SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

TASK 7 – ENVIRONMENTAL

SUBTASK 7.05
SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS
SOCIOCULTURAL REPORT
FINAL DRAFT

MARCH 1982

Prepared by:
STEPHEN R. BRAUND
AND ASSOCIATES

Prepared for:

ACRES

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SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

Submitted to

ACRES AMERICAN INC.

by

Stephen R. Braund
Thomas D. Lonner

Stephen R. Braund & Associates
P.O. Box 1480
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

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APPENDIX 1: Susitna Hydroelectric Sociocultural Studies Access Report (October 9, 1981).

APPENDIX 2: Susitna Hydroelectric Sociocultural Studies Access Report Addendum #1 (November 1981).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Because of the intensity of local residents' concerns related to potential impacts on existing values and lifestyles, the Alaska Power Authority (APA) and Acres American, Inc. added this sociocultural study to their original work plan. The purpose of this report is to describe and analyze baseline sociocultural conditions and provide a preliminary analysis of potential sociocultural impacts on those communities most likely to be directly affected by the Susitna Hydroelectric Project. The sociocultural categories addressed for the southern communities include: settlement patterns; economic conditions and values; political systems and community response capacity; and local attitudes toward growth, change, and economic development. These topics are addressed at the local community level. Residents' priorities related to access routes are discussed in the appendices.

The sociocultural impacts are based on socioeconomic data supplied by other subcontractors. This information, supplied by others, includes descriptions of baseline population and employment forecasts, project manpower requirements, description of construction camp facilities, distribution of workers and new residents to nearby communities, and socioeconomic effects of this in-migration on governmental facilities and services. From this information, a preliminary analysis of sociocultural impacts was developed.

The sociocultural study area and this report are divided into two major sections: the southern communities, which include Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and the railroad communities north of Talkeetna (Chase, Curry, Sherman, and Gold Creek); and the northern communities which include Cantwell and McKinley. Two researchers worked on this project: Stephen Braund, who researched and wrote the baseline and impacts related to the southern communities as well as the two Access Reports attached as appendices; and Thomas Lonner, who researched and wrote the section on the northern communities of Cantwell and McKinley.

Once the proposed access route to the project was identified as a highway connected with both the Parks Highway at Hurricane and the Alaska Railroad at Gold Creek, and not a road off of the Denali Highway near Cantwell, the potential project related impacts on the northern communities greatly diminished. Consequently, in this report, the northern communities are not addressed to the same level of detail as those settlements further south. Section 3.1 does provide a summary of findings and conclusions related to Cantwell and McKinley. (On file at the Alaska Power Authority's Public Participation Office is a detailed draft report on the sociocultural systems of Cantwell and McKinley).

The research for this report was conducted primarily from June through October of 1981. Much of the information was gathered during informal interviews with community residents, Matanuska-Susitna Borough officials, and other knowledgeable people. These interviews consisted primarily of a number of open-ended questions which allowed residents to express their thoughts related to a variety of relevant topics. The researchers did not use formal questionnaires, but asked standard

questions in all communities. These questions attempted to identify key sociocultural issues related to hydroelectric development in the region. In addition to the informal interviews, the researchers analyzed testimony and transcripts of public meetings related to the Susitna project; reviewed APA correspondence files and meeting notes; and reviewed Matanuska-Susitna Borough planning documents, relevant reports, correspondence files, and a 1978 questionnaire related to study area residents' priorities and goals. Also, a brief review of the past history and settlement patterns of the study communities proved most useful.

2.0 SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES

2.1 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

2.1.1 Introduction

Although in no way as dynamic as the population increases in the southern portion of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the settlement patterns in the communities in the southern sociocultural study area (Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and the railroad communities north of Talkeetna) has not been static. In fact, given the greater distance from Anchorage (which precludes them as bedroom communities to Anchorage) and the relative lack of local economic opportunity, the influx of people into these rural communities is surprising. A brief review of the settlement patterns in these study communities is helpful in understanding local residents' reasons for moving to the area, their values and priorities, and their attitudes toward change, economic development, and growth in the upper Susitna valley.

The settlement of the southern study area occurred in several distinct phases as different groups of people were attracted to this subregion for various reasons. Although the area's abundant natural resources comprise the basis for the attraction to the area, people who, over time, settled in the communities can, in general, be broken into two groups: those who came primarily to develop and extract and those

who came primarily to enjoy the natural resources. These two motives should be viewed as extremes on a continuum which represents the entire spectrum of local residents' values, motives, and attitudes. These two viewpoints still exist today, and although they represent different philosophies toward rural environments, all residents appear to have one commonality -- their desire to live in a non-industrial, relatively rural setting. This analysis of extremes does not mean that one who came to extract (e.g. a miner) did not also enjoy the natural environment. Also, not all groups neatly fit into the extremes of this continuum (e.g. the homesteaders who came to farm the land around Trapper Creek). But these minor problems do not overshadow the usefulness of this analysis as it reflects the current dichotomy in the study area. Thus, this section on settlement patterns will briefly summarize who came, when they came, and why they came to this subregion.

2.1.2 Talkeetna

Located at the confluence of the Susitna, Chulitna, and Talkeetna Rivers approximately 114 miles north of Anchorage, Talkeetna is reportedly the site of a Tanaina Indian village (Orth 1971). Although little information is available related to the Tanaina habitation in this immediate area, long-time Talkeetna residents still refer to their community as a "village". This reflects their view of Talkeetna as a small, rural community which has a meaningful continuity with its past.

The discovery of gold in the area in 1896 provided the impetus for Talkeetna's colorful history as an early Alaskan mining town. Beginning in the early 1900's, prospectors, miners, and freighters used Talkeetna as their base of operations for

the highly mineralized Yentna Mining District 50 to 60 miles west and northwest of town. Many miners worked their claims in the summer and wintered in Talkeetna, the closest community to the mining district. Others left Alaska or wintered in Anchorage, while some miners remained in the area and trapped. Thus, trapping added to Talkeetna's historic economy, until fur prices declined in the 1940's.

