

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

DESIGN & ENGINEERING SERVICES DIVISION, NORTHERN REGION

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May 20, 2005

RE: Prospect Creek Airport Improvements

Project No. 61857

Environmental Scoping

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is soliciting comments and information on a proposal for improvements at the Prospect Airport. ABR, Inc.—Environmental Research & Services is assisting ADOT&PF with the preparation of the environmental document.

Existing Facility Description

The Prospect Creek Airport is located at Prospect Creek, adjacent to the Dalton Highway at MP 140 (Figure 1). The airport is adjacent to Pump Station No. 5 of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System and about 35 miles south of the community of Coldfoot, Alaska (Sections 17 and 20, Township 23N, Range 14W, Fairbanks Meridian).

The Prospect Creek Airport is a 150-ft wide by 5000-ft long gravel runway within a 200-ft by 5200-ft safety area. The airport has a 325 ft-long taxiway and a 245-ft by 490-ft apron. The apron is connected to the Dalton Highway by 28-ft wide access road. The airport was built in 1974–1975 and is owned by the State of Alaska and currently maintained by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

The airport is certificated under Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 139. This certification allows it to serve 30-seat passenger aircraft. An aircraft rescue and fire fighting (ARFF) truck housed in an ARFF building provide services during the 30-seat aircraft operations. The airport is used as the major transportation link for crew changes for the nearby Pump Stations and DOT&PF Maintenance Stations, by flight services for tourism and commercial travel to nearby villages (Bettles), the Brooks Range, and the Gates of the Arctic National Park, and for medical evacuations.

Purpose and Need

The current airport has several deficiencies that need to be addressed: 1) inadequate runway safety area; 2) surface condition problems on the runway, taxiway, and apron, 3) erosion and settlement problems that need to be corrected, and 4) an outdated electrical and lighting system that needs to be replaced (Figure 2). The FAA mandates that safety areas be upgraded to current standards for all Part 139 airports concurrent with any work on the runway. This project will bring the airport into compliance with the Federal Aviation

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Regulations. The surface irregularities caused by thawing of the subgrade require great expenditures of time and resources every summer. This project will raise the embankment height to increase the insulation effect, which will reduce the rate of thaw consolidation and reduce maintenance expenditures and use of scarce, high-quality, gravel surfacing resources.

Proposed Action

The proposed action entails the expansion of the runway safety area to 300-ft by 6200-ft. The runway, taxiway, apron, and access road will be resurfaced. Erosion and settlement problems will be addressed and repaired. A dust palliative will be added during resurfacing to reduce future erosion. The airport lighting and electrical system will be replaced. The project will be developed pursuant to the 2003 *Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Impacts to Wetlands and Other Aquatic Resources, Mitigation and Airport Improvement Projects in Alaska*.

Materials sites for the project have been identified and will be evaluated for their potential use in spring 2005 (Figure 3).

Preliminary Research Results

In 2004, DOT&PF contracted ABR, Inc. to classify and map wetlands using aerial photography, conduct a field survey to verify wetland and upland boundaries, complete functional assessments of each wetland type, map vegetation and habitats, and evaluate habitat values for selected wildlife species. These data will be used to assess impacts to wetlands and other wildlife habitat. The wetlands report will be available in April 2005. Wetlands were delineated in the project area (Figure 4).

At present ADOT&PF does not anticipate any significant environmental impacts or unusual circumstances associated with the proposed project.

Results of a preliminary research on natural resources in the project area are provided in Appendix A. To ensure that all factors are considered in the environmental document (an environmental assessment), your comments are requested no later than June 20, 2005. The links below contain preliminary research collected through a review of federal and state documents. To ensure that all factors are considered in the development of the environmental document, your comments are requested. Please click on the organization that you represent. This link will take you to a summary of pertinent findings and a list of questions specific to your agencies purview:

ADEC	ADFG	ADNR-OHMP	ADNR
Native Corporations	Tribal Organizations	BLM	SHPO
FAA	USACE	NMFS	USEPA
USFWS	Coastal District	City and Village Governments	Historic Foundation
Local and Regional Organizations			

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Project Schedule

Written comments may be submitted to ADOT&PF via the ABR links on the website here, or by e-mail to our Environmental Consultant, Betty Anderson, at ABR, Inc., banderson@abrinc.com. All comments are requested by **June 20, 2005**.

If you have any questions regarding the project feel free to contact Betty Anderson at 455-6777, or by e-mail at banderson@abrinc.com. Should you have any questions on the design of the proposed project, contact Cindie Little, Project Manager, at 451-2284 or by e-mail at Cindie_Little@dot.state.ak.us.

Sincerely,



Cynthia M. Little, P.E.
Engineering Manager
ADOT&PF

Links: Agency Links

- Figure 1 – Location and Vicinity Map
- Figure 2 – Project Layout
- Figure 3 – Materials Sites Map
- Figure 4 – Wetlands Map
- Appendix A
- Printable version of Prospect Creek scoping letter.

cc: Cindie Little, P.E, ADOT&PF Engineering Manager
Bruce Campbell, ADOT&PF Environmental Analyst
Betty Anderson, ABR, Inc., Project Manager
Katrina Moss, FAA, Northern Region Planner
Matt Freeman, FAA, Northern Region Engineer
Chuck Howe, Northern Region Environmental Coordinator