

**Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project  
(FERC No. 14241)**

**Recreation Resources Study  
Study Plan Section 12.5**

**Part D: Supplemental Information to  
June 2014 Initial Study Report**

Prepared for

Alaska Energy Authority



**SUSITNA-WATANA HYDRO**

*Clean, reliable energy for the next 100 years.*

Prepared by

AECOM

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1. Purpose of Study .....	1
2.2. Study Components .....	2
<b>3. Status, Highlighted Results, and Achievements.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Summary of Study 12.5 Documents .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. New Study Documentation Supplementing the ISR.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Variances .....</b>	<b>4</b>
6.1. 2013 Study Season .....	4
6.2. 2014 Study Season .....	5
<b>7. Study Plan Modifications .....</b>	<b>5</b>
7.1. Modifications Identified in ISR.....	5
7.2. Modifications Identified since the June 2014 ISR .....	5
<b>8. Steps to Complete the Study .....</b>	<b>5</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Section 1 (Part A) of the June 2014 ISR for the Recreation Resources Study (Study 12.5) details the development of this study from the Revised Study Plan (RSP) in 2012, through the end of the 2013 study season. Section 7 of the ISR (Part C), filed in June 2014, sets forth AEA's plan and schedule, at that time, for completing this study and meeting the objectives of the RSP.

As detailed in Section 2.2 of the ISR Part D Overview, various circumstances have required AEA to extend the original timeframe for completing the Commission-approved Study Plan. However, AEA has made meaningful progress with Study 12.5 since the filing of the ISR in June 2014. As detailed below, AEA's recent activities for Study 12.5 have consisted of the following:

- On October 23, 2014 AEA held an ISR meeting for the Recreation Study.
- The study team completed the trail inventory, mapping, and trail classification effort.
- The study team completed the recreation supply, demand, and use assessment.
- The study team completed the Study Implementation Report in October 2015.

The primary purpose of this Part D Supplemental Information to the ISR is to report on the implementation of the Study Plan from the filing of the ISR in June 2014, through the filing of this ISR Part D. In light of this additional implementation, this Part D also identifies AEA's plans for completing Study 12.5 in a manner that meets the objectives of the Commission-approved Study Plan.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Purpose of Study

The goal of the study is to identify recreation resources and activities (by both visitors to Alaska and Alaska residents) that may be affected by the construction and operation of the proposed Project, and to help assess the potential impacts of Project construction and operation on those resources and activities.

The study objectives are established in RSP Section 12.5.1:

- Identify and document recreation resources and facilities that support commercial and non-commercial recreation in the Project area.
- Identify the types and levels of current recreational uses and future reasonably foreseeable future uses based on surveys and interviews, consultation with licensing participants, regional and statewide plans, and other data.
- Evaluate potential impacts of Project construction and operation on recreation resources, needs, and uses in the Project area.

- Develop data to inform AEA's future development of a Recreation Management Plan for the Project.

## 2.2. Study Components

This study consists of the following components:

- A review of existing management plans relevant to recreation resources.
- Inventory of trails and rights of way.
- Mapping of trails with a project nexus at a 1:24,000 scale.
- Description of recreation use areas using a National Resource Recreation Setting (NRRS) analysis.
- Inventory of facilities and dispersed recreation sites, which will be incorporated into a carrying capacity assessment.
- Collection of recreation user data through secondary data review, executive interviews, and intercept, on-line, mail and telephone survey research to assess demand for consumptive and non-consumptive recreation uses.

## 3. STATUS, HIGHLIGHTED RESULTS, AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This multi-year study was initiated in 2012 with preliminary work to define the recreation study area, identify recreation opportunities and experiences, map facilities and access, identify user groups and activities (by both visitors to Alaska and Alaska residents), and develop field methods for documenting current recreation activities; results of that work are reported in the 2012 technical memorandum for this study, *Recreation Resources Study*.

