



Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement

Bettles and Evansville Public Scoping Meeting

MEETING NOTES

December 12, 2017

Bettles and Evansville Community Hall, Bettles and Evansville, Alaska

Project Team Participants

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

HDR: Leslie Robbins, Katherine Wood

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

Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Marie Steele

Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA): Jeff San Juan

Doyon Limited: Sharon Hildebrand

Public Participants

Approximately eight 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 Laurie Thorpe (BLM) and Introductions
2. Presentation by Laurie Thorpe (BLM)

Background

The purpose of today's meeting is to share information about the BLM's EIS process and 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.

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 that 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 the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA). In 2015, AIDEA submitted an SF-299 application to federal agencies requesting right-of-way for the road for industrial access, not open to the public. In 2016, AIDEA spent the first half of the year responding to requests for additional information from the application recipients (BLM, National Park Service [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 scoping period. We knew that would not allow enough time for public scoping with all the affected communities. BLM did not want to impact subsistence activities during the summer and fall months so we extended the public scoping period through January 31, 2018. In 2017, NPS began a separate but parallel Environmental and Economic Impact Analysis (EEA) for the portion of the road on National Park Service land, as directed by ANILCA. This is a new thing for Alaska. It's similar to an EIS, but doesn't require all the public involvement. That road must connect to other lands managed by BLM, the State, and other Native Corporations to reach the Ambler Mining District.

Proposed Project

The right-of-way application from AIDEA proposes a road across public and private land to the Ambler Mining District 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.

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.

Road Elements

Maps are available to see the route. We encourage your participation by marking on the maps. We will also leave a set up maps here for your use.

AIDEA's proposed alignment begins at the Dalton Highway (Milepost 161) and extends westward along the south side 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 lands managed by BLM and NPS (24 percent), and lands associated with two Alaska Native Corporations (15 percent), and that's the NANA Corporation and the Doyon Corporation.

The road would be 211 miles long all-season, gravel two-lane road with industrial access only. It would be industrial access only, and not be open to the public. It includes bridges, material sites, maintenance stations, airstrips, and related infrastructure and utilities.

Vehicles using the road would include trucks hauling mineral exploration and development equipment, supplies, fuel, and ore concentrate. The road would be designed to accommodate large semi-tractor/trailer trucks.

Proposed Project Area

The project begins at Milepost 161 of the Dalton Highway. It would start on BLM-managed lands, and would cross a mix of State and corporation lands. It is 211 miles long and ends at the Ambler mineral belt area as shown on the Proposed Project Area Map (see handout). The proposed alternative is shown in red with an alternate route in green that reduces the number of miles that must cross the Gates of the Arctic National Park land. The two routes shown are proposed by AIDEA, and the routes through the National Park land will be analyzed by the NPS EEA. The BLM must look at other possible routes, including the no-action alternative. Additional maps were presented that showed a close-up of each section of the route. This is the proposed road in relationship to your community here, Bettles and Evansville.

Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR

We were looking at this [map] and just wondering, is this actually right? Because Bettles and Evansville are along...

Comment from Frank Thompson

That's old Bettles Town.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

That's historic Bettles? 1949? So Bettles is closer to Evansville now?

Comment from Frank Thompson

Yep, I think that airplane icon is the landing strip for here

Agency Roles

BLM is the lead federal agency for preparing the EIS. BLM is coordinating with all the other agencies. BLM has authority to grant right-of-way across BLM-managed lands. BLM must also comply with ANILCA Section 810 and the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106. This is a good time to submit comments about issues relating to subsistence and cultural 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.

Northwest Arctic Borough (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 Northwest Arctic Borough regulations.

USCG is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for bridge permits over navigable waters, 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. They are also in coordination with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

NPS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are all Participating Agencies.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

This EIS is a site-specific EIS for the proposed Ambler Road. An EIS is a document required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to assess the environmental consequences of their decisions. An EIS is required for actions by federal agencies that significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Without your input, we cannot do a good EIS. An EIS includes the following:

- Project Purpose and Need.
- Issues raised during scoping (internal/external) – Things we want to hear from you.
- Project alternatives.
- Description of potentially affected environment – Resources like wildlife, vegetation, hydrology, fisheries, cultural resources, and the human environment. We determine what we know about those resources now, and look at how they would be impacted by this project.
- Environmental consequences of all the alternatives that are addressed in the EIS.
- Proposed mitigation which can involve the project design, or reduce, avoid, or mitigate of any of the impacts that could result from any of the alternatives should they be selected and implemented

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 requesting public participation. The Scoping Period ends January 31, 2018. Should the project get funded further, then a draft EIS will be developed with draft alternatives by March 2019, depending on funding. Public review would be held on that draft EIS. Based on that feedback we would revise and issue a final EIS. After that the BLM would issue a Record of Decision. At this point we do not know what that decision will be. It could be one of the proposed routes, or it could be the no-action alternative. There are public involvement opportunities throughout the entire process. The

target completion date for the final EIS would be end of December 2019. At least 30 days after the completion of the final EIS, the BLM would issue their final Record of Decision.

