

## ATTACHMENT 12-6 RIVER RECREATION AND ACCESS SURVEY INSTRUMENT [DRAFT]

**Please read this introductory section before starting the survey.**

This survey is part of a study to determine river recreation opportunities, use patterns, access and quality of experiences for three river reaches on the Susitna River. The Alaska Energy Authority is studying the feasibility of building the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. The proposed Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric project would be located on the Susitna River roughly 90-river miles north of Talkeetna and approximately 34 miles upstream of the Devils Canyon rapids. As currently envisioned, the Project would include a roughly 750-foot tall dam with a 41-miles long, 2-miles wide (at widest) reservoir. Susitna-Watana Hydro includes a single dam, located below Watana Creek. Preliminary studies have indicated the surface powerhouse should have three generating units with an installed capacity of 600 Megawatts of renewable energy. The powerhouse, dam, and related facilities would be linked by a transmission line (or lines) connecting to the Railbelt Intertie

[If more information is needed, refer to:<http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/project/project-description/>]

This survey is designed to collect information on existing motorized and non-motorized river recreation opportunities using a variety of watercraft. Please complete this form if you are using the Susitna for recreation or for transportation purposes.

The river has been divided into three distinct reaches (see map below). The survey will direct you to questions specific to reaches 1, 2 and 3. If you have completed multiple trips using different watercraft and/or river reaches please complete a new survey for each trip and reach.

Your participation in this survey is important to the study's success. Please base responses on your direct experience from your trip rather than guidebooks, group opinions or historic flow preferences. Advances in boat design have expanded the range of suitable flows on many rivers.

Lastly, please encourage fellow boaters to participate in this study. If you have friends that recreate on the Susitna, please refer them to this webpage. The more responses we get the more useful our results will be. Alaska Energy Authority will publish the results of this study.

*Susitna River Recreation and Access Study*

**Section 1: Background Information**

1. Is this the first time you have participated in the Susitna River Recreation and Access survey?

Yes

No

2. Are you an Alaska resident?

Yes

No

3. What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_yrs

4. Please specify your gender.

Female

Male

5. What type of craft did you use on the river for this trip?

Non-Motorized watercraft (skip to Question 6)

Motorized watercraft (skip to Question 7)

Aircraft (skip to Question 9)

6. What type of non-motorized watercraft did you use on the river for this trip?

Raft

Cataract

Inflatable kayak

Packraft

Hardshell kayak

Open canoe

Closed-deck canoe

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**Section 3: Information**

7. What type of motorized watercraft did you use on the river for this trip?

Jetboat

Airboat

Prop boat

8. How would you rate your skill level with this type of craft?

Novice

Intermediate

Advanced

Expert

9. What type of aircraft did you use on the river for this trip?

Aircraft (floats) on Susitna River

Aircraft (wheeled) on Susitna gravel bar

Helicopter on Susitna gravel bar

10. How many years have you been operating/piloting this type of craft? (all respondents)

\_\_\_\_\_yrs

11. In general, how many days a year do you spend using this craft?

<5 day

6 - 10 days

11 - 20 days

>20 days

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**Section 2: Flow Information**

12. When you do a river trip do you typically check flow conditions prior to going?
- a.  Yes
  - b.  No (skip to question 16)
13. Did you know the flow conditions before heading out on your most recent Susitna River trip?
- a.  Yes
  - b.  No
14. How did you obtain Susitna River flow information for your most recent Susitna River trip?
- a.  Internet gage for Susitna River (Skip to Q15)
  - b.  Internet gage(s) for adjacent representative river(s)
  - c.  Observe the Susitna River firsthand
  - d.  Contact friends with local knowledge
  - e.  Rely on weather patterns to predict flows
  - f.  Other (name) \_\_\_\_\_
15. What gage did you use for flow information for your most recent Susitna River trip?  
Check all that apply
- Susitna R at Sunshine, River Mile - 84
  - Susitna R at Gold Creek, River Mile - 137
  - Susitna R above Tsusena C Nr Chulitna, River Mile - 182
  - Susitna R Nr Denali, River Mile – 291

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**Section 3: Information about this river trip**

16. Please provide the start and end date for this trip on the Susitna River (MM/DD/YYYY):

Start Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

End Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

17. For your most recent trip to the Susitna River, please identify the factors that influenced your decision to take your trip on the dates listed above as opposed to another time period. Check all that apply.

