

Initial Study Report Meeting

Study 12.5 Recreation Resources Study

October 23, 2014

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Study 12.5 Objectives

- Identify and document recreation resources and facilities that support commercial and non-commercial recreation in the Project area
- Identify the types and levels of current recreational uses and future reasonably foreseeable future uses based on surveys and interviews, consultation with licensing participants, regional and statewide plans, and other data
- Evaluate the potential impacts of Project construction and operation on recreation resources, needs, and uses in the Project area
- Develop data to inform AEA's future development of a Recreation Management Plan for the Project

Study 12.5 Components

- Regional Recreation Analysis (ISR Part A, Section 4.1; pg 3)
- Trails (ISR Part A, Section 4.2; pg 4)
- Recreation Use Areas (ISR Part A, Section 4.3; pg 4)
- Recreational Supply, Demand, and Use (ISR Part A, Section 4.4; pg 4)
- Recreation Facilities and Carrying Capacity (ISR Part A, Section 4.5; pg 6)
- Survey Data Collection (ISR Part A, Section 4.6; pg 7)
- GIS Maps and Figures (ISR Part A, Section 4.7; pg 20)

Study 12.5 Variances

- State-issued registration (Tier I) and Tier II subsistence permits have been included in the analysis of hunting and trapping effort (RSP Section 12.5.4)
- Adjustments were made to intercept survey and observational tally locations (RSP Section 12.5.4)
- Regional household mail survey was phased in two (June and October 2013) mailings instead of one (RSP Section 12.5.4)

Study 12.5 Summary of Results in ISR (ISR Study 12.5, Part A – Section 5)

