



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

ANCHORAGE
Regulatory Division (1145)
CEPOA-RD
Post Office Box 6898
JBER, Alaska 99506-0898

Public Notice of Application for Permit

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:	July 1, 2025
EXPIRATION DATE:	July 16, 2025
REFERENCE NUMBER:	POA-2021-00192-M1
WATERWAY:	Smith and Inmachuk Rivers

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States (WOTUS) as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

All comments regarding this public notice should be sent to the address noted above. If you desire to submit your comments by email, you should send it to the project manager's email as listed below or to regpagemaster@usace.army.mil. All comments should include the public notice reference number listed above.

All comments should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this public notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Andrew Kastning at (907) 753-2554, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, or by email at Andrew.C.Kastning@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this public notice.

APPLICANT: Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF),
Mr. William Sexton, 2301 Peger Rd, Fairbanks, AK 99709

LOCATION: The project site is located within Section 24, 25, 36, T. 08 N., R. 20 W.; Section 19, 30, T. 08 N., R. 19 W.; and Section 02, 10, 1, 16, 20, T. 07 N., R. 20 W, Kateel Meridian; Latitude 66.0743° N., Longitude 162.7463° W.; near Deering, Alaska.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to request a time extension and add two material sites to Individual Permit POA-2021-00192, for the rehabilitation and access road improvements of the Deering Airport. The project purpose is also to bring the airport to current

standards and criteria identified in the Alaska Plan, the Alaska Aviation System Plan, and current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) design standards.

PROPOSED WORK: The Applicant proposes to resurface the existing runway, rehabilitate runway embankments, replace the airport lighting, improve airport drainage, and construct a new access road to the airport with a bridge over Smith Creek. The new bridge would have earthen abutments and approaches on either side of Smith Creek. The new road would provide all season access to the Deering Airport. For this Permit Modification, updated design work has estimated that an additional 50,055 cubic yards of fill would be needed, bringing the total fill requirements for the project to 170,805 cy. Fill material (sand and gravel) would be excavated down to 2.5 feet below ordinary high water from up to seven material sites in the Inmachuk River impacting 19.7 acres of Waters of the United States. The new access road to the Deering Airport requires fill placement into approximately 8.1 acres of wetlands. To stabilize thawing permafrost around the runway new fill material would be placed on existing runway embankments and into adjacent wetlands. Airport fill would total approximately 10.4 acres in wetlands. The rip rap protecting the bridge embankments would impact 0.23 acre of WOTUS. A total of 18.8 acres of WOTUS would be filled for the entire project. Temporary workspace of 4.8 acres, would buffer the evacuation and access road. Vegetation grubbing for the project would take place before May 20th or after July 20th to avoid impacts to nesting migratory birds. All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (sheets 1-11), dated February 2025.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DOT&PF has revised the existing ADF&G Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit to allow for greater depth of excavation.

APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the United States from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

a. Avoidance: This project is located in the Norton Sound Highlands land resource area in western Alaska, where wetlands are estimated to be 52.9 percent of the surface area. Stantec completed wetland mapping on 1,361 acres and uplands totaled 90 acres (6.7 percent upland) in the area using high resolution aerial photography and elevation data. Mapping classifications included National Wetlands Inventory (Cowardin et al. 1979) and consolidated Viereck (Viereck et al. 1992) habitat classifications (Stantec 2021). The Deering Road network, airport, supporting infrastructure, portions of material sites, and the village are on uplands. Additionally, several small upland areas were mapped on berms and cut banks adjacent to rivers and streams. According to the Applicant, total avoidance of wetland impacts during any type of development for the Deering Airport would neither be practicable nor possible.

b. Minimization: The design incorporates existing roads, minimizing impacts to WOTUS, to include wetlands and streams. The construction equipment will be offloaded at the barge landing during the summer. Equipment will be stored in designated upland areas. Temporary Work Areas: The access road as well as the bridge approaches are proposed to be located in a temporary 25-foot-wide work area on either side. This buffer has been included in the drawings (Sheets 2-5). This has been included to allow for construction deviations with

equipment beyond the toe-to-toe layout of the road and bridge embankments. The buffer areas would be reseeded, if needed when construction is complete. This acreage has been calculated as temporary work area totaling 4.8 acres. Access Road Drainage Construction Minimization Measures: Appropriately sized culverts would be placed along the access road to maintain hydrologic connectivity of the adjacent wetlands. The figures show several proposed locations. No additional fill is required for the culvert placements. The fill is calculated as part of the roadway. Swales and other concave landscape features that collect water would have hydrologic connectivity maintained using culverts. A two-lane bridge would cross Smith Creek and has been designed to accommodate high water, navigation, and winter snow machine traffic. Abutments would be placed on either side of the creek within the floodplain. Rip rap layout was designed to protect the embankments at all water stages. Erosion Sediment Control Plans and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs) would be developed and implemented to prevent introduction of sediments and consequent turbidity into WOTUS during construction. Best Management Practice (BMP)s will be used project-wide to maintain instream water quality and stream bank stability.

c. Compensatory Mitigation: The Applicant's stated reason for this project is public safety; for both the runway and access road. There are no external economic drivers. Due to the avoidance and minimization efforts the Alaska Department Of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) has undertaken with community input during the planning and design of this project, minimal cumulative impacts, the in-river material site locations and the vast undeveloped wetland landscape within the watershed, North Arctic Brough (NAB) subsistence zoning, and by following the 404(b)(1) Guidelines sequencing, and adhering to current Alaska regulatory guidance, no compensatory mitigation is proposed by the applicant to offset the 18.8 acres of permanent losses to wetlands and waters in this location. The temporary impacts of 4.8 acres would be restored to preconstruction conditions following construction.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The lead Federal agency, ADOT&PF, by agreement of the FAA, is responsible for compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. ADOT&PF consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) during the original permit process which included review of the two additional material sites proposed for this modification, and on April 2, 2021, SHPO concurred with a determination of no adverse affect to historic properties.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The project area is within the known or historic range of the bearded seal (*Erignathus barbatus*), ringed seal (*Phoca hispida*), western distinct population segment (DPS) of the Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*), North Pacific right whale (*Eubalaena japonica*), Mexico DPS of the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), western North Pacific DPS of the humpback whale, fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*), sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Cook Inlet beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*), bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*). The proposed project is also within designated critical habitat for

