STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
DESIGN & ENGINEERING SERVICES DIVISION, NORTHERN REGION

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Re: Emmonak Airport Improvements
Stage II
Agency Scoping
ADOT&PF Project No. 62641

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), is proposing to complete the Emmonak Airport Improvements Project, which was begun in 2001. Stage II of the Emmonak Airport Improvements project consists of placing additional fill on the previously filled surface, regrading, and surfacing the aircraft apron, taxiway safety area, and runway safety areas at Emmonak Airport. In addition, lighting will be installed within existing filled areas. Construction is proposed for Summer 2006. FAA and ADOT&PF completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Emmonak Airport Improvement Project in 2001 and acquired a Section 404 permit for wetlands fill and a Title 41 fish habitat permit (previously referred to as a Title 16 permit) for construction of the airport improvements. The EA and permits documented the phased nature of the construction process, to allow for filled areas to settle prior to final surfacing. The FAA Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the 2001 EA expired in April 2004; therefore, ADOT&PF is reinitiating the scoping process to help determine whether there are any new environmental issues to be addressed on this project. Based on the results of scoping, ADOT&PF will prepare an EA Re-evaluation.

Emmonak is located near the mouth of the Yukon River, on the north bank of Kwiguk Pass. It is 120 air miles northwest of Bethel and 490 air miles northwest of Anchorage within the Yukon-Kuskokwim National Wildlife Refuge. The community is located at approximately 62.777780° North Latitude and -164.52306° West Longitude (Sec. 17, T031N, R081W, Seward Meridian) (USGS Quadrangle Kwiguk D-6) (refer to Figure 1).

Existing Condition

Access to Emmonak is primarily by air, although there is limited barge service during summer months. There is no dock in the village; supplies are received by barge and offloaded onto the shore. There are winter trails to Kotlik, Alakanuk, and Sheldon Point. Transportation within the area occurs by snowmobiles in the winter and by skiff or all-terrain vehicle in the summer. Since Emmonak is a regional hub, the U.S. Post Office uses Emmonak as a distribution center for surrounding villages. In 2000, ADOT&PF documented that increasing air traffic in Emmonak was resulting in increased congestion, and that many airfield facilities were deficient for the level of activity being realized.

ADOT&PF proposed the Emmonak Airport Improvements Project in 2001 and completed an Environmental Assessment and permitting at that time. Stage I of the airport improvements was constructed in 2001-2005. ADOT&PF is now proposing to complete Stage II of the airport improvements, which is limited to the placement of additional fill on the apron area constructed

in 2001, as well as regrading and surfacing of the apron, taxiway safety areas, and runway safety areas. Lighting will also be extended on the apron area. The airport and the recent improvements are described further below.

The airport consists of one 4400' by 75' gravel runway and an aircraft apron. The airport improvements project was proposed to address congestion on the aircraft apron, runway and taxiway improvements to address condition problems, and improvements to the airport lighting system. The aircraft apron expansion was part of the larger airport improvements project and is designed to address the congestion occurring on the aircraft apron.

Proposed Action

The proposed project would complete construction of the aircraft apron expansion that was begun in 2001 (see Figure 2). Fill materials may be obtained from the Emmonak material site described in the previous permit. A permit extension or new permit will be required for continued use of this site. Coarse materials will be provided by the contractor from off-site sources. Materials would be barged to the village and offloaded at the site used under Phase 1. These materials would be transported to the aircraft apron via an existing road. Existing developed areas will be used for staging. Wetland delineations for the project were completed in 2000 and a wetland permit issued in 2001. No new areas outside the project footprint described in the original permits are expected to be affected.

Preliminary Research Results

For preliminary research results of environmental resources in the project area, see Appendix A. A project website has been set up at www.dowl.com/projects/adotpfairport/index.htm.

In addition to identifying any concerns and/or issues your agency might have with the proposed project, the links on the project website identify agency specific information that is requested. Please go to the website and click on the organization that you represent. This will take you to a list of questions specific to your purview and a link that allows you to provide comments directly to our environmental consultant, via e-mail.

To ensure that all factors are considered in the Environmental documents, your comments are requested by July 21, 2005. If you have any questions regarding the project, feel free to call our Environmental Consultant, Kristen Hansen, DOWL Engineers, 562-2000, or by e-mail at

khansen@dowl.com. Comment letters can be sent to Ms. Hansen at 4040 B Street, Anchorage, AK 99503. Should you have any questions on the design of the proposed project, please contact me at 451-5129 or by e-mail at ryan_anderson @dot.state.ak.us.

Sincerely,

Ryan Anderson, P.E., Project Manager
Northern Region ADOT&PF Design

Attachments: Appendix A
Figure 1- Vicinity and Location Map
Figure 2 – Site Map

c (via e-mail): Cindie Little, P.E., ADOT&PF Engineering Manager
Chuck Howe, Northern Region Environmental Coordinator
Bruce Campbell, ADOT&PF Environmental Analyst
Katrina Moss, FAA, Northern Region Planner
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