The construction of the Alaska Railroad added to the growth in the area, and in 1920 a railroad station opened in Talkeetna, which quickly became the railroad's district headquarters. The railroad greatly increased access to the upper Susitna valley, and numerous miners entered the area in the 1920's and 1930's. Talkeetna flourished as the operations base for local miners and trappers, who would take the train from Anchorage to Talkeetna, spend a few days in town, and cross the Susitna River on their way to the mining district. Talkeetna's Fairview Inn, built in 1920, was (and remains today) a popular gathering place for townspeople, local miners, and travellers.

By 1939, most of Talkeetna's 136 residents were prospectors, miners, and trappers, many of whom were older bachelors. Apparently, few young people or families resided in the community at this time. After the Talkeetna airfield and FAA (CAA) facility were constructed in 1940, more families moved in to work for the government. The new airfield accommodated continual activity as pilots flew miners back and forth from their claims. Thus, by World War II, the two primary means of transportation in the area were railroad and air, and Talkeetna was a center for both.

The establishment of transportation (Alaska Railroad and FAA) and communication (COMSAT, now RCA) operations in Talkeetna created new jobs and attracted new families. The result was a relatively stable, year-round economic base for a very few people. Previously, local employment opportunities had been primarily seasonal (mining, trapping, fishing, lodges) with only a few, low volume year-round businesses (lodges and stores). To meet the educational needs of the new families, a one room school house for grades 1 through 8 was built in Talkeetna in 1936.

As the gold rush era ended, Talkeetna entered a new period, which extends into the present, based on tourism and recreation. Beginning in the 1950's, Talkeetna became the center of operations for mountaineering expeditions to Mt. McKinley. People from all over the world come to this old mining town to have local bush pilots fly them to the base of Mt. McKinley. In addition to mountain climbing, other recreational activities (hunting, fishing, guiding, and tourism) developed as the basis of Talkeetna's economy since the 1940's and 1950's. Many people originally came to the area as tourists and stayed because they enjoyed the rural, natural setting of the community.

More than any other recent development, the construction of the Parks Highway and the Talkeetna Spur Road paved the way for rapid change in the community. Before the road was constructed in 1965, Talkeetna was a very isolated community. The only access was by plane, boat, or train, and although the FAA facility did form a separate compound, the 76 residents of Talkeetna in 1960 comprised a very close-knit community. Once it was connected to the main highway system, Talkeetna became much more accessible to the population centers further south, especially Anchorage. Consequently, more and more people gradually came into the area for

recreational (sightseeing, hunting, fishing, and mountaineering) and residential purposes. Land was sold, and people built new homes. Although no single boom really occurred, Talkeetna's population steadily increased as more families were attracted to the area. This trend continues into the present.

Talkeetna's character as an old-timer's bachelor town comprised of miners and trappers gradually changed as younger, more family oriented people moved into the community. Residences grew along the Talkeetna Spur Road as well as other areas around the community. Because families and an increased population require more services than bachelor miners and trappers, Talkeetna's infrastructure, although still relatively meager, increased (e.g. schools, fire service area, library, ambulance service, electricity, and state and federal agencies).

Many of these people who moved to Talkeetna in the late 1960's and throughout the 1970's sought what they considered the best of two worlds: life in a rural, wilderness setting with basic services and, at the same time, relatively easy automobile access to the wide range of services offered in Wasilla and Anchorage. These newcomers came from different parts of the country and had different backgrounds and outlooks than the older Talkeetna resident. In many ways (their numbers, their families, and their need for services and employment), the relative newcomers significantly impacted rustic Talkeetna. Consequently, although all residents (both old and new) feel close to the land and nearby wilderness, long-time Talkeetna residents tend to view their community with a weathered perspective -- they have already witnessed years of change. Real old-timers were impacted by the arrival of FAA and COMSAT (RCA) families, while pre-road residents were

significantly affected by the road construction and associated population influx into the area. Consequently, when asked to give their views related to future growth and change, the words of one long-time Talkeetna resident reflect a common attitude, "I have lived here for 20 years and my lifestyle has changed 20 times. One more time will not make any difference." On the other hand, the more recent Talkeetna resident who came in pursuit of a rural, relatively self-sufficient lifestyle, generally perceives future change as encroaching urbanization and industrialization and therefore in serious conflict with the very basis of his residence in Talkeetna. (Although the recent, 1970's, settlement of the railroad area north of Talkeetna has had a significant impact on Talkeetna, this phenomenon will be discussed below under Railroad Communities North of Talkeetna).

2.1.3 Trapper Creek

Although Trapper Creek's population is relatively recent (e.g. post 1950) compared to that of Talkeetna, miners have long travelled through this area on their way to their claims. In the early 20th century, a road house located on the Trapper Creek side of the Susitna River served as a stopping point for freighters and miners. Because it had the railroad (and later the airfield), Talkeetna, and not Trapper Creek, became the center of the mining activity. Once they were on the west side of the Susitna River, the miners gradually established a trail into the mining district. This trail became the Petersville Road, which facilitated access into the Trapper Creek area west of the Susitna River.

The usable agricultural land in the Trapper Creek area attracted the early homesteaders, the first of whom arrived in the mid-1950's. These people, like the "59ers" who followed them in 1959, took the train to Talkeetna and crossed the Susitna River, the same way the miners had done before them. Thus, prior to the construction of the Parks Highway in 1969, the first year of dependable year-round road access to Trapper Creek, the early homesteaders depended on riverboats from Talkeetna or small aircraft for transportation to their homes. Although most of the early homesteaders left after a short time, many remained to farm the land and raise families in this isolated setting.