Steller sea lion, Cook Inlet beluga whale, North Pacific right whale spectacled eiders (*Somateria fischeri*), Alaska-breeding Steller's eiders (*Polysticta stelleri*), and polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*). The ADOT&PF is the lead federal agency by agreement with the FAA. Section 7 consultation was completed between ADOT&PF and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and on February 22, 2021, NMFS concurred with ADOT&PF's effects determination of may affect, but not likely to adversely effect, with the implementation of required mitigation measures. Also, Section 7 consultation was completed between ADOT&PF and the United States Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), and on December 11, 2020, USFWS concurred with ADOT&PF's effects determination of not likely to adversely effect, with implementation of the Polar Bear Interaction Guidelines. The additional material sites added to the proposal modification were included in the original consultations with federal agencies.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

The project area is within mapped EFH for chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*), pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*), and Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*).

We are currently gathering information regarding these species and have yet to make a determination of effect. Should we find that the described activity may adversely affect EFH for the species listed above, we will follow the appropriate course of action under Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Any comments the NMFS may have concerning EFH will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the USACE, Alaska District, on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This public notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal rights or resources. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander. This application is being coordinated with federally recognized tribes and other consulting parties. Any comments federal recognized tribes and other consulting parties may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by the work under the requested permit will be considered in the USACE final assessment of the described work.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

USACE is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by USACE to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

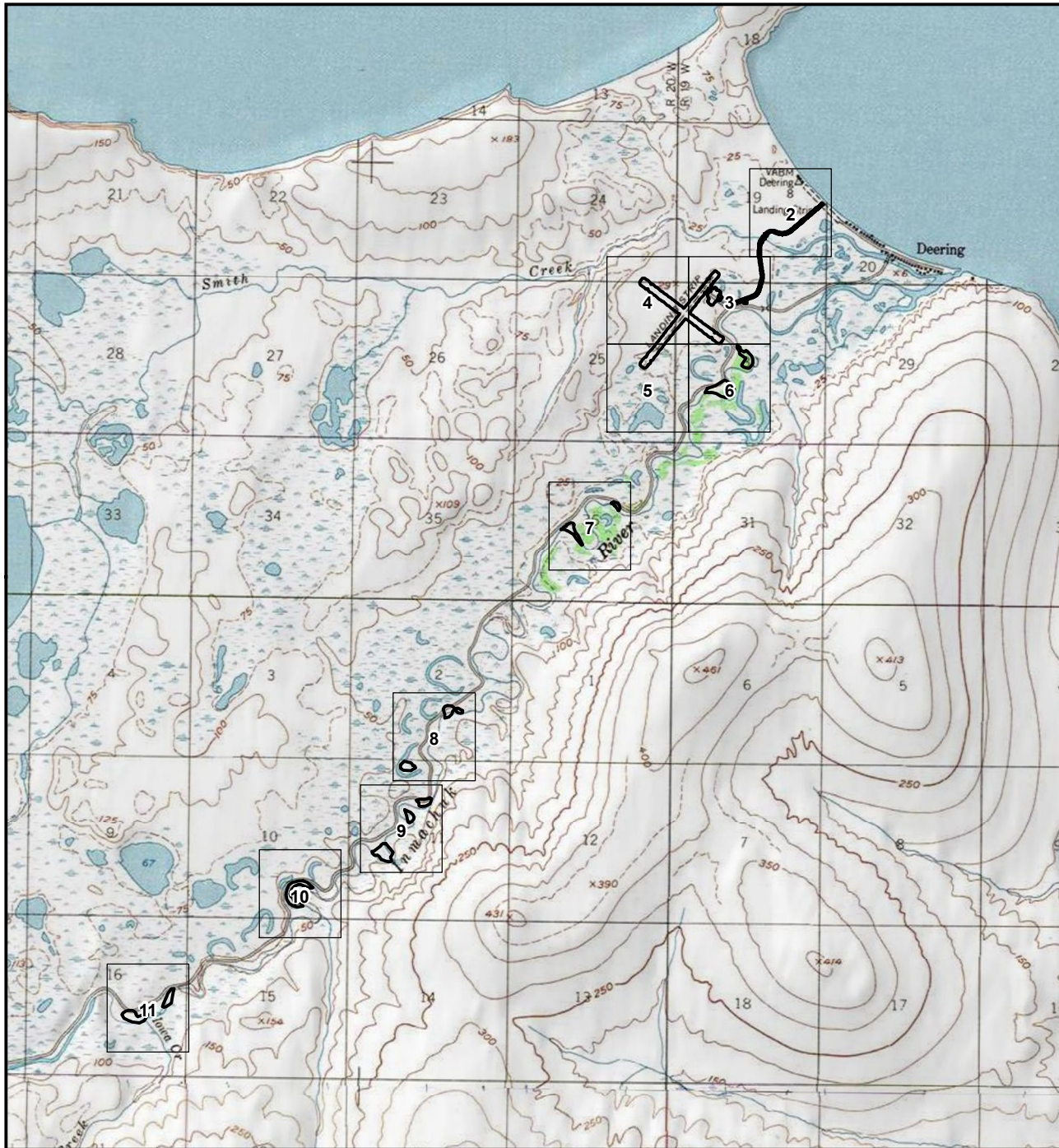
AUTHORITY: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authority:

(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States – Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

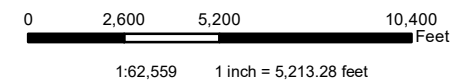
Project drawings are enclosed with this public notice.

