



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

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Public Notice of Application for Permit

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:	September 25, 2026
EXPIRATION DATE:	October 13, 2026
REFERENCE NUMBER:	POA-2022-00165
WATERWAY:	Skwentna River

Public Notice for a Standard Individual Permit Application to be Processed using the Procedures Outlined in the Alaska District Standard Operating Procedures for Processing of Permit Applications in Emergency Situations Pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 14156

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that the following request associated with the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) has been submitted for a Department of the Army (DA) permit under the provisions of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In EO 14156 the President declared a national emergency under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1621) based upon the finding that the United States' insufficient energy production, transportation, refining, and generation constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to our Nation's economy, national security, and foreign policy. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Alaska District has found that this permit request meets the terms of EO 14156 and is therefore subject to special emergency permitting procedures to address an energy supply situation which would result in an unacceptable hazard to life, a significant loss of property, or an immediate, unforeseen, and significant economic hardship if corrective action requiring a permit is not undertaken within a time period less than the normal time needed to process the application under standard procedures. The Alaska District will implement the special processing procedures approved by Pacific Ocean Division in accordance with 33 CFR § 325.2(e)(4). Additionally, USACE has identified this project as a critical mineral project per EO 14241, Immediate

Measures to Increase American Mineral Production, as amended by EO 14261, Reinvigorating America's Beautiful Clean Coal Industry and Amending Executive Order 14241. The Governor of Alaska has also requested that the Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Works render assistance on this project, in accordance with EO 14153, Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential.

APPLICANT: Mr. Jeffrey San Juan
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AGENT: Mr. Todd Hill
VHB
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LOCATION OF WORK: The proposed project site is located across several townships, ranges, and sections, and within the Johnson Creek, Middle and Lower Skwentna River, and Alexander Creek watersheds; between USGS Quads Tyonek C-2 and Tyonek D-7; the project is proposed to start at approximately 1.4 miles west of Alexander Creek (Latitude 61.55290° N., Longitude 150.67317° W.), at the end of the proposed Alaska DOT&PF West Susitna Access Road, and would continue for 78.5 miles northwestward into the Skwentna River Valley, and would end at the Whiskey Bravo Airstrip (Latitude 61.96250° N., Longitude 152.58727° W.), Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB), Alaska.

PROJECT PURPOSE: The Applicant's stated purpose of the West Susitna Access Project is "to provide safe, year-round public road access to remote areas of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough". The basic project purpose is of the West Susitna Access Project is transportation for a wide user group consisting of recreational, residential, commercial, and industrial users.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK: Based on preliminary information, the applicant would place up to 700,000 cubic yards of fill material (crushed stone/gravel, non-frost-susceptible aggregate with less 6% fines, sand, gravel, rock, or combination without muck, peat, roots, sod, etc., affecting compaction) in less than 66 acres of aquatic resources to construct a 24-foot wide by 78.5-mile long gravel road, with two 10-foot-wide travel lanes and 2-foot outside shoulders, within a 300-foot-wide right-of-way (USACE is currently performing an approved jurisdictional determination to refine the acreage of waters of the United States (WOTUS)). The applicant has provided figures detailing potential impacts to aquatic resources (Figures I-001-I-086). A dust palliative such as calcium chloride may be mixed in with the crushed aggregate surface course material to control dust. All access roads would also be 24-foot-wide to accommodate heavy machinery. Approximately 100-foot dual pullouts would be constructed every mile and 300-foot-dual pullouts every 6 miles. The road design would meet the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards for a

Rural Recreational and Scenic Road (AASHTO 2001). Although the roadway would be designed for highway-legal vehicles, the design would not preclude oversize or overweight vehicles with proper traffic control and other considerations.

Additional Road Components

1. Bridges.

The proposed project would require the construction of 10 bridges. None of the waterways to be bridged are currently listed as navigable by the U.S. Coast Guard or USACE or are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide.