The construction of the Parks Highway generally coincided with the State of Alaska's original Open-to-Entry (OTE) land disposal program which operated from 1968 to 1973. Under this program, individuals could buy up to five acres of land in designated areas if they staked the boundaries, leased the land from the State, and had the property surveyed, at their own expense, in a five (extendable to ten) year period. Because the purchase price was equivalent to the fair market value at the time of entry, this land was fairly inexpensive, especially during the inflationary 1970's. Large areas in the Susitna valley were open for entry, including areas both in the vicinity of Trapper Creek and north of Talkeetna.

In Trapper Creek area, the Parks Highway as well as Petersville Road greatly facilitated public access to the OTE land. The OTE program attracted a new group of people, and the highway provided access to the general area. Although the State generally advertised the OTE land as recreational (hundreds of people acquired land), a few people and families, eager to start a new life in the wilderness, built homes and lived year-round on their land. Similar to Talkeetna, the old-time

Trapper Creek residents were significantly impacted by the highway construction and state land disposals that attracted a new wave of residents to both their community and area. Also, like the Talkeetna area, many of the new residents were younger, college educated, and had different backrounds and perspectives than the older homestead families. Many of the people moved to the area because of its natural beauty and relative isolation -- not for economic reasons. Similar to recent arrivals in the Talkeetna area, the relatively new Trapper Creek resident is much more conservative and skeptical about future change and development than the more progressive, long-time resident who has witnessed considerable change and modernization precipitated by the Parks Highway and State land disposals.

Trapper Creek, like Talkeetna, became more diverse and complex and, with the road and new people, services expanded (lodges, service station, post office, electricity, troopers, telephone, school, and highway department). After spending a few years on their OTE parcels, many young families moved to Trapper Creek, presumably to be closer to the school and other services and live in a less isolated, although still rural, setting. Trapper Creek offers a small community environment with many services, easy access to Anchorage, and the Denali State Park and other wilderness areas nearby.

Trapper Creek, unlike Talkeetna, does not have a clearly recognizable townsite. Instead, it has a cluster of buildings (residential and commercial) at the junction of the Parks Highway, with residents living along both the Parks Highway and Petersville Road both east and west of the main highway. Homesteads, OTE parcels, and a few scattered subdivisions and small tracts provide the residential land base for Trapper Creek. In addition, numerous non-resident recreationists own property in the area.

2.1.4 Railroad Communities North of Talkeetna

Long before any roads were constructed into the study area, the Alaska Railroad provided land transportation into the region. Consequently, the railroad was a major influence which affected the location, development, and decline of many communities in the study area. For example, Talkeetna's population stabilized as a result of the establishment of a railroad depot there around 1920. In addition, Chase, Curry, Sherman, and Gold Creek were originally construction camps and railroad stops associated with the early days of the Alaska Railroad. The following represents the Alaska Railroad mileposts for the study communities going north from Talkeetna: Talkeetna (Mile 226.7); Chase (Mile 236.2); Curry (Mile 248.5); Sherman (Mile 258.3); and Gold Creek (Mile 263.2).

At one time, Curry was actually a railroad station with a hotel which, for more than 25 years, accommodated overnight passengers and crew when the train took two days to travel between Anchorage and Fairbanks. As late as 1958, Curry was still used as a crew change point and had a population of 44 persons (Orth 1971). A fire and a trend towards larger sections on the railroad led to the virtual desertion of the stop. Today, section foremen and very small crews are stationed at Gold Creek, Talkeetna, and Hurricane.

In addition to the railroad, there were gold mines and associated homesteads in the vicinity of Gold Creek. Although most of the homesteads are now vacant, many of the original settlers remained year-round and raised families in the area. A few mines are still seasonally active. These old patented homesteads create a private land base in the Gold Creek area that could accommodate future expansion and

growth. Located near the confluence of the Susitna and Indian Rivers as well as adjacent to the Denali State Park, this area has many natural attractions. Currently, the Gold Creek/Sherman area has a relatively sparse permanent population with many absentee landowners, including homesteaders, those who purchased small tracts from the original settlers, and more recent entrants associated with the State of Alaska's land disposal programs.

Between Talkeetna and Gold Creek, very little remains from the early railroad days. In fact, if it were not for the State's public land disposal programs, which began in 1968, few people would own land north of Talkeetna. The original OTE program (1968-73) coincided with the arrival in Alaska of many young people, a product of the turbulent 1960's, who had rejected the industrialization and urbanization in the "lower forty-eight" states and come to Alaska in search of an alternate lifestyle in a wilderness setting. Once they got to Talkeetna, many of these people found exactly what they were looking for: a small, relatively isolated rustic mining town at the end of a spur road, a railroad system which, for a few dollars, could transport them and their belongings to viturally free land, and a vast wilderness area seemingly beyond the scope of any development plans. For 10 years, all the entrants had to do was stake where they chose and pay a lease fee of $40 per year to the State. Later the land had to be surveyed and purchased.

The railroad, while it provided access to Talkeetna's post office, stores, and inns, was really only partial access into the area. Only a few people staked adjacent to the railroad tracks; the majority took the train north from Talkeetna and then hiked one to six miles west in order to establish more remote homesites. Consequently, visiting these people generally involves much more than a simple train ride from

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Talkeetna. This isolation and remoteness is, apparently, what these settlers had in mind when they staked, or later purchased from original entrants, their land.

