about 13 acres will be acquired for access road right of way.

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) includes the area within the proposed property limits for airport and access road, and a borrow site at the confluence of the Tuluksak and Kuskokwim Rivers. Borrow material for the project will be excavated from a very sparsely vegetated sand bar west of the community (Alternative 5). This material will be transported by truck to the new airport location during the winter via the Tuluksak River, or via the existing road system in combination with a temporary ice road. Access to uplands will be gained through the use of snow and ice ramps in order to minimize disturbance to the riverbank.

A search of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) files at the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) indicates one known historic property in the area. XRM-055 is the Village of Tuluksak, an Eskimo settlement since at least the mid 19th century, and a Moravian mission since 1895. The old main village location is apparently on the north bank of the river mouth. That area lies across the Tuluksak River from the current community, more than a mile east of the proposed airport. The current community dates to this century (Oswalt 1980).

Several negative cultural resource surveys have been conducted in and around Tuluksak. A proposed school site was tested in 1979 with negative results (Cook 1979). Bureau of Indian Affairs archaeologists conducted surveys at Native Allotments along the Tuluksak River near the proposed airport location in 1984 and found no sites (Hoff 1982, Hoff and Dotter 1982), and further surveys in the area in 1984 were also negative (Jespersion and Pittenger 1984).

The archaeology survey conducted for Village Safe Water by Mark E. Pipkin in 2003 covered the current community development, including future sites of the new water treatment plant (4 acres), sewage lagoon and solid waste sites (20 acres), the road to the waste sites, and approximately 3 miles of utility easements, where the mainline water and sewer lines would be constructed. Locations of potential service connections to buildings around the village were also inspected. This report concludes that there are no historical or cultural indicators other than modern occupation observed within the study limits. Although this work did not cover the proposed airport property about a mile east of the community, it indicates (in conjunction with the other surveys) that archaeological potential within the vicinity is relatively low.

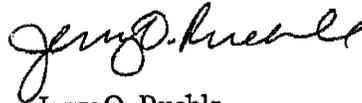
Northern Land Use Research, Inc. (NLUR) indicates that the preferred access road alternative, the Inland River Route, is well-situated to avoid areas with higher archaeological potential by being off set from the current river channel. The same is true of the runway location itself, which is on high ground between two old meander channels, and therefore not directly on an ancient river bank or terrace. The Material Source is within the active Kuskokwim River floodplain and therefore has low potential for the survival of archaeological or historic sites.

At the public scoping meeting held on July 28, 2005, in Tuluksak, DOT&PF met with community residents and the Tuluksak Native Community Council. We asked participants to identify any known cultural and historic areas that may be at risk from the airport project, road alternatives and potential borrow sites. No areas were identified.

Given the available data and NLUR recommendation that the proposed project area appears to have a low potential for encountering cultural resources, DOT&PF does not propose to conduct any additional surveys.

If you have any questions regarding this project, I can be reached at the above address or by phone at 269-0534 or email at jerry_ruehle@dot.state.ak.us. Your timely response will greatly assist DOT&PF in incorporating your concerns into the environmental assessment for this project. We request that you respond within 30 days of your receipt of this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Jerry O. Ruehle
Environmental Coordinator

