



SUSITNA-WATANA HYDRO *Clean, reliable energy for Alaska*

FERC NO. P-14241

IN THE COMMUNITY



Counting fish in the Susitna River



Wayne Dyok, project manager, meets with Fairbanks residents

The Alaska Energy Authority recently wrapped up a series of Susitna-Watana Hydro community meetings.

Open houses were held in Glennallen, Fairbanks, Wasilla, Anchorage, Talkeetna and Kenai – locations where key stakeholders live.

These meetings serve as an open forum to discuss the project, provide project updates, review current field study data, preview this summer's field study season and answer community members' questions.

Thank you to everyone who participated. Watch our website for new information.

Environmental Program Continues

Critical Environmental Studies Increase Understanding of Basin

Another Alaska summer is upon us and there is plenty of activity in the Susitna River basin. The Susitna-Watana Hydro environmental field effort includes 58 individual studies that span from the mouth of the Cook Inlet to the upper Susitna River.

This year the Susitna-Watana Hydro team has been prioritizing field efforts and identifying critical studies to continue during the calendar year 2014. Last summer more than 300 scientists, geologists, archeologists, biologists and more were in the field supporting Susitna-Watana Hydro field efforts. This summer will not see that level of activity but there are exciting studies underway.

This year's break-up and corresponding river flow levels were documented and this information feeds into modeling efforts that will identify potential project impacts and inform future operations. When it comes to fish and wildlife studies, there are important windows of time when crews need to be in the field capturing this information. May and June are important months for bird migration, the little brown bat and green tree frog, documenting moose and caribou calving and continuing to track collared animals. In addition, fisheries biologists are deploying screw traps and other methods of tagging salmon for genetic testing and population sampling along the Susitna River. At any one time, up to 40 individuals are in the field supporting Susitna-Watana Hydro field efforts.

In late-July, the team will begin a geotechnical program that includes six-to-eight weeks of core drilling and continued geotechnical investigations. Together with the extensive seismic monitoring and field work, the core drilling program will help engineers design the safest structure possible.

The Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) remains committed to supporting Alaska vendors wherever possible. Field efforts are not only important to gather valuable information, but this work supports local businesses, retail stores, helicopter companies, boat operators, lodging restaurants and more.

Next year will mark another intensive summer of field work and the level of activity should mirror that of last summer. All of the information gathered will be incorporated into a license application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), expected to be submitted in 2016.

[Learn more](#)

Susitna-Watana Hydro is in the midst of a multi-year federal hydropower license application with FERC. The development of the 58 environmental studies took more than a year with each study having received FERC-approval. FERC provides oversight for the environmental program as well as dam safety and inspection. Learn more about [FERC's Hydropower licensing process](#).

Project Achieves Licensing Milestone

Susitna-Watana Hydro Initial Study Report Filed with FERC

Susitna-Watana Hydro is conducting an unprecedented environmental study effort that will result in more being understood about the Susitna Basin and watershed than ever before. As part of the licensing process, the Alaska Energy Authority is required to file progress reports and engage stakeholders about the status of each of the 58 environmental study plans.

An incredible 8,600 pages of information was filed with FERC June 3 as part of the Initial Study Report. It is estimated to be the largest Initial Study Report filed with FERC. The Susitna-Watana Hydro team will continue to review the data and provide updates to stakeholders and regulatory agencies during the coming months. You can review the entire [Initial Study Report](#) online. Public comments are accepted on the ISR through November at [FERC.gov](#).

FIELD STUDY FAQ



Artist rendering of the Susitna-Watana Hydro project

Q: The Susitna River is glacially-fed. Won't silt build up in the reservoir and impact the turbines?

A: The impacts of Susitna River silt have been studied since the 1980s by several different engineering consultants. The short answer is not for many centuries. The amount of sediment that is estimated to be deposited in the reservoir over 50 years is about 210,000 acre-feet. The gross reservoir volume is about 5.2 million acre-feet. Based on the engineering studies, it would take more than 1,000 years to fill the reservoir with silt.

Hydroelectric projects are constructed in various river systems across the globe, including other glacially-fed systems in Alaska as well as Norway, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand and more. Modern turbine technology provides protection from silt and debris while allowing for efficient project operations.