

Appendix D: Minutes of Preliminary Regulatory Agency Meetings

Meeting Minutes
Sign-in Sheets



Meeting Notes

Subject: DNR Large Projects Agency Meeting	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: September 18, 2007, 9:00am-10:30am	Meeting Location: 550 West 7 th Avenue, 11 th Floor Conference Room
Notes by: HDR Alaska – LR	

Attendees:

Don Perrin, Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Office of Project Management & Permitting, Large Project Permitting
Doug Limpinsel, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service
Phil Byrna, U.S Fish & Wildlife Service
Mary Lynn Nation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Kimberly Klein, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Matt LaCroix, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Nina Brodie, Alaska DNR, Office of Habitat Management & Permitting (OHMP)
Stephanie Ludwig, Alaska DNR, Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
Sam Means, Alaska DNR, DMLW, Land Use-ROW
Clark Hopp, Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)
Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Barb Hotchkin, ARRC
Sasha Forland, ARRC
Tom Brooks, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Leslie Robbins, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Mike Pochop, TNH-Hanson
Dave McCourtney, TNH-Hanson
Via Phone:
Mike Bethe, Alaska DNR, OHMP, Title 41
Brad Sworts, Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Agenda

The meeting began with everyone introducing themselves.

Brian Lindamood went through a PowerPoint presentation, discussing the following topics:

1. Project History
2. Project Area
3. Project Purpose
4. Project Benefits
5. Project Participants
6. Funding
7. Surface Transportation Board (STB) NEPA Process
8. What's Happening Now
9. Anticipated STB Schedule
10. Next Steps
11. Opportunities and Constraints – Proposed corridors/ alternatives & environmental considerations

Topics Discussed

Agency Comment & Participation

- The ARRC will make every effort to coordinate with agencies on an individual basis. The primary point of contact will be Brian Lindamood, and he will make every effort to accommodate agency schedules. All resolutions should be distributed to the group to ensure that all agencies can identify conflicts.
- All agencies will be consulted when ranking the corridors with respect to each other.
- In early December, the ARRC will meet with all concerned agencies to inform them of the findings made by the project team.
- Don Perrin and the other presented agency members agreed that they would be able to provide agency input ('bigger picture' comments) by October 15.
- Agency members will be tied up in Pebble meetings the last week in November so the ARRC needs to be cognizant of that when scheduling a follow-up agency meeting. The group decided on the first week in December for an agency follow-up meeting.
- The agencies wanted an electronic copy of the PowerPoint to look at the GIS overlays. Brian was going to burn a CD after the meeting for Don, or alternatively, it could be placed on an ftp site.
- Don Perrin asked if a summary of the upcoming public workshops will be made available. Yes, comments will be tracked at the workshops using various methods, including a court reporter and comment sheets.
- Agencies are concerned with habitat fragmentation. They would generally recommend going through a more developed area than less developed.

Alignments

- Exchanging a few small portions of refuge land for agricultural land will provide a corridor for our western alignment near port MacKenzie.
- It may not be possible to avoid the recreational area near Willow for the western alignment.
- Alignment options in developed areas may be more desirable as this will prevent habitat fragmentation.
- The corridors listed are for transportation in general. Utilities, pipelines, and other things may appear within the ROW established by the ARRC. Placing a roadway within the ROW is currently not being advocated by the ARRC; however, it could happen. Locating highways near railroad limits development along the road, and causes accessibility problems for businesses.

Cultural Resources

- Stephanie asked if there are any known cultural resources studies for the area. MSB is working on a probability study of the sites. We feel we have a pretty good grasp of the known sites. Stephanie said overall there are not a whole lot of cultural surveys done for the area and she would likely recommend additional surveys.

Environmental document and contractor

- Brian mentioned that STB will make a determination to either do the environmental document in-house or hire a third-party contractor. STB will likely use a third-party contractor.

- Phil Byrna asked when the STB makes a determination on what type of environmental document they will pursue. Brian said the STB will determine whether it'll be an EA or EIS after the application has been submitted.

Matrix/ Scoring Criteria – Costs

- During the presentation, Brian had discussed the scoring system and how it will be composed of STB's 18 analysis points, plus cost (high-level) and feasibility. The analysis will also include cost and constructability. Mary Lynn Nation asked about the matrix scoring criteria. She asked how does cost factor into the scoring. Brian said it will be factored in and also addressed in the document. As for costs, Brian said they'd have a better idea summer 2008.
- Phil Byrna said he is interested in looking at the scoring/ranking matrix early on and would be amenable to giving input on it.

Purpose and Need

- The MSB will market the Port for interior construction and overall transportation of goods. As for Agrium, it's not 'if' but 'when' it happens.

Refuges and Agricultural Lands

- Brian talked about the possibility of land swapping some of the agricultural lands for some of the refuge land. Nina Brodie commented that the boundaries for the refuges are legislative, and would require an act of legislation to change.

Right-of-Way (ROW)

- Doug Limpensel asked where the ARRC sees the least resistance right now, as far as ROW. Brian said the MSB. As for the public, we'll have a better idea after the public workshops being held October 1-5.
- There was a short discussion regarding whether the corridor includes rail or rail and highway, as other past studies have considered a joint corridor. This effort is looking at a rail-only corridor. Within the 200 foot corridor, there will need to be some access roads, etc for ARRC infrastructure. Phil Byrna said what is considered a good rail-only corridor may not be a good highway-rail corridor.

Trails

- Nina Brodie asked if RS2477 trails were included in the trails layer.

Other available data

- Wetlands: For analysis and corridor development purposes, wetlands were divided into three categories based on the amount of water present. The slide show from today's meeting did not show the category with the lowest water content. Phil Byrna suggested talking to Mike Gracz (907-260-5449) of the Kenai Watershed Forum. Apparently Mike has available data in the project area beyond the NWI mapping. Phil said that the NWI mapping is about 60% accurate. He also said, according to Mike's work, that the forested wetlands may be more important than thought.
- Additional Studies: Matt LaCroix asked how much environmental analysis was done for the 2003 study. It was a 'high level' study. Preliminary ground probes are occurring right now. Fieldwork is slated for next summer.
- Mary Lynn Nation suggested obtaining the latest Bald Eagle data for the area.

