



## Meeting Notes

|                      |                                            |                  |                                  |    |    |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|----|----|
| Subject              | Knik Arm Crossing Project – Tribal Meeting | Sheet            | 1                                | of | 10 |
| Project Number       | 21132                                      |                  |                                  |    |    |
| Meeting Date<br>Time | 3-31-05<br>1:30 pm – 3:30 pm               | Meeting Location | HDR Alaska, Inc. Conference Room |    |    |
| Notes by             | Mike Snyder,<br>Rosetta Alcanta            | Office           | HDR Alaska, Inc.                 |    |    |
| Attendees:           | See Sign-in Sheet                          |                  |                                  |    |    |
|                      |                                            |                  |                                  |    |    |
| Topics Discussed     | Project Schedule                           | Project Area     | Point of contacts                |    |    |
| Project History      |                                            |                  |                                  |    |    |
| Constraints          | Confidentiality                            |                  |                                  |    |    |

Edrie Vinson began the meeting by welcoming the attendees and expressing her appreciation for them being there. She also recognized that some had traveled quite a distance to be there. Ms. Vinson introduced herself as the Environmental Project Manager for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on the Knik Arm Crossing Project. She said her responsibilities include overseeing the project, reviewing the environmental impact statement (EIS), and seeing that federal laws and obligations are upheld throughout the project. Ms. Vinson also indicated that in this initial meeting she would like to learn what tribes were interested in relating to the project and how they wished to be involved.

Ms. Vinson began the meeting by asking each person to introduce themselves and their interests in the project.

### Introductions

Kari Johns of the Chickaloon Village Traditional Council introduced herself as the Education Director for the tribe and as a tribal citizen representing the village. She also stated she was there to find out what was going on with the project, as her tribe is located 50 miles southeast of Anchorage. She said her interest was in existing cultural activities.

Jim Shaginoff of the Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, said he is a council member of the village, and he was asked at the last minute to attend. He was not sure of what to expect



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from the meeting other than to find out about the bridge. He said his interests were similar to Kari Johns.

Albert Harrison of Chickaloon Moose Creek said he is an elder and he came to observe and see what he could find out regarding the project.

Angela Sandstol of the Tyonek Tribe introduced herself as the tribal secretary. She said the Tyonek Tribe had a big interest in the project as they believe it will have big impacts on the westside of the Knik Arm. Ms. Sandstol also indicated an interest in finding out how the bridge would impact Cook Inlet, particularly subsistence fisheries and belugas.

Marc Lamoreaux introduced himself as the Environmental Director for the Native Village of Eklutna. He said the village had not fully assessed their interests, but indicated cultural resources, environment, and beluga were of interest. He also said he is not the official government-to-government contact for the village.

Alfred Tellman introduced himself as member of the Knik Tribe and a board member of the village corporation Knikatnu, Inc. Mr. Tellman indicated he had interests on a variety of levels, but was attending the meeting to primarily gather information on the project.

Maria Coleman said she was with the Native Village of Eklutna. Her interests include cultural, environmental, and subsistence issues. Ms. Coleman also indicated she and Mr. Lamoreaux served as the historical preservation officers for the tribal council.

Jack Alcorn introduced himself as a member of the Knik Tribal Council and his interests were to see what consideration the Knik Arm Crossing project has given to tribal lands in the area.

Don Jean introduced himself as the business manager for Knikatnu, Inc. He said the corporation has land holdings in the Matanuska Susitna area, and he was there to look out for their business interests and gather information on the project. He also stated that all of the tribes were in this together.

Michael Tucker introduced himself as the President of the Knik Tribal Council. He said his interest was to gather information and to hear about impacts to the Knik side. He also said he anticipated this would be the first of many meetings for a project of this size.

After the guests were introduced, Ms. Vinson asked for the staff to introduce themselves and talk about their role on the team.



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Dale Paulson introduced himself as a recently retired employee of the FHWA, where he spent 36 years. He came to Alaska to work on the bridge project for the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority.