As discussed above, although the state established the OTE program primarily for five acre recreational sites, many of those who staked land north of Talkeetna did so with the goal of subsisting year-round, much like early pioneer homesteaders had done before them. The majority of those who settled north of Talkeetna were young people in their twenties or thirties, many with young children. Robert Durr (1974:11-15), who interviewed many of these people, discussed their motivations as follows:

> Among the younger settlers, who constitute the majority, whether obviously "counter-culture" of "hippie" types or not, the humanistic range of values was clearly and consciously predominant. Virtually all of them, in one degree or another, were motivated by a desire to return to the land, to "Mother Earth," as they refer to it; and they are representative, in this respect, of an important current in the flow of American life today.
>
> Others of the younger settlers, while sharing the general motivational complex outlined above, have come to the woods for specifically religious reasons. Sometimes called "Jesus freaks" by their peers (the term "freak" is not derogatory but simply designates an intense enthusiasm for something, as, for example, "music freaks"), these young men and women have turned away from wordly pursuits in order to better know God amidst the undistracting quiet and simplicity of the woods.
>
> Still another set of motivations for returning to the land, ... has to do with the question of health or even survival, as they see it, in face of the pollution, overpopulation and general ecological damage done the earth by what they consider a technology gone mad. For them, being able to breathe clean air, drink pure water, and grow food in soil free of chemical fertilizers and insecticides ...
>
> ... the majority of these people were both attracted to life in the woods and repelled by life in the cities and suburbs: a twofold motivation.

> Quite a few of the younger ones, though by no means all, would be recognized generally as part of the "youth movement", or "counter culture". Others are simply the kind of adventurous, individualistic young people who had always been attracted to frontier life in our country, from the earliest pioneer days to the present.

As Durr's final comment indicates, although people who move to a remote wilderness area have many common goals and values, the people who settled north of Talkeetna are not necessarily members of a homogeneous group. They represent all age groups, singles, couples, families, people on food stamps, those who would rather starve then accept any form of governmental assistance, former businessmen and other professionals, as well as members of the "youth movement". In addition, Alaskan residents, as well as newcomers to the State, acquired land in this area, although it seems the majority of those who chose to live year-round were recent arrivals to Alaska at the time.

Some of the new arrivals were from the east coast, and although they had attended college, they had little money or possessions with which to begin a life in the woods, and they were very inexperienced in basic rural skills. But, although they were short on knowledge, many of these newcomers as well as those who came later were long on desire and commitment to remain on their land and learn the necessary skills. They built their own homes, some nicer than others, raise gardens, and harvest fish and game in the vicinity. Apparently, when winter arrived, many, but by no means all, left. Since that time other people have replaced them; a turnover of people in the area has occurred. This is not an uncommon settlement pattern in Alaska. Similarily, out of the fifty or so "59ers" who settled near Trapper Creek, only a few remained a few years later. Of the estimated 300 to 400 hopeful settlers who arrived in Talkeetna in the early 1970's, plus some more recent

arrivals, between 80 and 150 remain as permanent residents in the area between the Talkeetna River and Gold Creek. The summer population may easily double or even triple due to recreationists and absentee landowners who frequent the area.

Needless to say, the arrival of these young people in Talkeetna caused quite an impact on this small community which only a few years before had received year-round road access. Local residents estimate that 300 to 400 people arrived the summer of 1971. Talkeetna's 1970 population was only 182 persons. The railroad parking lot and nearby open areas filled up with cars, buses, vans, tents, and people on their way north to the OTE land. Although both the existing Talkeetna residents and the newcomers valued the wilderness setting in the Talkeetna area, in many ways these two groups represent two distinct sets of values. Many of the newcomers had consciously chosen to leave society and seek their isolated lifestyle. Because they had very little at first, many received government assistance (e.g. food stamps). Thus, to some outspoken Talkeetna residents, these people claimed to want the independent wilderness lifestyle, but only as long as food stamps, the railroad, and Talkeetna's services (laundry, stores, showers, and inns) are nearby. Based on one's source of information, an entirely different view of these people emerges. As one Talkeetna businessperson wrote to the Alaska Power Authority,

> Talkeetna lifestyle!? I have a lifestyle too -- but it is not the least bit similar to my "hippie" or "up the track" neighbor. In fact -- what is their lifestyle? A good number of welfare cases, not subsistence life as they would have one believe.

This view is reflected by a number of other Talkeetna residents who participated in the Borough's goals study (Mat-Su Borough n.d.) as well as more conservative residents who also live on OTE land. On the other hand, a typical resident of the area north of Talkeetna said,

> I had a dream of moving north to the woods. An idealistic point of view to live off of the land -- learn to live in the wilderness. The call of the wilderness, to escape society, is my reason for being here. I wanted to get away from the urban blight, from people, and try to live closer to nature for my fulfillment.

Another person who guided recreationists added,

> People here do not need much money to live. We live a simple life. We live a happy life. We like to live it with enough money to make things and provide for our children and enjoy the exhileration of being in the country ourselves. We are in the country ourselves. We do it for our own personal enjoyment.

Although this basic split still exists in the Talkeetna area, in the ten years since the first people arrived to settle on the OTE land, the social relations between the two groups has significantly improved. In short, they have, by necessity, learned to live with one another. It is not uncommon for a long-time Talkeetna resident to first give a diatribe on his "hippie" neighbors and then end the discussion with the statement, "The ones who stayed are OK," or "Now, of those who are left, most work seasonally. They are getting older, are not so radical, and blend into the community."

In summary, it may seem peculiar how people with such seemingly diverse backgrounds, attitudes, and values all settled into Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and the railroad communities (miners, trappers, construction workers, homesteaders, welfare recipients, businesspeople, "counter culture" members, developers, anti-developers, and so forth). But, in the larger perspective, all of these residents (both permanent and part-time) represent a commanlity not found in more urban areas to the south -- a desire to live in a rural, relatively undeveloped wilderness environment. The group who came to settle north of Talkeetna in the 1970's, as well as those who settled on OTE land near Trapper Creek, were not motivated by economic

ambitions. They did not come to Alaska or this particular area to get rich. On the contrary, as explained above, they sought what they considered to be a slower, simpler, healthier, more natural life in the woods. Even the old-timers, many of whom came to get a little richer (few did), remained in the area primarily because they valued the land, the open spaces in a wilderness area, and a small town atmosphere.

2.2 ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

2.2.1 Introduction

Economic opportunities in Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and the railroad communities north of Talkeetna are few and unemployment is high. This lack of local employment is not consistent with the recent population growth in the area because most people do not move into this area for economic reasons. Rather, the current trend in these communities seems to be that people first choose to live in this rural environment, and second they figure out some way to support themselves once they are there.