Draft Purpose and Need

The 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 deposits in the Ambler Mining District.

The 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 the associated facilities for that access.

BLM Decisions to be made

The BLM must decide whether or not to issue a right-of-way, and if so, the terms and conditions that will be associated with the right-of-way. We are not required to grant a right-of-way. We can issue a Record of Decision for a no-action alternative.

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. The intent of scoping is to:

- Inform agencies and the 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 under the applicable laws.

EIS Document

The EIS document will cover these kinds of issues [shown in presentation], which we came up with internally and felt should be considered:

- Air quality
- Special status species
- Subsistence use and access
- Climate change effects
- Fish and aquatic species
- Critical minerals
- Invasive species
- Water
- Travel management

- Mining
- Wetlands and riparian
- Demand for gravel resources
- Recreational activities
- Wilderness characteristics
- Public access
- Social and economic impacts
- Cultural resources
- Wildlife and biological resources
- Impacts to rural and traditional lifestyles
- Geology and soils
- Reasonably foreseeable future activities

ANILCA Section 810

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. They are a separate but concurrent process. We'll basically say, "Here's what we heard from you in the scoping meetings, did we get it right? Have we been correct in clearly displaying the potential impacts and consequences?"

National Historic Preservation Act Section 106

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) 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.

The agency will identify historic properties and their significance, and look at how those historic properties will potentially be affected. What would the adverse effects be to those historic and cultural resources? The group would consult to resolve those adverse effects, and at the end of the process, a MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] or Programmatic Agreement is developed where all those consulting parties agree how to address the historic and cultural resources specific to this project.

NPS EEA Process

AIDEA's proposal includes two alternative routes across NPS lands (North and South). If there's another alternative suggested during the process, we might look at that too.

Under ANILCA, NPS is legally required to permit access across NPS lands, and requires that they 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 route selection and permit terms and conditions.

The comment Period is open through January 31, 2018. To comment go to <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Ambler>

BLM and the NPS will share comments so that we have the most information we can to make the best decisions possible.

Schedule

Scoping concludes January 31, 2018. A Draft EIS will be developed by March 29, 2019, followed by public review and the ANILCA 810 hearings. 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. We 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.

When you provide comments:

- Be as specific as possible about what you are concerned about.
- Refer to a section or page number of a particular referenced document such as the Draft EIS.
- 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" is not useful. Explain why. What are the opportunities and challenges? What does it mean to you?

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

- Submit a comment form in the box today
- Submit comments via the Ambler Road EIS website: <http://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

Tribal Council Presentation

3. Comments

Laurie asked the participants to please share their comments.

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

Comment from Frank Thompson

It's no secret that we've got a resolution in opposition, the Evansville Tribal Council does and the corporation does too, and I know that Allakaket and Alatna also do too. So we've been opposed. We've got a lot of comments out to AIDEA and the Park Service on why. We've always suggested the alternative route being from the Ambler Mining District leading over to the coast. It's a shorter route. Those questions were never answered when DOT had the project or when AIDEA had the meetings here. Even when I went over to Kotzebue and we had Northwest Arctic Borough sponsor that meeting, and AIDEA would want that project. I think the fact is that we were never consulted at the first get-go when DOT had this project. It's directly affecting. It was originally just gonna come right through Bettles and just right on the south end of the runway. That was the original routing. And there was no consultation whatsoever from the State. Of course, now we know that they kind of recognize Tribes' sovereignty, but at that time they didn't, and that was kind of a sore spot you know to come and say, "Hey, here's a road and you're gonna love it, and it's gonna be good for everybody." We had the Ambler Mining District, which was not in our regional corporation's area, them telling us, "Hey, we're gonna put a road through your place, and it's gonna be great." And of course, we were against it from that point, from the non-consultation part of it. Other parts or other reasons why is most roads in Alaska not only go – I'm not speaking for everybody – not for the City of Bettles. Anyway, another issue that we pointed out, and also community fish and wildlife too, when there was talk of going through a community that this road is going east to west, and you see that all the rivers in Alaska are kind of north/south orientated, and putting a road like that, not only is it, you've got bridges over the rivers and there are all the other lowlands, wetlands, and especially like in the flats, flatlands that you put a road like that. It's officially changing the dynamics of the watershed doing such a road like that, and that's why it's obviously not going through Kanuti anymore. Mike Spindler is a refuge manager. He's close to retiring next month. But anyway, that was a big push when the road got switched to going through Kanuti that there was a big environmental impact there. Whoa! This is all wetlands through here and you're gonna affect, essentially make a dam and change the water. There's other reasons just within the Tanana Chiefs' region communities that did have roads, the impacts that it brought along, like Minto and [Recording not audible] that they've seen how things change. And that's pretty much the bread basket for everybody to go moose hunting now in the Fairbanks area and even further south. And they kind of resent that a lot. I know there's a lot of trespass that goes on. I know that even Doyon has, they didn't do it last year but the year before they did the patrolling kind of thing for trespassed lands. So there's that issue. It doesn't make sense, I feel, to transport ore from 220 miles to the Dalton Highway, and then you've got another 200 just to Fairbanks, and then what do you do – rail it? When a cheaper alternative, I think, would be to transport it by road to [the] Kotzebue area,