\_\_\_suitable river flow conditions

\_\_\_suitable weather conditions

\_\_\_scheduled vacation time in advance

\_\_\_hunting/fishing season

\_\_\_time with family/friends

\_\_\_Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

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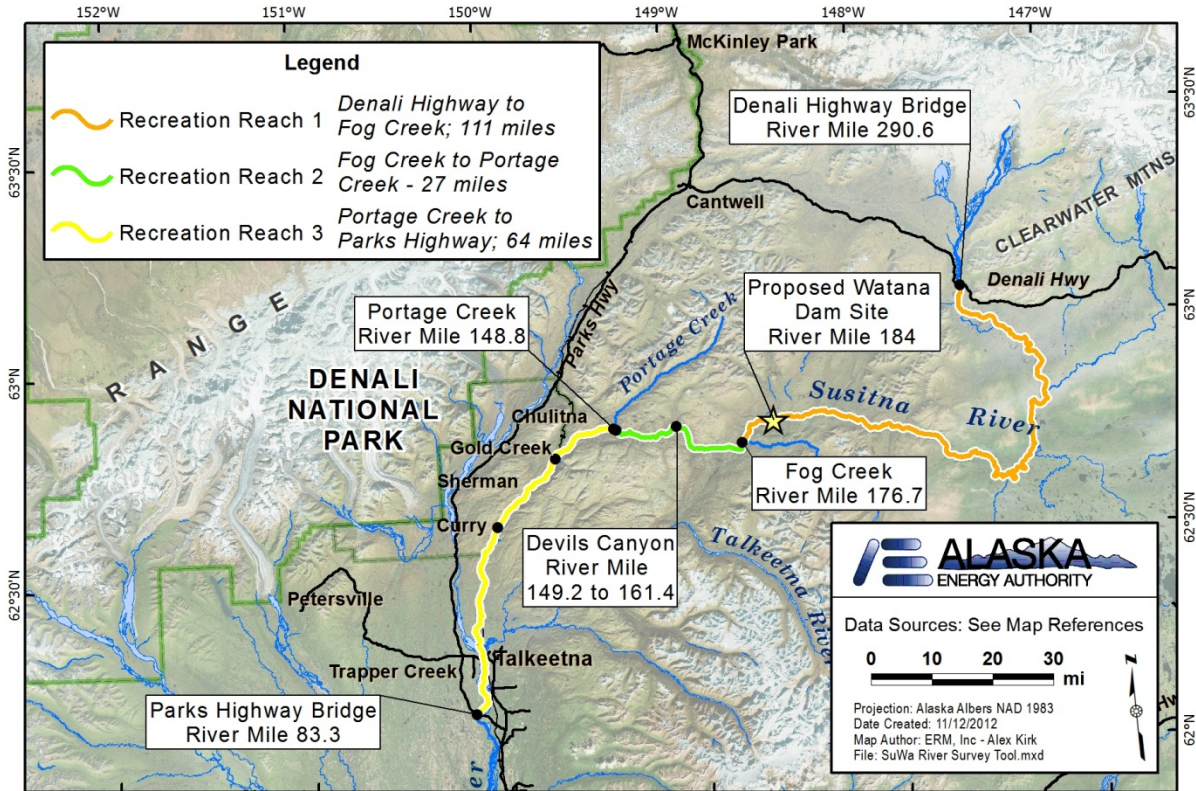
**Section 3: Information about this river trip**

18. For this trip, what river reach did you recreate? RM equals river mile. (select all that apply)?

\_\_\_ Reach 1 (Denali HWY Bridge to Fog Creek--RM 290 to 177)

\_\_\_ Reach 2 (Fog CK to Portage Ck including Devils Canyon--RM 177 to 149)

\_\_\_ Reach 3 (Portage CK to George Parks HWY--RM 149 to 86)



19. Including this most recent trip, how many times have you recreated on the Susitna River reach(s) selected above (select one)?

\_\_\_ 1 time

\_\_\_ 2 to 5 times

\_\_\_ 6 to 10 times

\_\_\_ More than 10 times

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**Section 3: Information about this river trip**

20. Some people come to the Susitna for recreation while others use it as a transportation corridor. What was the primary purpose of this trip on the Susitna River? (select one)
- Transportation
  - Motorized river recreation trip
  - Non-motorized river recreation trip
  - Whitewater recreation
  - Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
21. What were the secondary activities for this trip on the Susitna? (select all that apply)
- Camping
  - Wildlife viewing
  - Hunting
  - Fishing
  - Photography
  - Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
22. On your most recent trip on the Susitna River, including yourself, how many people were in your immediate party, sharing expenses for this river trip?
- # \_\_\_\_\_ in party
23. On this river trip, including yourself, what was the total number of people traveling in your group (friends or relatives traveling with you, but not necessarily sharing expenses)?
- # \_\_\_\_\_ in group
24. On this river trip, did your group have more than one watercraft?
- yes
  - no (skip to Q26)