Utilities, existing ROW, and easements

- Land for railroad ROW has not yet been acquired. Obtaining this land from the MSB should be straightforward.
- Matt LaCroix commented that the existing ROW, easements for pipelines, and transmissions are missing on the overlay. He said he's assuming these utility crossings will be analyzed. Yes, easements/ROW for existing pipelines and roads will be taken into consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.

Re-Cap of Action Items

- Place public workshops summaries on the project website so the agencies have an idea of what the public's concerns are.
- Schedule follow-up agency meeting for first week in December
- Phil Byrna is interested in looking at the matrix before the scoring occurs.
- Obtain additional wetlands data (Kenai Watershed Forum) and Bald Eagle data (Mary Lynn Nation).
- Make sure trails GIS layer includes RS2477 trails.

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Meeting Notes

Subject: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Meeting	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: October 2, 2007, 10:30am-12pm	Meeting Location: HDR office, 2525 C St. Ste. 305
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Barb Hotchkin, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jeff Schively, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Skip Joy, USACE
Serena Sweet, USACE

Agenda

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential wetlands impacts and mitigation strategies.

Brian Lindamood began by presenting the project background, purpose and need, STB process and the anticipated project timeline.

Topics Discussed

Port MacKenzie Expansion Project

- Skip said that he'd be looking at this project and tying it in with the Port and KABATA projects when considering issuing permits. Skip had some serious issues with the Port Expansion project and it sounded like flaws in that project could hold up obtaining permits for this project.
- Brian noted that it is not the ARRC's intent to have dual purpose within their corridor. It would be used only for a rail line.

Permitting Issues

- Skip noted that the Corps would only permit the alternative that is the least environmentally damaging. If the preferred alternative is not the least environmentally damaging, mitigation would be required to bring it to the least impacting alternative.
- The NEPA process, from the Corps standpoint, is just disclosure of the impacts and the Corps doesn't exactly follow a NEPA process. To obtain permits, the Corps could require a greater detailed analysis of wetland impacts than is required under NEPA.
- Brain asked if the practicability or constructability of alternative would play a role in the Corps' permitting of an alternative, as opposed to just approving the least environmentally damaging alternative. Skip said that yes, they consider the practicability, but they may suggest a different alternative than the one most practicable to build.
- Barb asked if a permitting level of data was required now to assist the Corps is formulating a stance on a preferred alternative. Skip said that no, general information on each alternative (i.e., general stream crossing locations, which streams to cross, etc.) is good. Skip also noted that ARRC would

need to provide specifics on each alternative, not just ARRC's preferred alternative. The ARRC needs to look into each alternative with the same level of detail.

Wetland Maps and Ranking

- Donna explained how wetlands were categorized and ranked by their functional value and factored into the constraints analysis. Skip agreed that this was a good start and at this stage of the project, with the limiting NWI dataset, there isn't much more that we could do. Skip said he trusts the NRCS soils data better than the NWI data for depicting wetlands.

The Corps' Role/ What ARRC needs from the Corps

- Skip noted that he would not be handling this project; Serena Sweet would be.
- Brian requested a formal letter from the Corps expressing any preliminary concerns they have about project alternatives. Statement of which alternative is better would help the application process, as far as providing the STB with as much information and agency input as possible.
- Skip noted that it is probably too early for the Corps to weigh in on which alternative is preferable.
- Skip said that they would likely issue their letter regarding the project after the official scoping process occurred for the project EIS. Skip did note that during the EIS process, the Corps does communicate with the applicant. There would be opportunities then for impact/mitigation discussions.

Mitigation Discussion

- It was noted by the Corps that mitigation could be used to bring the preferred alternative up to the least environmentally damaging.
- Brain noted that he was not hoping to do nearly the extensive amount of fieldwork as was done for the Northern Rail project. ARRC planning on using existing wetlands data from other projects (KABATA, MSB?) to satisfy Corps' needs.
- The Corps noted that compensatory action would be the last thing to do. They encourage avoidance and minimization of impacts first.
- The Corps identified that mitigation could take many forms. Wetlands delineation and mapping of the project area, or a data gathering component, could serve as mitigation. The thought it that data gathered as mitigation for this project could benefit future development projects in the area and assist the Corps in the regulatory process.
- The Corps noted that, for economical purposes, the Railroad is already avoiding and minimizing wetlands impacts and that these measure should be fully disclosed in the environmental document in order to give credit to the Railroad.

Mat-Su Borough Wetland Banks

- It was noted that one of the alternatives goes right through the MSB wetlands bank. The Corps noted that it was the Borough that designated them as wetlands banks and the Corps isn't entirely in agreement about those parcels. It was noted that some wetlands banks contain uplands, and that by avoiding a wetlands bank more wetlands could be impacted than if the alignment went through the bank.
- Skip said he'd talk to Jack Hewitt about the wetlands banks and the acceptableness of impacting them.

Transmittal of Project Materials:

- Serena said that project materials on a ftp site was fine.

Re-Cap of Action Items

- Providing Serena Sweet with project materials via a project ftp site. (this was done)
- The Corps would issue a letter with an official stance on a preferred alternative and offer mitigation strategies that could suffice. This letter may not come as soon as ARRC desires.

- Another meeting would be scheduled (in approx. 1 month?) to invite all resource agencies to discuss project specifics.



Meeting Notes

Subject: Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game Meeting	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: October 3, 2007, 10:00- 11:30am	Meeting Location: HDR office, 2525 C St. Ste. 305
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Barb Hotchkin, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Mark Fink, ADF&G
Tammy Massie, ADF&G

Agenda

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential impacts to parks and refuges, fish, fish habitat, as well as mitigation strategies.

Brian Lindamood began by presenting the project background, purpose and need, STB process and the anticipated project timeline.

Topics Discussed

Using KABATA data and agency comments pertaining to this project

- Mark Fink noted there was a lot of information generated for the Knik Arm Crossing EIS. This project should take advantage of that data. Also, to keep from producing redundant comments, Mark suggested looking at ADF&G/DNR comments provided for the Knik Arm Crossing EIS as they pertain to the Pt. Mac Rail project, as many of the comments would be similar. In particular, comments given on the topic of wildlife crossings.