Bridges would have a useable roadway width of 28 feet plus 1.5 feet on each side to allow for railings, for an overall width of 31 feet. Bridge spans up to approximately 150 feet would be subject to site specific designs that may include modular-type pre-engineered bridges (e.g. Acrow Bridge, Bailey Bridge, etc.) or DOT&PF-standard precast deck-bulb-tee girders. Similarly, bridge spans over 150 feet would be subject to site specific designs that may include modular pre-engineered bridge or steel plate girder bridges with cast-in-place concrete deck. A minimum 25-foot setback from the bankfull edge of the waterway or adjacent wetland boundary would be maintained to the toe of end slopes. End slopes are proposed to be 2 Horizontal (H):1 Vertical (V) for intermediate and complex bridges. Vertical abutments are proposed for routine single span bridges. During final design, bridge lengths would be refined with more detailed topographic survey, hydraulic analysis, regulatory agency consultation, and structural/geometric optimization. The minimum vertical clearance below bridges (OHW elevation to the lowest bridge superstructure member) is 15 feet for streams that have boat traffic or could in the future. The minimum vertical clearance below bridges is 8 feet for streams that are not expected to have boat traffic. Vertical clearance requirements would also be refined based on site-specific hydrology and hydraulics during final design. Figures BX-001 through BX-010 show the plan and profile of each bridge crossing.

Table A: Bridge Crossings.

Stream Name	Stream Crossing ID	Plan and Profile Figure Number ^a	Milepost	Approximate Length (feet)	Number of Spans
Wolverine Creek	SCA019.0	BX-001	6.0	135	1
Upper Sucker Creek	SCA025.0	BX-002	9.3	110	1
Bear Creek	SCA036.0	BX-003	15.9	90	1
Clear Creek	SCA053.0	BX-004	21.6	90	1
Upper 8 Mile Creek	SCA072.0	BX-005	27.7	130	1
Skwentna River 1	SCA080.0	BX-006	33.6	588	3
Shell Creek	SCA082.0	BX-007	36.3	120	1
Skwentna River 2	SCA121.0	BX-008	69.2	350	2
Chickak River	SCA133.0	BX-009	71.7	310	3
Skwentna River 3	SCA148.0	BX-010	78.2	275	2

^a Figure BX-006 shows typical section for the Skwentna River Bridge. ID=Identifier.

2. Culverts.

Several streams would be crossed using culverts designed for either drainage or fish passage depending on their widths, stream characteristics, topographic considerations, or whether they are anadromous. There are 26 documented anadromous streams within the project footprint; other streams are likely to have resident fish based on location and connectivity to other streams. In total there would be approximately 138 culverts, of which approximately 35 would be drainage culverts and 103 fish passage culverts. Culvert width would range from 3 up to 50 feet wide depending on stream width. Figures CX-001 through CX-009 show the different culvert categories.

Table B: Estimated number of stream crossings.

Stream width (feet)	Stream Crossings – Culvert	Stream Crossings – Bridge	Total Stream Crossings	Anadromous Fish Stream Crossings^a	Resident and Anadromous Fish Stream Crossings^a
0–1	22	0	22	2	14
>1–5	92	0	92	9	68
>5–10	17	0	17	4	14
>10–15	4	1	5	2	5
>15–25	0	0	0	0	0
> 25	3	9	12	9	12
Total	138	10	148	26	113

^a Anadromous and resident fish stream crossings include 26 documented Alaska Waters Cataloged fish streams.

Drainage culverts

Drainage culverts (Culvert Categories 1, 2, 3, and 5) would be designed to meet the criteria provided in the Alaska Highway Preconstruction Manual (DOT&PF 2025) and Alaska Highway Drainage Manual (DOT&PF 2006). These manuals require drainage culverts to pass a specified design flood event without major impacts. The minimum size proposed for the proposed project is 3 feet in diameter to minimize ponding potential, improve constructability, and allow for breakup flow capacity if ice forms in the culverts. Culverts size would be defined during final design.

Fish Passage Culverts:

Fish passage culverts would be designed in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Culvert Design Guidelines for Ecological Function, Alaska Fish Passage Program (USFWS 2024). Fish passage culvert planning and design would use the following stream simulation design criteria: 1) Culvert width would be not less than 1.5 times bankfull width (it is assumed that OHW width equals bankfull width at this preliminary engineering stage); 2) Slope should be within 25% of the bankfull channel slope; 3) Culvert invert burial should be 0.4 times culvert diameter for circular culverts or 0.2 times culvert height for pipe arches; burial is measured at the channel bottom; 4) Substrate located in culverts would remain stable up to, and including, the 50-year

discharge; 4) Culverts would span the entire roadway toe-of-fill width plus one-half of the culvert height beyond the toe of fill; 5) Inlet and outlet protection should extend 2 times the culvert diameter from culvert end.