District Commander
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures



- Detail Sheet
- Project Footprint



Notes

1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Alaska 7 FIPS 5007 Feet



STATE OF ALASKA
 Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
 2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, AK 99709

Deering Airport and Access Road Improvements

File No.: POA-2021-00192 Waterway: Smith Creek

Proposed Activity: [Modification] Resurface and rehabilitate Deering Airport; construct new airport access road

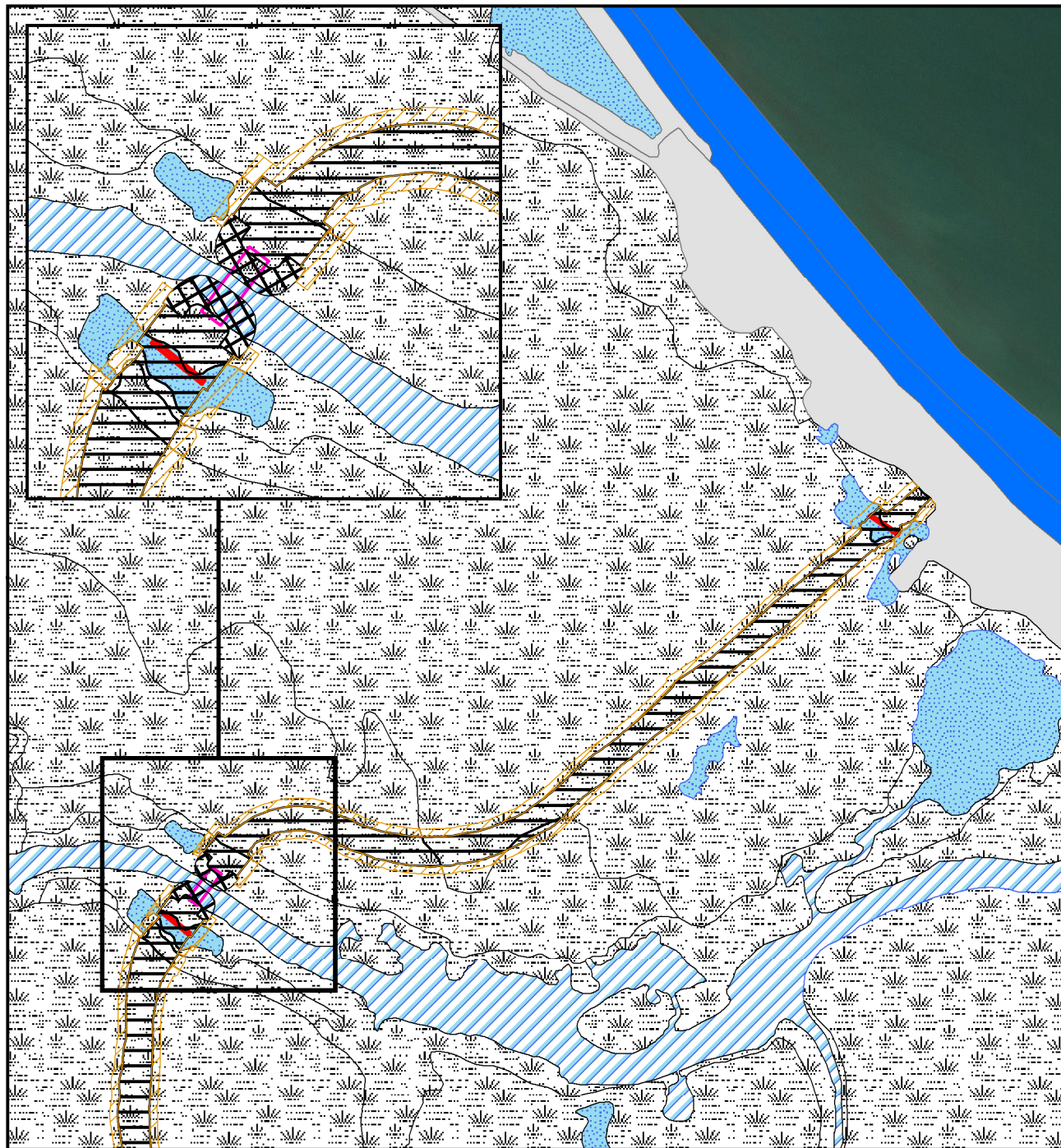
Kateel River Meridian: T8N, R20W, S 24, 25, 36; T8N, R19W, S 19, 30; T7N, R20W, S 2, 10, 11, 16, 20



Latitude: 66.0743 Longitude: -162.7463

DATE: Feb 2025

Sheet 1

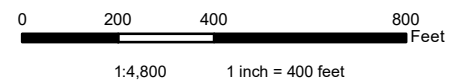


Impact

- Fill in WOUS
- Rip rap in WOUS
- Temporary Work Pad in WOUS
- Culvert
- Bridge

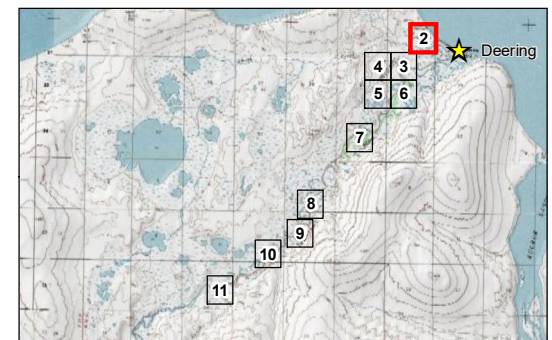
WOUS Status

- Wetland
- Pond
- Tributary
- Traditional Navigable Water
- Upland/Existing Fill