ARRC's requesting of input from ADF&G

- Brian asked for guidance on fish and fish and wildlife habitat issues. Topics on what impacts ADF&G considers most important, how to assess the impacts, and any mitigation ideas would be helpful. It is ARRC's intention to provide the STB at application time a clear sense of the anticipated breadth of impacts as well as ideas on mitigation.
- Mark Fink expressed concern that ADF&G would either be asked for too much involvement or too little involvement on this project. He wanted to participate as a cooperating agency with the STB, providing input throughout the project and not just be handed a finished product by the STB.
- It was understood that this project would not involve as many agency meetings as KABATA and that schedule would be more or less determined by the STB. But, this project would entail several resource specific meetings with agencies.

Moose

- ADF&G were asked to provide input on their moose habitat data and clarify or rank which habitat type was most critical. ADF&G expressed concerns about the data itself, as far as whether it really was compiled in 2005 or if it's data from years ago. They did not seem to have the highest confidence in the data's usefulness. It was noted that winter habitat was the most important type.
- ADF&G asked if the Railroad was planning any field work.
- ADF&G were most concerned with creating barriers to wildlife movement/migration and the long-term impacts. Brian sees the railroad less as a barrier to movement (moose can cross it fine) as a problem with increasing moose stikes/kills.
- ADF&G will likely ask for more data on moose movement and numbers as a part of this project. They would benefit from data on seasonal moose movements. This could be done by conducting radio-collar work. There was concern with the fast pace of the project and that there wouldn't be enough time to collect quality data. Of course, ADF&G noted that a study of this type would require their involvement, due to darting/handling large animals, and they don't yet know if they would even have the personnel to conduct such a study.
- Mark sees similarities in this project and the Northern Rail project. In fact, he felt this project would likely require closer scrutiny of data and anticipated impacts because of the many land uses and population numbers in the project area.
- There was discussion on the agreement that is in the works for N. Rail mitigation that provides ADF&G/UAF significant funding to conduct moose analysis. Brian asked if this agreement could serve as mitigation for this project, as it would be applicable data.
- ADF&G would talk to the Palmer office about their availability to conduct field work and acceptable mitigation strategies and if that was desired. They would decide if it could be done by a 3rd party contractor, or if ADF&G would need to be involved. Also, identification of how soon they could get started.
- Brian mentioned that funding would be much more readily available if a study was considered mitigation and not part of the EIS process. Also, in light of the fast pace of this project and limited time to conduct field work, it was noted by ARRC that the study would be best if conducted post construction for however many number of years was necessary (within reason).

Fish

- There was mention of a historic MOU/MOA between ADF&G and DNR relating to fish passages. Mark had some issue with that agreement. It sounded as if that memorandum was being revised. ADF&G would like to see the number of crossings reduced. Bridges were preferable to culverts. It was noted that a trestle/bridge structure works pretty well for fish passage and wildlife crossings.

Susitna Flats State Game Refuge

- Susitna Flats is co-managed by ADNR and ADF&G. DNR has purview over recreation lands and ADF&G has purview over refuge lands.
- ADF&G highly recommends the Refuge be avoided. They even had problems with an alignment along the edge of the Refuge. ADF&G stated that the SFSGR management plan does not encourage new roads, may even preclude it in the language.

Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- ADF&G asked why ARRC could not build a rail corridor paralleling an existing road corridor. Brian explained that while it is a good idea environmentally, it isn't practicable from a safety and cost aspect.

Mitigation Strategies

- The notion of a land swap for mitigation seemed possible. It is unclear if the swap would be a 1:1, 3:1, etc. There would likely need to be a replacement of more refuge lands for the impacted refuge lands, i.e., replacement of lands of similar quality and similar levels of management/protection.
- Similar to an example on military lands where ARRC enhanced moose browse in some areas as mitigation to moose strikes, ARRC could agree to a similar program to mitigate impacts for this project.

- ADF&G noted that there would be no need for a MOA/MOU regarding the land swap, unless money exchanged hands for the funding of mitigation.
- ARRC also asked if they could double count mitigation, i.e., could mitigation for the Corps, for example, count towards mitigation for ADF&G. It sounded as if that was a possibility.



Meeting Notes

Subject: Alaska Dept. Natural Resources – Parks and Outdoor Recreation	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: October 5, 2007, 10:30- 11:30am	Meeting Location: HDR office, 2525 C St. Ste. 305
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Sasha Forland, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Wayne Biessel, ADNR

Agenda

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential impacts to state parks and refuges as well as mitigation strategies.

Brian Lindamood began by presenting the project background, purpose and need, STB process and the anticipated project timeline.

Topics Discussed

Impacting a State Recreation Area or Refuge

- Brian started by asking whether or not passing through a SRA is even an option? If avoidance of the recreation area is not feasible, the ARRC would like ideas on what could be done as well as examples of projects that have impacted state recreation areas and how DNR resolved them. Wayne noted that river corridors are important to DNR as well as to the public and that crossing one is a big deal from a resource perspective. He mentioned that cutting through a SRA is probably not an option.
- Wayne seemed most concerned with the Willow route and specifically the impacts to the Willow Creek State Recreation Area and the fact that this alternative would bisect this SRA. He noted that DNR – Parks would be aggressively opposed to crossing that recreation area.

Potential Impacts

- Noise impacts would likely be an issue with this project. Wayne noted that the Red Shirt Lake Homeowners Assoc. (Nancy Lake SRA) is active and have voiced concerns about this project. It was suggested that some level of noise analysis be conducted for this project.
- Transporting coal (and the dust falling from the cars carrying it) can have an impact on anadromous streams. Brian mentioned that that concern can be solved by using ballast deck bridges to keep debris from falling through bridge.

Potential Mitigation Strategies

- Brian talked about the different design techniques that can be used to decrease the amount of noise generated from a train. Usage of concrete ties and welded rails is much quieter. Also, bridges that have been designed with a concrete deck decrease noise.
- Trail impacts will be a big concern with this project. Brian mentioned the different trail crossing concepts (so far) that could be used to maintain access to trails. The 3 examples are all grade separated: (1) a culvert – which is not that good from a dog musher/snow perspective; (2) a bridge for the railroad – this is a costly procedure; and, (3) a bridge for the trail. It was mentioned that all legally-designated trails would have continuity maintained.
- The topic of a land swap for impacted park land was talked about. DNR could entertain that idea. DNR would not agree to swap less valuable uplands, for instance, for impacts to a valuable river corridor. It would be difficult to mitigate impacts to such an ecologically and recreationally important area as a river corridor.