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**Section 3: Information about this river trip**

25. On this trip, please specify the number of watercraft in your group for each type below.

\_\_\_ Raft

\_\_\_ Cataract

\_\_\_ Inflatable kayak

\_\_\_ Packraft

\_\_\_ Hardshell kayak

\_\_\_ Open canoe

\_\_\_ Closed-deck canoe

\_\_\_ Jetboat

\_\_\_ Airboat

\_\_\_ Prop boat





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**Section 4: River Access**

Questions 30, 31 and 32 are dependent on response to question 18.

30. If you were on Reach 1 for this recent trip, please place a check mark for the put-in and take-out location. Please specify approximate River Mile (RM) for put-in and take-out or tributary floated or trail hiked to access mainstem Susitna.

<b>Put-in</b>	<b>Take-out</b>
___ Float in from upstream of Denali Hwy	___ Denali Highway Bridge
___ Denali Highway Bridge	___ Wheeled Plane (specify RM_____)
___ Wheeled Plane (specify RM_____)	___ Float Plane (specify RM_____)
___ Float Plane (specify RM_____)	___ Helicopter (specify RM_____)
___ Helicopter (specify RM_____)	___ Hike out (specify RM_____)
___ Hike in (specify RM_____)	___ Float through to Reach 2
___ Access via tributary float (specify stream name_____)	___ Exit via tributary (specify stream name_____)

31. If you were on Reach 2 for this recent trip, please place a check mark for the put-in and take-out location. Please specify approximate River Mile (RM) for put-in and take-out or tributary floated or trail hiked to access mainstem Susitna.

<b>Put-in</b>	<b>Take-out</b>
___ Float in from Reach 1	___ Denali Highway Bridge
___ Wheeled Plane (specify RM_____)	___ Wheeled Plane (specify RM_____)
___ Float Plane (specify RM_____)	___ Float Plane (specify RM_____)
___ Helicopter (specify RM_____)	___ Helicopter (specify RM_____)
___ Hike in (specify RM_____)	___ Hike out (specify RM_____)
___ Access via tributary float (specify stream name_____)	___ Float through to Reach 3
	___ Exit via tributary (specify stream name_____)

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**Section 4: River Access**

32. If you were on Reach 3, please place a check mark for the put-in and take-out location. Please identify approximate River Mile (RM) for put-in and take-out or tributary floated or trail hiked to access mainstem Susitna.

<b>Put-in</b>	<b>Take-out</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Float in from Reach 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Float through to Reach to lower Susitna
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheeled Plane (specify RM_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheeled Plane (specify RM_____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Float Plane (specify RM_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Float Plane (specify RM_____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Helicopter (specify RM_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Helicopter (specify RM_____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Hike in (specify RM_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hike out (specify RM_____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Talkeetna	<input type="checkbox"/> Talkeetna
<input type="checkbox"/> Susitna Highway Bridge (aka Sunshine)	<input type="checkbox"/> Susitna Highway Bridge (aka Sunshine)
<input type="checkbox"/> Access via tributary float (specify stream name_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exit via tributary (specify stream name_____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Jet Boat or <input type="checkbox"/> Train (specify location below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Jet Boat or <input type="checkbox"/> Train (specify location below)
<input type="checkbox"/> Portage Creek	<input type="checkbox"/> Portage Creek
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Creek	<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Creek
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Creek	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Creek
<input type="checkbox"/> Curry	<input type="checkbox"/> Curry
<input type="checkbox"/> Sherman	<input type="checkbox"/> Sherman
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (RM_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (RM_____)

33. Would you be very likely, somewhat likely or unlikely to use the Susitna River more often if river recreation reaches were more accessible in the future? Please respond for each river reach for your skill level and interest. Select NA (not applicable) for reaches where the river difficulty precludes you from using the reach.

<b>Reach</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Reach 1</b>				
<b>Reach 2 Devils Canyon</b>				
<b>Reach 3</b>				

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**Section 4: River Access**

34. Which of the following most closely reflects your opinion concerning Susitna River access? Please respond for each river reach.

<b>Reach</b>	<b>Oppose additional access</b>	<b>In favor of improvements to access river</b>	<b>Current access is sufficient</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<b>Reach 1</b>				
<b>Reach 2</b>				
<b>Reach 3</b>				

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**Section 5: Evaluating this river trip**

35. If you were to plan a return trip to this river reach would you be very likely, somewhat likely or unlikely to do a trip if the river flow was similar to this most recent trip?

