



Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement

Hughes Public Scoping Meeting

MEETING NOTES

December 11, 2017

Hughes Community Hall, Hughes, Alaska

Project Team Participants

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Laurie Thorpe, Tina McMaster-Goering

HDR: Katherine Wood, Leslie Robbins

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): John Sargent

Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Marie Steele

National Park Service (NPS): Jeff Rasic

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC): Marna Sanford

Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA): Joy Huntington

Public Participants

Approximately 20 people attended the meeting.

Meeting Purpose

To share information about the BLM's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, and to gather input from the public.

Meeting Topics

1. Welcome by Wilmer Beetus, First Chief

Thanks to Tanana Chiefs for attending this important meeting. Wilmer noted that we've been talking about the Ambler Road for years. The road could provide for a lot of jobs in the future if the village corporation gets involved from the day it starts to develop contracts for work on the road and work on the mine. The Hughes Village Corporation is talking with NANA right now, and I think Doyon is trying to set up a meeting with NANA. I've talked with Larry Westlake and Miles Cleveland, Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB) Assembly, and they are willing to talk with us. It's really important that we stay involved and in the future, it could provide some really good paying jobs for the people on the Koyukuk River.

Introductions were given.

2. Presentation by Laurie Thorpe (BLM)

We are here today to talk about a right-of-way permit request received by BLM to build a road from the Dalton Highway over to the Ambler mineral belt.

Other Cooperating Agencies

- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources
- Northwest Arctic Borough
- National Park Service
- Allakaket wants to join as a Cooperating Agency
- Alatna wants to join as a Cooperating Agency

Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of today's meeting is to get input from the local communities. Without that input, the EIS process will not be effective. Public input about issues and concerns is very important.

Proposed Project

The right-of-way application from AIDEA proposes a road across public and private land to the Ambler Mining District to increase job opportunities, and otherwise encourage the economic growth of the state, including the development of its natural resources.

According to AIDEA, without that 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.

Project Background

In the 1950s, mineral exploration efforts discovered significant mineral resources on the south side of the Brooks Range. In the 1980s, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was established. Congress passed the law recognizing the mineral potential in 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, but did not address access across BLM lands. That's why we are here today to address it with you as we respond to the application for the right-of-way. In 2009-2010, the 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. In 2013, project ownership was transferred from DOT&PF to AIDEA. This is the first time the federal agencies are really involved in the process and responding to the application. In 2015, AIDEA submitted an SF-299 application requesting right-of-way for the road, permits for bridges, permits for filling waters of the United States, and other authorizations that would be necessary to allow the construction and operation of a 211-mile road proposed for all-season industrial access. In 2016,

AIDEA spent the first half of the year responding to requests for additional information from the application recipients (BLM, NPS, U.S. Coast Guard [USCG], and USACE). The application was completed by June 30, 2016, which triggered a timeline for BLM action on the application. BLM filed a Notice of Intent on February 28, 2017, to prepare an EIS, initiating a 90-day public comment period. We knew that would not allow enough time for public scoping through all the affected communities. BLM did not want to impact your subsistence activities during the summer months so extended the public scoping period through January 31, 2018. In 2017, NPS began a separate but parallel Environmental and Economic Analysis (EEA) for the portion of the road on National Park Service land. That road must connect to other lands managed by BLM, the State, and Native corporation land to reach the Ambler Mining District.

Road Elements (maps are available to see the route)

AIDEA's proposed alignment begins at the Dalton Highway (Milepost 161), and extends 211 miles westward along the south foothills of the Brooks Range to the southeast bank of the Ambler River.

The type of land crossed by the road includes State lands (61 percent), Federal land managed by BLM and NPS (24 percent), and lands associated with two Alaska Native Corporations, Doyon and NANA (15 percent).

The road would be 211 miles long, all-season, gravel two-lane road. It is proposed for industrial access only. It would not be open to the public. It includes bridges, material borrow sites, maintenance stations, airstrips, and related infrastructure and utilities. AIDEA would manage the access, and has indicated that they would take out the road after the mining is done.

Vehicles using the road would be designed to accommodate two-way traffic for large semi-tractor-trailer trucks.