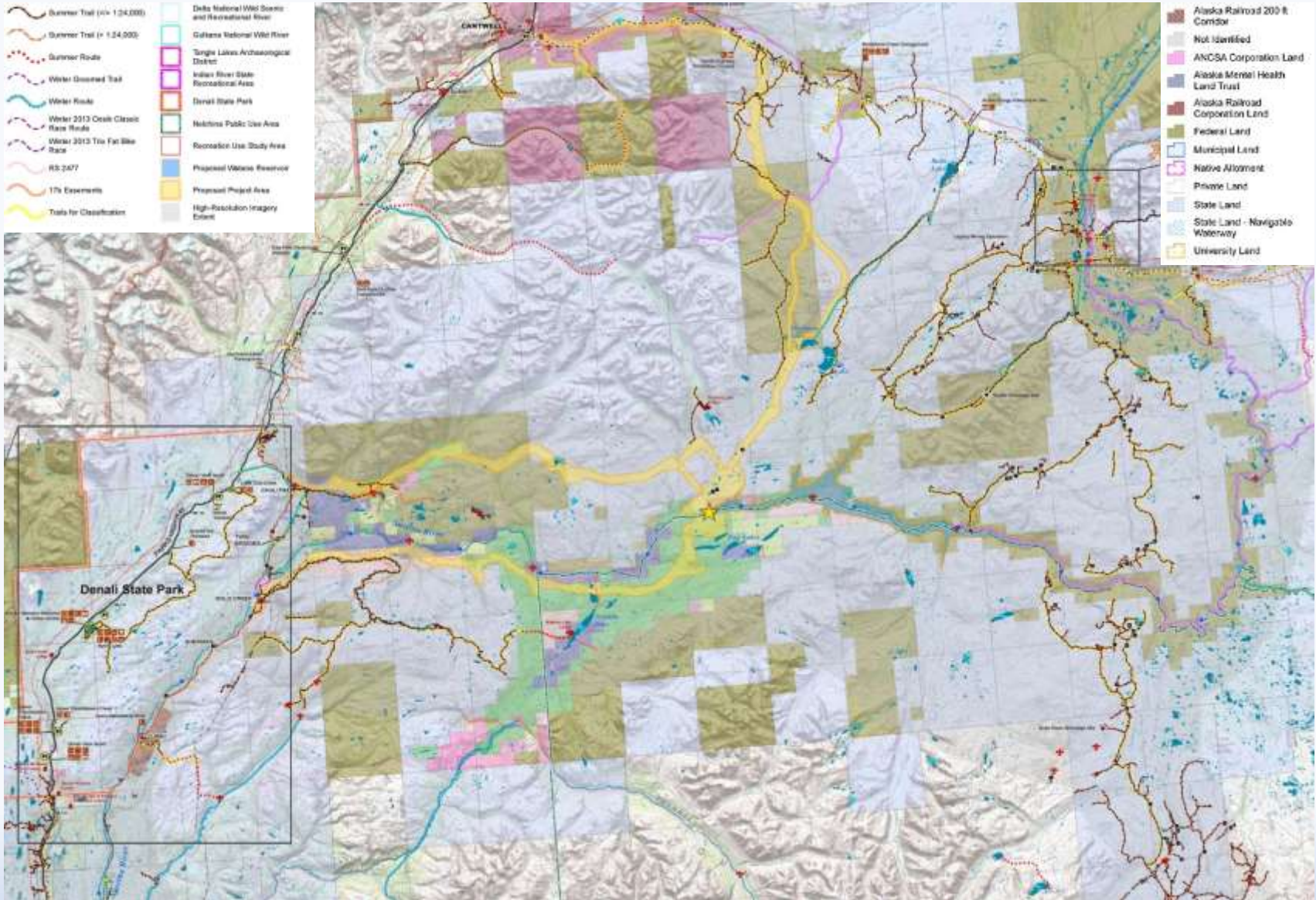
Regional Recreation Analysis

- Assessed and presented recreation related information from plans outlined in Study Plan as well as other relevant plans identified in 2013 (Appendix A of ISR)

Trails

- Identified summer and winter trails, routes, 17(b) easements, and RS2477 trails within Recreation Use Study Area
- Trails were mapped at scale >1:24,000

Trails Mapping



Study 12.5 Summary of Results in ISR (ISR Study 12.5, Part A – Section 5)

Recreation Use Areas

- Identified and described special resource use designations

Recreation Supply, Demand, and Use

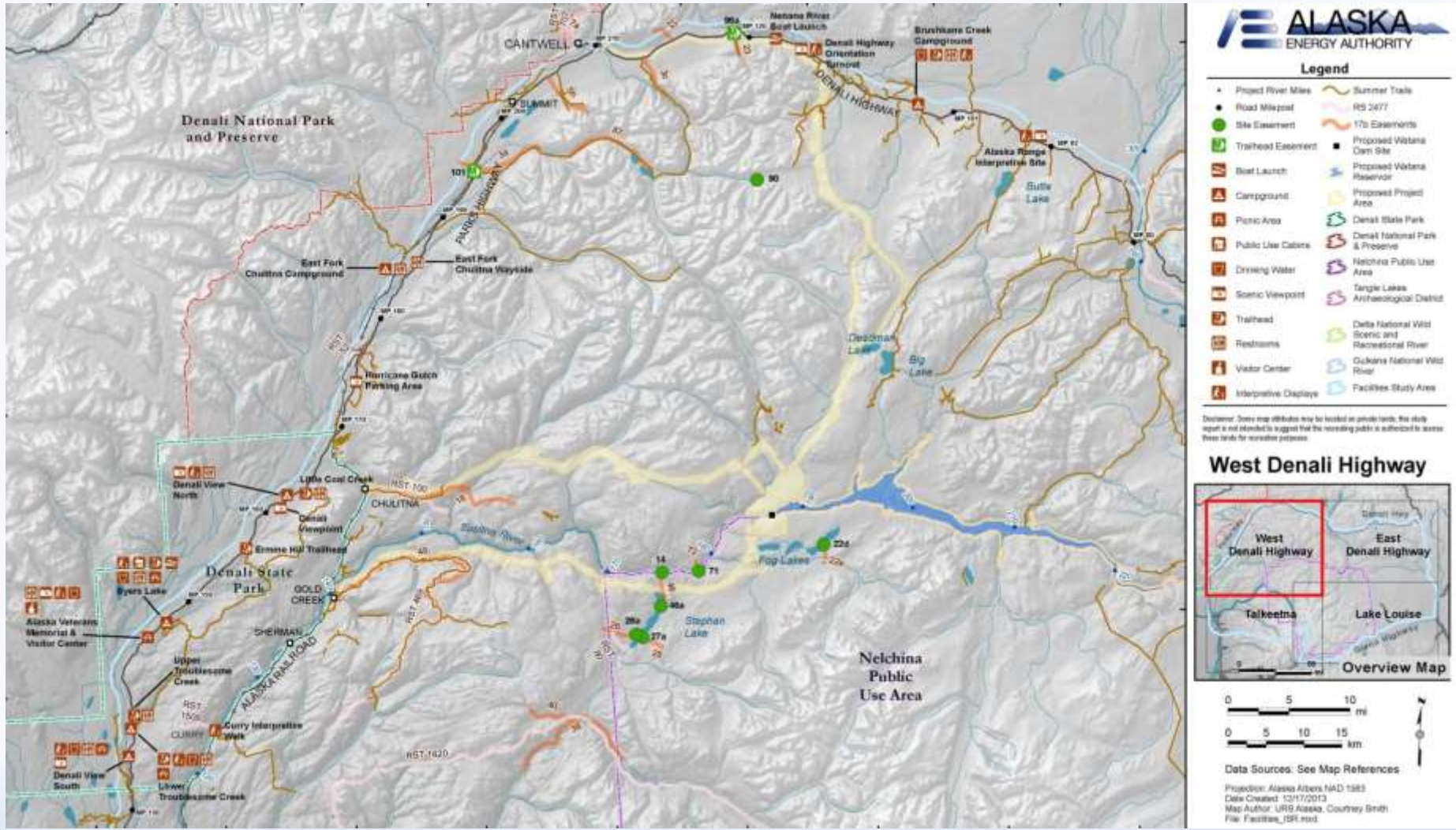
- Reviewed secondary data sources (BLM, ADF&G, ADNR, AKRR)
- Analyzed ADF&G wildlife harvest reports (2003-11)
- Analyzed ADF&G sport fishing survey database (2003-11)

