



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Project Overview

An aerial photograph of a mountainous landscape. The foreground shows a valley with a road winding through it. The middle ground features rolling hills and a valley floor. The background shows distant mountain ranges under a cloudy sky.

Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road Project



Background 1

- 1950s – Mineral exploration efforts since the 1950s identify significant resources of copper and base metals in the southern flanks of the Brooks Range.
- 1980 – Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which acknowledged the mineral potential of the Ambler Mining District and the need for transportation access. Section 201(4)(b) provides for surface transportation access through Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. No such specific decision is made in ANILCA for access across BLM-managed lands.



Background 2

- 2009-2010 – Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) began evaluating multiple road and rail routes that could provide access to the Ambler Mining District.
- 2013 – Project ownership was transferred from DOT&PF to Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA).
- 2016 – AIDEA completed its application for federal authorization for the route.



Background 3

- 2017 – BLM filed a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, initiating a 90-day public scoping period. BLM later extended the public scoping period through January 31, 2018.
- 2017 – NPS began a separate but parallel Environmental and Economic Analysis (EEA) as directed by ANILCA Section 201(4)(d), for the road section across NPS lands.



Proposed Project

Who proposed the road?

- The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) is the applicant requesting the right-of-way for the project.

Why is AIDEA proposing the road?

- AIDEA is interested in developing the Ambler Road as part of its mission to “...increase job opportunities and otherwise encourage the economic growth of the state, including the development of its natural resources...”
- AIDEA indicates that without access, the mineral assets associated with the Ambler Mining District would remain unused, and AIDEA would not be able to support economic development and increase job opportunities within a region known for high unemployment rates.



Proposed Road Elements

Where would the proposed road be located?

- AIDEA's proposed alignment begins at the Dalton Highway (Milepost 161) and extends westward along the south side of the Brooks Range to the south bank of the Ambler River.

What type of land would be crossed by the road?

- State lands (61%)
- Federal land managed by BLM and NPS (24%)
- Lands associated with two Alaska Native Corporations (15%)



Proposed Road Elements 2

What would the road be like?

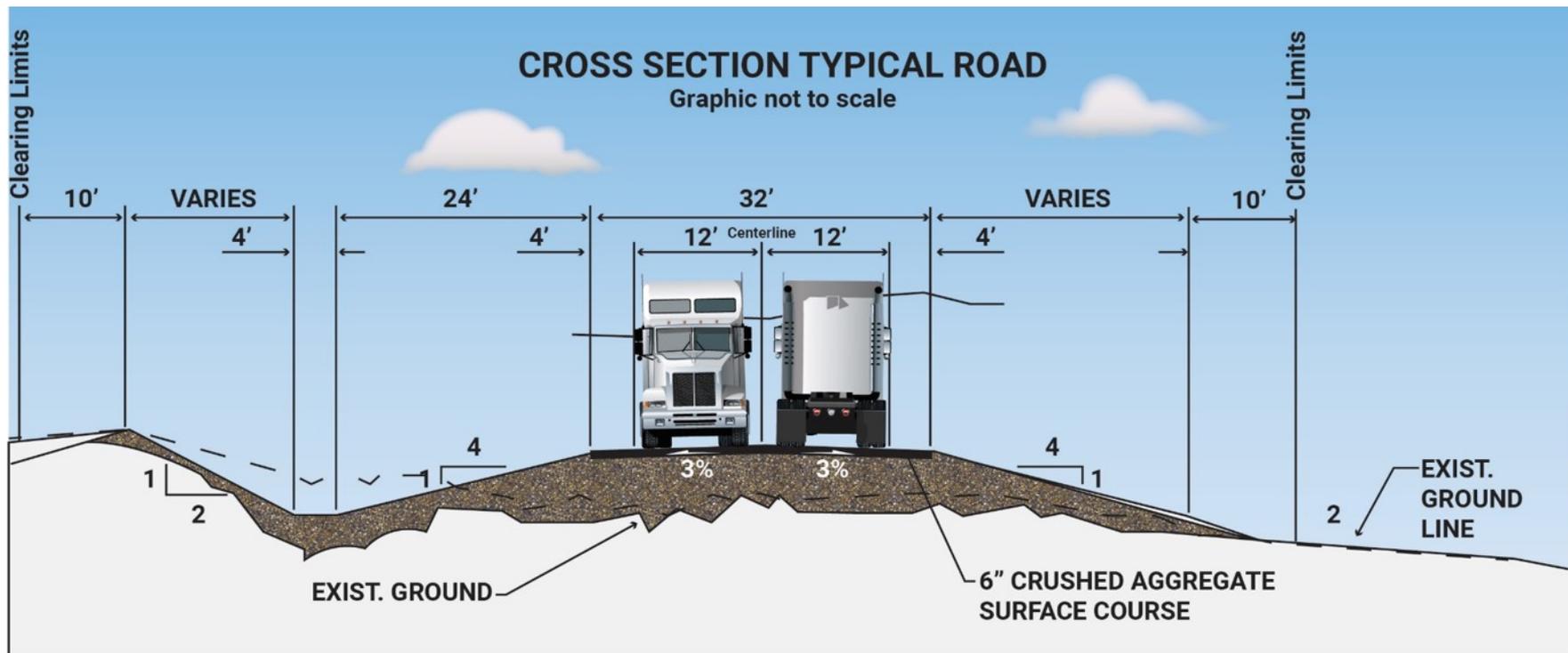
- 211 miles long
- All-season gravel two-lane road
- Industrial access only (not open to the public)
- Includes bridges, material sites, maintenance stations, airstrips, and related infrastructure and utilities