There are Two Options Being Proposed

The North Route and the South Route. The NPS has to pick which one they prefer based on the results of their environmental analysis.

Proposed Project Area

The proposed project area begins at Milepost 161 of the Dalton Highway. It is 211 miles long, and ends at the Ambler mineral belt area as shown on the Proposed Project Area Map (see handout). Additional maps were presented that showed a close-up of each section of the route.

Agency Roles

BLM is the lead federal agency, and is preparing the EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to assess the environmental consequences of their decisions. BLM has the authority to issue a right-of-way across BLM lands, although we are not required to grant a right-of-way. BLM must also comply with ANILCA Section 810, which involves impacts to subsistence users and resources, as well as the National Historic Preservation Act Section

106, which requires BLM to consider and mitigate for potential impacts to cultural and historic resources.

- USACE is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for the wetlands permits that would be required. The USACE would evaluate the project application under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and use the EIS as the basis for its permit decisions.
- USCG is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for bridge permits over navigable waterways, and would also use the EIS as a basis for its decisions.
- State of Alaska DNR is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for state permits. DNR would make land management decisions for right-of-way access across State-managed lands.
- NAB is a Cooperating Agency. NAB will provide traditional knowledge and input on subsistence, cultural resources, and coordination with Tribal members and affected communities. The NAB would also enforce local permitting requirements, and advise the BLM on NAB's responsibilities under State law and NAB regulations. Allakaket and Alatna will also be able to provide input on those subjects once they are added as Cooperating Agencies.
- After scoping meetings have finished, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be developed to add Allakaket and Alatna as Cooperating Agencies.
- NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are all Participating Agencies.

What is an EIS?

I told you I'd tell you what an EIS is. The BLM is required to develop an EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act to assess the environmental consequences of any proposed use of the Federal lands and decisions associated with that. It is required for actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and there are a lot of aspects of the human environment to consider. An EIS includes the following:

- Project Purpose and Need (Why are we doing this?)
- Issues raised during scoping, through the end of January (internal/external)
- Project alternatives developed from issues raised during scoping
- Description of potentially affected environment, which would be impacted by this project
- Environmental consequences of the potential impacts of all the alternatives
- Proposed mitigation of the impacts

So where are We Now?

We published the Notice of Intent to produce an EIS in February 2017, and are now in the Scoping Process. After we get input, we'll develop a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and present that to you. Based on more input and maybe some final adjustments, we'll issue a Final EIS and then a Record of Decision on what we're deciding to do.

Draft Purpose and Need

Project need is based on the requirement for the BLM to respond to a right-of-way application from AIDEA for surface transportation access to currently inaccessible, economically valuable mineral resources in the Ambler Mining District.

Project purpose of the BLM action is to provide AIDEA with: (1) technically and economically practical and feasible surface transportation access across BLM-managed lands for mining exploration and development in the Ambler Mining District, and (2) authorization to construct, operate, and maintain associated facilities for that access.

BLM Decisions to be made

The BLM must decide whether a right-of-way shall be granted, and if so, the terms and conditions that will be associated with the right-of-way grant.

What is Scoping?

Scoping is the process used to get input on the issues, impacts, and potential alternatives that will be addressed in the EIS. What do you think we should be studying in this analysis? The intent of scoping is to:

- Inform agencies and public about AIDEA's application and the proposed project.
- Identify resources, impacts, and issues of concern to be addressed in the EIS.
- Obtain input to help refine the purpose and need and the alternatives to study.
- Identify potential mitigation measures that may be needed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for project impacts.
- Obtain information to help evaluate the project in respect to applicable laws.

Project Issues

The EIS document will cover many issues (see the list in the handout), and we want your input about them. If there are issues you think we should be addressing or more discussion on some of these, please let us know.

ANILCA Section 810

ANILCA Section 810 addresses subsistence issues and impacts. Under Section 810 of ANILCA, the BLM must determine whether the project "may significantly restrict subsistence uses." This analysis will be included in the EIS.

If alternatives may significantly restrict subsistence uses (either abundance, access, or availability), then this will be identified in the analysis, and ANILCA Section 810 hearings will be held at the same time as public meetings upon release of the Draft EIS.