Study 12.5 Summary of Results in ISR (ISR Study 12.5, Part A – Section 5)

Recreation Facilities

- Mapped and inventoried developed public recreation facilities throughout Recreation Use Study Area
- Mapped and inventoried dispersed recreation use areas along Denali Highway
- Reviewed published information and agency consultation
- Field assessment: signage, fees, condition, and capacity

Recreation Facilities – W. Denali Hwy



Study 12.5 Summary of Results in ISR (ISR Study 12.5, Part A – Section 5)

- **Existing Survey Data Collection**
 - SCORP, BLM Visitor Surveys, Benefits-Based Management Study (Denali Highway), Alaska Resident Statistics Program, Alaska Visitor Statistics Program

Study 12.5 Summary of Results in ISR (ISR Study 12.5, Part A – Section 5)

New Survey Research

- Incidental Observational Survey
- Recreational User Intercept Survey
 - Fielding – March 2013-March 2014
 - 1,118 completed surveys (including 1,012 in-person and 106 online completions)
- Regional Household Recreation Mail Survey (2 phases)
 - 1,704 completed surveys (June 2013 mailing)
 - 2,278 completed surveys (October 2013 mailing)
 - 3,982 total surveys completed (27.4% response)
- Nonresponse Bias Telephone Survey (2 fieldings after each mail survey phase, 818 completed surveys)

Study 12.5 Summary of Results since ISR

Regional Household Mail Sample Components (as of 9/1/14)	JUNE	OCTOBER
Voter Registration List, Unduplicated households, randomly-selected	7,500	8,436
Surveys Undeliverable for Incorrect Addresses	29	362
Number of surveys mailed	7,471	8,074
Surveys returned with no forwarding address	457	512
Surveys returned for other reasons (moved, died, refusal)	17	21
Total Mail Survey Sample	6,997	7,541
Second mailing of surveys to non-respondent Households	4,500	4,800
Completed surveys returned by mail	1,413	1,889
Completed surveys returned online	291	389
Total completed surveys	1,704	2,278
Response rate	24.4%	30.2%

Study 12.5 Summary of Results since ISR

Recreation User Intercept Survey Sample (as of 9/1/14)

Month	Sample Days	Total Surveys Completed In-person	Field Surveyor Hours	Weekend	Weekday	7:00- 11:59 am	12:00- 4:59 pm	5:00- 8:00 pm	Total Surveys Completed Online
March 2013	23	171	937	128	43	32	94	45	0
April	21	187	830	136	51	46	102	39	1
May	18	65	578	31	34	19	25	20	4
June	27	133	607	40	93	40	48	45	4
July	27	164	580	41	122	38	51	75	18
August	27	131	584	48	83	41	44	46	15
September	18	79	407	28	52	23	33	23	54
October	14	6	74	4	2	3	3	0	2
November	19	7	99	4	3	2	3	2	0
December	16	17	94	8	9	2	10	5	0
January 2014	18	7	140	3	4	0	6	0	0
February	15	21	95	12	9	5	8	8	0
March	17	24	103	17	7	0	13	13	8
TOTAL	260	1,012	5,128	500	512	251	440	321	106

AEA Proposed Modifications to Study 12.5 in ISR (ISR Study 12.5, Part C – Section 7.1.2)