Robin Reich introduced herself as an employee of HDR Alaska, Inc. Her role is to help prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Knik Arm project.

Rosetta Alcantra, also an HDR Alaska, Inc. will be assisting Ms. Reich on the EIS, as well as working directly on public involvement activities.

Mike Snyder stated he was also with HDR Alaska, Inc. and would be assisting Ms. Reich on preparation of the EIS.

Steve Braund introduced himself as an anthropologist. He is a sub-contractor for HDR Alaska, Inc. and would be performing the cultural resources evaluation for the EIS.

Richard Stern said he worked with Steve Braund working on the cultural resources assessment.

An attendee asked if it would be possible to get a copy of the sign-in sheet for the meeting. Ms. Reich replied that HDR would fax or email the information from the sign-in sheet to all the attendees.

After the introductions, Ms. Vinson again expressed her appreciation for the attendees and indicated there was a lot of work ahead and she was glad to begin the dialogue with the tribes. Ms. Vinson went over how the people present were involved in the project and what her role would be in overseeing the project. Ms. Vinson also told the group she is located in Juneau and that the tribes should feel welcome to contact Dale Paulson if they had any concerns or input.

Mr. Paulson also identified Ms. Reich as the prime contact for the EIS and as someone who would be available to them. Mr. Paulson also indicated the project was currently in “scoping” and there would be more information becoming available as time went on.

At this time, Ms. Reich asked Mr. Braund to give an overview of the work he had conducted to date. Ms. Reich also indicated that Mr. Braund had been contracted to assess the cultural resources and would be the expert for Section 106.

Mr. Braund began by saying he had been working on the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act assessment for the EIS. Mr. Braund reminded the attendees FHWA had included a preliminary Phase 1 Assessment with the invitation letter to this meeting. The



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report indicates database gaps and area of investigations. Mr. Braund also informed everyone that not much work had been done on the uplands for Phase 1. He encouraged everyone to read the Phase 1 report. In addition to the report, current work includes an inventory of buildings in the Ship Creek and Government Hill area.

Following Mr. Braund's brief update, Ms. Vinson introduced the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process board and discussed how it related to EIS schedule. Ms. Vinson reminded the attendees that the Knik Arm Crossing project is in the first block of activities, called "scoping." These activities include identifying issues and concerns in order to end up with a range of alternatives for the EIS. Ms. Vinson also indicated this time period is a good time for tribes to get concerns on the table.

After the NEPA process discussion, Ms. Reich introduced the Constraints Map board. Ms. Reich explained the board was the result of an initial effort to look at project constraints. Further, she explained what a constraint is and listed examples. Ms. Reich also explained where the general study area is located; within the boundaries of Knik dock and Six-mile creek on the north and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on the south. Ms. Reich explained there was a great deal of activity in the area and how each related to the constraints map. Following is a listing of issues discussed:

- Military (security, airfield, elephant cage)
- Mat-Su (Plans for Port area)
- Port of Anchorage (space limited, security, keep port traffic separate from other traffic)
- Railroad and Ship Creek area (very crowded)
- Government Hill (neighborhood quality concerns)
- Existing transportation connections
- Water (ship traffic, huge tides, ice, sedimentation)
- Natural environment (fish and belugas)

Ms. Reich also highlighted the yellow area on the Constraints board as an area representing the "most opportunity" to put in a bridge. She then presented some preliminary concepts two general corridors where the crossing could go with the likelihood of using solid fill embankment. She added this would not likely be a cable-stage bridge due to air space issues.

Kari Johns asked if they were working with any of the marine mammal councils.