So once we get the initial take on the alternatives and what we think the environmental impacts on the human environment would be, we'll come back to the community and present the Draft EIS, and at the end of that meeting, we would immediately go into the Section 810 hearings, where people have

the opportunity to provide testimony of what you think the potential impacts to subsistence uses, resource availability, abundance, and access could be.

National Historic Preservation Act Section 106

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and places of religious and cultural significance.

Tribal entities, the State Historic Preservation Officer (Judy Bittner), and other interested parties are consulted to identify significant places and ways to reduce or mitigate potential effects.

Letters were sent out to all communities this last week, so you should be receiving a letter inviting your participation in the Section 106 involvement process to be a consulting party. The process is concurrent with the EIS where we:

- determine the undertaking,
- respond to the right-of-way application,
- identify historic properties and their significance to be evaluated,
- talk about what historic properties could be affected,
- what the adverse effects could be,
- consult with the consulting parties to resolve to the best degree we can any of those adverse effects and, at the end
- develop a MOU or Programmatic Agreement on how we're going to handle any potential impacts to historic or cultural resources.

That's all the way from developing protocols on identifying what's out there, what do we know about the historic or cultural resources, and if the right-of-way was going to be granted, how would they be addressed, how would impacts be avoided, mitigated, and minimized even to the point of how we would deal with resources that might be discovered during the pre-construction process. All of those points would be fleshed out before construction even begins and would be fully developed in the Programmatic Agreement with the consulting parties.

NPS EEA Process

NPS EEA process focuses only on the NPS-managed lands.

AIDEA proposal includes two alternative routes across NPS lands (north and south).

Under ANILCA, NPS is legally required to permit access across NPS lands, and prepare an EEA to evaluate which route is preferable based on environmental, social, and economic effects, and develop permit terms and conditions.

EEA Public Input

NPS seeks comments on NPS route selection and permit terms and conditions.

The Comment Period is also open through January 31, 2018. To comment go to www.parkplanning.nps.gov/Ambler.

Schedule

Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register February 28, 2017. Scoping concludes January 31, 2018. A Draft EIS will be developed by March 29, 2019, followed by public review. We would also be holding subsistence hearings during this time. A final EIS based on public and agency review of the draft will be produced by December 30, 2019, and the Record of Decision is targeted to be completed by January 30, 2020.

What's Next?

BLM is collecting comments and feedback, and will be sharing them with the Park Service. This meeting is being recorded. You are not limited to commenting once. You can submit comments throughout the scoping period. BLM will consider input received to potentially refine the Purpose and Need, determine issues and impacts to be studied, determine alternatives to be studied, and potentially identify mitigation measures to apply to the project.

Substantive Comments

Writing substantive comments assists BLM to make good decisions.

Be as specific as possible about what you are concerned about. Refer to a certain section or page of a handout, or when we get to the Draft EIS, any specific parts of that.

Present new information.

Share issues relevant to the environmental analysis.

Suggest alternatives to the proposed project and the reason(s) why they should be considered.

"I don't like this" or "I do like this" isn't enough for us. Tell us why you do or don't like the project. Explain what you think the opportunities are in the project and how they could affect your lives, or the challenges to overcome with it. Let us know everything you think about it. The more information we can get from you, the better we can do on the environmental analysis, mitigation, and the decision to be made. We've heard from a lot of communities who say that the decision has already been made, and that is not true. The BLM has made no decision. What we have is an application for a proposed road corridor, requesting right-of-way across BLM-managed lands. We have a decision to make: whether or not to issue the right-of-way across BLM-managed lands. We can't make a decision until we go through this environmental impact statement process.

How to Submit Comments

You are welcome to comment on the proposed project. You can submit comments in the following ways:

- Submit a comment form in the box

- Submit comments via the website: www.blm.gov/AmblerRoadEIS
- Fax to (907) 271-5479
- Email to blm_ak_akso_amblerroad_comments@blm.gov
- Mail to 222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513

3. Comments

Laurie opened up the meeting to take comments from meeting attendees.

Below are a compilation of verbal comments received at this meeting.

Question from Janet Bifelt

In order to be a Cooperating Agency such as Allakaket and Alatna requested, what do we need to do? Is it up to us if we want to or not, as a Tribe?

