



**SUSITNA-WATANA**  
**HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT**

**Meeting Summary**  
**Social Resources Agency Workshop**  
**2012 Studies and Issues**  
**1 - 4 p.m., December 8, 2011**  
**Held at AEA Project Offices Conference Room,**  
**411 W 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1, Anchorage, AK**

**Purpose of Meeting:**

Present and discuss 2012 Study Plans.

**Attendees:**

MWH	Kirby Gilbert
CRC	Michael Yarborough
ABMC, Co.	Chuck Akers
Cultural Assessment	Ron Stanek
HDR Alaska	Laurie Cummings
NLUR	Peter Bowers
Hydropower Reform Coalition	Jan Konigsberg
BLM, Glennallen	John Jangala
Cardno-Entrix	Jim Gill
Long View Associates	Steve Padula
ADNR, OHA	Richard VanderHoek
NLUR	Richard Stern
Van Ness Feldman	Jonathan Simon
DOWL HKM	MaryEllen Tuttell
AEA	Betsy McGregor, Env Manager
AEA	Wayne Dyok, Project Manager
AEA	Emily Ford, Public Affairs
CIRI	Dara Glass
Ninilchik Natives Association	Gary Oskolkoff
Knikatnu, Inc.	Tom Harris
ADF&G	Joe Giefer
MSB	Fran Seager-Boss
DOWL HKM	Kacy Hillman
USDOI	Michael Baffrey
HDR Alaska	Tracie Krauthoefer

<i>(Not provided)</i>	Evan Oval
URS Alaska	Jon Issac
ADF&G	Davin Holen
BIA, Archaeology	Ricky Hoff
FERC	Ken Wilcox (by phone)
BLM Glennallen	Brenda Becker (by phone)
BIA	Mark Cutland (by phone)
Senator Joe Thomas office	Grier Hopkins (by phone)
FERC	Frank Winchell (by phone)
MWH	Steve Bedross (by phone)

**Presentations:**

- Kirby Gilbert (MWH): Recreation, Land Use and Management, Aesthetics, Socioeconomics and Transportation.
- Richard Stern (NLUR): Subsistence
- Pete Bowers (NLUR): Cultural Resources

**Questions/Discussion Related to Presentations**

***Kirby Gilbert, MWH – Recreation, Land Use, Aesthetics, Socioeconomics and Transportation***

- Some concern that construction workers would potentially change the quality of the recreation experience in the area, due mainly to numbers.
- While it is important to quantify the recreation use patterns and potential changes it is also important to get at the changes in the quality of the experience in terms of what recreationists are seeking.
- Important to not “over survey” people as they can get survey fatigue.
- The question was raised if there could be a decrease in recreation opportunities due to loss of sand bars.
- Important to look at the relevant land use plans.
- Need to consider including hunting and fishing uses and commercial operation use areas.
- Current recreation questionnaire went out to commercial operators; about 20 were sent out, but only a few received back.
- Talkeetna is a hub for recreation in the vicinity and there is a desire that it not be underestimated.
- Question was raised about what happens if you inundate BLM land? Discussion about AEA seeking to obtain approvals, such as use and occupancy permits for the reservoir and right-of-way or access permits for roads and transmission lines.
- BLM indicated that the State may take ownership of the lands in the reservoir.