or wherever that deep water port is for the Red Dog Mine. And we're talking about how more open climate change is going to turn everything into a shipping lane there. And that would make a lot more economic sense right there to get it there, but I know it's the State of Alaska that's wanting to open up lands. And I keep hearing that you guys have to say it, but this is proposed industrial access only like the Haul Road was, but once you've got a road, that's gonna change. The State would have a lot invested in it and would be seeking through the taxes and the tolls and everything that this would be an opening, you know. I'm not opposed to all development just this one. Opening it up to a lot of potential trespass from just regular or from Alaskans not only Native but non-Native coming in there and hunting, and it's gonna change what little character that we have seen. Definitely I know it affects caribou migration. I know that the working group for the Western Arctic Herd. All the studies that they've done on that mine from Red Dog down to the port that they collared the caribou, and you'll notice that they avoid that whole road now. So that really changes migration. It's gonna affect these vital streams for sheefish, whitefish, the potential impacts. I know the head of the geological and soil things in there. I know a lot of that section in the Brooks Range are high in asbestos in the gravel and those impacts. So there's that concern, water quality. I know through the State, what did they do? One year of fish studies on the water quality? You can see what we're dealing with on the Yukon for the salmon that they fish in cycles of – you want six, seven years of studies on fish to get an accurate thing. One year, two years is really relatively leaving a lot unknowns there.

Comment from Rich Thorne

Yes, I live in Bettles and yes, I'm on the city council, but at the moment I'm not speaking for the City Council. I have been involved in some sort of road, the possibility from the whole road to Bettles, for 25 years, 26 years. The environmental issues that Frank brought up are real. I think if we're careful we could build a road and mitigate those. But what I'm seeing, looking at the map, my concerns kind of go this way: What has Bettles got going for it for an economy? We have some tourists coming here. Okay, you've got a road that's, what 10 miles north of us? That's not gonna impact the tourists who come here for the Northern Lights, but the ones that want to go out in the wilderness? That road is gonna have a major impact on wilderness quality. That's our asset here! Now when I go out and play, I like to go up to Wild River, and that road is gonna cross the Wild River and the drainage there. And the moose population in the lower Wild River still hasn't recovered from the 1992 overhunting that was done when a bunch of guys came up from Fort Wainwright, and they took a whole bunch of moose out of lower Wild River off snowmachines, and the population hasn't come back. Okay, so you put a road up there, and any possible benefit that we could have we don't get, and it hurts us. I've got two questions for you: With respect to the private property, the Native lands across here, you guys need to find a way to make everybody happy with that. Without it, this road isn't going to be built even those routes that you've got showing up there. Maybe it won't go out to the west coast, but that route isn't going to be built. You guys are wasting an awful lot of money on this EIS, because it isn't going to happen. I'd love to have a road come through here, but it's got to mitigate all those issues, and you've gotta keep everybody happy. And that's not gonna happen in my lifetime. Now that doesn't mean I've changed my mind. It means that I'm more realistic about getting it done. It isn't going to happen. Recently there was a settlement between the State and Ahtna Corporation and the lands along the

Klutina River on access up to the lake there. How does that affect crossing the Native lands here? And last question was actually sprung to me by Representative Dean Westlake last spring. What if this road were built as a private road? Do you guys still need an EIS to build this as a private road? Let's get the State and the Feds out of it. That would allow the locals to actually control the access. It would have to be done with money from the Native Corporations and the mining companies. But the millions of dollars that have already been spent on this without doing your homework ahead of time on the land issues just seems to me like a very big waste of money.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

So there were some questions in there you're asking about the Native lands and private property. So there's NANA-owned lands and Doyon-owned lands, and both of those property owners would have to grant right-of-way for this project to go forward. There have been some folks, Sharon with Doyon here and NANA, has been attending some of the meetings as well to listen and hear what people's concerns are. The other question, do you want to answer? If the road was private-funded, would we still need an EIS?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

If anything like this, regardless of who's proposing it, if it would go across BLM public lands would require action from BLM.