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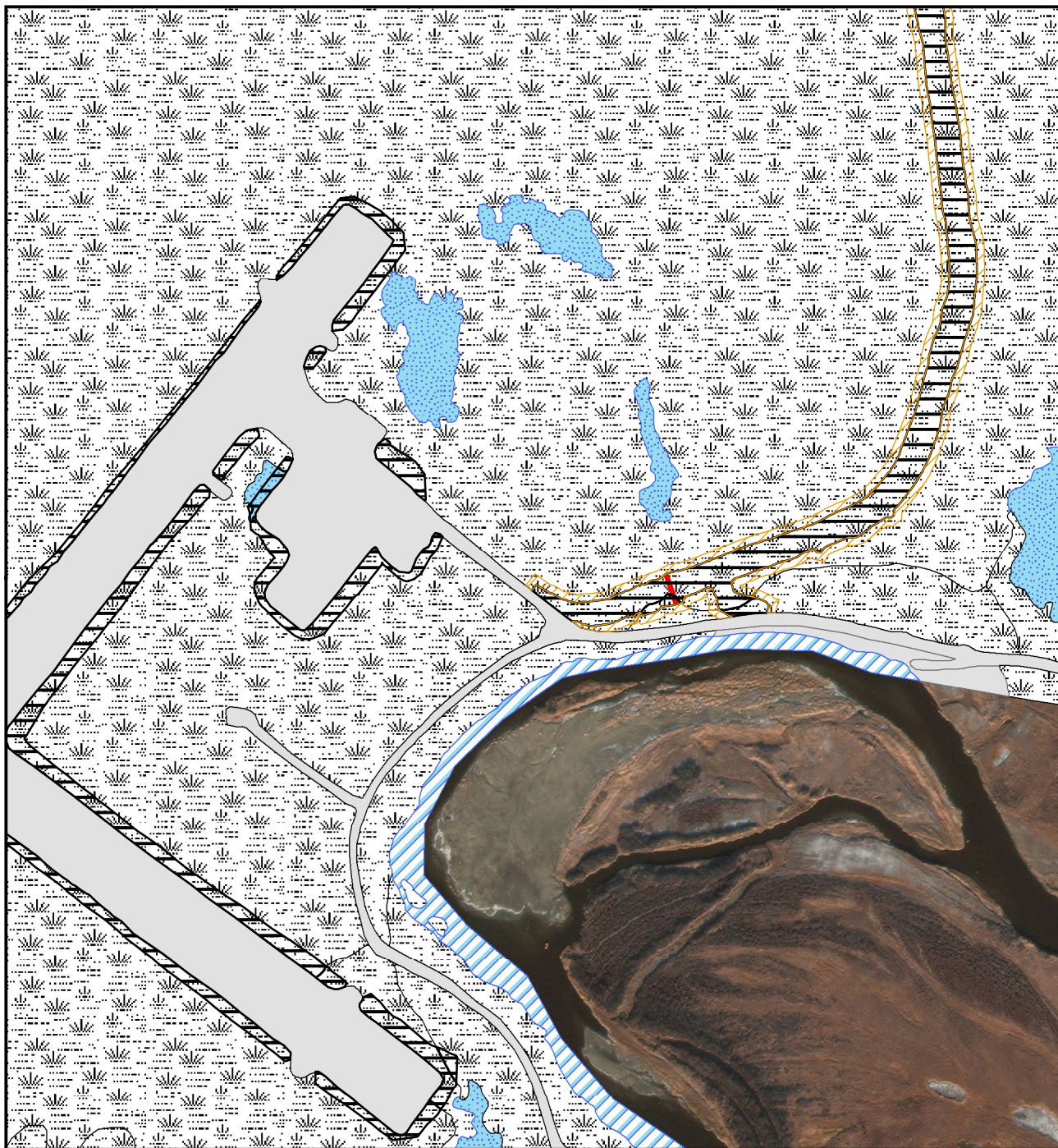
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Sheet 2