Ms. Reich indicated the project team had been coordinating with the NOAA fisheries and LGL to conduct beluga observations. Briefly, Ms. Reich gave an overview of what has been learned about beluga whales to date. Observers have been posted at Cairn Point, Eklutna, and



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Eagle River every month since July of 2004 recording beluga observations. Results to date show belugas are in the Knik Arm from June to December and they appear to ride the tide up into the upper part of the Knik Arm and back down. From the preliminary observations, the belugas stop showing up in December and seem to be gone until March. Ms. Reich also added that with the presence of winter ice, it is also difficult to observe the belugas. Current population numbers indicate there are approximately 150 whales in the Knik Arm.

Michael Tucker asked if the observers would be conducting research this summer. Ms. Reich said the observations will be conducted for a full year.

Ms. Johns asked about the salmon impacts. Ms. Reich replied that from July to November of 2004 fish studies had been performed. She said John Houghton of Pentec Environmental was doing the studies for HDR. At this time, Ms. Reich handed out CDs with copies of the fish and beluga reports. There was a brief discussion on presentations to tribes about the fisheries information. The general consensus was this information would be helpful. In addition, Ms. Coleman from the Native Village of Eklutna added that she thought a project overview would be valuable.

### Tribal Involvement

The discussion continued regarding what would be the best way to involve the tribe(s)? Ms. Vinson asked if they would prefer meetings, presentations at the village or were there other means to be involved.

Don Jean, the general manager for Knikatnu, Inc. recommended coming to the villages and suggested meeting somewhere in the Wasilla or Palmer area or in Eagle River. Mr. Jean indicated this would help get more people to the meeting and to provide input. He also mentioned the library in Chickaloon as a potential meeting location.

Others at the meeting indicated they would like to go back to their tribe with the information they have received and have the tribe determine how they wanted to be involved in the project. The participants at the meeting felt it was important that presentations be made to the tribal councils, because the council members are the people who would vote on final decisions.

Ms. Vinson asked if those present would go back to their tribe and come up with a recommendation on the best way to communicate with FHWA on the project. Ms. Vinson was open to special meetings on specific topics or overview presentations to the councils.

Ms. Sandstol from the Native Village of Tyonek recommended having separate meetings on topics. She felt there was a lot of information. Ms. Vinson asked Ms. Reich to put together a listing of specific topics and get back to the tribes regarding setting up separate meetings.



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After the discussion regarding the types of meetings available, Ms. Vinson asked if there were other questions or topics to discuss. Ms. Johns from the Chickaloon Village asked when the Environmental Impact Statement would be due. Ms. Vinson said a draft is due out in November 2005, but there is a lot of information already available. Ms. Vinson thought the land use issues would also be more of a one-on-one meeting topic.

Ms. Alcantra also reminded the attendees there would be public scoping meetings on April 12<sup>th</sup> at the Wasilla Sports Complex and on April 13<sup>th</sup> at the Egan Convention Center. Ms. Coleman asked if they could get copies of the presentation boards from this meeting. Ms. Reich said she would have HDR Alaska, Inc. send out a packet of information to the attendees.

Ms. Vinson indicated the public scoping meetings are a good place to get information, she also mentioned cumulative and indirect effects (e.g. from growth in Mat-Su) as an area of interest for the tribes. Michael Tucker, President of the Knik Tribe replied the project boundaries presented earlier gave an idea of impacts, but when the bridge goes in is when the impacts will start happening.

Ms. Vinson stated that FHWA has an official responsibility to look at cumulative impacts and the cumulative and indirect impacts assessment will look at the Mat-Su side.

Ms. Coleman also asked if information was being presented separately for the Mat-Su and Anchorage areas. Ms. Vinson replied that everyone was getting the same information. There was a brief discussion on what medium to use to get information out. Mr. Tucker said he preferred getting information on CD.

### Confidentiality

After the discussion on opportunities and how to exchange information, Ms. Vinson asked to have a discussion on the subject of confidentiality for tribes and government-to-government consultation.

Past experiences were shared regarding confidentiality of historic and cultural resource sites. It was recommended that the government-to-government process be separate from Section 106.