Response by Laurie Thorpe, BLM

The Tribe would need to send a letter to the BLM or a written request somehow. BLM did send out a letter – maybe you have it – to the tribal representatives. It was last spring though so it might have gotten lost in the shuffle. I know that happens. If you'd like to be a Cooperating Agency, a government can be a Cooperating Agency, just let us know and we can talk about that more and get you on board as a Cooperating Agency if you have a significant role to play in the Project.

Question from Vivian Billy

Since I'm new here, I'm a visitor. Being that Hughes is on the river that would be directly impacted if anything should spill or leak into it so the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) if the village wants to get an MOU would they be able to access the Alatna or Allakaket MOU to use that as a template?

Response by Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Absolutely. The MOUs that we develop for this project are available to the public. We're still in the process of developing them. Certainly we could share the ones that are already done with you as examples to go by. They're pretty basic. They're a handshake deal of how we would work together and what each of the signing parties has to contribute to the project. It's not a money thing. It's just about roles, responsibilities, and how we agree to work together on the project.

Response by Katherine Wood, HDR

But there isn't an MOU yet with Allakaket or Alatna. They've made the verbal request, but we haven't gotten to the point where we're doing that in writing yet so we don't have that yet to share with you.

Statement from Marna Sanford (TCC)

There are some resources available to Tribes who are wanting to become cooperating members; the Tanana Chiefs Conference realty department has templates available and you guys can reach out to us.

Comment from Wilmer Beetus

Does everybody know that the Northwest Arctic Borough funds our schools and school district? And I think this would work in really good with this project and it's too bad it's not gonna happen, but it's just a comment. I know most people who are here are for developing into a borough, which as you know it provides a lot of money for different school districts. I just wanted to mention that.

Question from June Walker

Why did they not want a borough?

Response from Wilmer Beetus

TCC has the resolution that was established in the 80s, which is still standing today that people didn't want to form a borough and the Tanana Chiefs Council agreed. And we had meetings on it, and most everybody was against it.

Question from Unnamed man

After you write the EIS and build the road, is all this going to be an ongoing process, monitoring the impact and environment and whatnot? Who would monitor the impacts? U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)?

Response from Laurie

We don't have a fully fleshed-out monitoring plan so that's a great question.

Comment from Unnamed man

If somebody has to monitor wildlife and waterways, monitoring stream, one thing about streams and rivers, making a bridge over it. If you don't disturb the actual stream, and I don't think it's gonna hurt the fishing and spawning areas as long as you don't take it through the river or the creek and just make a bridge over it.

Question from Unnamed woman

It says the roadway corridor is expected to operate for up to 50 years that's like a generation. What happens around that time? So the vision only goes to 50 years? That's one generation. I'm thinking about future generations.

Response from Laurie

That's a good question. I don't have answers for 50 years from now. We'll try to get answers to that and have that in the EIS.

Comment from Wilmer Beetus

Up north the oil companies agreed that when all the oil is found they'll have to reclaim all the pads and everything, the roads. I heard from guys at the Northwest Arctic that when they're done mining some of the areas, at Red Dog they're already doing that, and it's back to the same – not exactly the same – but it looks nice out there.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

That is in AIDEA's proposal that they would plan that when mining activity is done that they would reclaim the road. They do have that in their proposal and they're saying that might be 50 years, but it's a good question.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

And the Park Service and the BLM have agreed to share comments, so anything you submit to the Park Service, they'll share with us, and any comments submitted to the BLM, we'll share with them – so that we all have the most information that we can possibly have to make the best decisions possible.

Question from Unnamed Person

Is the authority behind the EIS, is that still EPA?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

The BLM is the federal lead agency.

Additional question from Unnamed Person

If the EPA is taken out by Trump that's not going to impact the EIS?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

The EPA is a participating agency right now.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

The reason the EIS is being done is a law called the National Environmental Policy Act. It's a separate law, not part of the EPA, and as long as that law stands the EIS goes forward.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

The EPA is an agency, whereas NEPA is a law that applies to all federal agencies for any actions that are being taken on federal lands. We're required to do an environmental analysis. Very good question.