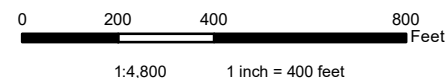


Impact

- Fill in WOUS
- Rip rap in WOUS
- Temporary Work Pad in WOUS
- Culvert

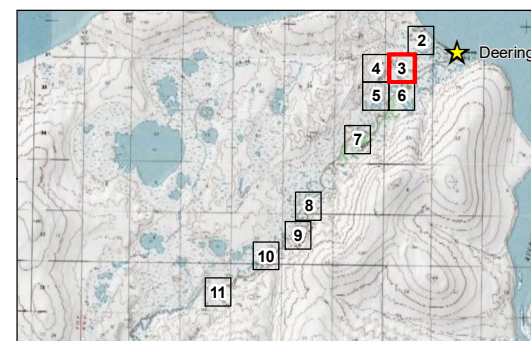
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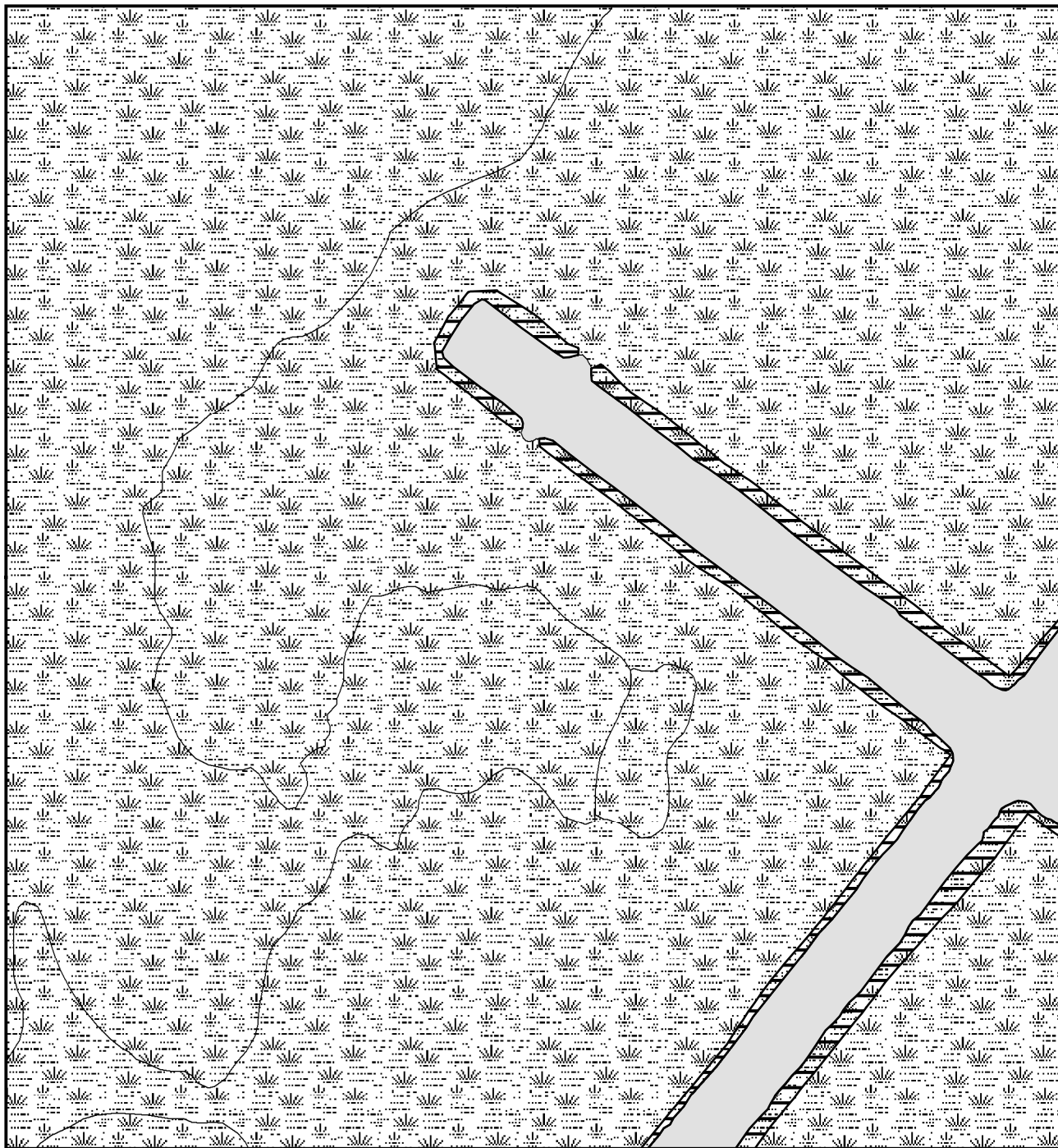
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Sheet 3

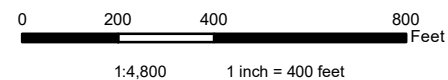


Impact

- Fill in WOUS
- Rip rap in WOUS
- Temporary Work Pad in WOUS

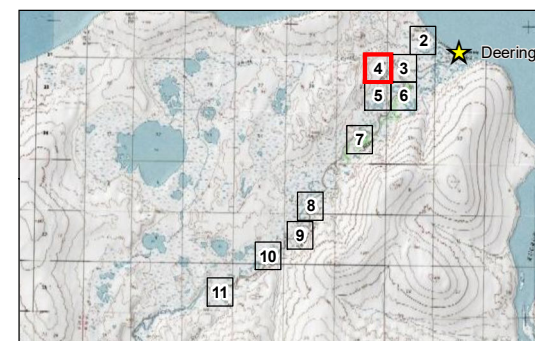
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- Pond
- Tributary
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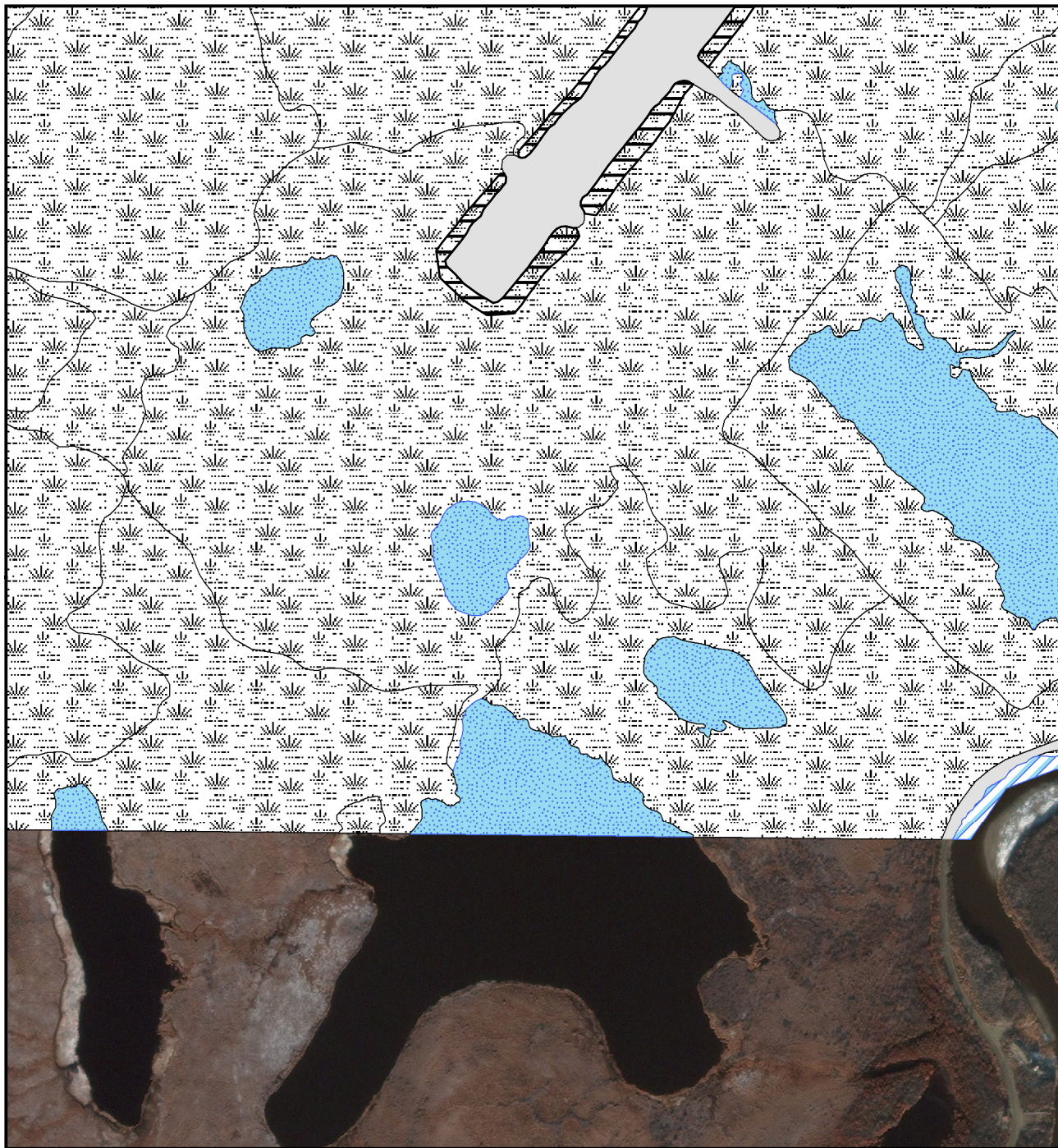
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Sheet 4