Local residents depend on a wide range of economic activities to enable them to live in these communities. Because many people have families to support, the lack of local jobs generally forces men to leave the area to work (e.g. the North Slope, Wasilla, or Anchorage). The few retail businesses and services that do exist in Talkeetna and Trapper Creek are generally associated with tourism and recreation. Some government employment is also present. Because of lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, some people do tend to seek governmental subsidies (e.g. food stamps, energy assistance, aid to families with dependent children, or other grants). Residents in the study area participate in these programs, but it is not known to what extent. In addition, people in all communities produce arts and

crafts which they sell. Also, in all communities residents rely on local fish and game, gather firewood as well as berries and other greens, and raise gardens.

2.2.2 Talkeetna

Tourism and recreation form the main basis of Talkeetna's present economy. This colorful mining town, located off the main highway, is relatively isolated in the heart of scenic wilderness -- qualities which add to its growing popularity. Visitors have a scenic view of Mt. McKinley, riverboat or aircraft access to hunting and fishing, and a relatively colorful night life in town. For an increasing number of people, including both non-resident tourists as well as Anchorage weekend recreationists, Talkeetna is an entertaining and relaxing place to visit. It still retains much of its frontier character which attracts both visitors and new residents. In addition, Talkeetna is the take-off point for climbing expeditions to Mt. McKinley, which adds to its international reputation. Because the tourist economy is generally slower in the winter, Talkeetna is currently promoting cross country skiing.

Of the communities in this area, Talkeetna has the largest number of businesses and employers. A partial list of Talkeetna's businesses includes: two service stations, a laundromat, four lodges/motels, five air taxis, a few recreation guide services, two riverboat services, two realties, five retail stores and gift shops, one surveyor, two construction services, an aircraft rebuilder, a few miners, and other tourist related businesses. Most of the commercial establishments are oriented towards transient tourists and recreationists. Government agencies and services include the

Matanuska Electrical Association, Alascom, the borough school, the library, the Talkeetna fire service area, a post office, the Alaska Railroad, FAA, and the State Division of Aviation.

When asked who the main employers are in town, most people name the school, Alascom, the railroad, FAA , and the local stores. Thus, a few people have permanent employment, but there are many more people than jobs in Talkeetna. Because most of the Takleetna businesses are owner-operated, they actually hire few employees and consequently provide few job opportunities in the community. In the past, the railroad provided significant employment in Talkeetna and the stops further north, but layoffs have reduced Talkeetna's winter railroad employees to two.

Many residents, who moved to the Talkeetna and Trapper Creek area primarily for non-economic reasons (i.e. they preferred to live in a rural wilderness), now rely on recreational guiding for income. In this way, they are able to pursue wilderness activities and also provide some economic security for themselves and their families. In 1979, some of these individuals formed an association of guides called Denali Wilderness Treks. As one local resident explained,

> Essentially the people that live ... in the Trapper Creek area and the Talkeetna area are people who have lived in the woods and enjoy the wilderness because they live in it and each of the individuals have tried to get a business going that would enable them to make a living at showing others the beauties of the area.

Because, as individuals, they found it difficult to be both in the woods and in town advertising, they formed Denali Wilderness Treks, a non-profit association that

books clients and advertises for its members. These people are not hunting guides, but instead they primarily sell cross country skiing, alpine skiing and mountaineering, backpacking, canoe trips, raft trips, ice fishing, dog sledding, and so forth. Activities which "use the land and this beautiful wilderness area with a minimum amount of impact." Denali Wilderness Treks' goal is to make it "feasible, economically, (for tourists to) get out into this beautiful country and enjoy it as wilderness."

2.2.3 Trapper Creek

As in Talkeetna, job opportunities are limited in Trapper Creek. As discussed above, people, with the possible exception of the early homesteaders, now tend to move to the area for non-economic reasons, accept a lower standard of living than if they lived and worked in more urban areas, and manage to support themselves. Many people have seasonal work at other areas (e.g. construction employment, commercial fishermen, or miners). In Trapper Creek, a few businesses, associated with tourism and highway services, provide some employment (service stations, store, restaurants, lodge). Also, there is some local mining, logging, and farming in the area. The highway department, school, post office, trooper's facility, and nearby state park also provide additional jobs. Other people do a variety of activities including dog mushing, a local wood crafts business, and hunting guide. There are also several local artists and craftsmen in the community who paint, scrimshaw, and carve (wood, ivory, and soapstone).

2.2.4 Railroad Communities North of Talkeetna

Except for a few jobs associated with railroad maintenance in Gold Creek, employment opportunities in this area are non-existent. There is one lodge and a bar in the area, but they are family operations and do not provide any local employment. In addition, very few people work in Talkeetna. Although many of the original settlers entered the area with the intent of subsisting off of the land, apparently the relative lack of local resources combined with the present population density will not support such a lifestyle. Consequently, these people require some cash to purchase staples (e.g. beans, flour, sugar, and cereals), pay for railroad transportation back and forth from Talkeetna, and other necessities.

Related to earning the necessary cash to support this particular wilderness lifestyle, the cycle of residence in the area varies considerably. The husband of a household may leave seasonally to work, while his wife and children remain at home. In other cases, a couple will leave to work until they earn adequate money to return to live. When the money is gone, they leave to earn more. In some cases, people leave to work during the summer (e.g. construction or on the railroad) and then spend the winters in their cabins; others leave the state for six months during the winter and return for the summer. And some, according to more conservative Talkeetna and OTE residents, "Never seem to work, but instead live on welfare and food stamps."

In summary, those people who live, more or less permanently, north of Talkeetna rely on a combination of sources to maintain their lifestyle. A typical household may depend on the following: seasonal construction work out of the area,

supplemented with food stamps and unemployment, the harvest of local fish and game resources, and personal gardens. Although it is by no means possible to live completely off of the land in this area, many people reported that as much as one-third to one-half of their food came from local fish, game, and gardens. For such resources as game and firewood, it requires each household considerably more than 5 acres to live.