What types of vehicles would use the road?

- Trucks hauling mineral exploration and development equipment, supplies, and fuel; and ore concentrate.
- The road will be designed to accommodate large, semi-trailer trucks (AASHTO WB-62).

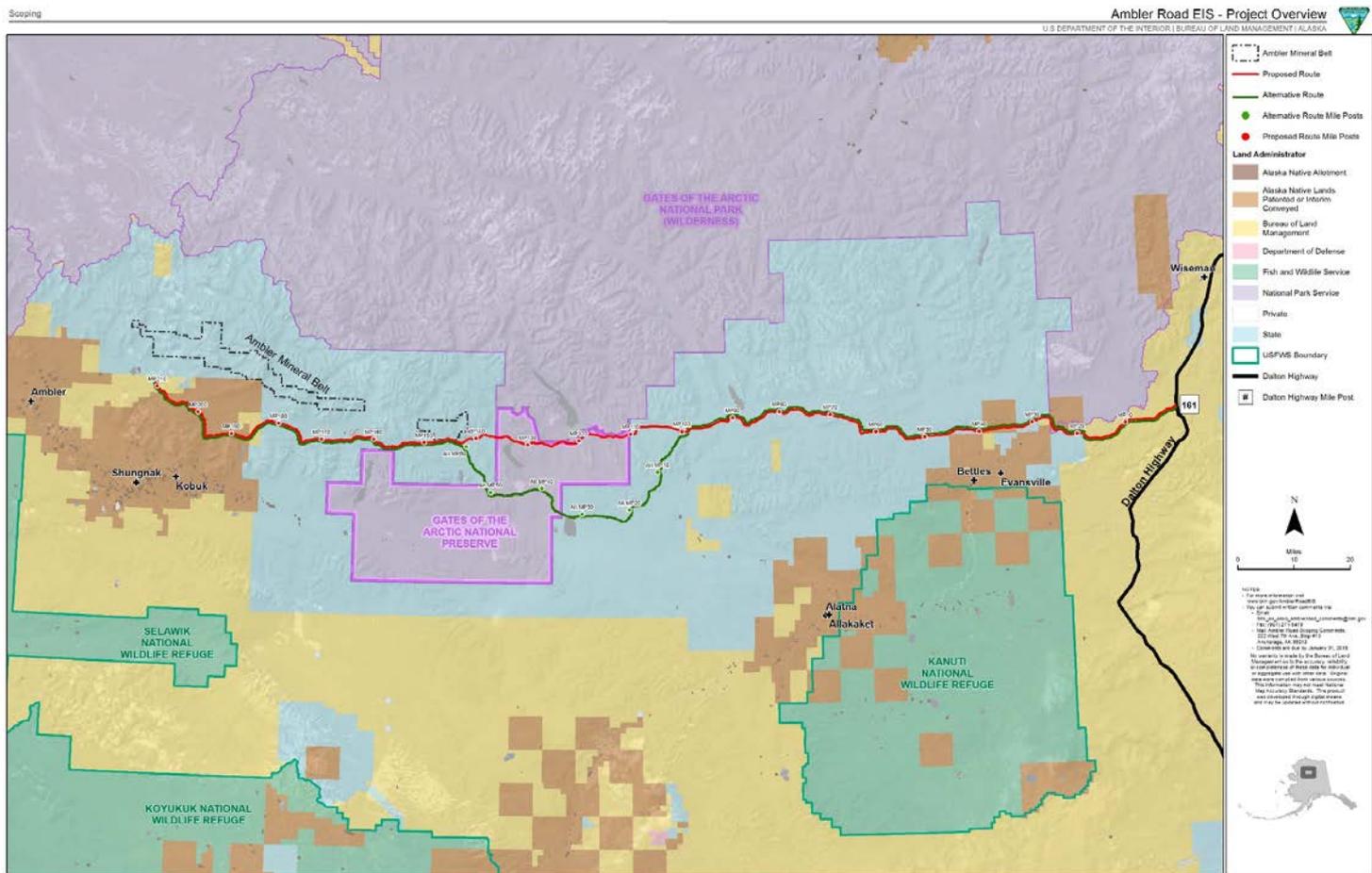


Proposed Road Elements 3





Proposed Project Area





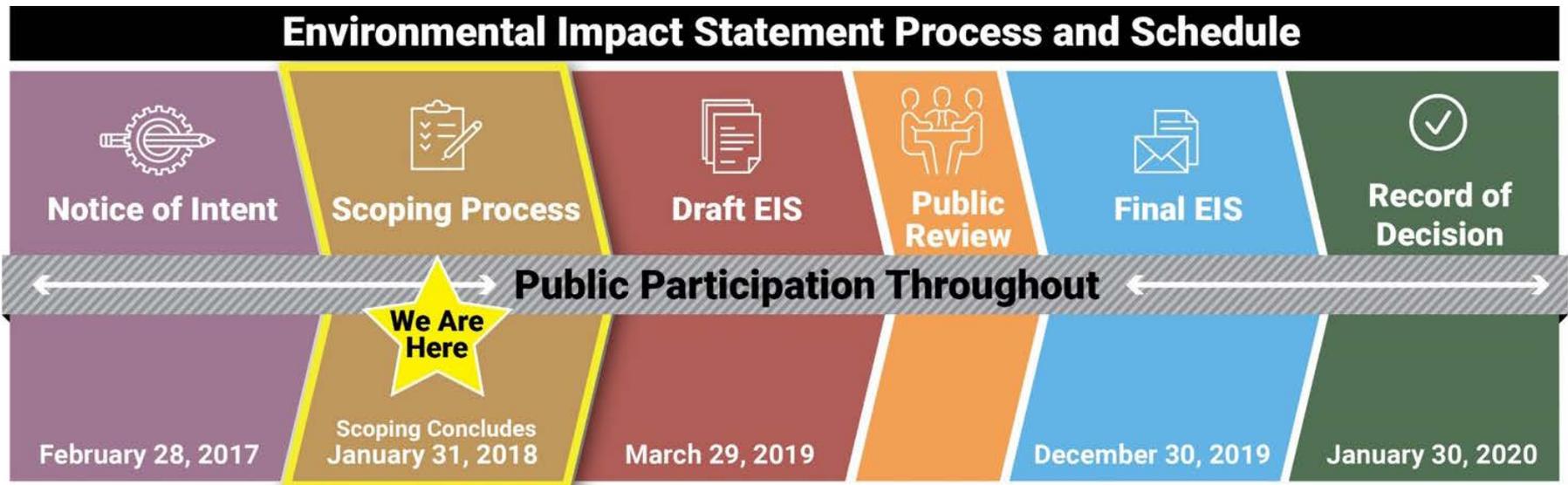
NEPA Process

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental consequences of their decisions
- An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a document required under NEPA for actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment.
 - An EIS includes:
 - Project Purpose and Need
 - Issues raised during scoping (internal/external)
 - Project alternatives
 - Description of potentially affected environment
 - Environmental consequences
 - Proposed mitigation



Coordinating NEPA & Section 106

- NEPA process happening alongside Section 106
 - Public scoping meetings held Nov 13 – Jan 18
 - NEPA addresses all aspects of the proposed project including subsistence concerns (through an 810 Analysis)
 - Section 106 focuses on cultural resources





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Section 106 Overview

An aerial photograph of a vast mountain valley. The foreground shows rolling green hills, while the middle ground features a deep valley with a river or stream. In the background, there are more mountains under a cloudy sky.