Question from Vivian Billy

I was noticing on the map all of the different waterways associated with this. Is all of that going to be impacted? Is all of it going to be addressed? Because they're all up and down the river and associated with the project, so that's a lot of waterways.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

That's a good comment. I'm hearing some issues that we should address in the EIS – all of the waterways that the proposed project could potentially impact.

Question from June Walker

What companies are going to be doing all the mine?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

I don't know all the companies.

Response from Wilmer Beetus

NovaGold, I think...

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

Right now one of the companies is Trilogy Metals who bought out the NovaGold interest.

Response from Wilmer Beetus

They're a company from Australia that's putting in \$10 million a year. I couldn't remember their name.

Additional Question from June Walker

There's an act called the TERO (Tribal Employment Rights Office Act). It's to help the Natives get hired. They have a percentage of Native hire. Will that be implemented?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

That's a good question. I don't know, but that's a good question that we can try to answer in the EIS, and should be addressed in the EIS: how many people would potentially be employed and from where would they be hired.

Additional Question from June Walker

There's some companies like up north that hire from out of state, and then when they hire Natives or other minorities here in Alaska they give them a hard time because they have mostly people from out of state.

Response from Wilmer Beetus

First of all, I went to the Fairbanks meeting that you guys had on November 16, and Hughes was not on the list for a public scoping meeting so I invited BLM here. I want to make a comment about what I think we should be ready for. I'm not sure about Doyon, but I think we should encourage our board members at the K-Corp Board to really think about this. Right now, in Interior of Alaska, and especially on the Koyukuk River, we have no fishing, no logging, no mining. We have no kind of work here, and one thing I want to do is keep our people here. So we stay involved and we get in partnership with our Village Corporation and work with NANA, with AIDEA, who's going to be giving out the contracts to build the road, with the mining companies. If this is gonna happen, we want to be at the table, and I think it should be our Village Corporation to provide jobs. We could have a direct flight from here to the mine or from here to where they're building the road, and bring our people to work, and that could happen if we do things right. If this road is gonna be built, because the minerals are there. They are there. There's billions of dollars in minerals that they want to extract from the ground, and that's a lot of money. And the mining companies like I mentioned, there's a company out of Australia that's putting in \$10 million a year to do testing – Trilogy – that's what I heard at the Bornite meeting I went to. So they're not doing this for nothing. If they're going to put in \$10 million a

year, which is probably not very much for them for being a big mining company, we really need to encourage our K-Corp Board members that we really want to do this. If you look at our kids here, we have more kids here, and we have more coming. One was just born at 4:00 this morning. I don't know if you guys heard, but in five years are we still gonna have this half-court gym? Where are we gonna get the money to extend it out to a full court for our kids? In five years, we're gonna have more than 30 kids in this school. We've got to think about where the money is gonna come from. We can't just go back to the same life, subsistence lifestyle, this day-to-day struggle; there's going to be good jobs available and we've just got to be ready for them. Or see our young guys here and ladies have a chance to really make some good money. I just wanted to mention that. We could still live a subsistence lifestyle. Or like over in the Northwest Borough they work two weeks on, they come home, they have money for new snowmachines, boats, they have money for gas, and they go out hunting for two weeks and then they go back to work again. They do that year-round at Red Dog. They gave a million dollars – NANA did – to each of their villages. Do what you want with it. There's money that's floating around. That's what we need to be ready for.

Question from Vivian Billy

I would like to take it to the next step further. In addition to creating jobs, there should be language incorporated that says the project will enhance subsistence levels, current levels, in enhancing at least the abilities for the fishing and the logging and the mining and give better access to them. Having some language in there that sets aside a certain amount of money for that purpose, working with other agencies, and if other countries and agencies ever come in and do exploration, do they work with TERO (Tribal Employment Rights Office) where you have to have a certain amount of local Natives?

Comment from Wilmer Beetus

NANA right now at Red Dog has 65 percent shareholder hire. They're partners. We have to be partners. We have to stay on the table.

Question from Claude Koyukuk

Will there be a railroad?

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

The railroad was looked at by DOT&PF in their study, and it wasn't carried forward, but a lot of people have asked "Can it be a railroad?" So that might be something we need to look at again.