The following tasks were completed in 2013 and reported in Part A of the ISR for Study 12.5:

- Review of existing management plans relevant to recreation resources.
- Inventory of trails and rights of way.
- Mapping of trails with a project nexus at a 1:24,000 scale.
- Description of recreation use areas.
- Inventory of facilities and dispersed recreation sites.
- Recreation user data collected through secondary data review, executive interviews, and intercept, on-line, mail and telephone survey research.
- Assessment of demand for consumptive and non-consumptive recreation uses.

The study team has completed the following activities for Study 12.5 since the June 2014 filing of the ISR:

- The study team updated and completed the trail inventory, mapping, and trail classification effort.
- The study team update and completed the recreation supply, demand, and use assessment.
- The study team analyzed the survey data collection effort, including Susitna-Watana Recreation Intercept Survey, Susitna-Watana Recreation Regional Resident Household Mail Survey, Intercept Site Recreation Tallies, and Nonresponse Bias Telephone Survey.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF STUDY 12.5 DOCUMENTS

Since filing of the RSP in 2012, AEA and FERC have prepared several documents pertaining to this study. To aid review by FERC staff and licensing participants, each of these documents is listed below. Each of these documents is accessible on AEA's Project licensing website (<http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/type/documents/>) by clicking on the entry in the "Link" column in the table. In addition, these documents are available on FERC's eLibrary system (<http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/elibrary.asp>), in Docket No. P-14241.

Title	Date	Description	Link
12.5. Recreation Resources Study (Revised Study Plan)	12/14/2012	This document presents the plan for this study, including goals, objectives, the study area, and proposed study methods for recreation resources.	<a href="#">RSP for Study 12.5</a>
FERC Study Plan Determination for Study 12.5	2/1/2013	This document presents FERC approval of Study 12.5, which approved AEA's Revised Study Plan with recommended adjustments.	<a href="#">FERC SPD for Study 12.5</a>
Recreation Resources Report (Technical Memorandum)	2/19/2013	2012 reconnaissance study on recreation resources.	<a href="#">Feb. 2013 TM for Study 12.5 (File 1)</a> <a href="#">Feb. 2013 TM for Study 12.5 (File 2)</a> <a href="#">Feb. 2013 TM for Study 12.5 (File 3)</a> <a href="#">Feb. 2013 TM for Study 12.5 (File 4)</a>
Final Intercept and Mail Survey Instruments (FERC Determination Response)	4/15/2013	Technical memorandum describing survey instruments in response to FERC's SPD recommendations.	<a href="#">Apr. 2013 TM for Study 12.5</a>
Draft Initial Study Report for Study 12.5	2/3/2014	This draft of the ISR summarized the study methods and variances during the 2013 study season, and presented preliminary data collected for Study 12.5. This draft ISR was later republished as Part A of the final ISR.	<a href="#">Draft ISR for Study 12.5 (File 1)</a> <a href="#">Draft ISR for Study 12.5 (File 2)</a> <a href="#">Draft ISR for Study 12.5 (File 3)</a> <a href="#">Draft ISR for Study 12.5 (File 4)</a> <a href="#">Draft ISR for Study 12.5 (File 5)</a>

Title	Date	Description	Link
Initial Study Report for Study 12.5	6/3/2014	This document is the Initial Study Report (Parts A, B, and C) for Study 12.5. Part A republishes the Draft ISR. Part B identifies supplemental information and errata in Part A. Part C presents study modifications and plans for completing the study.	<a href="#">ISR Part A for Study 12.5 (File 1)</a> <a href="#">ISR Part A for Study 12.5 (File 2)</a> <a href="#">ISR Part A for Study 12.5 (File 3)</a> <a href="#">ISR Part A for Study 12.5 (File 4)</a> <a href="#">ISR Part A for Study 12.5 (File 5)</a> <a href="#">ISR Part B for Study 12.5</a> <a href="#">ISR Part C for Study 12.5</a>
Initial Study Report Meetings, October 23, 2014 (Parts A and B)	11/15/2014	Transcripts and AEA's agenda and PowerPoint presentations for the ISR meeting concerning the Project recreation studies.	<a href="#">Transcripts from ISR Meeting</a> <a href="#">Materials from ISR Meeting</a>
Recreation Resources Study (12.5) – 2014 Study Implementation Report	11/4/2015	Study Implementation Report: a summary of study results in 2013-2014.	<a href="#">2014 SIR for Study 12.5 (File 1)</a> <a href="#">2014 SIR for Study 12.5 (File 2)</a> <a href="#">2014 SIR for Study 12.5 (File 3)</a>