3. Material Sites.

There would be 17 material sites at approximately 1- to 7-mile intervals. They would provide the sand, gravel, and riprap needed for construction and maintenance of the road. Borrow sites provide gravel and sand, while quarry sites provide rock that can be processed into riprap or smaller aggregates. Materials would be transported from the material site by truck along constructed access roads. When needed, access roads would be constructed to the material site to transport heavy equipment to the site and transport material to the road corridor. Not all 17 material sites are expected to be used during construction to provide materials for the road. Additional geotechnical information would be collected during final design to determine the quantity and quality of the resources available at each material site. For the purpose of this application, all waters within all material site boundaries have been included in the potential impact calculations. Material sites located in uplands may also be used as waste material disposal sites. Excess excavated material that is either unsuitable or not used as backfill would be disposed of at these sites. Material sites that were used during construction and determined to be no longer needed for road maintenance would be closed subject to State of Alaska landowner reclamation requirements and made available for public use. Figures MS-001 and MS-002 show the details of material sites with impacts on aquatic resources.

4. Shell Creek Maintenance Station (SCMS).

The Shell Creek Maintenance Station (SCMS) would be located at Milepost 38.0 and occupy 19.5 acres. This maintenance station is located adjacent to Shell Creek airstrip to facilitate worker shift changes as well as the transport of materials and equipment. It would consist of fence line dimensions of approximately 500 by 1,000 feet and would provide equipment storage, worker housing, and materials needed to maintain the road year-round. Ground disturbance outside the fence line is estimated to be approximately 100 feet for an overall disturbance area of 700 by 1,200 feet. SCMS would include onsite diesel-electric generators with secondary-containment fuel storage tanks for electricity generation, as well as a groundwater well for potable water supply, and a septic tank and drain field for sanitary sewage treatment and disposal. During construction, SCMS would be used as staging and laydown areas, as well as temporary construction camps, hence, it is sited near other project components to support major construction activities. Figures OF-001 and OF-002 show the typical maintenance station layout and sections.

5. Airstrip.

The Shell Creek Airstrip would be constructed at Milepost 37.0 along the proposed route to support construction through the transport of construction equipment, materials, and

worker crews. After construction is complete, the airstrip would facilitate emergency transport of workers and supplies to SCMS in the event of a road closure. The airstrip would be closed to public use during construction, but it could be open to public use after construction is complete. The runway would be 200 feet wide and 5,000 feet long, have a 500-foot-wide runway safety area (RSA) (85.2 acres) with an apron/access road (2.4 acres) and would accommodate C-130 Hercules. Areas 1,000 feet from the ends of the runway would be cleared of vegetation to prevent obstructions to the airspace, improve visibility, and limit wildlife habitat. Vegetation would be removed at or above the ground surface. No grubbing or ground-disturbing activities would occur within these areas. Figure AS-001 shows details of a typical airstrip.

6. Water Extraction Sites.

The proposed project would have 9 water extraction sites located at regular intervals along the proposed route. Water extraction sites are composed of access roads to the bank of a water source, where water trucks can pump water for use during construction and maintenance. The access roads would have a 24-foot-wide surface to accommodate water trucks and heavy machinery during construction, as well as for road maintenance. Some of the water extraction sites are located adjacent to bridges. In areas with few stream crossings, access would be near ponds. Water extraction methods, equipment, and timing would comply with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) guidelines for avoiding fish impingement. Water extraction sites and related access roads that were used during construction and determined to be no longer needed for road maintenance would be closed subject to State of Alaska landowner reclamation requirements and made available for public use. Table C outlines the locations and sizes of water extraction sites. The typical structural section of the access road is the same as the primary road and is shown on Figure RX-001.

Table C: Water Extraction Sites.

Water Extraction Site ID	Milepost	Waterbody	Access Road Length (miles)	Associated Project Component
SCAW1	6.0	Wolverine Creek	<0.1	Wolverine Creek Bridge
SCAW2	15.9	Bear Creek	<0.1	Bear Creek Bridge
SCAW3	25.6	Unnamed Pond	0.2	
SCAW4	27.6	Upper 8 Mile Creek	<0.1	Upper 8 Mile Creek Bridge
SCAW5	35.3	Unnamed Pond	0.1	
SCAW6	48.4	Unnamed Pond	<0.1	
SCAW7	59.8	Unnamed Pond	<0.1	
SCAW8	67.1	Unnamed Pond	0.1	
SCAW9	73.5	Unnamed Pond	0.1	