Process, Roles, Responsibilities



Key Terms: Section 106

- Section 106 “requires Federal agencies (in this case BLM) to take into account the effects of their undertakings (in this case the Ambler Road Project) on historic properties” [36 CFR 800.1 (a)]
- Process law - does not dictate an outcome
- Required consultation with the goal of communication and agreement among consulting parties about historic or cultural resources



Key Terms: Consultation

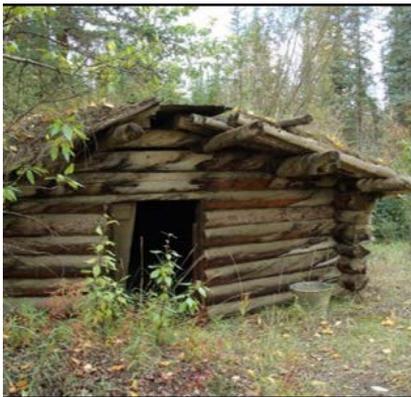
“The goal of consultation is to identify historic properties potentially affected by the undertaking, assess its effects and seek ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects to historic properties” [36 CFR 800.1(a)]

- Consultation is the dynamic and good-faith process of seeking, discussing, and considering the views of the other participants.
- The views of the consulting parties are essential for informed decision-making on matters regarding Section 106.



Key Terms: Historic Properties

Any “prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places....this includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to, and located within, such properties....[and] includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to tribes” or other entities [36 CFR 800.15(l)(1)]





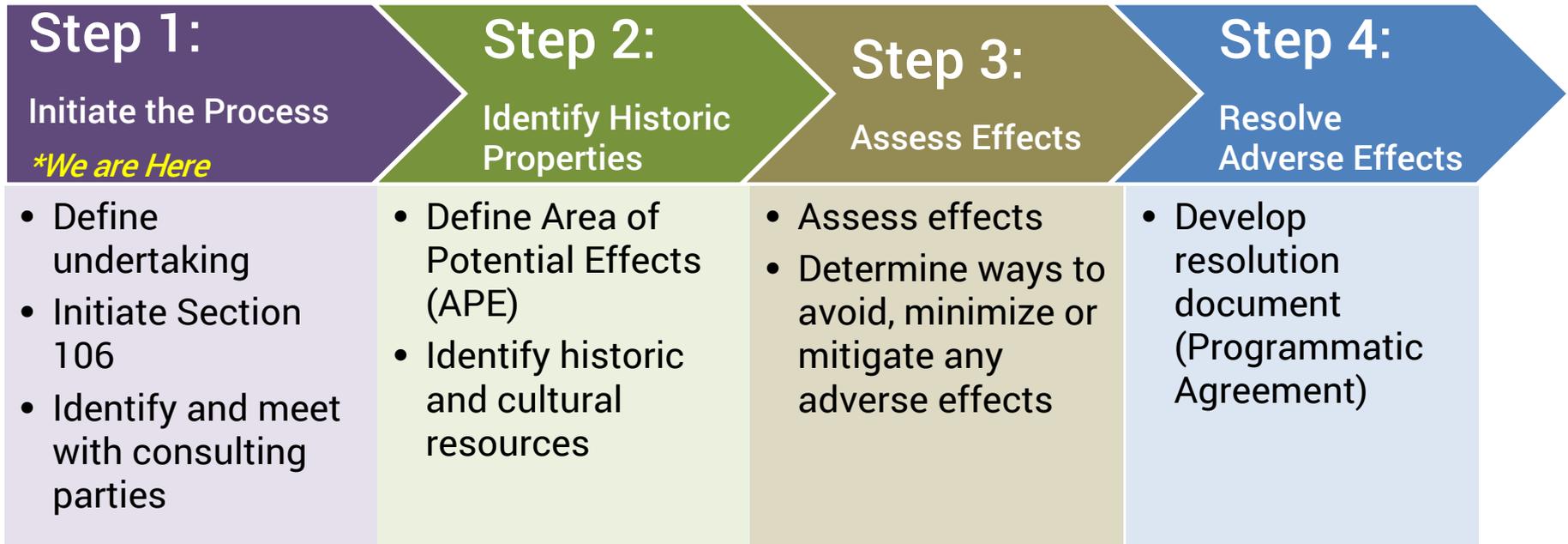
Key Terms: National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The NRHP is a federally maintained list of historic properties that are considered important to the Nation's cultural heritage and history. A historic property must meet one of the following criteria to be considered eligible:

- A) associated with significant events that have contributed to history
- B) associated with a significant person in the past
- C) embodies the characteristics of a type of construction or represents the work of a master (artist, architect, etc.)
- D) has yielded or can yield information important to our history or prehistory.