Comment from Rich Thorne

Well, BLM would wind up swapping the land. It would become entirely a private road on private land.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

That would be a change of land ownership, jurisdiction of the land. That's an interesting comment to consider. However, a land transfer from federal to state is a federal action, and would still trigger NEPA.

Comment from Rich Thorne

Congressman Westlake, when he heard I was coming, he was all prepared to talk to me about it. It was an intriguing idea, but I don't hear anybody else talking about it.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

So the EIS, the NEPA process applies when there's a federal action or federal money to be spent. So in this case, the federal action is the BLM granting the right-of-way or not. So theoretically if it was all private lands there would be no need for...

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

What about the Corps of Engineers? The jurisdiction?

Response from John Sargent (USACE)

Because of all the discharge of fill material into wetlands and waters, the permit from the Corps, that permit is the federal nexus.

Question from Rich Thorne

Even if it were on private land?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Yes, because it's affecting waters of the U.S. that would be considered a federal nexus triggering NEPA.

Comment from Rich Thorne

As I see it right now with the road going around us, we have all the problems of the development and none of the benefits.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

It's really good to share the comments whether you like it and whether don't like it. You might like parts of it, and you might not like other parts of it so let us know all that, because that information and feedback from you is important so we cover what needs to be studied.

Comment from Eric Burrows

I was talking to a fellow that's lived in Wiseman, and he was telling me he was there before we all were. He was telling me that the Haul Road never actually ended up being completely private because what you had people doing if you filed a mineral claim along that Haul Road route then they had to grant you a permit. So you had people going up there, filing a mineral claim (the cost of the permit was 40 bucks), and then specifically just doing that so they could hunt in that area. So they could drive up and down the road, [and] make a claim that they would have a false pretense for access. So if this was a closed-off road to the public for general access, what sort of preventative measures would be made to keep that from happening? Because we live in an area with low moose density. Moose is the big one here. Caribou may have been in the past. I'm relatively new so if we have that issue it's going to be a hot spot for population centers because people I talk to in Fairbanks think we're just crawling with moose up here. I've spent enough time hiking out there to know that's not the case. So we'll deal with the loss of large amounts of game for the people who may or may not benefit economically from that so we'll still have a depressed area as far as year-round employment goes. And then the thing you have going for you is the subsistence aspect, but we'll deal with lower game numbers. It's a big concern for this community and others.

Comment from Naomi Costello (Evansville Tribal Council)

I was here when the pipeline was being constructed initially. Where they actually came through this community up the John River through Anaktuvuk, and of course they were like, "Yeah, this is going to

bring jobs,” and they wrote jobs into it, and Title 29 that, “This is going to help create jobs for Alaskans,” and they imported nearly the entire work force to construct it and operate their operation on the slope. And here we are in Evansville and Bettles, and I’ve been here since 1975. There really was no benefit to our community aside from our small, little winter trail over to the main road, which is acceptable to the Corporation because it restricts access. There’s no infrastructure here in our little community to deal with the impacts of that type of year-round infrastructure. And so we never saw a benefit from the Haul Road. So who’s really going to benefit from the rich resources? They’re finite in that area. Our community did receive revenue sharing because they did have extra funding because of the taxes, but that stopped a long time ago. The benefits of the environment here are much greater than money or what the minerals are going to be used for when they’re taken away.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Anyone else have any thoughts, ideas, comments you want to share now? Again, this isn’t your only opportunity. I’d encourage you all to think some more, and you can go online or just even write on a piece of paper and send it in to us. Many other ways are possible.

Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR

We have some comment forms up front, so if you want to take one with you if you think of something tomorrow or next week and you want to add to it, that’s great. I just really want to thank you for coming and sharing with us again tonight. I appreciate the fact that DOT and AIDEA have been through already talking about this project for many years. But for the BLM process, this is the first time. We have access to those old notes, but it’s also very different and important to come and hear it from you directly. So thank you, even if you feel like, “I’ve said this before,” it’s important for us to hear it again, so thanks so much for that.

Comment from Frank Thompson

On the slide where you had the Cooperating Agencies, I thought Allakaket had filed in as a Cooperating Agency, and I didn’t see it on there.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

When we put this presentation together, when we went to Allakaket and Alatna that’s when they said they’d let us know if they wanted to be considered for Cooperating Agency status.

