ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR
OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN ACCESS ROADS

APPLICANT:

ALYESKA PIPELINE SERVICE COMPANY
1835 S BRAGAW STREET
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99512

RIGHT-OF-WAY APPLICATIONS F-20688, F-20717, F-20732, F-21537, F-84277
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. BPM 92-002

PREPARED BY:

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, ALASKA
BRANCH OF PIPELINE MONITORING (983)

I. NEPA REQUIREMENTS

(A) Introduction

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (Alyeska) has requested authorization to reopen, resurface, and extend 19 pipeline access roads as part of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP), approved by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the State of Alaska on April 3, 1991. The roadwork will be authorized by a right-of-way grant under the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act, 97 Stat. 584 (1973). This assessment addresses 5 of the applications which utilize pipeline access roads currently on granted rights-of-ways, where there will be former access roads reopened, or where there will be some new construction. In each case an amendment to the existing grant is necessary. These sites were field examined in August, 1991 and February, 1992.

(B) Issues

Staff members with the Arctic District Office, BLM have raised the following issues and concerns: (1) potential impacts to cultural resources, (2) potential impacts from hazardous and solid Wastes, (3) potential impacts to visual resources and (4) potential impacts to subsistence resources.

(C) Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, Policies, Plans or other Environmental Analyses

The applicable statute is the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act. Alyeska holds a Federal right-of-way grant for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). The project area is located within the inner Utility Corridor. The lands are managed by the BLM. The relevant planning document is the Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved on January 11, 1991. The proposed action is in conformance with the land use plan as required by 43 CFR 1610.5.

The proposed action is a requirement of Alyeska's Oil Spill Contingency Plan for the TAPS, Stipulation 2.14 of the Agreement and Grant of Right-of-Way for TAPS, and the National Oil Hazardous Pollution Contingency Plan 36 FR 16215, August 20, 1971.

Four (4) environmental impact statements have been completed for three separate pipeline projects and for a proposed BLM Resource Management Plan, each of which cover the proposed permit area. Information describing the existing environment is available in these documents.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

(A) Purpose and Need for Action

The proposed action is needed to reopen or provide surface access roads as part of the requirements of Alyeska's OSCP. This plan consists of General Provisions and 12 Section Plans which delineate specific response actions for spills located between pump stations. Contingency Area Plans, mapped and described in each Section Plan, give response actions for pipeline spill within specific drainages. Containment sites were selected within the 12 Contingency Areas to enable rapid response to oil spills thereby minimizing the amount of oil that could reach sensitive areas. Most of these preplanned sites have been located on small drainages and points of confluence. Permanent vehicle access is needed at each of the 5 sites served by the access roads in this permit action (Site numbers 30, 44, 47, 55, 58).

(B) Proposed Action

The proposed action is reopening, resurfacing, and extending 5 pipeline access roads, and providing transition to the waterways served by the OSCP sites. The roads were used during construction of the pipeline and subsequently closed. The width of the road surface is planned as 28 feet, and the overall width of the road will not exceed 30 feet unless the topography is limiting.

103 APL-3 (OSPC Site 58): This is located in Section 9, T. 32 N., R. 10 W., Fairbanks Meridian, providing access to the Middle Fork Koyukuk River. Access from the existing roadway will require construction of an access ramp to the floodplain using an estimated 50 cubic yards of fill material. This will be open to public access.

104 APL-3 (OSCP Site 55): This is located in Sections 14, 23, and 24, T. 33 N., R. 10 W., Fairbanks Meridian, providing access to the Dietrich River. This is the original access road to the former Dietrich Camp. A smooth transition to the floodplain at the river will require blade work. No fill is required. This will be open to public access.

113 APL-1 (OSCP Site 47): An access route located in Sections 3 and 4, T. 13 S., R. 12 E., Umiat Meridian, providing access to the Atigun River. This is the original access to a material site in floodplain of a small tributary to the Atigun River. Very little blade work and no fill will be required at this site.

119A APL-3 (OSCP Site 44): An access route located in Sections 7 and 8, T. 8 S., R. 14 E., Umiat Meridian, providing access to the Sagavanirktok River. This route is includes existing access to OMS 119-A, then traverses the disturbed material site and continues to the river. A total of 1957 feet of new road is requested, primarily within the boundaries of the material site. Ramp construction requiring blade work will be necessary at the river bank, but no fill is needed. This will be open to public access.

125 APL/AMS-4 (OSCP Site 30): An access route located in Sections 9 and 10, T. 2 S., R. 14 E., Umiat Meridian, providing access to the Sagavanirktok River. The segment of the road between the Dalton Highway and the pipeline is currently in use. The access to the river involves reopening a road closed since completion of construction. A smooth grade transition to the floodplain may require blade work.

(C) No Action Alternative

The no action alternative would be to deny Alyeska's request to utilize the public lands. If the proposed action can be mitigated through standard operating procedures, denying of a permit would be inconsistent with Bureau policy formulated in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (43 USC 1701). FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to manage the public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield.

This alternative would initially protect against visual impact, loss of habitat, and would allow continued uninterrupted public recreation opportunity. However, if an oil spill occurs, no access to preconstructed containment sites next to the waterways may result in extensive environmental damage , as response time would be longer. Upgraded access roads may make the difference of whether or not an oil spill is contained.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

(A) Introduction

The affected environment for the area of the Proposed Action is adequately discussed in the following documents: Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan , Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Utility Corridor , Alyeska's Oil Spill Contingency Plan, Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Trans-Alaska Gas System.

(B) The following Critical Elements of the human environment are subject to requirements specified in statute, regulation or Executive Order. These critical elements have been analyzed for the proposed action and no significant impacts are likely to occur:

Critical Elements	May Be Impacted	Can be Mitigated
1. Air Quality	No	
2. ACEC's	No	
3. Cultural and Historic	No	
4. Farmland, Prime or Unique	No	
5. Floodplains	No	
6. Nat. Amer. Rel Concerns	No	
7. Paleontological	No	
8. Threatened/Endangered	No	
9. Visual Resources	Yes	Yes
10. Waste, Hazardous/Solid	No	
11. Water Quality	No	
12. Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Yes	Yes
13. Wild & Scenic Rivers	No	
14. Wilderness Values	No	

No ACECs are affected.

No known cultural resource sites are located in the immediate project area. These right-of-ways were surveyed prior to original construction.

Work on the floodplain of rivers will change the river banks to provide smooth transition to the waterways. It is not expected that the limited blade work necessary will impact resources as long as the work is done within the gravel floodplain when dry and where unvegetated.

There is no reasonably foreseeable restriction to subsistence activity or effect on the availability or productivity of resources for subsistence use which will result from the proposed action. Substantial benefits to subsistence resources would occur if the sites were successful in the rapid containment of spilled oil.

The proposed action is confined within the area designated as the utility corridor. No wilderness values would be affected by the proposed action.

Road related impacts are further discussed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. This includes visual resources.

(C) Mitigation

1. Prior to commencement of surface disturbing activities, the right-of-way limits, as well as the construction zone limits shall be staked.

2. The holder shall permit free and unrestricted public access to and upon the right-of-way for all lawful purposes except for those specific areas designated as restricted by the Authorized Officer to protect the public, wildlife, livestock, or facilities constructed within the right-of way. The following roads are open to unrestricted public access: 103 APL-3, 104 APL-3, and 119A APL-3.

3. The width of the road surface shall not exceed 28 feet.

4. The roads will be removed at the abandonment of the pipeline, with discretion of the land manager.

(D) RESIDUAL IMPACTS

No long term residual impacts are expected to occur.

IV. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Persons and Agencies Consulted.

Stan Bronczyk, BLM BPM (983)
Ken Hunt, BLM BPM (983)
Gary Stackhouse USF&WS (JPO)
Chuck Joy, BLM ADO (060)
Tom Coghill, APSC

V. ANILCA REQUIREMENTS

Section 810 Subsistence Evaluation

This action is not likely to cause any significant restriction to the subsistence resources of the area.

VI. LOCATION REFERENCES

Preliminary design drawings (5), Access Roads Prudhoe Bay to Valdez Terminal, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, 1/92.

G-100 series, Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, sheets 14, 20, 21, 28, 37, 38, as revised.

Preparer: _____ Date: 3/4/92

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD

Decision: It is my decision to amend existing rights-of-ways to authorize redesigning, reactivating and resurfacing of 5 access roads as part of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan. Individual site requirements, including mitigation if necessary, will be incorporated into the Notices to Proceed written for each action. These actions are authorized pursuant to the Pipeline Authorization Act, 87 Stat. 584 (1973). A rental fee based upon fair market value appraisal will be collected for the grant.

I have selected the proposed action as the environmentally preferred alternative provided with the mitigation measures identified in this environmental assessment.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based upon the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that the impacts on the human environment are not expected to be significant and that an environmental impact statement is not required.

The evaluation and finding done to comply with Section 810 of ANILCA found no significant restrictions to subsistence use.

Rationale for the Decision: The decision to allow this proposed action does not result in undue or unnecessary environmental degradation, will not restrict subsistence activity or resources, and is consistent with PLO 5150 which has withdrawn the area for use as a utility corridor. Additionally, the proposed action is a necessary component of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

Nolan Heath
Chief, Branch of Pipeline Monitoring

3/4/92
Date