Public Comments

- Wayne asked about public comments regarding this project and their availability. Brian mentioned that the public comments would be made available both in a consolidated form in the alternatives evaluation as well as in their entirety in the public involvement report.

ARRC's requesting of input from ADNR

- Brian asked for guidance (preferably within 30 days) on bridge design as it pertains to fish and boat passage. Topics on what impacts DNR considers most important, how to assess the impacts, and any mitigation ideas would be helpful. It is ARRC's intention to provide the STB at application time a clear sense of the anticipated breadth of impacts as well as ideas on mitigation.
- Wayne said that DNR Parks would consult on this project and try to get a letter out expressing their concerns prior to the upcoming large agency meeting in November.



Meeting Notes

Subject: Alaska Dept. Natural Resources – Division of Mining, Land & Water	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: October 10, 2007, 1 – 2:30pm	Meeting Location: DNR office, Atwood Bldg. (downtown)
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Sasha Forland, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Carol Eaton, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Tracy McDaniel, MSB
Sam Means, ADNR-DMLW
Clark Cox, ADNR-DMLW
Justin Selvik, ADNR-DMLW

Agenda

The purpose of the meeting was to begin a preliminary discussion on potential impacts to State lands, ROW acquisition procedures, and identifying additional information needed.

Topics Discussed

DNR-DMLW's role and responsibility

- (General Role) ADNR-DMLW is land manager for State lands and DNR-managed lands. They issue land use permits and easements on State lands. They also have somewhat of a role on agricultural parcels and some parks.
- (For this project) It is largely unknown whether or not the STB will include ADNR as a cooperating agency for this project. There is a possibility of ensuring this due to Senate Bill 31 (2004)...

Granting easements on State lands

- Generally speaking, ADNR-DMLW doesn't find any 'show stopping' reasons for granting easements. However, should DNR-Parks&Rec say no, that would veto their ability to issue an easement.
- ADNR-DMLW rarely finds language within the various area planning documents that precludes development of a transportation corridor.
- ARRC noted that it is their policy to require fee simple acquisition (or something very close to) for land transfers. For the Northern Rail project, there was legislation passed with language that enabled ARRC to acquire state lands through fee simple acquisition. ADNR-DMLW said it would be useful to obtain an explanation of the nature of land title the ARRC is required to have.
- ADNR-DMLW noted that they only have authority of granting surface rights. The Constitution prohibits transferring of subsurface rights. There are areas where Mental Health of Alaska owns subsurface rights and DNR owns surface rights. In this instance, ARRC will need to work with Mental Health on a suitable arrangement.

Types of activities on State lands/Trails

- ARRC asked about the myriad of uses occurring on State lands and their legal status. ADNR-DMLW pointed out that many uses (including an airstrip) do not require a permit. On State land it is legal to cut a 5'-wide trail without a permit.
- The ARRC asked about the deference paid by the State on non-permitted land activities. ADNR-DMLW noted that there is a MSB project underway to make many trails legally recognized and procuring easements.
- ARRC is willing to maintain access/connectivity to legally recognized trails. It was noted that many of the dog mushing trails are on undesignated trails. ADNR-DMLW should offer guidance on how ARRC should decide on which trails need to be recognized and which do not. ADNR-DMLW noted that significant weight will be paid to the Borough trails plan.
- ADNR-DMLW asked about resources dedicated to trails delineation/field work/trails inventory as part of the NEPA process. The ARRC will start by recognizing all legal trails, and decide where to go from there.
- ADNR-DMLW mentioned that they could selling materials (gravel, rock) for building the railroad should the ARRC need more than what's in the ROW.
- Iditarod trail – ADNR has 3 people working specifically on Iditarod easements. Cliff Larson is the ADNR-DMLW Iditarod easement manager.

Land ownership map

- The grey area on the ownership maps (recorded as “NO DATA” in the MSB GIS dataset) was thought to be all State lands, according to ADNR-DMLW. That information does not exist in digital/GIS format. ADNR-DMLW didn't think they had that information in digital format.

ROW research and acquisition process

- ADNR owns section line easements. All section lines have easements designated for a road and DOT has rights to that easement. ADNR ultimately owns the easement.
- For agricultural parcels, some are owned fee simple and some aren't. Each parcel's title report would need to be examined separately. The conveyances can be found on DNR's website.

ARRC's requesting of input from ADNR-DMLW

- ARRC asked for a letter expressing concerns with this project. This letter could include perceived obstacles or any 'show stopping' information regarding each alternative.
- ADNR-DMLW will research each alternative and assess the ownership information (surface/subsurface) on State lands.

Re-cap of Action Items

- HDR will provide ADNR-DMLW with the GIS shapefile of the proposed alternatives.
- ADNR-DMLW requested a RSA for billing some of their time to this project. Brian noted that an arrangement had been made with Don Perrin to manage one large RSA. Sam Means said he would then send Don a bill for DNR's work.



Meeting Notes

Subject: Alaska Dept. Natural Resources – Office of Habitat Management and Permitting	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: October 10, 2007, 10:30- 11:30am	Meeting Location: HDR office, 2525 C St. Ste. 305
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Sasha Forland, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Mike Bethe, DNR-OHMP
Tom Namtredt, DNR-OHMP

Agenda

The purpose of the meeting was to begin a preliminary discussion on potential impacts to state parks and refuges, fish populations and habitat, and mitigation strategies.

Brian Lindamood began by presenting the project background, purpose and need, STB process and the anticipated project timeline. On November 9th there will be a large agency meeting.

Topics Discussed

Impacts to Fish

- DNR-OHMP spoke about a MOU with ADOT that addresses bridge structures for fish passage from an engineering perspective. They have some issues with that memorandum, but feel it is a reasonable place to start.
- For a project such as this one, DNR-OHMP will look at each proposed crossing on a case-by-case basis. They will examine each crossing individually.
- ARRC will conduct a close examination of the hydrology at each crossing and will provide a greater level of detail to DNR-OHMP on each proposed crossing before the large agency meeting on Nov. 9th.
- DNR-OHMP mentioned that cumulative impacts to fish and fish habitat should be examined for each route.