Section 106 Timeline



← CONSULTATION OCCURS THROUGHOUT →



Roles & Responsibilities

Lead Federal Agency (BLM)

- Responsible for ensuring compliance with the Section 106 process
 - Must initiate consultation with tribes, the SHPO, and other interested parties
 - Must provide opportunities for consulting parties to identify and consult about historic properties and participate in the resolution of adverse effects
 - Takes the lead role for drafting agreement documents (Programmatic Agreements or Memorandums of Agreement)



Roles & Responsibilities 2

State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)

- Responsible for advising and assisting the federal agency
 - Ensures consultation with interested parties occurs
 - Ensures that historic properties are taken into consideration and adverse effects to historic properties are avoided, minimized, or mitigated
- Represents the interests of the state and its citizens regarding the preservation of cultural heritage.



Roles & Responsibilities 3

Tribes (and tribal organizations)

- Advises the identification and evaluation of historic properties, including those of traditional religious or cultural importance
- Shares comments, concerns, or information about the undertaking's effects on such properties
- Participates in the resolution of adverse effects (ideas for avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating)



Roles & Responsibilities 4

Other Consulting Parties

- All Federal agencies must comply with Section 106
- State agencies must also comply there is federal involvement. The State of Alaska also has laws regarding cultural resources (AS 41.35)
- Local governments with jurisdiction over the area in which the undertaking may occur
- Individuals and organizations with a demonstrated interest in the undertaking
- The applicant (AIDEA)



Cultural Resources and Cultural Resources Investigations in the Project Area

- 2018 Cultural resources data gap analysis for current EIS to commence after scoping is completed (February 2018).
- Previous cultural resources data gap analysis for the project conducted in 2014.
- 2018 data gap analysis will be refined based on alternatives analysis and updated with new studies and resources since 2014.



Cultural Resources in the Project Area

- 2014 Cultural Resources Data Gap:
 - Study area included a 10-mile wide corridor around each proposed alignment.
 - 323 previously recorded archaeological or historic sites are located in the combined corridors. 118 sites are within 1 mile.
 - 93 of these are common to both corridors.
 - Site Types Include:
 - » Historic Cabins, Camps, Trash Dumps, Roadhouses, Trails, Mines.
 - » Prehistoric Sites include Chipped Stone Artifact Scatters, Habitations, and Isolated Artifacts.