There was further discussion regarding confidentiality and Section 106. Ms. Vinson said that for direct impacts FHWA has an obligation to State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO). There was additional discussion on how to protect confidentiality of sites and maintain the obligation. Ms. Vinson indicated there are confidentiality provisions through the Department



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of the Interior. She also indicated FHWA will have a consultation meeting with SHPO on historic buildings in the near future.

There was a brief discussion on what SHPO was including as historic sites, whether they were concerned about buildings or cultural sites that are not buildings. Mr. Jean from Knikatnu, Inc. said SHPO needs to look at sites and locations and what the native use was then and it needs to be considered. He also indicated no one has worked with them in that position on this project yet.

Ms. Vinson informed the attendees that FHWA is to consider native cultural sites. Mr. Jean also said the project team would be remiss to not work with the tribes and elders on locations of cultural sites. He said the preliminary Phase 1 report contained excellent research on what is there and the project team needs to talk to the elders.

Ms. Vinson also explained Mr. Braund had just conducted a literature search and she wanted to have this introductory meeting with the tribes before beginning the discussion on cultural sites. Ms. Vinson also suggested that Mr. Braund would be contacting the tribes individually.

Ms. Coleman indicated her tribe is generally not interested in buildings, but there are some sites which may be related to the WWII era and their displacement. Mr. Lamoreaux followed up expressing a comfort level of working with Mr. Braund and his familiarity with the confidentiality and cultural issues. Ms. Vinson asked if these meetings would be the opportunity to identify confidential sites. The general response in the room was in the affirmative.

Mr. Braund said that everything he had identified so far was from public records. The methodology he would use for cultural issues would be that anything learned from the tribes goes back to the tribes before a report is released. The tribes can then give input on confidentiality, they will edit the report based on that input and then it would be sent out. The protocol is the tribe would see the information first before anything gets published.

Ms. Vinson said that it was important for Mr. Braund to be aware of the project footprint and alternatives so he can help determine impacts.

There was additional discussion about the confidentiality of the information. Mr. Jean expressed his concern about Mr. Braund having information that could be accessed 30 or 40 years down the road. Mr. Braund indicated in his 28 years of field work he had not encountered a situation where there was a site the tribe did not want to disclose. Should this occur, he thought negotiations with the tribe on how to handle the situation would be appropriate.



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Ms. Vinson concluded the discussion by saying she thought it was in the tribes' best interest to identify sites that would be directly impacted and she hoped confidentiality would not lead to the destruction of sites.

Mr. Braund said that if they gather baseline information on the project area, at that time they are not talking about the impacts of the project, they are just determining what is out there. He said there would be no need for a discussion of alternatives at that time and he would not look at the initial meetings as having a lot of information on alternatives.

Ms. Vinson said that they know there is a likelihood of impacts to the Mat-Su area and they need all known information.

Mr. Braund said he would be willing to share what he knows about the project but to understand he is not the expert on project information (alternatives, etc.).

Ms. Vinson said that Ms. Reich is the expert on the project information.

### Point of Contact

There was a lengthy discussion regarding who to contact regarding the project and government-to-government consultation. Ms. Reich is available to answer questions regarding alternatives and the process. If there were comments relating to cultural sites, the tribes were directed to contact Mr. Braund and for government-to-government, the tribes should contact Ms. Vinson because she is the official government-to-government representative for FHWA. Mr. Jean also indicated it would be helpful to have one person to contact.

The group also discussed the process of getting tribes involved. Mr. Lamoreaux indicated the process he is hearing at this meeting is vastly improved over what was portrayed in the letter they received informing them of this meeting. Ms. Vinson asked for ideas on how to improve the process. There was an appreciation for the phone calls inviting them.

Another concern brought up in the meeting related to the time needed to participate and the resources. Mr. Tucker from the Knik Tribe said he wants to be involved but also has many conflicting issues. He sees this process becoming very time consuming down the road. He said that FHWA has the funds to hire consultants and experts, but he cannot walk into the room with a team of experts to give him advice on the project. He said that he is concerned about having enough knowledge to make good decisions and feels like it is a bit of a "David and Goliath situation". This concern was echoed by others and noted by Ms. Vinson to discuss with the contractors.