Fish Data

- DNR-OHMP noted that baseline data doesn't exist on some (many?) of the crossings. ARRC would need to collect data on many of the streams where there are proposed crossings.
- DNR-OHMP requested good aerial photography of the proposed crossings.

Potential Mitigation Strategies

- DNR-OHMP noted that if the bridge was designed correctly, there often times are minimal impacts to fish/fish passage.

- DNR-OHMP noted that their jurisdiction lies primarily bank to bank on the rivers and can sometimes extend to the floodplain.
- DNR-OHMP mentioned that sometimes mitigation could be accomplished by upgrading each proposed bridge structure.
- DNR-OHMP said they would restrict their input to only stream crossings.

ARRC's requesting of input from ADNR-OHMP

- Brian asked for guidance on what impacts DNR considers most important, how to assess the impacts, and any mitigation ideas would be helpful. It is the ARRC's intention to provide the STB at application time a clear sense of the anticipated breadth of impacts as well as ideas on mitigation.
- Additional input on the deficiencies of the MOU with DOT would be useful.
- DNR-OHMP would review the different alternatives and get back to ARRC on which one was preferable. As soon as they can issue it, a letter should be sent to ARRC regarding significant issues/concerns related to this project.



Meeting Notes

Subject: State and Borough Trails and the Iditarod National Historic Trail	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: October 17, 2007, 10:00- 12:00pm	Meeting Location: DNR Lands office – Atwood Bldg.
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Kirsten Anderson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Don Perrin, DNR
Neil Shishido, DNR

Sam Means, DNR
Ben Hagedorn, DNR
Bruce Paulson, MSB
Brad Swortz, MSB
Fran Seeger-Boss, MSB

Agenda

The purpose of the meeting was to begin a discussion on identifying and locating existing trails and determining their legal status. The latter half of the meeting focused specifically on the National Historic Iditarod Trail. Brian wanted to flesh out and prepare an official trails map to be brought to the Willow area trails meeting on Oct. 24th to show the public which trails are and are not officially dedicated, i.e., which ones will and will not have connectivity maintained by the ARRC.

Topics Discussed

Trails, Connectivity, & Conceptual Crossings

- It is ARRC's intention to maintain connectivity of legal trails only. They will work with the MSB and DNR to decide what to do with trails without an easement. It was understood that several trails that are not yet legally designated are recognized in the MSB Trails Plan and getting easements for those trails is underway. The MSB Trails Plan-identified trails will also have connectivity maintained. As for non-legal trails that cross the proposed alternatives, there remains the idea of either moving or removing them. But the official stance by the ARRC is that connectivity will not be maintained for these. DNR will lean heavily on the MSB for identifying which trails are to have easements implemented.
- ARRC is confident that almost all, if not all, trail crossings will be grade-separated. This primarily becomes a safety issue. With grade-separated crossings, it is easier for ARRC to build in deterrents to the public using the RR ROW. At a glance, the ARRC sees the number of crossings as "a handful."
- ARRC sees 3 potential options for trail crossings: 1. a culvert – inexpensive, snowmachiners seem to like them, but dog musher compatibility is questionable; 2. a bridge for the trail over the RR – about 10X more expensive, but easier to maintain/groom for snow conditions; and 3. spanning the RR over the trail – even more expensive.
- The ARRC envisions a mix of these types of crossings depending on the location and the predominant trail usage type.
- DNR feels that it is the project developers' role to engage the trail users' groups to discuss trail crossing arrangements. They, as the land managers, will not take on that responsibility.
- DNR agreed to provide ARRC/HDR with their list of user groups.

- There had been the suggestion from the public to dedicate a trail easement running parallel along the proposed RR ROW. The ARRC is not interested in that idea, primarily from a safety perspective. DNR agreed; they are mostly looking at maintaining east/west connectivity on trails.
- There is a possibility of shifting trail location of trails already with easements if avoidance by the RR is not feasible. DNR noted that the easement location changing process is just like the process of creating one; DNR would need to publish a public notice, but not required to hold a public meeting.
- RS2477 trails – DNR is the manager of these trails. These have a 100' easement. Most of them are not surveyed, but the vast majority of them do have easements.

Iron Dog Trail

- The Iron Dog trail has an easement of 50'.

Big Lake Trails

- The MSB is currently working towards obtaining easements of several Big Lake area trails. In general, the trails around Big Lake and Houston are on private property or Mental Health lands.

Iditarod Historic Trail

- This discussion focused primarily on the specific location of both the historic trail and the active race trail. Pinning down the location of the historic trail is difficult; agencies at this meeting all seemed to have their own idea of where the trail ran. Kevin Keeler noted that the section between the Knik Arm and the Susitna River has always been confusing.
- The ARRC suggested the idea of mitigation be a once-and-for-all survey of the historic trail to end the confusion.
- DNR noted that sometime in the 1970s someone surveyed the route. That then provided the location of a 400' easement.
- The historic route is often not used during the official Iditarod race due to unpredictable snow conditions. Also, Kevin Keeler noted that the dog mushers actually prefer starting in Willow to alleviate having to race through the developed area of Wasilla and Big Lake, where various trail crossings are common. The idea of combining the crossing location for both the active race trail and the historic trail may not be feasible. BLM would like to see both trails treated separately with this project. BLM also wanted to see the loops maintained.
- DNR has always been challenged with providing ample signage to show mushers where the legal trail is and to require them to stay on it. Most of the trail is remote in the area and there is no way to keep mushers on the easement, especially when snow conditions may not be suitable at that exact location.
- BLM noted that they would defer to SHPO on decisions affecting the historic trail. SHPO will take the lead on historic trails on state land, BLM will be happy just getting cc'd on all correspondences.
- BLM noted that it is permissible within the National Historic Trails Act to move the location of a historic trail.

Gas Line Trail

- This trail extends from Ayershire Rd. and receives significant usage in winter. The trail is mostly on a section line and is owned by ENSTAR. It is often used as an ice road in the winter by utility equipment to get over to Tyonek or other areas.

Trails map

- DNR-OHMP spoke about a MOU with ADOT that addresses bridge structures for fish passage from an engineering perspective. They have some issues with that memorandum, but feel it is a reasonable place to start.
- For a project such as this one, DNR-OHMP will look at each proposed crossing on a case-by-case basis. They will examine each crossing individually.