7. Winter Access Route/Skwentna River Bypass.

The Skwentna River Bridge No. 1 crossing (see Table A) would begin at Milepost 32.4 and end at Milepost 34.2 with a length of approximately 2 miles (8.3 acres). It is in an area of steep topography, therefore, a winter access route through the Skwentna River is needed. The winter access route would be used to access and transport material to

the other side of the bridge crossing during construction. The access route would generally be located within 1 mile of the proposed stream crossing, within areas with gentler slopes that are more favorable for transporting equipment. Construction would only involve vegetation clearing. Vehicles and equipment would drive on the frozen ground and river ice surface. No fill would be placed; however, minor cuts into steep upland sections of banks may be necessary.

8. Trail crossings

The current Iditarod trail, historical routes, and prescriptive routes for the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) are located in close proximity to the proposed project. The proposed route crosses documented INHT alignments at multiple locations. The route also crosses Revised Statute 2477 (RS2477) trails, motorized winter trails, and other miscellaneous recreational trails. Trail locations were determined from publicly available databases (including the Bureau of Land Management's [BLM's] Ground Transportation Linear Feature database [State of Alaska 2025]), the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey database, field observation, and observations using aerial photography. Research of trails within the project area was a focus of HDR's summer 2022 cultural and historical resources field study program. Additional study of trails would be needed as the Project advances, and the project design may need to be refined as new information on trails becomes available. Two types of crossing structures would be used where the proposed route intersects trails. At-grade crossings with broad approach slopes would be used for the majority of smaller recreational trail crossings. Bridges would be used over larger or historical trail crossings, such as the INHT. Table D outlines the trail crossing locations and crossing type for the proposed Project. Figures TX-001 and TX-002 show the typical details of the at-grade and bridge crossing structures.

Table D: Trail Crossings.

Milepost	Trail Type / ID	Crossing Type
33.9	INHT and Iditarod Race Route / SCAT1	Bridge
34.5	INHT / SCAT2	At-grade
35.8	Iditarod Race Route / SCAT3	Bridge
40.7	Recreational / SCAT4	At-grade
48.8	Recreational / SCAT5	At-grade
49.1	Recreational / SCAT6	At-grade
65.1	INHT and RS2477 / SCAT7	Bridge
68.8	Iditarod Race Route / SCAT8	Bridge

9. Construction Staging Areas and Worker Camps.

Construction staging areas and worker camps would be sited within the proposed footprint of the proposed project. Most staging and laydown areas as well as camps would either be located within the material sites, the road footprint, or the proposed footprint of the permanent maintenance station. No additional temporary construction staging areas or worker camps would be required.

Construction

Road Construction: Road construction would include field staking the alignment, site clearing and grubbing, staging equipment and materials, excavating, creating embankment, grading, final, stabilizing, and cleaning up the site. It would also include placing fill, blast of existing rock, and/or excavating existing material to reach the proposed designed grade. Construction limits would include a 20-foot buffer on either side of the toe of slope to account for temporary activities during construction, such as vegetation clearing and/or equipment operating. Within the construction limits, the overall disturbance footprint generally would range between 100 to 120 feet. No grubbing would occur within the temporary disturbance limits, and vegetation would be cleared above the ground surface. All activities within the 20-foot buffer would not be ground-disturbing. The limits of the temporary impact area are the minimum necessary to conduct the work.

Bridge Construction: Bridge construction would be determined by construction contractor and would start by clearing and grubbing embankment and abutment sites, excavating or filling to design subgrade elevation. Reinforced concrete abutments may be constructed; depending on geotechnical characteristics at each site, some abutments may also need driven pile foundations. The roadside of abutments may be backfilled to finished grade. The streamside of abutments may be backfilled at a 2V:1H slope down to the stream bank. The streamside of abutments may also be armored with riprap as needed to protect against scour. Temporary fill may be placed as needed to construct equipment access to the stream banks and/or to construct temporary work trestles. Temporary piles may be driven in the waterbody, and a temporary work trestle may be constructed. From the work trestle, a crane may drive piles for the bridge piers. Reinforced concrete pile caps may be constructed at the top of the piles to complete the bridge piers. A crane may lift and set steel plate girders into place between piers and abutments. A crane may then set precast concrete bridge deck sections into place, fastened to girders. Railings may be attached along each edge of the bridge deck. Piers for taller bridges may require a pile foundation and concrete pile cap at streambed elevation. Concrete pile caps at the stream bed elevation may be constructed with temporary cofferdams. After the permanent bridge is constructed, the temporary work trestle would be removed, and trestle approaches would be re-contoured and re-vegetated to match preconstruction conditions.