- Very Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Unlikely

36. For your recent trip on the Susitna, please rate the flow for each attribute that applies to your recreation activity. Consider your trip purpose, watercraft and skill level for each of the trip attributes. (one of the three tables visible depending on response to Question 5 and 20)

Non-Motorized Table

Trip Attribute	River flow level for this recent trip was.....?				
	1 Totally unacceptable	2 Unacceptable	3 Neither too low or too high	4 Acceptable	5 Totally acceptable
Multi-Day River Trip					
Number of portages					
River Safety					
Speed of travel					
River Camping					
Bank fishing					
Float fishing					
Overall rating					

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**Section 5: Evaluating this trip**

Motorized Table

Trip Attribute	River flow level for this recent trip was.....?				
	1 Totally unacceptable	2 Unacceptable	3 Neither too low or too high	4 Acceptable	5 Totally acceptable
River transportation corridor					
Motorized navigation					
Multi-Day River Trip					
River Safety					
River Camping					
Bank fishing					
Float fishing					
Overall rating					

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**Section 5: Evaluating this trip**

Whitewater Table

Trip Attribute	River flow level for this recent trip was.....?				
	1 Totally unacceptable	2 Unacceptable	3 Neither too low or too high	4 Acceptable	5 Totally acceptable
Multi-Day River Trip					
Whitewater boating					
Technical boating					
Powerful hydraulics					
Whitewater play areas					
Number of portages					
River Safety					
Speed of travel					
River Camping					
Overall rating					

37. Compared to your recent trip, would you prefer a flow that was lower, higher or about the same as the flow you experienced?

- Much lower flow
- Slightly lower flow
- About the same flow
- Slightly higher flow
- Much higher flow

38. For the preferred flow you just listed in the previous question, are you very likely, likely or unlikely to return to boat the preferred flow?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Unlikely

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**Section 5: Evaluating this trip**

39. Please estimate the number of hits, stops, boat drags and portages you had on this run.  
Your best guess is fine.

Number of times I hit rocks and other obstacles (but did not stop): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times I was stopped after hitting rocks or other obstacles (but did not have to get out of my boat to continue upstream or downstream): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times I had to get out to drag or pull my boat off rocks or other obstacles: \_\_\_\_\_

I had to abandon trip due to boat running aground: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times I had to portage around unnavigable sections, log jams, or other obstacles: \_\_\_\_\_

40. Did lack of water clarity contribute a lot, somewhat or not at all to the hits, stops, drags and boat running aground?

\_\_\_ a lot

\_\_\_ somewhat

\_\_\_ not at all

41. Was your trip length (upstream or downstream) cut short because flows were too high or too low?

\_\_\_ Too high

\_\_\_ Too low

\_\_\_ Not applicable



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**Section 6: Susitna compared to other rivers**

Questions 42, 43 and 44 are visible dependent on response to Question 18

42. Reach 1 river recreation opportunities on the Susitna River are above average, average or below average compared to....? Please respond for each row. Select “DK” if you don’t know.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>DK</b>
<b>Compared to other rivers in Alaska</b>				
<b>Compared to other rivers in the Pacific Northwest and Canada</b>				
<b>Compared to other rivers in the U.S.</b>				

43. Reach 2 river recreation opportunities on the Susitna River are above average, average or below average compared to....? Please respond for each row. Please respond for each row. Select “DK” if you don’t know.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>DK</b>
<b>Compared to other rivers in Alaska</b>				
<b>Compared to other rivers in the Pacific Northwest and Canada</b>				
<b>Compared to other rivers in the U.S.</b>				

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**Section 6: Susitna compared to other rivers**

44. Reach 3 river recreation opportunities on the Susitna River are above average, average or below average compared to....? Please respond for each row. Select “DK” if you don’t know.

Region	Below Average	Average	Above Average	DK
Compared to other rivers in Alaska				
Compared to other rivers in the Pacific Northwest and Canada				
Compared to other rivers in the U.S.				

45. As part of this study, we are interviewing recreational users to gain additional information about recreation opportunities on the Susitna. Would you like to participate in an interview?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

46. If you answered yes to Question 45, please provide contact information for a phone interview.

Phone Number: \_\_\_ - \_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

47. Do you have other comments you would like to make about river recreation on the Susitna River?

Thank you for your participation! Please forward this survey link to individuals recreating on the Susitna River.