- ARRC will conduct a close examination of the hydrology at each crossing and will provide a greater level of detail to DNR-OHMP on each proposed crossing before the large agency meeting on Nov. 9th.
- DNR-OHMP mentioned that cumulative impacts to fish and fish habitat should be examined for each route.

Miscellaneous Topics

- DNR noted that they have in their possession an application from the MSB for a RR ROW. Brad Sworts noted that this was their initial application to the State for the RR. The original application calls for a 800' ROW. The actual ROW easement granted won't need to be this wide. It was determined that this application will remain on hold as the project progresses and may be eventually used when they get to that step.
- Ag lands – owners own agriculture rights only, state has other rights. The owner and the state must both agree to transfer land. Basically, a title by title search is necessary to determine exactly.
- It was noted that GIS data on existing trail easements of the state's is available on the ASGDC website



Meeting Notes

Subject: SHPO – APE; Iditarod Trail; Agricultural Area; Indirect Effects	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: October 23, 2007, 10:00am – 11:00am	Meeting Location: DNR SHPO office – Atwood Bldg.
Notes by: HDR Alaska – LR	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Barb Hotchkin, ARRC
Kirsten Anderson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Leslie Robbins, HDR Alaska, Inc.

Fran Seager-Boss, MSB
Dave Gasek, DNR-SHPO
Stephanie Ludwig, DNR-SHPO

Agenda

The purpose of this meeting was to follow up on the comments provided to the ARRC by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of History and Archaeology in their letter, dated September 26, 2007. The main comments to discuss included the Area of Potential Effect (APE); the Iditarod National Historic Trail; the Port MacKenzie Agricultural Area and 1915 Matanuska Farm Station; and indirect effects.

Topics Discussed

APE

- The APE will be determined once the Surface Transportation Board (STB) comes on board and begins to lead the process.
- At some point, Stephanie said archaeological surveys will need to be done. Barb said that when the NEPA-STB process begins, they will focus on high probability areas for field surveys.

Iditarod National Historic Trail

- SHPO recognizes that the trail cannot be avoided; it will have to be crossed.
- The exact trail location seems to be in discrepancy, based on surveys done by various agencies – DNR, BLM, etc. It seems like we're dealing with three components for trail location – the National Historical location, the actual race location, and the historical/scenic location.
- Apparently Jo Antonson at SHPO is determining the National Register eligibility for multiple Historic Trail crossings. She may have some additional information.
- Brian brought up the issue that the Iditarod Trail has been crossed by other transportation projects. Brian said the ARRC would be amenable to developing a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the applicable agencies, similar to the MOA between FAA and SHPO for the Takotna Airport project. Interpretive panels were constructed as part of mitigation for the Takotna Airport project. ARRC would be amenable to putting up interpretive panels.
- Doug said it may be useful to look at other transportation corridor crossings in the country in which national historical trails were crossed.
- For grade-separated crossings, from a safety standpoint, the ARRC would prefer to go over the trail. Viewshed issues come into consideration with the grade-separated crossings.

Port MacKenzie Agricultural Area

- There was some discussion regarding the 1915 Matanuska Farm Station. Apparently this project is outside of the project area and is completely different from the Point MacKenzie Agricultural Area near the Port, which apparently was established by the State in the late 1970s and 1980s.

- Doug said that the criteria would need to be applied to the Point MacKenzie Agricultural Area to determine its eligibility to be listed on the National Register. Apparently Janet Clemens (now with the Park Service) wrote a document that has information on the farming area. It would be good to get a copy of this.

Indirect effects

- There was some discussion regarding audible and visual impacts, and the possibility of changing the character and use of the area adjacent to the agricultural area. Barb mentioned that when it comes to rail noise, most of the noise is due to whistles at crossings. The idea is to keep the at-grade crossings limited, especially near the agricultural area. The ARRC also controls track noise by using continuously welded rail and concrete ties. The goal of the project is for the long haul movement of goods, not for spurring development (for purposes of identifying indirect effects).

Other

- Fran mentioned it might be a good idea to consult with the Trails Council in Knik. Joe Redington) formed the group, which is separate from the Iditarod Race group. This group may be disbanded.
- Judy mentioned that a company out of Duluth focuses on context sensitive design solutions. This is something that could be considered with the trail crossings.

Brian said he'd like to reconvene at the end of November with the applicable agencies (DNR, BLM, etc) to discuss the Iditarod Trail again.



Meeting Notes

Subject: DNR All Departments Meeting – OHMP, DMLW, Parks&Rec	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: November 9, 2007, 9:00am – 11:00am	Meeting Location: DNR office – Atwood Bldg.
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Barb Hotchkin, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Don Perrin, ADNR

Mike Bethe, ADNR-OHMP
Ken Bouwens, ADNR-OHMP
Wayne Biesell, ADNR-Parks&OutdoorRec
Sam Means, ADNR-DMLW

Agenda

The purpose of this meeting was to follow up on the previous individual department meetings with ADNR DMLW, OHMP, and Parks & Outdoor Recreation. The main comments to discuss included the issuance of letters still being sought by ADNR-DMLW and ADNR-Parks&OR outlining their stance on significant resource issues and preference or opposition to any particular proposed route.

Topics Discussed

Lands (DMLW)

- Sam Means agreed that he would quickly organize DMLW's thoughts onto letterhead and issue to ARRC.
- There was discussion about the non-designated state lands in the project area, mainly the area west of Nancy Lakes. The public has some concerns about maintaining access to these areas. Sam pointed out that these state lands are not necessarily easy to dispose as they may be included in various plans. The Susitna Area Plan designates the area west of Nancy Lakes SRA as state public recreation lands and this classification allows the public to use the land and build trails without a permit. The classification may also limit the ability to easily convey ownership to the Railroad. It was pointed out that the plan could be amended to allow ROW acquisition.
- The ARRC asked about the Houston North alignment where it ties into the existing rail within the Railroad ROW and crosses a stream. Because it is already in Railroad ROW, no additional permits or special bridge design considerations would be needed.
- When acquiring ROW, the Railroad would be subject to the existing trail easements. DNR-DMLW will be providing a letter listing existing state trail easement as well as some that are recommended, but they may find more in the future to add to the list. It could be the case that there are too many section line easements that are being used as trails for the Railroad to create trail passages for them all. DNR may choose to retain a few of these section line easements, but they are not prepared to identify which ones yet.