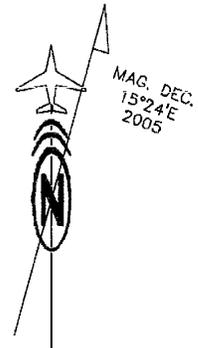
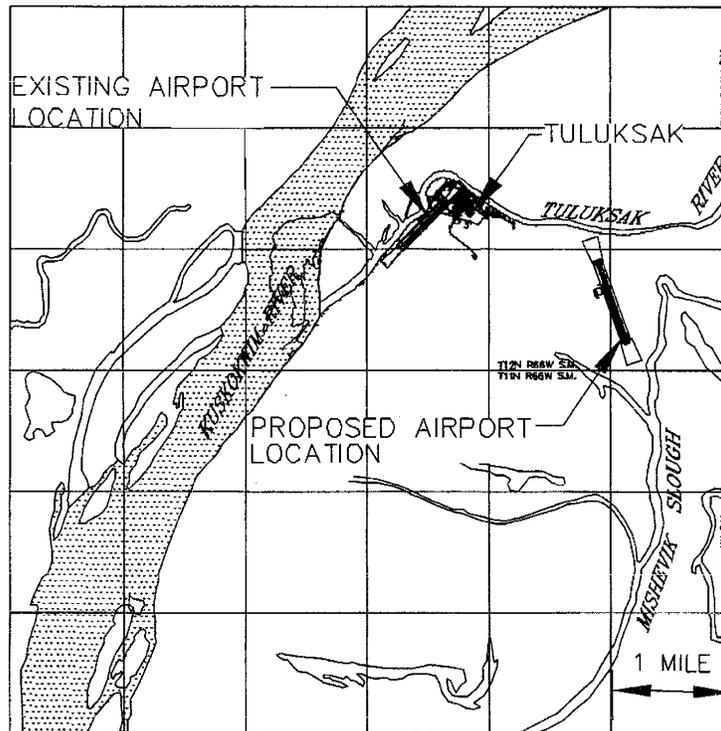
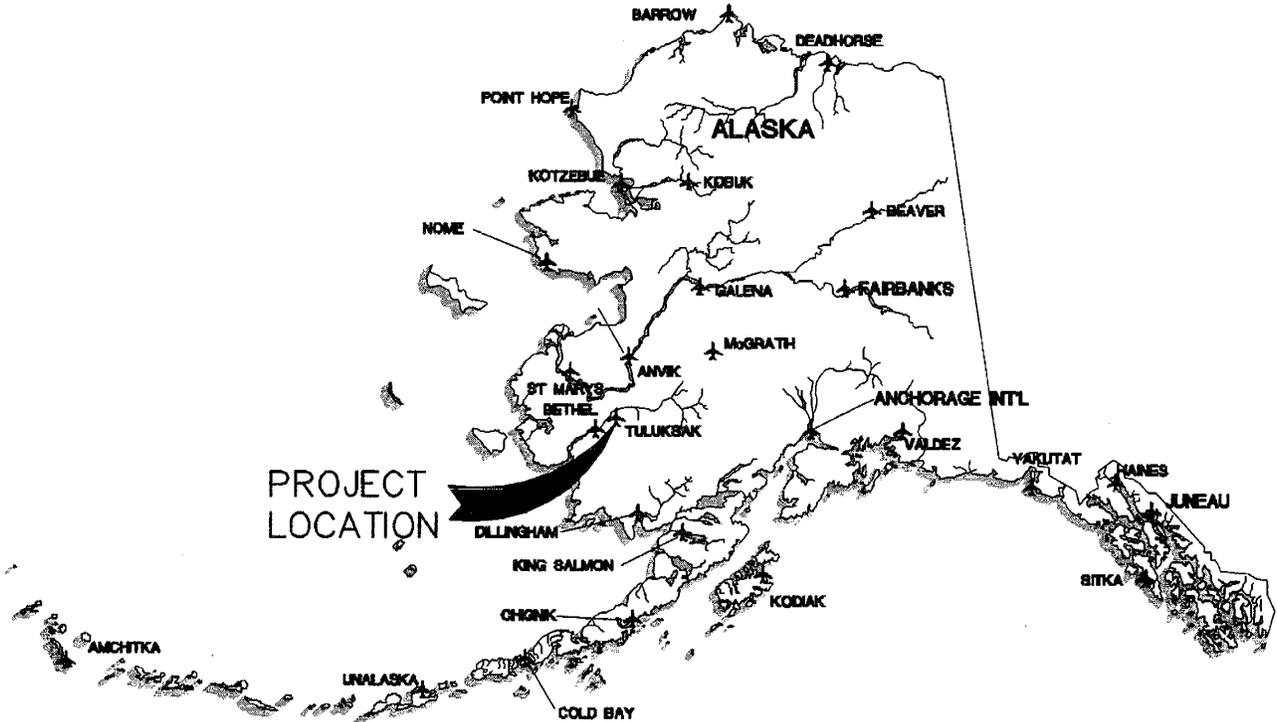
Enclosures: Figure 1-1 Tuluksak Location and Vicinity Maps
Figure 2-1 Proposed Action
NLUR Opinion, August 14, 2006

cc: Patricia L. Oien, P.E., Project Manager, FAA
James E. Amundsen, P.E., DOT&PF, Central Region, Project Manager
Laurie Mulcahy, DOT&PF HQ, Environmental Program Manager

References

- Cook, John P. 1979 Examination Of Proposed School Sites. Report prepared for Lower Kuskokwim School District.
- Hoff, Ricky 1982 BIA Archeological Inventory of Eleven Native Allotments Kuskokwim River, Alaska. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage.
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- Jespersion, Michele and Dean Pittenger 1984 Cultural Management Inventory of Eight Native Allotments and Five Townsite Lots in Bethel, Aniak, Tuluksak, And Platinum, Alaska. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage.
- Orth, D. J. 1967 Dictionary of Alaska Place Names. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Papers 567.
- Oswalt, W. H. 1980 Historic Settlements along the Kuskokwim River, Alaska. Juneau, Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums.
- Pipkin, Mark E. 2003 Tuluksak Water and Sewer Project 2003 Archaeological Survey. Report prepared for CE2 Engineers, Inc.

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TULUKSAK VICINITY MAP

DWN: JWF
 CKD: EPL
 DATE: 9/1/05
 SCALE: AS NOTED

PREPARED BY:
 R&M CONSULTANTS, INC.

TULUKSAK
 A.I.P. NO. 3-02-0302-001-2007
 PROJECT NO. 51795
**LOCATION AND
 VICINITY MAP**

FIGURE
1-1