Cultural Resources Investigations in the Project Area

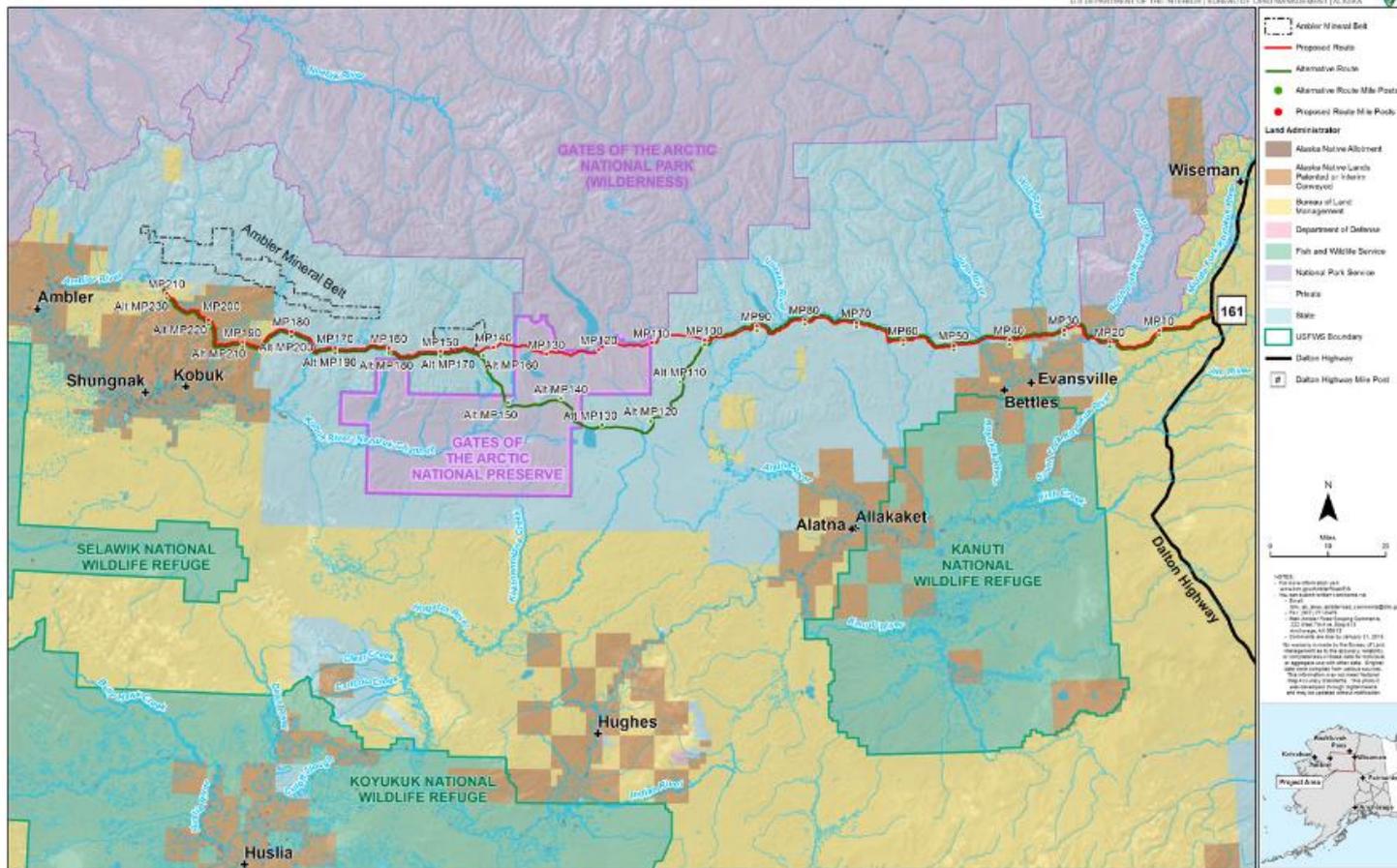
- 2014 Cultural Resources Data Gap:
 - Many Previous Surveys Conducted in the region and nearby communities. Few overlap with project corridor. Most previous surveys in GAAR or TAPS Corridor.
 - 1 Survey Conducted Along Ambler Road Alternatives in 2013.
 - » Included helicopter reconnaissance of a 2000-foot wide corridor.
 - » Pedestrian survey of 26 of 772 high probability areas. Pedestrian survey totaled 340 acres.
 - » Did not include support facilities such as gravel sources, access routes, or temporary construction facilities.
 - » Did not occur on any Native Allotments.
 - » Identified 2 previously unrecorded sites.
 - 1 Survey Conducted in 2014 on NPS Lands within Alternatives
 - » Approximately 900-1200 acres surveyed by pedestrian and helicopter survey.
 - » 2 new sites were identified.



Open Discussion: Comments, concerns, or information about historic properties or cultural resources near the proposed route

Scoping

Ambler Road EIS - Project Overview





Next Steps:

- Define the study area (Area of Potential Effect – “APE”)
 - BLM and SHPO, with input from consulting parties
- Identify historic properties/resources within the APE
 - Determine how, where, when, to what extent
 - (all consulting parties involved)
 - Data gap analysis will help inform this step
- Identify ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts to historic properties (with all consulting parties)



Thank you for participating!

- Section 106 questions, comments, or concerns can be directed to:
 - Crystal Glassburn: cglassburn@blm.gov, (907) 474-2240
 - Dawn Ramsay: Dawn.Ramsey@hdrinc.com, (907) 644-2145
 - Additional details about the proposed project and information on the EIS process can be found at: www.blm.gov/AmblerRoadEIS