In some respects, it is the lack of an economic or employment base in the railroad communities that often gives its residents the appearance of being a transient population. People are continually coming and going for seasonal jobs, supplies, and services (e.g. post office, stores, health care, library, schools, and so forth). In addition, many other users of the area are, in fact, highly transient (sports hunters, fishermen, and absentee land and cabin owners).

2.3 POLITICS AND REPONSE CAPACITY

2.3.1 Introduction

In this age of increasing political complexity for most rural areas, there are very few local political organizations in Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and the railroad communities north of Talkeetna. While rural Native communities often struggle to determine which organization has control of what activity, the general trend in the southern study communities has been a reluctance to form political groups. Typically, in rural Alaskan Native villages, numerous political organizations exist or have influence in each community (i.e. regional profit corporations, regional non-profit corporations, cities, boroughs, traditional councils, and village corporations). Because none of the southern study communities are Native villages under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), they do not have either Native corporations or traditional councils. Also, because none of the study communities have incorporated under State law, there are no cities in the study area. The only State recognized political organization in the area is the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, incorporated as a second class borough in 1964, which encompasses the entire study area except Cantwell and McKinley.

Because all of the southern study communities are unincorporated, they have no governmental powers and are therefore dependent on services provided directly by

the State or the Borough. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough exercises areawide powers (administration, taxation, planning and zoning, education, and parks and recreation) and, because they are unincorporated, non-areawide (solid waste disposal and libraries) powers in the southern study communities. In addition, the Borough administers the Talkeetna Fire Service Area, the Talkeetna Water and Floor Control Service Area, as well as the Talkeetna and Trapper Creek Road Service Areas. The State provides some funds for these services. Presently, one member of the borough Assembly lives in Talkeetna.

In the past few years, as more and more people have moved into the area, there has been a tendency toward the formation of political organizations in Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and Chase. This trend is primarily the result of proposed developments (the capital movement, the Susitna Project, and the Intertie), State land disposals, anticipated population growth, and the growing belief that local participation and control is necessary to maintain present values. On the other hand, the formation of and participation in political groups is contrary to the philosophy which motivated most people to settle in this rural area -- individualism, a desire for isolation, and a lack of governmental controls on one's life. This section addresses local political organizations in the area, their formation, and associated social divisions in the community, as well as community response capacity.

2.3.2 Talkeetna

Over the years, Talkeetna residents formed a few local civic and community organizations designed to increase the quality of life and respond to community needs. For example, the Talkeetna Historical Society, founded in 1972, is active in the community. Located in Talkeetna's original schoolhouse, the Society restored the building and converted it into a museum. It also operates a local library. The Society's primary goal is to preserve as much of the local history as possible. Currently, it owns other buildings in the community that it plans to restore for public use. The Talkeetna Historical Society raises money at its Annual Moose Dropping Festival in July. Other organizations in the community include the Parent-Teacher's Association, six churches, a local library board, road and fire service area boards, and the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce.

Founded in 1978, the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce was formed primarily to promote a healthy tourist and recreation industry in the area as well as encourage new businesses to locate in the community. The desire to build a solid economic base in Talkeetna motivated local businesspersons to form the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce. Because of the lack of local municipality, the Chamber has assumed responsibilities generally administered by a local government. For example, it incorporated in order to be eligible to pursue grants and enter into contracts with the Borough. Under such a contract, the Chamber constructed and presently maintains a combined riverboat landing and picnic area on land leased from the Borough. In summary, the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce is active in local affairs and generally takes a position on issues which will promote tourism and business development in the community.

In the spring of 1981, sixty-five Talkeetna residents submitted to the State a petition for the incorporation of Talkeetna as a first class city. The petition proposes a 1.4 mill local property tax levied for general operating expenditures and for Public Safety in the new municipality. Although the petitioners acknowledged that Talkeetna residents had met many of their needs through the formation of community service organizations (i.e. the Chamber of Commerce, the Historical Society, and borough service areas), they also believe that incorporation is necessary to enable the community to better respond to future growth and have necessary input into the resolution of community problems.

Supporters of Talkeetna incorporation contend that organized government is necessary to ensure planned growth and police protection. They maintain that local control over economic development will be needed to handle anticipated population growth from the proposed Susitna River dam projects, the proposed capital relocation at Willow, and general growth resulting from increased tourism and recreation as well as State land disposals. Because Talkeetna is a tourist community, incorporation proponents claim that it is in residents' best interest to have a city that would control local development and protect nearby recreational areas. Incorporation supporters also say that the borough headquarters in Palmer are too far away to adequately represent local concerns. The City of Talkeetna would provide a local legal entity recognized by other levels of government. If Talkeetna incorporates, supporters want a small city administration and a single police officer. Presently, Alaska State Troopers stationed at Trapper Creek (thirty miles away), provide police protection for the community. Incorporation advocates say State-shared revenue will pay for city operations, not taxes.

Opponents of incorporation submitted their own petition, signed by 103 registered voters residing within the proposed incorporation boundaries, to the State. They pointed out that the services to be provided by the proposed city (i.e. fire protection, public safety, and road maintenance) are already adequately provided for by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Alaska State Troopers. In addition, they contended that the proposed incorporation boundaries were too large and inappropriate -- services could not be economically provided to the remote areas; and downtown, rural and remote residents within the proposed boundaries are too dissimilar to effectively participate in city government. (The Local Boundary Commission reduced the original 102 square miles to 65 square miles, which excluded large agricultural tracts and State classified remote parcels). Finally, the anti-city petitioners maintained that Talkeetna has neither the economic nor population stability nor the desire to support incorporation.