- There is an ongoing settlement process related to Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) land claims. The 12a lands are held in trust by CIRI. Therefore research will be needed and it will not be easy due to the ongoing litigation.
- May need to dig into the history on the status of land claims and land trades.
- CIRI cautioned that identifying land ownership and obtaining access agreements may be difficult and time consuming. There are both selected and unselected CIRI lands within the Project area. For all of the lands, CIRI holds the right to the subsurface estate while the village corporations have surface rights.
- CIRI will try to help AEA in working through the ownership issues. Might have to learn more about any disputed claims.
- Knikatnu has 950 acres of 12a lands to be submerged and 580 acres of 12b lands. Tyonek has 3,340 acres of 12a lands which would be submerged and another 950 acres which have been selected but not yet deeded. Chickaloon, Seldovia, Salamantoff, Ninilchik, and Tyonek have not finished selecting CIRI lands.
- Ninilchik puts high value on their lands and does not like to sell or use it for backing up loans.
- It was stated that cooperation was needed with every Village Corporation, along with CIRI, and that no one should access CIRI lands without permits.
- Ahtna may have lands to the north.
- A centralized process for gaining access permits was suggested.
- While doing reconnaissance to identify potential key view points and viewing areas would be appropriate in 2012, the actual photography work should probably be performed in 2013. It would be better to have photographic documentation built into ILP studies as part of the formal FERC study process.
- The State regulations require an assessment of public health impacts. Health and Social Services coordinates this and then it gets wrapped into the EIS.

***Richard Stern, NLUR - Subsistence***

- Subsistence program manager from ADF&G, Davin Holen was present at the meeting. He discussed the State's experience with FERC pipeline office. The State and FERC established seven criteria for subsistence studies including detailed harvest and locations information, harvest maps, spatial and temporal patterns, demographics, associated economics and description of subsistence versus local and traditional uses, and requirements that the data be collected within the previous three years.
- It was expressed that downstream communities could be affected. Many communities exist along the river, but some of these may be below the threshold of minimum community/population size.

- There was discussion about the study area and how to define the communities in the study area. For instance the effects, if any, in Alexander Creek are uncertain. It was expressed that if there is a nexus of biological resources which move from one area of the Project into another area then studies may be warranted. Talkeetna is not within the State's subsistence area, but the community members do exhibit a subsistence lifestyle.
- NPS also suggested we include consideration of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Section 810 analysis of subsistence impacts procedures.

***Pete Bowers, NLUR - Cultural Resources***

- Need to have a plan in place in case a discovery is made.
- Areas within the proposed impoundment zone should be prioritized for 2012 studies.
- FERC staff indicated that AEA should talk with tribes now and identify data gaps.
- CIRI indicated that there are important distinctions among regional corporations, village corporations and tribal councils.
- FERC indicated that it will identify who the relevant groups are and what they call themselves. "Tribes" is used as an all-encompassing term relative to Section 106 Consultation and it includes the ANSCA Corporations and tribes, both federally recognized and those that are not federally recognized.
- Suggestion offered that it might be better to use term "Alaska Native Groups" instead of "Tribes."
- A Programmatic Agreement (PA) will need to be prepared. It was suggested that this be initiated soon, but FERC indicated that the PA is typically completed after the studies and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis have been completed.
- An associated historic properties management plan will be developed.
- Final PA is typically issued with final NEPA document.
- A question was asked if FERC will take care of the initiation of consultation letters. This will happen after the Notice of Intent, which formally begins the Section 106 process. Additional parties include Alaska Native groups, BLM, the Applicant, plus anyone else who would have a site affected by the Project.
- FERC asked if the list of Alaska Native Groups is current as shown in the preliminary permit. David Turner may contact AEA to complete the list.
- Tom Harris of Knikatu discussed federally recognized tribal consultation in terms of districts. Some districts have been formed while other applications are underway. He mentioned Tyonek as a land owner as well as an original member of a Tribal Conservation District.

- The Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) representative noted that efforts on the PA and any archeological permits will need to be coordinated.
- Discussion about reviewing the data gap analysis prior to having archaeologist going to the field.
- Data needs to be brought up to current standards, GIS format. Questions about if FERC could be innovative due to large study area.

Jim Gill, Cardno Entrix and Kirby Gilbert, Sr. Regulatory Specialist, MWH<sup>i</sup>

**Action Items:**

- AEA will post the draft subsistence and redacted cultural resource gap analyses.

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The notes are designed to provide a summary of conversation and the meeting was not recorded. If you feel there is an error or a correction needs to be made, contact Emily Ford at [eford@aidea.org](mailto:eford@aidea.org).