Culvert Installation: Culvert installation would involve excavating up to 2 feet of material below the culvert invert elevation for proper bedding. Engineered substrates to stay stable during design flood events would be placed inside fish passage culverts to construct a stream channel to match dimensions up- and downstream. Unsuitable material would be removed and disposed of at material site locations. No trenching in wetlands is proposed outside the construction work area. Prior to installing culverts in stream channels, stream flows and seepages from bottom of excavation would be temporarily diverted. Dewatering is necessary to provide an adequate surface to place

and maintain fill compaction. Procedures for temporary water diversion would include: 1) sizing the diversion channel to carry anticipated flows during the construction; 2) isolating the diversion channel from the stream during excavation; 3) constructing the bed and banks of the diversion channel by first removing the downstream plug, then removing the upstream plug, then closing the upstream end and then the downstream end of the natural channel and diverted stream; 4) connecting tributary streams to the new channel if they enter the former channel within the diversion area; 5) removing the downstream plug from the natural channel and then the upstream plug, then closing the upstream end and then the downstream end of the diversion channel to accomplish re-diversion of flow into the natural stream channel; 6) removing human-made materials from the diversion channel, backfilling the channel, and stabilizing the stream bank; and 7) re-vegetating disturbed areas re-vegetated with naturally occurring woody plants/grass grasses, if appropriate.

Material Sites Construction: First the access road would be constructed to the material site. Then the site would be cleared and grubbed; cleared vegetation, organics, and other unusable material would be placed in an overburden pile. Useable material would be excavated, processed, and trucked away. Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) would be set in place to prevent runoff from carrying sediment into adjacent areas and waterbodies.

Maintenance Station (SCMS) Construction: The SCMS construction would start by clearing and grubbing the site, then grading to design subgrade elevation and adding a crushed aggregate surface course. Next, the buildings, groundwater well, septic system, fence, generator, fuel storage, and other facilities would be built.

Airstrip Construction: Clearing and grubbing the site would be done first, followed by grading to design subgrade elevation, then the runway and apron embankment, and a crushed aggregate surface would be constructed. Overburden material from clearing, grubbing, and grading would be disposed of at the ends of the runway. The approaches to the runway would be cleared to eliminate obstructions to aircraft. An access road to the runway would also be constructed. A small terminal building for storage and worker safety would be constructed on the apron. For terminal building electricity a powerline would be buried in a conduit along the access road from SCMS to the airstrip.

Water Extraction Sites: These are access roads constructed from the main road alignment to the bank of a water source (streams or ponds). First clearing and grubbing would be done along the access road alignment, followed by grading to design subgrade elevation; last the embankment and crushed aggregate surface course would be constructed. A walking path to the edge of the waterbody would be cleared. Stormwater BMPs would be employed to prevent runoff from the access road construction areas limiting sediment transport into the waterbody. All water extraction activities would be subject to authorization from ADNR (Temporary Water Use Authorization) and ADF&G (Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit).

Construction Schedule: The construction schedule has not been defined and would vary depending upon a final investment decision, funding sources, final design, and permit approvals. Construction means and methods, including schedule, would be determined by the construction contractor prior to beginning construction. Construction could occur as early as 2027. Construction could occur year-round at some locations, and depending on the criteria outlined above, would likely take between 2 and 5 years. Initial construction activities would include wintertime clearing of the entire alignment, followed by geotechnical investigation drilling, and then design-level surveying. Heavy construction would likely begin with winter mobilization of equipment and materials to strategic construction headings using existing winter trails. Mobilization of equipment and materials to construction headings could also happen by river barge during summer. Limited aircraft mobilization of equipment and materials could occur at the Whiskey Bravo airstrip. Initial construction would be focused on laydown areas, worker camps, airstrips, material sites, and temporary access and work trestles for bridge construction. Road and bridge construction would advance from multiple construction headings, likely simultaneously. The construction contractor would determine the actual construction logistics. Road construction locations would include:

- 1) MP 0: From the terminus of DOT&PF's proposed West Susitna Access project.
- 2) Skwentna River #1 crossing, to the east and west.
- 3) Skwentna River #2 crossing, to the east and west.
- 4) Whiskey Bravo airstrip and camp (MP 78.5).