- As described in the ISR Overview and depicted in Figure 7.1-1, **AEA has added the Denali East Option road and transmission corridor to the study area.** With regard to this study, the modified study area showing the Denali East Option is depicted on Figure 7.1-1. The proposed modification includes an expansion of the Recreation Effects Analysis Area by including a five-mile buffer on proposed Denali East Option and on new trails identified in 2013 that were found to have a nexus to the Project, notably the **Butte Lake Trail and the Goose Lake Trail.** The extent of proposed changes to the Recreation Effects Analysis Area is shown in Figure 7.1-2.
- As outlined in Section 4 of this ISR, the **inclusion of State-issued registration (Tier I) and Tier II subsistence permits in the analysis of hunting effort,** demand and use will be carried forward as a Study Plan modification during implementation of the balance of the study. Implementing this modification will meet Study Plan objectives by capturing the recreational value of hunting activities by hunters from populated, urban areas.

New Modifications to Study 12.5 since ISR

There have been no modifications to Study 12.5 since the ISR.

Decision Points from Study Plan

Extension of Study Area to Lower Susitna River

- Study 12.5 coordinated with Instream Flow Study (Study 8.5), Ice Processes in the Susitna River Study (Study 7.6), Geomorphology Study (Study 6.5), River Recreation and Flow Study (Study 12.7), and Aesthetics Study (Study 12.6).
- Executive interviews with user groups and informal consultations have indicated low levels of flow dependent recreation use between the Parks Highway Bridge (PRM 88.9) and Susitna Landing. Summer users and operators cited the lack of access, safety considerations, cost, and availability of fish and game resources as reasons for low levels of flow-based recreation.
- Log books provided by Susitna Landing managers indicate that winter recreation users (primarily snowmachiners) were crossing the Susitna River to travel to lands west of the river. Winter trails that cross the Lower Susitna River include: Rabideaux Trail (MP 89), Trapper Lake Trail (MP 82.5), Deshka-Su Trail (MP 82.5)
- Assessment of changes to flow and ice dependent river recreation are discussed in Study 12.7.

Steps to Complete Study 12.5 (ISR Study 12.5, Part C – Section 7.1)

To complete this study, AEA will implement the methods in the Study Plan except as described in Sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. These activities include:

Regional Recreation Analysis

- Completed in 2013.
- Review additional plans identified to have pertinent information on recreation resources as needed.

Trails

- Identify, update, and revise the current inventory of summer and winter trails as needed.
- Summer and winter trails with a Project nexus will be classified based on the National Trail Classification System.

Recreation Use Areas

- Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)/NRRS framework will be used to describe recreation opportunity areas

Steps to Complete Study 12.5 (ISR Study 12.5, Part C – Section 7.1)

Recreation Supply, Demand, and Use

- Implement the variances in gathering wildlife harvest report data and subsistence permits from ADF&G.
- Update wildlife and sport fishing analysis to include 2014 and 2015 ADF&G data as available.
- Incorporate recreation survey and tally data into analysis.

Recreation Facilities and Carrying Capacity

- Finalize the inventory of developed facilities and dispersed recreation sites within the Recreation Facilities Study Area.
- Develop an estimate of carrying capacity for inventoried sites.

Steps to Complete Study 12.5 (ISR Study 12.5, Part C – Section 7.1)

Survey Data Collection

- **Executive Interviews** – Additional local and Alaska Native stakeholder interviews regarding baseline recreational activity.
- **Incidental Observations Survey** – Continued collection of IOS from field crews.
- **Recreation User Intercept Survey** – Completed Intercept Survey fielding (March 2014). Intercept survey data analysis, including: clean and code data, evaluate survey datasets, produce unweighted results, estimate proportional volumes of users, model and estimate number of resident/nonresident recreation users/days, compare intercept profile with mail survey profile. Share responses to spending questions with Socioeconomics team.

Steps to Complete Study 12.5 (ISR Study 12.5, Part C – Section 7.1)

Survey Data Collection (continued)

- **Observational tallies** – Clean and code data, summarize data, share data with Recreation Resources team members.
- **Regional Household Mail Survey** – Clean and code data, integrate survey data sets (June/October; online/paper), produce unweighted results, weight mail survey (for nonresponse bias), model volume of baseline recreational activity.
- **Nonresponse Bias Telephone Survey** – completed 2nd telephone survey (January 2014), clean and code data, compare survey data with U.S. Census, weight results and compare demographics to mail survey responses.

Licensing Participants Proposed Modifications to Study 12.5?

- Agencies
- CIRWG members and Ahtna
- Public