STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

*NORTHERN REGION PRECONSTRUCTION*

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September 10, 2007

Re: Serpentine Hot Springs Access Road
(State Project No. 62205)

Agency Scoping/Request for Comments

Dear Agency Representative,

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) is proposing improvements to Serpentine Hot Springs Access Road (also known as the Taylor Highway). Serpentine Hot Springs Access Road is an extension of the Nome-Taylor Highway which originates in Nome, Alaska. The project area includes a 18 mile stretch from mile post (MP) 68 to MP 85.5, and three material source locations adjacent to the road (1:63360 USGS Quadrangles Bendeleben A-6 and B-6) (Figure 1).

## EXISTING CONDITIONS / PURPOSE AND NEED

The Serpentine Access Road was established approximately 60 years ago by the Alaska Road Commission (ARC). It serves as the only access to the Serpentine Hot Springs trailhead, and current average daily traffic is less than 50 vehicles per day. The existing road is approximately 24 feet wide, and in some areas, the adjacent vegetation has become overgrown, hindering driver sight distance. Sections of the road suffer annual seasonal flooding, due to permafrost melt. The lack of drainage ditches, combined with permafrost melt and water ponding alongside the road has caused erosion of the roadbed and occasionally renders the road impassible.

## PROPOSED ACTION

Improvements would be made to the road along approximately 26 short segments that total approximately 2-1/2 miles of the overall 18-mile project corridor. The location of these areas is shown on Figure 2 and proposed work for each segment is summarized in the table below. Proposed improvements include restoration of road embankments, installation of culverts, filling of ponded areas adjacent to the road, construction of drainage ditches, and brush cutting to increase sight distance. In areas where ditches need to be cut and slopes laid back, the fill footprint would be approximately 20-25 feet beyond the existing road shoulder.

| Work Area | Milepost | Approximate Length of Work Area | Proposed Action |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 69.7 | 200 feet | Raise road grade approximately 2 feet. |
| 2 | 70 – 72 | 10,560 feet | Brush cut, ditching. |
| 3 | 74 | 500 feet | Cut back slope, raise road approximately 2 feet, extend culvert, perhaps add overflow culvert. |
| 4 | 75.1 | 250 feet | Cut back bank approximately 12 feet, fill in ponded areas or ditch to drain when possible. |
| 5 | 79 | 100 feet | Perched culvert needs ditching up station and slope layback, fill to even grade. |
| 6 | 79.2 | 250 feet | Cut back bank approximately 12 feet, fill in ponded areas or ditch to drain. |
| 7 | 79.6 | 75 feet | Extend drainage culverts, re-establish slopes, rip rap, extend large pipe to remedy washout |
| 8-10 | 80 | 200 feet | Fill ponded area on right (easterly) side of road, ditching, address road erosion. |
| 11 | 80.1 | 200 feet | Raise road grade 2 feet, fill in ponds or ditch on left (west) side of road to drain ponds. |
| 12 | 80.3 | 200 feet | Fill ponded area on right (easterly) side of road and address longitudinal cracking and erosion at edge of pond. |
| 13 | 81 | 200 feet | Cut back slope on right (east) side of road. |
| 14-19 | 81.2 – 81.6 | 2,400 feet | Fill ponded areas or ditch to drain ponds on left (west) side of road, install culvert to drain ditch, address road erosion, cut back bank, brush cut. |
| 20 | 82.25 | 100 feet | Clean ditch, install drainage culvert. |
| 21-25 | 82.4 – 82.8 | 2,400 feet | Fill ponded areas on left (west) side of road or ditch to drain when possible, address road erosion, install drainage culvert. |
| 26 | 85.1 – 85.4 | 2,000 feet | Fill ponded areas or ditch to drain ponded areas on both sides of road, install drainage culvert. |

Three material sources, located adjacent to the road, are being considered for the project, as shown on Figure 2. The proposed improvements would occur within the existing 200-foot right-of-way (ROW) (Figure 2). Construction may begin as early as summer 2008.

## PRELIMINARY RESEARCH RESULTS

For preliminary research results of environmental resources in the project area, see Appendix A (attached). Due to the presence of wetlands and ponded areas, we anticipate that the project will require a Section 404 permit for fill in wetlands from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

An agency scoping meeting and/or site visit can be arranged, upon request. Scoping comments can be submitted by mail or e-mail to the address listed below. To ensure that

all factors are considered in the environmental and design studies, your comments are requested by October 12, 2007. Below is a list of federal, state and local entities that we are requesting input from. Please click on the organization that you represent. This will take you to a list of questions specific to your purview, as well as a "comments" link that can be used to submit comments electronically.

ADEC ADF&G ADNR-POR ADNR-RAD ADNR-NRO

ADNR-OPMP ADNR-OHMP Air Carriers BLM Local and Regional

Oganizations
City and Village Governments USACE USEPA USFWS USNMFS

Comment letters can also be sent to our Environmental Consultant, Kristen Hansen, at DOWL Engineers, at 4041 B Street, Anchorage, Alaska, 99503. Ms. Hansen may be reached by telephone at (907) 562-2000, or e-mail to *khansen@dowl.com*. Should you have any questions on the design of the proposed project, contact Cindie Little, P.E., Design Engineering Manager, at (907) 451-2284 or send e-mail to *cindie.little @alaska.gov*.

Sincerely,

Bruce Campbell
Regional Environmental Coordinator

Enclosures: Appendix A
Figure 1-Vicinity and Location Map
Figure 2- Project Area and Material Sites

cc: Cindie Little, P.E., Engineering Manager, DOT&PF, Northern Region
Phyllis Moor, Design Engineer, DOT&PF, Northern Region
Kristen Hansen, DOWL Engineers, Project Manager