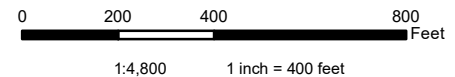


Impact

- Fill in WOUS
- Rip rap in WOUS
- Temporary Work Pad in WOUS

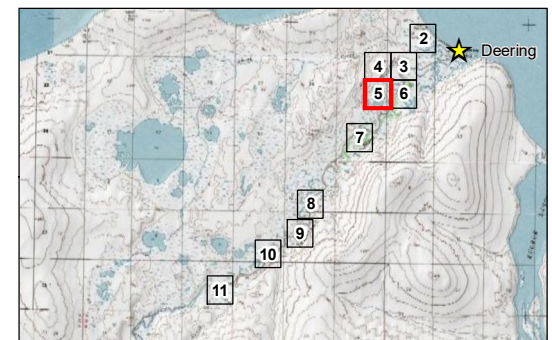
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Sheet 5

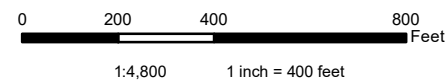


Impact

- Fill in WOUS
- Rip rap in WOUS
- Temporary Work Pad in WOUS
- Potential Material Site
- Potential Staging Area

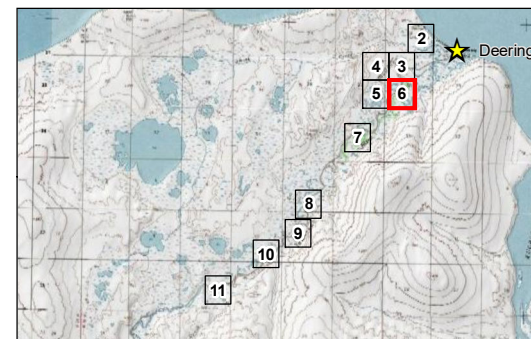
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Sheet 6

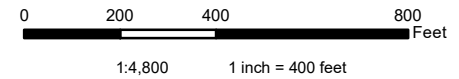


Impact

- Fill in WOUS
- Rip rap in WOUS
- Temporary Work Pad in WOUS
- Potential Material Site

