

DISTRICT TRIP REPORT

Project: Denali Commission Moorings Points Phase 3 – Kuskokwim River

Description: Goodnews Bay, Alaska Trip Report

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George Kalli and Dee Ginter traveled to Goodnews Bay, Alaska on September 22nd to conduct a site visit and scoping meeting related to potential installation of barge mooring points in the community. While in Goodnews Bay we were escorted by Carl Evon, land planner for the Tribe and vice-president of the local Native Corporation, Kuitsarak, Inc. A public meeting was conducted at 12:00 during which one potential landing site on the bay side of a small spit of land protruding into Goodnews Bay and the Goodnews River (Photo 1), was identified. A total of 16 residents participated in the meeting. Following the meeting, the identified landing site was inspected.

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

It was recommended that no mooring points be placed on the river side of the spit in Goodnews Bay due to the presence of a former village site in that location. Artifacts and graves could be encountered if construction were done in that area. In addition, that side of the spit is subjected to strong currents. The river side of the spit is also heavily used by the village as a staging area, a skiff landing, and for subsistence fishing activities.

There is one fuel header located to the west of the landing area and the airstrip on the Bay side of the spit. The bay in front of the header is too shallow to allow barge access (Photo 2). A hose must be run up from the landing area to service the fuel header. Fuel trucks have also been used to transport fuel from the barges to the header.

Fuel is delivered by Crowley and Delta Western while Northland delivers freight. They typically get 3 barges each summer.

Due to shallow depths throughout Goodnews Bay, barge deliveries are confined to high tides.

No erosion concerns at the spit were identified or noted.

It is believed that the land at the landing site is owned by the village corporation. There are no known easements, right-of-ways, or allotments. There is an area on the river side of the spit leased to Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

Next spring, a cellular tower may be installed in the village. There is also a housing project coming up. Either of these projects could utilize a pile driver.

Below grade mooring points are preferred by those who attended the public meeting.

During the public meeting we were asked what would happen if we encountered a grave during construction. George offered to consult with the project archaeologist and get back to Carl Evon. It is possible that an archaeological monitor could be required during construction.

Robert Shaw, retired archaeologist from SHPO, is familiar with the old village site located on the river side of the spit.

The landing area is a shallow gravel ramp located at the tip of the spit (Photo 3). The water to the east of the landing is the Goodnews River while the water to the west of the landing is Goodnews Bay (Photo 1). To the west of the landing site a shallow mud shelf was exposed along the shoreline in the direction of the fuel header (Photo 2). It did not appear that this area would be suitable for mooring even at the highest of tides.

From the orientation of the ramp, it is apparent the barge must nose into the landing. Landing broadside to the landing area does not seem practical.

There are two gravel roads accessing the landing site. One comes from the north and passes through the old village area. Much of the area adjoining this road was being used for storage of heavy equipment and other equipment. The other road comes from the west along the edge of the runway and provides access to the fuel header. Where the roads converge at the landing area is a flat gravelly area suitable as a small staging area.

While visiting the landing area, Carl indicated that the old village site began approximately 200 feet north of it. On a community map he provided, however, the delineation of the ancient village site indicates it to be directly adjacent to the landing area.

The crown of the slope of the landing ramp is between 50 and 60 feet from the apparent lower high water mark and would be a convenient location for a mooring point(s) (Photo 4).

There appear to be two placement options for the mooring points.

- Option 1 is to align them both approximately 75' on either side of the centerline of the landing ramp. With this alignment, the anchored barges will likely be aligned at an angle and possibly be exposed to the current of the Goodnews River.
- Option 2 is to place one mooring point along the centerline of the ramp and the other 150' to the west of it (Photos 4 – 6). Anchored barges would be further from the currents of the Goodnews River but would also be closer to the shallow depths located immediately to the west of the landing ramp.

- Follow up conversations with barge company personnel confirmed that Option 1 is preferred due to the shallow depths. Option 1 is recommended unless a pre-construction site survey discovers any artifacts at the site.

High water and ice has occurred up to the edge of the access roads. Installation of below grade mooring points would eliminate concerns of ice impacts upon the mooring points.



Photo 1: Aerial view of spit the landing area is located on. The far side of the spit is the Goodnews River while the near side is Goodnews Bay.



Photo 2: View to the west from the landing area. The shallow mud shelf that prevents access here is apparent. The fuel header is located beyond the fence visible to the right of the photo.



Photo 3: The landing ramp looking out from the spit.



Photo 4: Dee and Carl standing along the centerline of the landing ramp. This would be the approximate location for the eastern mooring point under Option 2.



Photo 5: Dee standing at approximate location for western mooring points under Option 2.



Photo 6: Dee standing at approximate location for western mooring points under Option 2.