

DISTRICT TRIP REPORT

Project: Denali Commission Moorings Points Phase 3 – Kuskokwim River

Description: Akiachak Trip Report

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Date: 17 September 2010

George Kalli and Merlin Peterson traveled to Akiachak, Alaska on September 17th to conduct a site visit and scoping meeting related to potential installation of barge mooring points in the community. We began by meeting with George Peter (Tribal Administrator) and Charles James (Tribal Roads) at the IRA office. We discussed the potential project. We learned that there is only one landing site that both fuel and freight barges utilize in Akiachak. In addition to inspection of this landing site, a public meeting was conducted at 13:00 in the bingo hall. A total of five residents participated in the meeting.

Following is a summary of the information learned during the site visit.

There is one landing and adjacent staging area site in Akiachak used for both freight and fuel deliveries. The landing itself is a gentle sloping muddy bank (Photos 1 – 2). The proposed area is previously disturbed and without vegetation. Bank material is mainly sand and silt with little gravel. Placement of two mooring points at this site seems warranted.

Upstream of the barge landing is a skiff landing area (Photo 2). This area experiences high vehicle traffic associated with the skiff landing area. The vegetation is sparse and mainly located back from the edge of the river bank at the tree line.

Downstream the bank is nearly vertical due to ongoing erosion related to breakup (Photos 1 & 3). Bank material is similar to that in the barge landing area, sand and silt. Geotextile was seen near the top of the eroded bank.

According to those we spoke with, barges approach the landing both parallel to the bank and nose the barge into the bank. No deadmen or other mooring features exist within the barge landing. Sometimes the barge companies anchor to bulldozers they have transported with them.

The barge landing area appears to be generally centered about the fueling station located in the staging area (Photo 4).

Erosion is evident approximately 100 feet downstream from the center of the landing area. The streambank here is vertical and a small embayment has formed in the bank with soil stress fractures propagating both upstream and downstream from the embayment (Photo 3). There is

also some geotextile fabric and an old discharge pipe of some sort daylighting out of the eroded bank within the embayment.

Placement of the downstream mooring point approximately 75 feet downstream of the fueling station and 35 feet inland from the river seems appropriate (Photos 5 & 6). During our visit, this location was near the corner of a white conex. This location effectively places the mooring point away from the actively erosion bank just downstream. To avoid conflict with the activities associated with the staging area, this mooring point should be below grade mooring installation.

Placement of the upstream mooring point should be at the edge of a tree area at the downstream end of the skiff landing beach area located upstream of the landing site (Photos 7 & 8). The location is roughly 130 feet upstream of the fuel station and approximately 60 feet from shore. To ease locating the mooring point, an above ground bollard mooring point is recommended. Since this is a high traffic area, the mooring point should be placed as close to the trees as possible. While barges are anchored to this mooring point, access to the skiff beach will be impacted. Acceptable alternate routes to the beach exist however.

Edward James and Charles James agree with the suggested locations and installations types detailed above. Additionally, no objections were raised during the public meeting.

According to those we spoke to, the landing site is tribal land. The DCRA map shows a public use easement in the vicinity of the landing area.

There are 3 – 4 fuel headers that are all filled from the lone landing area. Crowley, Delta Western, and sometimes Yukon Fuel service the fuel headers.

Gravel is delivered by Faulkner and Walsch (Bethel). North Web delivers freight.

The main tank farm consists of tanks owned by the tribe, Village Corporation, and the school district. There are also fuel tanks for the water treatment and power plants.

There is a new airstrip being constructed in the community next year (construction has begun). The contractor's equipment and some material are currently occupying the staging area downstream of the barge landing. The new access road begins near the back corner of the landing site staging area. No conflicts between the mooring points and the access road are anticipated.

No potential cultural or archeological conflicts at the landing site were identified.

Salzburn Drilling in Bethel often drives piles for housing projects in Akiachak.

The locals did not know if a barge landing permit had been obtained for the existing barge landing. We discussed obtaining the permit and how the permit protects the communities' access to the landing area.

A total of five people attended the public meeting. No major issues were raised during the public meeting. There was some discussion regarding the merits of above ground and buried mooring points.



Photo 1: Landing Area Looking Downstream



Photo 2: Landing Area Looking Upstream



Photo 3: Erosion Adjacent to Staging Area



Photo 4: Landing Area and Fueling Station



Photo 5: Merlin Standing at Proposed Location of Downstream, Below Grade Mooring Point



Photo 6: Merlin Standing at Proposed Location of Downstream, Below Grade Mooring Point



Photo 7: Merlin Standing at Proposed Location of Upstream, Above Grade Mooring Point



Photo 8: Wide Angle View of Upstream Mooring Point Location