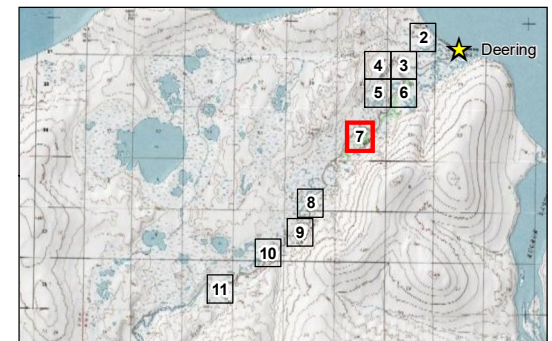
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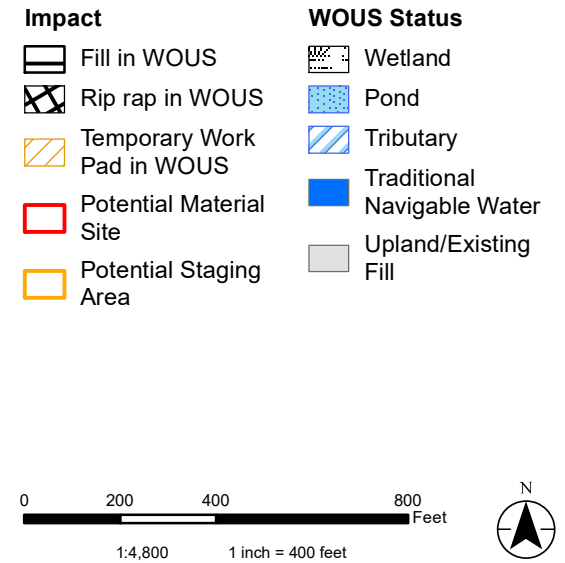
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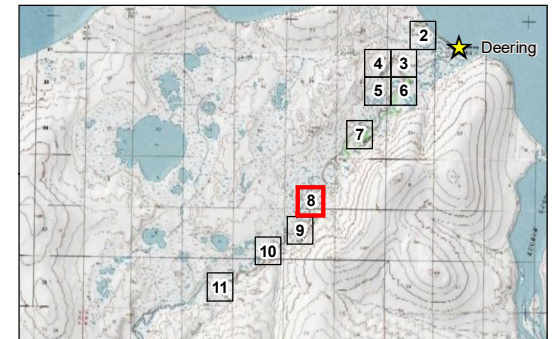
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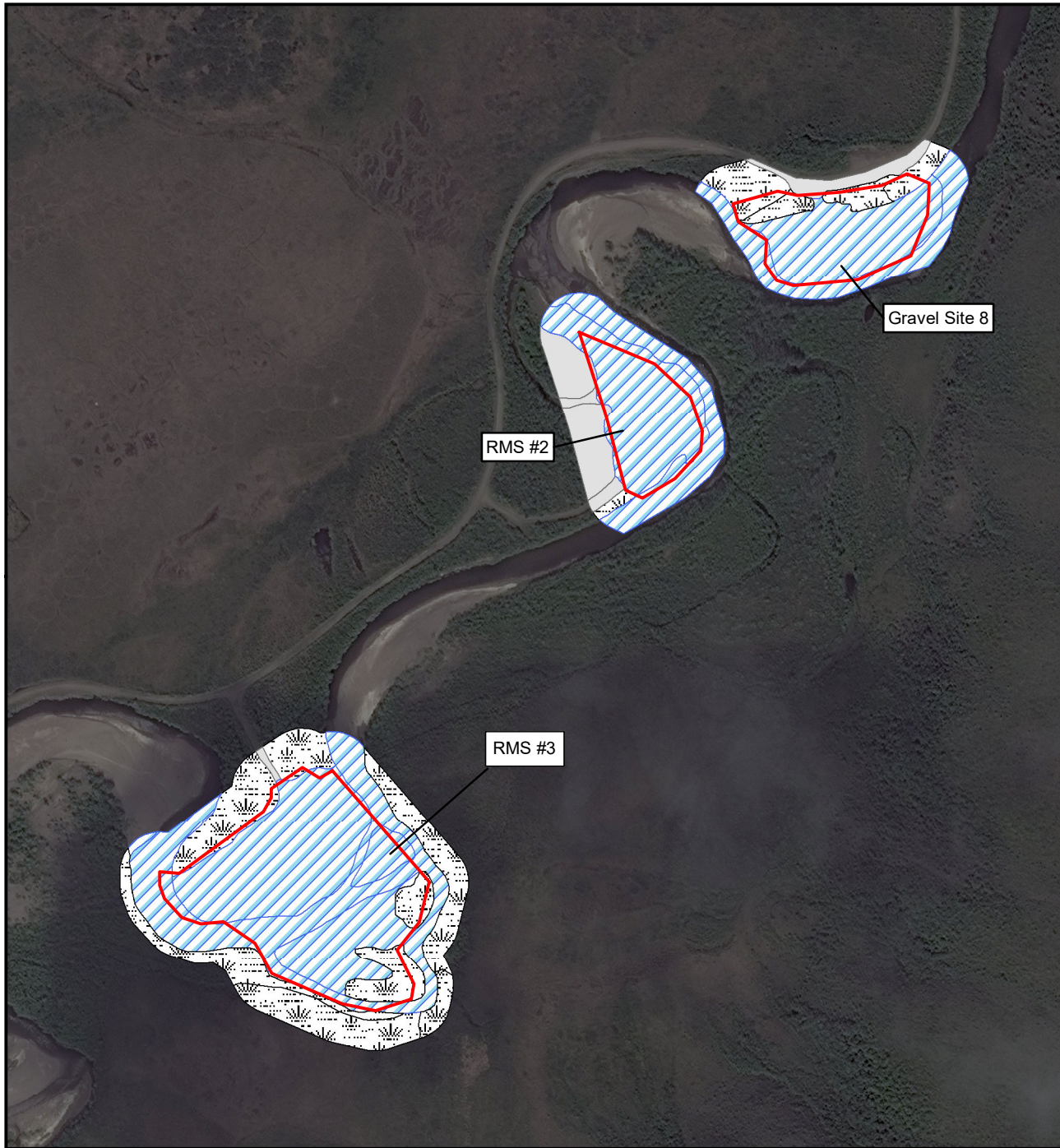


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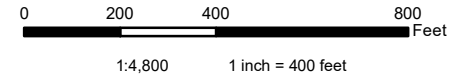


Impact

-  Fill in WOUS
-  Rip rap in WOUS
-  Temporary Work Pad in WOUS
-  Potential Material Site

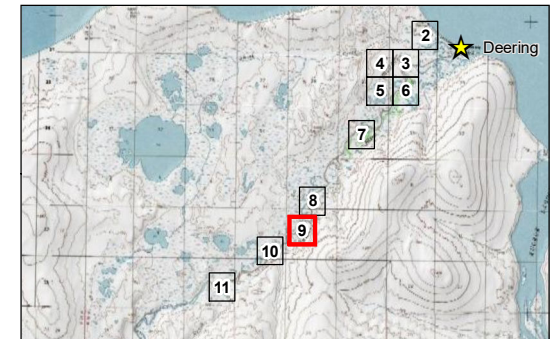
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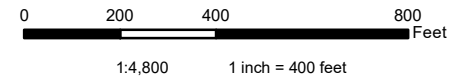