Comment from Claude Koyukuk

It would probably cost more to maintain a rail system I imagine especially up around the Brooks Range where it snows like crazy.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

We're going to take a hard look at the DOT&PF study that's already been done, and if we feel that there's additional consideration for a railroad, we'll take a look at that. But we're so early on in this step of the process that we can't say one way or the other at this point.

Comment from Wilmer Beetus

I think the most important thing is if the road is going through we have to be partners with somebody, and our best chance is our Village Corporation of being partners so we have a say in who could be hired, and we have a say at the table. If we're not partners, we just go against the road, then they're just gonna run right over us. All the oil is drying up.

Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR

A couple of things about comments. We want to hear from everybody regardless of your opinion. We always want an open space where anybody can feel free to comment. Another thing is that if you don't like to speak in public that's okay too. If you want to write a comment we have comment forms up front. You can send those in anytime. And anything that we get whether it's in writing or the spoken word it all receives the same weight. If you don't want to speak out that's okay. You can also write your comments.

Comment from Thelma Nicholia

I just want to let everybody know that since this is in the planning process everybody should be ready and go get some education in heavy equipment or whatever to be ready for employment. Right now.

Response from Wilmer Beetus

I think it's really important. There'll be jobs available for younger people, and evidently they're going to do drug tests so everybody just has to keep that in mind. They'll be high paying – either union or non-union – we don't know yet till the time comes.

Comment from Hugh Bifelt

I just want to speak on the subject because I'm in favor of development. The Ambler Mining District is large, and there are a lot of minerals out there so I can see that there will be satellite roads coming off the main road in the future. The biggest thing I see from people opposing this road is satellite roads. The country is already impacted with hunters and airplanes already. It really is, and I think the biggest thing is that people think this road is going to be opened up to the public and we're gonna be flooded with hunters and everything. You know, we've gotta take this chance, we've gotta take this gamble. We have our grandchildren. I had a granddaughter born this morning. I'm not saying it for myself, I'm saying it for them, you know? We've gotta quit thinking this narrow-minded subsistence, subsistence, subsistence. We all can subsist, but that don't pay the bills. I'm looking forward to this project, and I really hope we build it, and frankly I disagree with the Tanana Chiefs. They represent us, and we're part of the Tanana Chiefs, and these people they live in Fairbanks. They come and they make all the decisions for us, and they live in Fairbanks with all the cheap fuel, cheap food. They can jump in their truck and go hunting, take their boat down the Yukon and go fishing, and then be back in Fairbanks that night. And they make decisions for us. You know, the people that are living out here. I really disagree with that. I would like our leaders to think further down the road than just right now. That's all I have to say.

Response from Wilmer Beetus

We could still be subsistence people, but we still have to think of how we're gonna pay the bills, like you mentioned, and be business people also. We could be.

Comment from Thelma Nicholia

We are business people.

Response from Wilmer Beetus

And Hughes, we lost elders over the last few years, some of them were for the road [*recording not audible*] Henry Beetus is for the road [*recording not audible*]; they were all miners. They all grew up mining back there 16 miles on the mountain. The mine started in 1954, and was operated for about 10, 15 years. And then they moved to Hog River and mined for most of their lives. My dad was a miner. That's how they made a living out there. But they were still living a subsistence lifestyle also, and we could do the same thing. But the main thing is we're want to keep our people here in the community. We have a hard time in the last 15 years. Our school's almost closed down twice, and we have to keep our people here.

Question from June Walker

We have a lot of problems with people hunting in our area, and with the road being built, I think it will really impact that also. How are you going to be able to police them?

Comment from Wilmer Beetus

We need to hire our own fish and game officer.

Comment from Claude Koyukuk

Well, I know Doyon, they do security on the pipeline; maybe they could do the same for this.

Response from Wilmer Beetus

That's why we need to be partners. We could have gas stations. If our corporation gets involved early enough we could start that, and have them run by our own people. We could do that.

Comment from Alfred (not on sign-in list)

Or if there's a way we could if progress could be made as it goes further along and measure the forward progress – if the public could know more about it.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

For this planning phase of the project, go to this website [*shows URL*], and this will have the current information for this EIS process.