Comment from Frank Thompson

I thought that process was done already.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

It isn’t. We’re right in the thick of doing these meetings so after this we’ll be working with Allakaket and Alatna to develop an MOU to bring them on as Cooperating Agencies.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

I think Hughes also – Hughes Tribal Council – asked to be a Cooperating Agency yesterday.

Comment from Unnamed man

I think we should, too, but it's kind of hard.

Comment from Frank Thompson

The Corporation, right?

Comment from Naomi Costello

One of the first meetings that was held here at this community center, Frank, you were here, it was like one of the very initial meetings early on, and they weren't accepting comments or anything. It was just, they came in here and said this is what they want to do, and they weren't accepting comments or anything. Basically, they left here with, "This is what we're going to do." That was at the initial meetings. *[Recording not audible]*

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

This is the first time BLM and the federal agencies are reaching out since we received the application. We weren't really involved until we received the application for the right-of-way so now that's prompted us to become involved with communities and do this scoping so we know what to analyze in the EIS. And also, I think it's important that you know we are not required to issue a right-of-way. We have the discretion to issue a right-of-way or not. We don't even know what we're going to do yet. We have to go through this EIS process.

Comment from Frank Thompson

If the applicant has provided more detailed sections of this hundred-mile view above, pretty vague, on where it goes to the affected lands of the Native corporations. I guess it's easy for the Park Service. Over here around Bettles and Evansville, is that allotments or BLM lands inside? *[looks at map with Katherine Wood, HDR]*. And other maps that I've seen them bring through you could barely read some of the names of the rivers and creeks and stuff. It was so far out.

Comment from Rich Thorne

Have you guys seen any of the aerial photos from the 1994 flood?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

No.

Comment from Rich Thorne

All that flat wetland you're talking about was a lake. This community was an island in the river.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

Did you say it was 1990 or '94?

Comment from Rich Thorne

Ninety-four. Even with that northerly route there any of those lower areas that you're crossing will get wet, and it will be moving because you're up higher than [*Recording not audible*] country. If you do try to go down through Kanuti that whole area was just one big, giant lake. The Kanuti Flats was entirely inundated.

Comment from Eric Burrows

The water levels were 24, 25 feet higher than normal in spots.

Comment from Rich Thorne

Eric, you saw what happened in September.

Comment from Eric

Yep.

Comment from Rich

The water level was – are you ready for this? – Six feet deeper in 1994. We had high water in September, but it was nothing. We lost a little bank, but there was no damage to this community at all. We barely escaped 1994; we lost our seaplane base on the river, and that's why FEMA [*Federal Emergency Management Agency*] put in that craziness down at that lake three miles southeast of us. I really think you guys are making a mistake pushing on this route at this time. There are some issues that need to be addressed first. Sorry.

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

That's why we're here; you don't have to apologize.

Comment from Rich Thorne

I keep getting looked at. I can feel the eyeballs looking at the back of my head, too. That's okay. Tina, you just look so much like Senator Cathy Giessel that it's amazing. She could be your twin sister.

Comment from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

There's also larger maps. There's a 6-foot-long map on the back table there. We're going to leave all that here with you.

Comment from Unnamed man

Also, I think on the smaller more zoomed-up one you don't show the Native Corporation or the regional corporation items just the Native allotments.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Yeah, we thought having the reference on the topographic map might be useful. We have it on some of the maps, and on others we have different ways of displaying different information. We overlaid that, and it got a little bit congested, but we certainly can develop maps that show all of that.

Comment from Rich Thorne

That would be a good idea, with some detail.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Absolutely. There is a lot to consider. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and ideas and comments.

Comment from Unnamed man

Like I say, I'm not opposed to all development. It's just the way of the State opening up Alaska for exploitation.

Comment from Naomi Costello

What happened to "reduce, reuse, and recycle?" The mine is just going to tear down the mountain and, I was over in Bornite in the summer of '85 working, cooking for the drilling company that was up there – Arctic, and they said that whole mountain was copper. Better quality than Butte, Montana. If they're planning on tearing down the mountain they're just gonna keep using things up from the Earth, and that's not a good thing for my grandkids and their kids.

4. Closing

Katherine informed the group that meeting notes were being taken and would be available and shared with other communities. Laurie thanked the community for allowing the meeting to take place, for their attendance, and for their comments and feedback. She reminded them that they have until the end of January 2018 to submit their comments.

Katherine adjourned the meeting and asked the participants to please take home the leftover food. Fred Thompson thanked DOT&PF and AIDEA for holding the meeting in the small, crowded space of the community center.