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- Potential Material Site

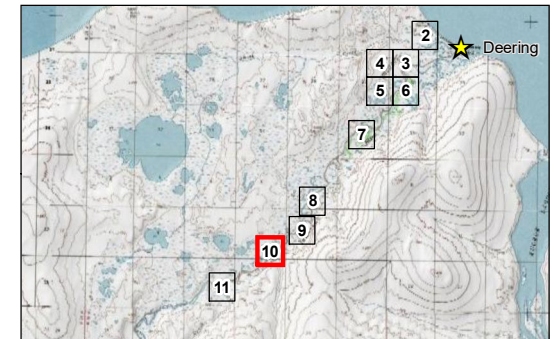
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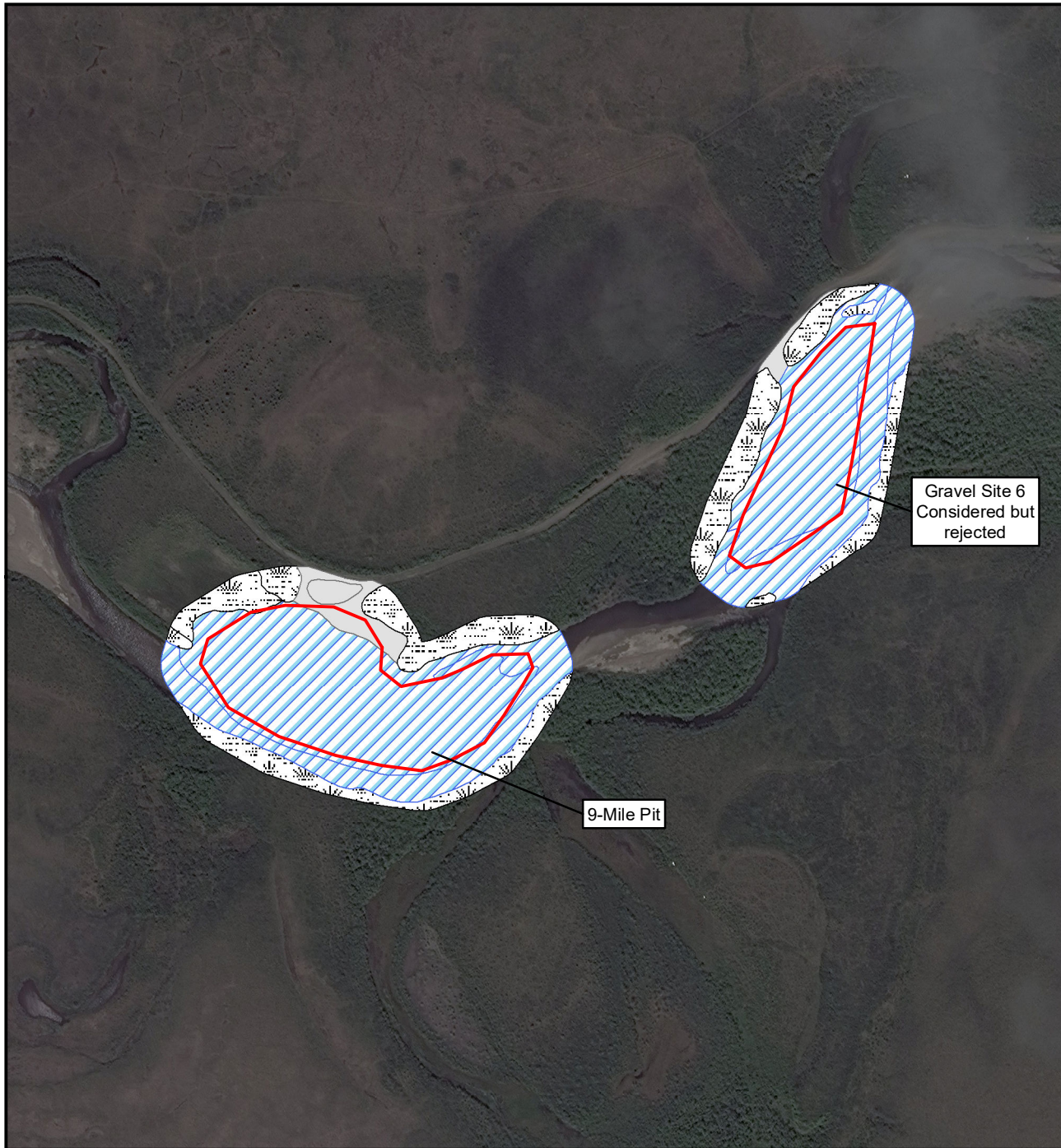


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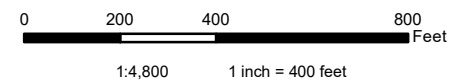
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	Latitude: 66.0743 Longitude: -162.7463
	DATE: Feb 2025
Sheet 10	

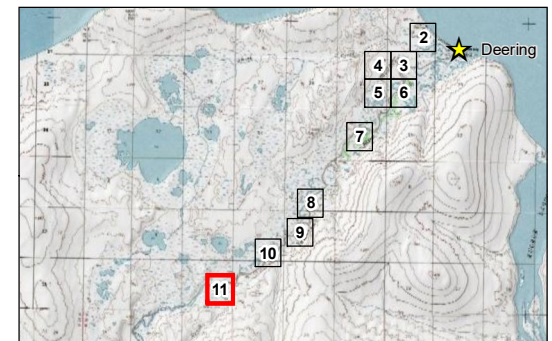


Impact		WOUS Status	
	Fill in WOUS		Wetland
	Rip rap in WOUS		Pond
	Temporary Work Pad in WOUS		Tributary
	Potential Material Site		Traditional Navigable Water
			Upland/Existing Fill



Notes

1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Alaska 7 FIPS 5007 Feet



STATE OF ALASKA	
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	
2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, AK 99709	
Deering Airport and Access Road Improvements	
File No.: POA-2021-00192	Waterway: Smith Creek
Proposed Activity: [Modification] Resurface and rehabilitate Deering Airport; construct new airport access road	
Kateel River Meridian: T8N, R20W, S 24, 25, 36; T8N, R19W, S 19, 30; T7N, R20W, S 2, 10, 11, 16, 20	
	Latitude: 66.0743 Longitude: -162.7463
	DATE: Feb 2025
	Sheet 11