Coastal Management Plan and Floodplains

- The ARRC is still looking into the MSB Coastal Management Plan Enforceable Policies and the state-wide standard of 75' setback from water bodies. The Railroad is asking for clarification from DNR on how this policy applies to bridge building and whether or not they'd be able to place a pier within this distance.

- The problem with floodplains is seen as relating more to the interconnectivity of hydrologic functions than conveyance of floodplains. Cottonwood Creek was used by DNR as an example of disrupted hydrological functions due to roads and development. The Railroad pointed out that they've got good examples of bridges that do not restrict the lateral movement of overland flow due to equalization culverts.
- There was some discussion about fragmentation of aquatic habitats where proposed bridges cross anadromous streams. Title 41 (Alaska Statute 41.14.840 (Fishway Act)) requires that a structure not fragment a waterway used by fish.
- ARRC will have to plan bridges to withstand a 100-year event. OHMP is making it a standard requirement (except for DOT) that stream simulation use a 125% stream width modeling criteria.

Project Timeline

- Assuming that the STB begins the project in January, scoping could begin as early as March 2008. The Railroad will be advocating including ADNOR as a cooperating agency. The Railroad will continue talking to agencies regarding significant issues.

Consultation with SHPO

- The Railroad cannot talk to SHPO about the APE; this is going to be hashed out by the STB. The discussion now revolves around that of historic landscapes.

OHMP letter discussion

- The Railroad is not in the position to eliminate any of the alternatives. There was discussion about the statement saying floodplains must be spanned by bridge structures/piers. Keeping bridge piers outside the floodplain is not practicable.
- All comments are noted as being preliminary, but accurate. Mike Bethe said that regarding fish passage and bridge structures, the MOU between DOT and ADF&G is a good place to start.
- Mike Bethe noted that ADF&G will have significant input on fish issues and all future meetings and correspondences should also include them.

Existing data vs. Gathering Additional Data

- OHMP doesn't think existing data is good enough to base specific decisions on. There would need to be much better wetlands data and fish sampling to make informed decisions. It is unlikely that the data requirements requested from the USACE would satisfy the data requirements for OHMP.
- OHMP may not require fish sampling on every little drainage. They will want a say in the fish sampling methodology.
- ARRC was inquiring into whether DNR-OHMP would ask for a project area-wide sampling measures or would they be more interested in doing finer sampling/data gathering on just one alternative-when there is a preferred selection. The letter coming from OHMP will mention that they are comfortable using existing data for narrowing down their preferred alternative and will then mention what additional data would be necessary on the alternatives that require more careful analysis.
- OHMP noted that detailed fish sampling could benefit the ARRC in that perhaps special bridge designs may not be needed on certain stream crossings if the results do not warrant it.

Parks & Outdoor Rec

- ARRC would like to see letter to be issued by DNR-Parks & OR explain their stance on each route. It should explain the practical realities of an alternative impacting a park or refuge. The ARRC needs to know DNR position on the proposed alternatives.
- Wayne Biesell will issue a letter by Nov. 15th to be provided to the MSB Assembly. He said it is premature to discuss mitigation before a preferred alternative is selected.

Other

- OHMP suggested that ADEC be involved in agency discussions. They have purview over water quality issues and often time ADEC and ADF&G comments overlap one another
- As it relates to ADEC, the Railroad has a spill response plan in place and it would be amended to include the Pt. Mac project area.



Meeting Notes

Subject: USACE Agency meeting	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: November 21, 2007, 1:30 – 2:15 pm	Meeting Location: HDR office
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Sasha Forland, ARRC
Donna Robertson, HDR Alaska, Inc.
Jon Schick, HDR Alaska, Inc

Leroy Phillips, USACE
Serena Sweet, USACE
Mike Pochop, TNH-Hanson
Brian Kovol, TNH-Hanson

Agenda

The purpose of this meeting was to follow up on the October 02, 2007 initial meeting with the USACE. ARRC wanted to get early feedback on the USACE's concerns about the project, discuss wetlands and identification of wetlands for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and begin a discussion on acceptable potential mitigation measures.

Topics Discussed

General USACE Concerns

- Ms. Serena Sweet provided attendees a preliminary letter outlining the agency's broad view of the project. The letter details additional measures needed in delineating wetlands and assessing function in order to obtain a Dept of Army permit.
- In general, the USACE will be concerned with wetlands, anadromous streams, and fish habitat. In consulting with the SHPO, they will also be concerned with historic sites.

Wetlands Data for NEPA

- USACE expressed concern about the lack of adequate baseline wetlands data. It was explained that at this stage of the project, the team has used existing data, primarily National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) data, for the project area.
- The ARRC inquired into whether or not NWI data is sufficient for a project-wide assessment of alternatives during the NEPA process or if data collection and reporting would be required for all alternatives. The USACE would like to see all alternatives carried through with the same level of baseline data.
- The USACE would not be satisfied with only NWI data. They did mention, however, that by supplementing the NWI data with soils data, aerial photography, and some ground truthing, the NWI data accuracy increases and that would suffice for the adequate baseline data for all alternatives.

Wetlands Classification

- The USACE would like to see a HGM-type (hydrogeomorphic model approach) wetlands functional assessment for this project.
- The USACE suggested looking at the modified HGM ("HGM-light") procedures HDR used for the Chuitna Coal project for an example of the type of functional assessment appropriate for the NEPA process for this project.

The STB and NEPA Process

- ARRC provided a brief summary of the hopeful schedule once all project materials are turned in to the STB. If all goes smoothly, the STB could begin their scoping process as early as March or April 2008. The ideal schedule would allow for only 1 field season in spring/summer of 2008.
- The USACE is required by law to be a cooperating agency during the NEPA process. It was agreed that the USACE needs should be tied into the scoping process, the sooner the better.
- It was the USACE intention to run the permitting process concurrent with the EIS.
- ARRC mentioned the Northern Rail Extension project and the MOU between the Fairbanks USACE office and the STB. The USACE said they could use this MOU as a model.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15pm.