Clearing of vegetation would not occur from May 1 through July 15 to avoid potential impacts on nesting birds, per USFWS recommendations. If vegetation clearing would coincide with this time frame, further coordination with USFWS would be necessary. If bald or golden eagles are determined to be in close proximity to the project area, AIDEA would coordinate with USFWS to maintain compliance with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA; 16 U.S. Code 668–668c). Culvert construction and other in-water work in fish-bearing streams would be timed to minimize impacts to fish spawning and migration.

All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (Figure 1 dated June 2026; Figure 2 dated August 2026; R-001-R-053 and I-001-I-086, dated February 2026; and RX-001, CX-001-CX-009, BX-001-BX-010, TX-001-TX-002, MS-001-MS-002, OF-001-OF-002, and AS-001, dated July 2025).

JURISDICTION:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is directed by Congress under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344) to regulate the discharge of dredged and fill material into all waters of the United States, including wetlands. The intent of the law is to protect the nation's waters from the indiscriminate discharge of material capable of causing pollution and to restore and maintain their chemical, physical and biological integrity.

The Applicant has proposed that 3.18 acres of aquatic resources are jurisdictional and has requested an Approved Jurisdictional Determination. As such, USACE is currently performing an approved jurisdictional determination to refine the acreage of WOTUS within the proposed project footprint. See Table E for preliminary estimation of aquatic resources found within the project footprint. At the time of this publication, USACE estimates that fewer than 66 acres of the aquatic resources are within the proposed project footprint.

Table E: Preliminary estimation of aquatic resources.

Streams & Rivers (acres)	Emergent Wetland (acres)	Scrub-Shrub Wetland (acres)	Forested Wetland (acres)	Emergent/Scrub-Shrub Wetland (acres)	Forested/Emergent Wetland (acres)	Forested/Scrub-Shrub Wetland (acres)	Open Water Pond (acres)	Total Aquatic Resources (acres)
3.22	1.96	20.49	11.19	8.71	6.72	13.08	0.04	65.41

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

Avoidance/Minimization: The applicant states that complete avoidance of jurisdictional wetlands and waters is not possible. The Proposed project has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts on WOTUS, non-jurisdictional wetlands, fish, Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), and other resources, wherever practicable, through avoidance and minimization measures such as route refinement, construction methods, selective siting of proposed project components, and appropriately sized conveyance structures. Regulations and guidelines associated with Section 404 of the CWA call for the proposed project proponents to take measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on jurisdictional wetlands and other resources. The following avoidance and minimization measures have been incorporated into the design and construction of the proposed project.

The Applicant proposed the following design avoidance measures:

- 1) The proposed route has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts on WOTUS (including EFH) to the maximum extent practicable. Design engineers worked with wetland scientists to adjust the route throughout the length of the proposed project to avoid WOTUS, move road crossings perpendicular to stream channels, and cross wetlands at the narrowest possible point in consideration of topography and design criteria constraints. Alignment shifts were completed at multiple intervals throughout the proposed project preliminary alternative design starting in 2019.
- 2) Material sites, the airstrip, the maintenance station (SCMS), and other proposed project facilities have been sited in uplands to the maximum extent practicable.
- 3) Material sites, the airstrip, the maintenance station, and other proposed project facilities are located, to the maximum extent practicable, to avoid impacts on WOTUS.

- 4) The dimensions of the road would be the minimum required to meet the overall proposed project purpose.
- 5) The proposed project is designed to include a 50-foot buffer for anadromous waters and EFH, except where streams would be crossed, to avoid impacts on riparian habitat.