Response from Joy Huntington

I'm just going to add to that Alfred that there is one of the documents on the front table is an AIDEA document with the newsletter from AIDEA there so that kind of gives a little bit, from the process perspective, an update on where things are at. This is a big part of that process and what happens

throughout it so what the decision is and the outcome of the evidence process is really important to the overall project, of course. This kind of gives an overview of milestones right now, and there is a website for the project that is AIDEA's website. You can also contact me or anyone listed there for updates.

Response from Katherine

If you or someone in the community has email and you gave us your email address, we will share information too as we get more as we move through the EIS process.

Comment from Marna Sanford

Tanana Chiefs has a resolution currently, and it's not supporting or opposing the road. Just so you know, our current resolution, which is what dictates what we do says that we'll help provide you access to the process. So currently, we have someone on staff that will help you draft comments for the EIS process. We also have someone on staff what will help you draft comments for the 106 part. Those comments can be whatever you, the Tribe, wants. So currently, the resolution that Tanana Chiefs is operating under is not in support of or in opposition to the road. It is just to be a resource to our tribes and to do what you tell us. That's how we operate. To do what you tell us to do. So if anybody wants to avail themselves of those services again I have my card, and am happy to bring that to the leadership that I work for. But just so you know we're not pushing any agenda except to provide you all with information and opportunity so that you can let your voice be heard.

Comment from Wilmer Beetus

The reason that I said that was that when I attended the meeting in Fairbanks, and Victor Joseph said in person, said he opposed this road, so I don't know if he was speaking for his person, himself, or acting as a representative of TCC. And with the Borough, he did the same thing with the Borough. He was supporting the resolution against the Borough we're trying to form. If we did have a Borough, through this process we would have a huge say. We'd be owners of the land and we would annex that and have tax authority.

Response from Marna Sanford

I will bring that back to my leadership.

Question from Claude Koyukuk

I was reading in the paper that these miners were interested in the road just so they could have access to the road for mining. Is that preventable too? What about private miners?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

That's a really good question. We hope to work more closely with AIDEA on how they would manage access on the road. We don't have all those answers yet, but that's a great question.

Comment from Wilmer Beetus

Just to let people know, the owners over at the mine, which has been operating over there for years. They're three owners and they're all from out of state so now they're taking all that money out of

state. If we did have a borough we could tax them. As a tribe, we invite you to take a look at this mine back here 16 miles in there at Indian River. The reason we want to do that is to see if it's feasible enough for them since we're not miners. We don't have the tools or the equipment. You might take a look at it, and if it's feasible enough for them it might provide jobs for us here to have a mine right back there.

Comment from June Walker

Who owns the land...Doyon?

Response from Wilmer Beetus

Yes.

Question from June Walker

What do they mean by "critical minerals?"

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

There were a lot of other different minerals that have been identified there, and I can't think of them off the top of my head.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

Sometimes the minerals are.... it's called "rare earth elements" sometimes so it's more of the smaller more rare minerals. A lot of those are used for cell phones and technology. So that's the kind of minerals they mean. There are a lot of different kinds of minerals

Question from June Walker

What about the invasive species of plants? How would you control them?

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

That's a good question. I think in some other places, they wash the trucks, but there are a whole lot of different options there.

Comment from Claude Koyukuk

Maybe you should start a newsletter for everybody that'll impacted by this. You know, like a monthly newsletter to update everybody.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

That's why we're collecting email addresses up front.

Comment from Claude Koyukuk

Not everybody is technological.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Are you suggesting something that would be sent out to each person?

Comment from Claude Koyukuk

Yeah, just send it out to the tribes.

Question from Joy Huntington

Just a clarifying question – were you asking that from the BLM EIS perspective, or from the project perspective?

Comment from Claude Koyukuk

Whoever it is – an update on the whole project.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

The other thing we can do is when we send out an email we can remember to print a copy and send it to the tribe.

Comment from Claude Koyukuk

Or you can send it to the tribal office and we can make copies.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

If you can be sure we have that email that would be great.

4. Closing

Laurie Thorpe and Katherine Wood drew the tickets for the door prizes. Laurie thanked all the attendees, reminded them that there are many ways to submit comments. She asked them to stay involved, and to continue to submit all their comments.

Katherine encouraged the visitors to take food as they left.