The issue of whether to incorporate or not became hotly contested and resulted in two public hearings, an anti-incorporation rally, flyers, and posters in the Moose Dropping Festival Parade. Incorporation opponents also formed a group called TRAIN (Talkeetna Residents Against Incorporation Now). Members associated with this organization insisted that Talkeetna already had sufficient government to serve local needs, and more government would result in unwanted restrictions on their relatively informal lifestyle. Many of these residents had moved to Talkeetna to escape "government." To them, Talkeetna's attraction as a place to live is its lack of governmental rules and regulations. Also, this group doubted if Talkeetna had enough interested people who were willing to work on the city council.

In summary, although many of the anti-incorporation people believe that Talkeetna should organize to protect itself, they also believe that the jump from an unincorporated community to a first class city is too large. One of the major fears associated with a first class city is the council's power to tax without a community referendum. Instead of a first class city, many of these residents suggested that Talkeetna organize as a second class city, which must ask its voters before it raises taxes, or a community council, now formally recognized by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

The Talkeetna incorporation issue did not reflect normal social division in the community. Both newcomers and long-time residents opposed incorporation. Members of these two groups, often with opposing viewpoints, agreed on the negative results of incorporation: taxation, unnecessary bureaucracy caused by another level of government, and additional regulations which threaten their independent, self-reliant lifestyle. On the other hand, this issue did divide long-time residents as well as local businesspersons -- members of both took different stances regarding incorporation.

The Local Boundary Commission decided that despite the intense opposition, there was adequate interest in the Talkeetna incorporation issue to put the question on the ballot. In November of 1981, Talkeetna voters, by nearly a three to one margin, rejected incorporation as a first class city. Local people estimated that the voter turnout of approximately 265 persons represented "100 percent or a little better" of the registered voters. They attributed the high vote to last-minute registration. One of the goals of incorporation was to give local residents a unified, recognized voice with which they could address issues which might affect Talkeetna's future.

Instead the voters expressed a different unified, strong message -- they do not want a first class city in Talkeetna at this time.

2.3.3 Trapper Creek

In 1978, a group of residents who lived on OTE parcels northwest of Trapper Creek formed the Tokosha Citizens Council which proposed a seven year sunset clause for a unique residential and recreational roadless area. The land affected totaled four contiguous townships (144 square miles) north of the Petersville Road and west of the Parks Highway. This area was a part of the original OTE State land disposal, and different individuals held approximately 300 five acre parcels in the area at the time.

A spirited public debate ensued which represented a wide cross section of property owners in the proposed roadless area. Both sides of the issue, which represents the two opposing attitudes toward economic development and change in the area, emerged. On the one hand, those in favor of the proposal included both residents and some part-year recreationists who had laboriously hauled in supplies and materials to build rustic wilderness cabins; who eloquently espoused the natural, untouched beauty of the area and its wildlife; and who enumerated problems connected with road access (theft, vandalism, litter, and noise) but not associated with dog mushing or cross country skiing.

Those who opposed the roadless concept primarily included non-local inholders who had either acquired the land for speculation or recreational purposes. Many feared

a decline in land values associated with no roads (although the Tokosha Citizens Council maintained the values would actually rise because of the unique qualities of a roadless, wilderness area). In addition, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was not in favor of the concept in this area. Also, the proposed roadless area included approximately seven sections (over 4,000 acres) of a State subdivision, which contained numerous surveyed roads. Finally, one preferred route to the proposed Tokositna Visitors Center, which would serve the south side of McKinley (now Denali) Park, went through the proposed roadless area. The public testimony indicated that a majority of non-local and non-resident land owners were opposed to the roadless concept because it cut off recreational access to their property. In the final analysis, the area simply had too many inholders at the time of the proposal. As one borough official explained, "It was a good concept, but in the wrong place."

Although it did not succeed in its efforts to establish a roadless area, the Tokosha Citizens Council did have two effects in Trapper Creek: 1) it clearly established two opposing attitudes toward economic development and change in the area; and 2) it served to alert residents who tended not to become politically involved that if they did not participate in the political process, others, possibly with opposing views, would speak for them. The leaders of the Tokosha Citizens Council, many of whom eventually moved to Trapper Creek, were well-educated, polite and presented an articulate, well-organized, and reasonable proposal. They polled 250 land owners in the area; approximately 25 to 30 percent responded, and of the respondents, approximately 75 percent apparently approved the concept. These political strategists represented a different type of rural resident -- not the typical homesteaders who tended to avoid public meetings, political organizations, and what

they may consider esoteric discussions on the quality of life. Instead, the older homesteaders were likely to devote their efforts to repairing a farm building or buying their next tractor. They took issue with the statement that a majority of inholders desired a roadless area because it seemed to reflect a no-growth attitude in the Trapper Creek area -- a position to which they could not adhere. They had experienced considerable change, had been impacted by the road and newcomers, and were not necessarily opposed to future change. In addition, many of these long-time residents did not feel that the newer group actually represented a majority opinion in Trapper Creek.

From the point of view of political organization, the developments surrounding the Tokosha Citizens Council had a positive effect in Trapper Creek -- all factions began to participate in the political process. Prior to the emergence of the Tokosha Citizens Council, there were not many organizations in Trapper Creek. By the time the Trapper Creek Community Council was formed, all segments of the community increasingly made sure their views were represented. Long-time residents attribute the formation of these political organizations to the influx of new people who recently moved into the area. Once these newer arrivals began organizing, the older residents "became involved for self-defense." As one long-time resident explained,

> The Trapper Creek Community Council was formed because too many people with a vested interest were saying, "We represent the community," and the people of Trapper Creek knew nothing about it.

Trapper Creek residents formed the Trapper Creek Community Council three years ago in order to bring local issues into the open, afford residents the opportunity for

maximum participation in community self-government, and hopefully influence higher levels of government related to community development and services. In this context, Trapper Creek Community Council provides a local forum by which different factions in the community can discuss their differences and priorities, decide on a solution, and present a unified position to the Borough or State.