## 5. NEW STUDY DOCUMENTATION SUPPLEMENTING THE ISR

The following table identifies and describes additional reports and other documents that update, refine, or otherwise supplement certain sections of the ISR pertaining to this Study 12.5, during AEA's continued implementation of the Study Plan since the ISR was filed in June 2014.

ISR Reference	Description
Part A, Section 4	This Section is superseded by the Study Implementation Report Section 4, describing 2014 study plan implementation.
Part A, Section 5	This Section is superseded by the Study Implementation Report Section 5, describing the results of 2014 study plan implementation.

## 6. VARIANCES

### 6.1. 2013 Study Season

The following variances are reported in the June 2014 ISR:

- State-issued registration (Tier I) and Tier II subsistence permits have been included in the analysis of hunting and trapping effort (RSP Section 12.5.4).
- Adjustments were made to intercept survey and observational tally locations (RSP Section 12.5.4).
- Regional household mail survey was phased in two mailings instead of one (RSP Section 12.5.4).

## 6.2. 2014 Study Season

The following variances occurred following the filing of the June 2014 ISR:

- As explained in Section 1.3 of the ISR Part D Overview and Section 3 of the Study Implementation Report for Study 12.5, in 2014 AEA included the Denali East Corridor Option as an additional, alternative north-south corridor alignment for transmission and access from the dam site to the Denali Highway.
- Also in 2014, as explained in Section 1.3 of the ISR Part D Overview and Section 3 of the Study Implementation Report for Study 12.5, after the ISR was filed with FERC in June 2014, AEA finalized its plans to eliminate the Chulitna Corridor from further study.

As noted in Section 4 of the Study Implementation Report for this study, AEA encountered no other variances when implementing this study in 2014.

## 7. STUDY PLAN MODIFICATIONS

### 7.1. Modifications Identified in ISR

Section 7 of the ISR (Part C) details modifications for this study following the 2013 study season. These modifications are generally summarized as follows:

- As explained in Section 1.3 of the ISR Part D Overview, AEA has added the Denali East Option road and transmission corridor to the study area. The proposed modification includes an expansion of the Recreation Effects Analysis Area by including a five mile buffer on proposed Denali East Option and on new trails identified 2013 that were found to have a nexus to the Project, notably the Butte Lake Trail and the Goose Lake Trail.
- The inclusion of State-issued registration (Tier I) and Tier II subsistence permits in the analysis of hunting effort, demand and use will be carried forward as a Study Plan modification during implementation of the balance of the study. Implementing this modification will meet Study Plan objectives by capturing the recreational value of hunting activities by hunters from populated, urban areas.

### 7.2. Modifications Identified since the June 2014 ISR

As detailed in the Study Implementation Report, AEA plans no additional modifications of the methods for this study.

## 8. STEPS TO COMPLETE THE STUDY

In light of the variances and modifications described above, the steps necessary for AEA to complete this study are summarized below. As necessary and appropriate, these steps have been updated from those appearing in Section 7 of the ISR (Part C).

- Recreation Use Areas: As specified in Section 12.5.4 of the RSP, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) framework will be used to describe recreation opportunity areas.
- Recreation Facilities and Carrying Capacity: As specified in Section 12.5.4 of the RSP, AEA will continue to develop an inventory of developed and dispersed recreation sites, and estimate carrying capacity of the inventoried sites.