The Applicant proposed the following design minimization measures:

- 1) The proposed road alignment is routed to minimize unavoidable impacts on sensitive areas such as WOTUS (including streams and EFH) to the extent practicable and in consideration of design criteria constraints.
- 2) Existing drainage patterns would be maintained; properly sized and designed culverts would be used in appropriate locations to maintain the natural flow patterns and timing of surface water inflows to adjacent wetlands and waters.
- 3) Culverts would be sized to reduce maintenance associated with debris clogging and icing, potential glaciation concerns, and sediment deposition; the minimum culvert size proposed is 3 feet in diameter to minimize ponding potential and allow for break-up flow capacity if ice forms in the culverts.
- 4) The proposed alignment would be routed so stream crossings are as close to perpendicular to the axis of the channel as engineering and routing conditions allow to minimize culvert and bridge length as well as reduce stream impacts.
- 5) Properly sized and designed culverts would be installed to minimize impacts on fish in fish bearing streams, and all anadromous fish stream crossings would be permitted according to ADF&G Title 16 guidelines. Fish passage culvert diameters would be sized to convey peak 100-year flows.
- 6) A 24-foot-wide, gravel road section with minimized use of roadside ditches would be used to promote sheet flow of runoff water from the road surface, increasing infiltration and vegetative filtration, thereby minimizing impacts on water quality resulting from concentrated runoff.
- 7) Roadside ditches would be designed to accommodate maintenance demands and snow storage.

The Applicant proposed the following construction avoidance and minimization measures:

- 1) To the extent practicable, laydown/staging areas and other work areas would be located within the road or other proposed project facility footprints, at least 50 feet from wetlands and/or the water's edge. Equipment would remain within the identified proposed project limits, and would not be stored, maintained, or repaired within WOTUS.
- 2) In locations where the roadway would be constructed over jurisdictional wetlands, geo-fabric may be placed under roadway fill to minimize subsidence and migration of fill material into native soils.
- 3) Proposed project limits within WOTUS would be clearly identified in the field (e.g., staking, flagging, silt fencing) prior to clearing and construction to

- ensure avoidance of impacts on WOTUS (including wetlands) beyond the proposed project footprints.
- 4) A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be prepared for the proposed project. The plan would clearly describe BMPs required during construction to prevent erosion and runoff from entering aquatic habitats:
 - a. Erosion and sediment control measures (perimeter protection) such as silt fences and straw wattles would be placed around jurisdictional wetlands and waters within the disturbance limit (within 15 feet).
 - b. Temporarily disturbed areas, including slopes, would be recontoured to match existing contours and stabilized in a timely manner within the post-disturbance growing season as work is completed. All silt fences, curtains, and other structures would be installed properly and maintained in a functioning manner for the life of the construction period where fill material and exposed soils might cause transport of sediment or turbidity beyond the immediate construction site.
 - c. Road embankment side slopes would be stabilized with an Alaska native seed mix as soon as possible after final grading.
 - d. Standard spill-prevention measures would be implemented during construction; spill clean-up equipment (e.g., oil-absorbent pads) would be available onsite during construction.
 - 5) Locally sourced, contaminant-free embankment and surface materials would be used during construction to avoid introducing contaminated material to the proposed project area.
 - 6) All seeds used for revegetation would be certified to be free of prohibited noxious weeds in accordance with Alaska Administrative Code, Title 11, Chapter 34.
 - 7) Any stream bank affected by the work would be restored and stabilized. The stream bed and banks would be backfilled and restored to the pre-existing course, condition, capacity, and location.
 - 8) Coordination with USFWS would occur prior to construction to avoid and minimize impacts on nesting eagles in compliance with the BGEPA.
 - 9) Timing windows would be implemented to avoid clearing, grubbing, and other site preparation and construction activities during critical life stages for migratory birds, in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and BGEPA.
 - 10) ADF&G would determine timing windows during which in-water work would be authorized to minimize potential impacts on sensitive fish life stages such as spawning and/or migration periods. Timing windows for in-water work would be incorporated into the construction schedule.
 - 11) Construction activities would not result in a migration barrier for resident or anadromous fish. Fish passage would be maintained using temporary stream diversion channels, unless otherwise approved by the ADF&G Division of Habitat. Diversion techniques would likely involve creating a temporary diversion channel, plugging the natural channel upstream and downstream of the construction area, and temporarily rerouting flow into the diversion channel.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION:

The applicant has provided the following explanation why compensatory mitigation should not be required:

AIDEA, in accordance with Section 404 of the CWA, has designed the proposed project to avoid impacts on wetlands and waterbodies wherever practicable, and to minimize impacts where impacts are not avoidable. Due to the number of streams within the proposed project area and the length of the proposed project, complete avoidance of WOTUS is impractical. AIDEA believes that the proposed project would impact 3.18 acres of WOTUS over four HUC10 watersheds. In Alaska, implementation of regulations governing compensatory mitigation is further guided by a document called the “Compensatory Mitigation Considerations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District Regulatory” (CM Considerations; USACE 2025). Due to the proposed project’s small impact on jurisdictional waters, the distribution of the minimal impacts over multiple watersheds, and the extensive avoidance and minimization measures that AIDEA has already performed and committed to, AIDEA proposes no compensatory mitigation for the 3.18 acres of unavoidable impacts of jurisdictional aquatic resource impacts. If USACE requires compensatory mitigation, AIDEA would work with USACE and mitigation providers in the region to develop a compensatory mitigation plan acceptable to USACE.