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Alfred Tellman said that he would like to see more detailed information in order to focus on the big picture for this project.

There was a brief discussion on how tribal staff could be involved in collecting information regarding the Knik Arm Crossing project. Mr. Lamoreaux stated that tribal staff in the past had done a good job of gathering information. Mr. Lamoreaux also indicated that in the past the tribal representatives had received stipends to attend meetings. He said he would like to be involved with the NOAA fisheries discussions on beluga because he has concerns about the resource. Mr. Lamoreaux also indicated he was dismayed to see the bridge is set in stone at the first meeting.

Ms. Vinson clarified the information presented today were only design concepts and no decisions have been made on any alternatives at this time. Ms. Vinson also indicated there were issues such as water and sedimentation that could be addressed now.

Briefly, Ms. Reich and Mr. Lamoreaux discussed how the tribe had been involved in the beluga observations. Mr. Lamoreaux indicated the LGL company had hired about 10 Native Village of Eklutna tribal members to help with observations on the beluga studies. The Native Village of Eklutna would have like to have been contracted to do the work.

### Other discussion

Prior to adjourning the meeting there was an open forum for issues. Following is a summary of items brought up in the discussion.

- Payment for Tribal Elders for traditional environmental knowledge.
- Don Jean said that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the letter, he would like to see “as warranted” changed to “is”. He also said he thought there should be some weighted averages on the information, for example half with native groups.
- Have FHWA determine a way Tribes can work with the SHPO through this project.
- Tribes would like the minutes and handout materials sent to their offices from the meeting.
- Angela Sandstol summarized that her goal is to find out how the tribe wants to work with FHWA and then asked if we would come back again as a group to meet.
- Adding the attendees to the mailing list.
- Michael Tucker, President of the Knik Tribal Council asked why was CIRI not represented at the meeting. Ms. Vinson said this meeting was for the federally recognized tribal governments and as a rule FHWA meets with the tribal governments separate from the corporations. Ms. Vinson said that the team would meet with CIRI separately.
- Don Jean said he saw the project as a toll bridge project. He did not know if they could speak to this, but he wondered if a portion of the toll money could be distributed



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to the tribes as they will be impacted by growth, development, etc. He also indicated they would be heavily impacted on the west. They would be on the “work end” of the shovel. Mr. Paulson answered that the current thinking was the revenue stream from the toll would go to pay back the bonding. Mr. Jean concluded that he would like to see it considered at some point in the future, for example 10 years from the time the bridge opens that royalties begin to go to the tribes.

- Mr. Lamoreaux from the Native Village of Eklutna indicated that mitigation should be a topic of discussion. Ms. Coleman agreed and said she had experienced where some Environmental Impact Statements had changed how they addressed impacts to native tribes. For example, for socioeconomics some look at the whole community and do not separate out the native tribes. She said that some impacts need to be addressed specific to the tribes, such as development on the Mat-Su side, increased traffic, anything that could result in an economic decline to the tribes. Mr. Lamoreaux concluded that the economics issues should be brought up at the meeting with CIRI and the corporations. Ms. Reich followed by saying the regional and village corporations would have their own meeting in the near future.

### Next Meeting

There was a discussion regarding the next meeting. It was tentatively scheduled for May 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM. It was agreed the minutes would be sent out to the attendees prior to this next meeting along with an organizational chart of who everyone is on the project team.

Ms. Vinson concluded the meeting by thanking all for attending. She said the Environmental Impact Statement will be a federal document that will help her and her boss to determine their decision to fund this project. Ms. Vinson also listed the other the decision makers, for example the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, and the State of Alaska. They all play various roles, and the Federal Highway Administration is meeting with all the agencies in this process.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.