Meeting Notes

Subject: DOT&PF Agency meeting	
Client: Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Project: Port MacKenzie Rail Extension	Project No: 09585-67879
Meeting Date: December 5, 2007, 1:00 – 2:15 pm	Meeting Location: DOT&PF Central Region office
Notes by: HDR Alaska – JS	

Attendees:

ARRC

Brian Lindamood
Tom Brooks

HDR Alaska, Inc.

Donna Robertson
Jon Schick
Tom Brigham

TNH-Hanson

Norm Gutcher

KABATA

George Wuerch,
Andrew Niemiec

DOT&PF

Steve Horn
Jennifer Witt

Gordon Keith
Rob Campbell
Kim Rice
John Tolley
Scott Karner

MSB

Brad Sworts
Joe Perkins

Agenda

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension project to Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) staff. Joe Perkins and Brian Lindamood presented a PowerPoint presentation on the project background, environmental and engineering constraints mapping, and project scheduling.

Topics Discussed

General Project Information from Presentation

- Joe Perkins presented the project to the DOT&PF and KABATA representatives. The presentation touched on the history of the project, project team members and consultants, public involvement component, involvement of the Surface Transportation Board (STB), and project timeline.
- Joe noted that although it is not fully known yet, the STB more or less agreed this project would involve preparation of an EIS.
- All of the work done up until the delivery of the report to the STB is done in order to streamline the EIS process by getting them the necessary information early to successfully and efficiently prepare an EIS. It will provide them the breadth of concerns from the public and agencies. The environmental analysis that is being prepared for the STB is more or less the equivalent of an environmental assessment.

Discussions from the Q/A Session:

EIS Schedule

- DOT&PF staff asked about the 18 month EIS schedule and how that could happen in cooperation with the STB. Brian noted that they have requested a waiver with the STB to allow the ARRC to forego the 6 month waiting period the STB normally requires prior to starting an EIS. The Port Mac Team has hired an attorney in Washington D.C. who specializes in supporting Applicants during the NEPA process with the STB. This is standard practice during the third-party NEPA process which fosters communication between the STB and ARRC and helps maintain the project schedule.

- There was discussion of the STB's EIS process. The STB will choose a 3rd party consultant from a list of consulting firms. The 3rd party consultant will prepare the EIS at the direction of the STB. The ARRC will have limited contact with the 3rd party consultant during the EIS preparation.
- It is likely the largest potential hold-up in getting an EIS completed in 18 months is the level of public controversy. It was noted that this is why this pre-scoping work was being done—to limit the surprises and disclose as much information as possible to the public, regulatory agencies, and the STB.
- The STB does not have a 4(f) process, which could help in expediting the project. But, depending on funding for the project (e.g., Federal Railroad Administration [FRA]), 4(f) analysis may be required. The ARRC has approached the FRA about being a cooperating agency partly to ensure the section 4(f) analysis is completed as part of the NEPA process and 4(f) does not delay the project later.
- The ARRC is hoping to have all field work completed in one field season in order to adhere to the strict timeframe.

Is there a Preferred Route? Could it be a multi-purpose corridor?

- It was noted that the article in the Anchorage Daily News spoke of a preferred route, based on the matrix evaluation. To complicate the matter even more, the MSB is on record as endorsing the Willow route as presented from the 2003 reconnaissance study. Brian explained that there is no preferred alternative yet. Based on the objective evaluation of criteria within the matrix one route does in fact present less impacts. The EIS process and the STB could very well identify other routes or remove existing alternatives, so nothing is etched in stone.
- The MSB identified an 800-foot-wide multi-modal corridor for this project in the 2003 reconnaissance study. It has since been reduced to a 200-foot-wide corridor for rail only. A single purpose corridor is safer for rail and has the potential for fewer environmental impacts. From their standpoint and 20-year outlook, DOT&PF doesn't foresee the need to include an adjacent highway.

Project Funding?

- The project is being funded by a \$10 million appropriation by the State Legislature to study the rail extension and prepare an environmental document. The ARRC intends on getting the whole process completed, including the EIS, for under \$10 million.
- It is not yet known how the construction of this project will be funded.

Has there been coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to discuss wetland impacts?

- ARRC has been proactive with involving agencies. Discussions have already taken place with the USACE on potential wetland impacts. The MSB has also been proactive with the creation of wetland banks from which this project may draw from.

Joe and Brian concluded the presentation by asking DOT&PF to remain communicative with their plans for future transportation projects and how they may interact with or impact this rail project. Such projects could be the Wasilla Bypass project or Knik Arm Crossing.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.



Port MacKenzie Rail Extension Project

Agency Meeting

550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 705

Tuesday, September 18, 2007

9:00 am

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Oct. 02 2007

Wetlands Meeting w/ USACE

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
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Jon Schuck	HDR	644-2095	jon.schuck@hdrinc.com
Irvin T. Joy	COE	753-2144	irvin.t.joy@ usace.army.mil
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Barb Hotchkiss	ARRC	265-2373	hotchkiss@arrc.ca



Port MacKenzie Rail Extension

Agency Meeting – ADNR, MSB, BLM: Trails Discussion
October 17, 2007 Wednesday 10:00am – DNR office.

Name	Company	Phone	Email
Jon Schick	HDR	644 2015	jon.schick@hdrinc.com
Ben Lindmark	APRC	265-3095	lindmarkb@alerr.com
Don Perrin	KDJR	269-7476	don.perrin@alaska.gov
Kevin Ardison	HDR	644 2077	kevin.ardison@hdrinc.com
Bruce Paulsen	MSB	745-9867	bruce.paulsen@matsugov.us
Neil Shishido	DNR	269-8564	neil.shishido@alaska.gov
Ben Hagedorn	DNR	334-2676	benjamin.hagedorn@alaska.gov
Sam Means	"	269-8548	Sam.means@alaska.gov
Donna Robertson	HDR	644-2127	donna.robertson@hdrinc.com
Kevin Keebler	BLM	267-1207	keebler@blm.gov
Fran Seager-Boss	MSB	745-9859	fseagerboss@matsugov.us
Brad Swalts	MSB		



Port MacKenzie Rail Extension

Agency Meeting – Alaska DOT&PF

December 5, 2007 Wednesday 1:00pm – DOT&PF office

Name	Company	Phone	Email
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Joe Perkins	MSB / Consultant		