Note: USACE has not completed an Approved Jurisdictional Determination (AJD) at the time of this publication; however, USACE has determined that fewer than 66 acres of the aquatic resources within the proposed project footprint are likely to be jurisdictional under the USACE regulatory authority.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The proposed project (aka AIDEA WSA project) is proposed to be connected to a gravel road currently in the planning stages by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (aka DOT&PF WSA project).

The DOT&PF WSA infrastructure preliminarily consists of a 22.3-mile public road extending from West Susitna Parkway current terminus near Big Lake to an area near state subdivisions west of the Susitna River, near Alexander Creek. ADOT&PF WSA’s preliminary beginning point is at Latitude 61.50247° N., Longitude 150.10083° W. and preliminary terminus is at Latitude 61.55283° N., Longitude 150.67543° W. (expressed in decimal degrees and referenced to the North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)) (Figure 2). The DOT&PF WSA’s preliminary road alignment would be gravel surfaced, with two 12-foot lanes, no shoulders, and a 3 percent cross-slope. More information on DOT&PF WSA project is available at <https://dot.alaska.gov/westsusitnaaccess/>.

DOT&PF project would improve public access to Matanuska-Susitna Borough and State of Alaska lands west of the Susitna River for recreation, settlement, and economic development. The lack of permanent overland access limits use of lands designated for recreation and settlement, including existing platted subdivisions, and constrains development of timber, agricultural, and renewable energy resources. A reliable road

connection and crossing of the Susitna River would help address these access limitations. DOT&PF's West Susitna Access Project is proceeding independently.

USACE does not currently have an application under evaluation for the DOT&PF WSA road construction, and no permits have been issued to DOT&PF for the construction of the road. Based on preliminary information, a DA permit will be required for construction of the DOT&PF project.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Compliance with Section 401 Water Quality Certification procedures is required for this project.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: In accordance with the special processing procedures approved by Pacific Ocean Division, the District is coordinating with the State Historic Preservation Office under 36 CFR Part 800.12 in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: In accordance with the special processing procedures approved by Pacific Ocean Division in accordance with 33 CFR § 325.2(e)(4), the district is consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under 50 CFR Part 402.05 in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: In accordance with the special processing procedures established by Pacific Ocean Division, the district is consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under 50 CFR Part 600.920 in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

PUBLIC INTEREST: This application will be reviewed in accordance with 33 CFR Parts 320-332, the Regulatory Program of USACE, and other pertinent laws, regulations, and executive orders. Our evaluation will also follow the guidelines published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 230). Interested parties are invited to state any objections they may have to the proposed work. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit that reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; of those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline 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. The district will make a permit decision after considering/addressing any comments submitted by the agencies.

COMMENTS: Comments and requests for additional information should be submitted electronically to USACE by email at WestSusitnaAccess78@usace.army.mil or via the Regulatory Request System at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs>. Please include Project Number POA-2022-00165, with all comments. Any comments which are received during this period may be forwarded to the applicant for possible resolution before the determination is made whether to issue or deny the requested DA permit. Please note that all comments received, whether by regular mail or email, will become part of the administrative record and are subject to public release under the Freedom of Information Act including any personally identifiable information such as names, phone numbers, and addresses.

If you do not have internet access, comments may be submitted through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to the following address:

United States Army Corps of Engineers
ATTN: Alaska District, Regulatory Division (CEPOA-RD)
Public Notice: POA-2022-00165
P.O. Box 6898, 2204 3rd St
JBER, AK 99506-0898

Comments should only be provided through the USPS when electronic transmission is not possible. Precautionary internal mail handling procedures may be instituted to protect our workforce, which may result in longer than normal times to process and receive hard copy submissions. To be considered in our evaluation, comments submitted through the USPS should have a postmark dated on, or prior to, the close of the comment period, October 13, 2026.

Thank you for your interest in our Nation's water resources.

District Commander
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures