ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR
OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN ACCESS ROAD AND BOAT RAMP

APPLICANT:

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

RIGHT-OF-WAY APPLICATION
FF088221
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. BPM 92-008

PREPARED BY:

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ALASKA STATE OFFICE
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April 17, 1992

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 26 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 work will be authorized by right-of-way grants under the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act, 97 Stat. 584 (1973). This assessment addresses an access road and parking area which will be newly developed on a site which has been previously disturbed. This site was field examined in August, 1991.

(B) Issues

BLM staff members 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, (4) potential impacts to subsistence resources, and unnecessary or duplicative road development.

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

The statute that applies to this proposed action 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 on lands managed by 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 the BLM RMP, each of which cover the application 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 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. This site is located at point on the Atigun River upstream of where the river becomes inaccessible to the highway.

(B) Proposed Action

The proposed action is to develop an access road, boat launch ramp, and parking area adjacent to the Atigun River at the Dalton Highway bridge (DHMP 272.3). The area to be developed lies immediately adjacent to the bridge at its northwest corner.

The site is located in Section 32, T. 11 S., R. 11 E., Umiat Meridian, totalling 1.05 acres. A portion of acreage shown in the application overlies the Dalton Highway right-of-way (100 feet, about 40% of the acreage applied for). Drawings supplied with the application show that only the portion of the site closest to the river will be developed. Parking areas (2) are proposed to be 80 feet x 80 feet in size on the site. The total estimated footprint to be developed is approximately 17,500 square feet.

(C) No Action Alternative

The no action alternative would be denying Alyeska's request to utilize the public lands. If the proposed action can be mitigated through standard operating procedures, denying of a permit (no action alternative) 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.

Not having access to preconstructed containment sites next to the waterways may result in extensive environmental damage should an oil spill occur, 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 statue, 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	No	
13. Wild & Scenic Rivers	No	
14. Wilderness Values	No	

No ACECs are affected.

The project area is adjacent to an area known to be important for cultural resources. This general area has been subject to considerable survey activity since the original road construction. On the ground survey of this site was conducted in Summer, 1990.

Blade work will be required to construct a boat launching ramp. This work will be primarily focused on an area previously disturbed by bridge and road construction, and used as an undeveloped parking and camping site by the public. Upland areas, outside the floodplain, potentially have the highest probability for archeological or cultural sites. Therefore, blade work should be avoided outside the area previously disturbed by construction and outside the floodplain.

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.

No refueling or storing of hazardous materials would occur on site.

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. This site will be open to public access.

3. A buffer of natural vegetation will be left in place along the river adjacent to the site, except for a 25 foot wide boat ramp. The buffer will be 25 feet in width along the stream bank including where the vegetation has previously been disturbed.

4. Site development will be restricted to an overlay or fill construction technique. The grantee will not be allowed to cut the existing upland site to grade with the river floodplain. Blade work will be allowed at the boat launch or ramp site.

(D) RESIDUAL IMPACTS

No long term residual impacts are expected to occur.

IV. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Persons and Agencies Consulted.

Stan Bronczyk, BLM (983)
Ken Hunt, BLM (983)
Arctic District Specialists, BLM (060)
Craig Gerlach, University Of Alaska, Fairbanks

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 (2), Access Roads Prudhoe Bay to Valdez Terminal, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, 1/92.

G-100 series, Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, sheet 26, as revised.

Preparer: _____ Date: 4/17/92

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD

Decision: It is my decision to grant a right-of-way to authorize development of a boat launch and parking site near the Atigun River 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 rights-of-ways.

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 necessary to complete the requirements of Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

Nolan Heath
Chief, Branch of Pipeline Monitoring

6/3/92
Date