Critical to the effectiveness of this organization is whether it is recognized by higher levels of government. In August of 1981, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough passed an ordinance (81-97) which recognized community councils as "nonprofit, voluntary, self-governing associations composed of residents located within geographic areas designated as districts by the Assembly." Community councils will primarily act on advisory levels to Borough planners related to comprehensive or community plans and capital improvement programs in their area.

To date, the primary concern of the Trapper Creek Community Council has been associated with the acquisition of community facilities and services desired by a family-oriented community. The new Trapper Creek Elementary School, which will replace outdated, portable units, has occupied much of the council's time. Other future goals discussed by the council include the acquisition of a cemetery, baseball field, park and picnic area, community center, fire station, and fire engine.

As discussed above, the older homestead families have lived without these organizations and services, and the recent idea for their formation and acquisition, respectively, seems to be attributable to the new residents. In addition to the community council, other Trapper Creek organizations include the Denali Arts Council, the Parent-Teacher's Association, the Denali Drama Group, a newly

organized library association which may build a library, four churches, and a community schools program. While some residents believe that the cost of some of these services is too great compared to the relatively low population in the area, the trend seems to be towards more services. The Trapper Creek Community Council provides a public forum whereby local residents can determine their priorities.

2.3.4 Railroad Communities North of Talkeetna

Given their propensity for isolation, individualism, and anarchism, most residents who live north of Talkeetna have tended to avoid involvement in political organizations. It was not until 1979 that the first political group, the Chase Community Association, emerged. Residents formed this non-profit corporation primarily to resist the proposed Chase II State land disposal in their area. In the spring of 1980, the State had offered the Chase Remote Parcel selection areas, which allowed a maximum of 185 entrants to stake up to 40 acres each. Chase residents did not oppose this disposal because it seemed to reflect the spirit of their rural way of life. But, when local residents became aware of the State's future plans for Chase II , a subdivision of 418 separate 5 acre lots, they banded together, hired an attorney, and protested the development. Residents feared that the increased population density would become too great to support their semi-subsistence lifestyle. They maintained that five acres is inadequate to supply firewood and other resources for each family. In addition, representatives of the Chase organization said many of the lots were located in the floodplain, had no practical access, and could result in waste disposal problems. Largely because of

their protest, the State did not hold the lottery as scheduled. Instead, the State made some minor changes (i.e. increased the size of the lots) and scheduled the lottery for the fall of 1981. The Chase Community Association, through their attorney, is still fighting this subdivision.

The Chase Community Association has also responded to other potential developments which its members believe threaten their rural, semi-remote way of life. These include the Susitna Hydroelectric Project and the Intertie power line. Association members tend to believe that by supporting these three developments, the State has betrayed them. In their opinion, they moved to this relatively isolated area under a state remote parcel program, which reflected the State's support for rural lifestyles. This is, they believe, inconsistent with State sponsored hydroelectric development, massive power lines, and high-density land disposals. Consequently, they formed an association to fight these developments. Because it has more power, association members are considering the formation of a second class city in Chase.

There is no easy way to determine how many people the Chase Community Association represents, but, based on the interviews with local residents, it seems likely that this organization represents between 50 to 75 percent of the permanent area residents. In any event, it is clear that the Chase Community Association does not represent all of the local residents, some of whom disagree with their protests. These lines of social division are similar, on a smaller scale, to those in Talkeetna.

Related to Chase politics, it should be mentioned that because many people who live in this area are continually in and out of Talkeetna, they tend to become very interested in Talkeetna politics. For example, even though the railroad communities

north of Talkeetna were not included within the proposed incorporation boundaries, many residents from this area were very vocal in their opposition to incorporation. One of the potential threats incorporation posed for these people was increased police protection in Talkeetna. The pro-city group maintains that the troopers located in Trapper Creek are unable, because of manpower restrictions, to respond to the kinds of public safety problems which frequently arise in Talkeetna. For example, they contend that the influx of summer visitors requires Talkeetna to regulate camping, traffic, parking of vehicles and boats, dogs, livestock and farm animals, and the use of public places such as parks, boat ramps and docks. The regulation and associated police enforcement of these activities would likely result in conflict with many Chase residents when they are in Talkeetna. They keep vehicles and trailers parked in the railroad lot for long periods of time, often camp in and around town, may travel with a dog, and tend to make use of public parks.

2.3.5 Response Capacity

Often, community values and public objectives are articulated and implemented (or not implemented) through political processes. The major sources of community change potentially induced by economic development (increased population, employment, and land and service demands) can have a variety of effects upon local political subsystems. These include the development of conflict within the community, formation of political groups, shifts in political power, and increasing pressure upon the ability of local people and governments to supply and guide growth. In addition, rapid growth forces local government to take a more active and expansive role in the lives of community residents (Jirovec, R. 1979), a trend rural communities may oppose.

A community's response capacity, or ability to affect, guide or control change with the context of its own values, is largely a function of the political subsystem (Braund and Behnke 1979:26). Often, a community's response capacity can be qualitatively measured by an analysis of the local political structure and processes. In determining a community's response capacity, four factors seem important:

- Information: Knowledge of what is likely to happen, and what alternatives are available.
- Consensus: Agreement on community (or regional) priorities, and what should be done to implement or protect common values.
- Organization: Knowledge of how to do what needs to be done, and the existence of a system for doing it. It is important to determine whether the community will receive support from the higher levels of government (borough, state, or federal government) and/or the developer.
- Resources: The availability of human, physical, and financial resources to do what needs to be done. The benefits a community may derive from development depend on the ability of the local government to exercise land control either through ownership or planning and zoning tools, the taxing authority, and the quality of community leaders. Local, borough, and state resources are important.

Comparison of these four factors with the community political subsystems seems to indicate that if the communities are confronted by both governmental (borough, state, and federal) and industrial pressures for development of the Susitna project, their existing response capacity might prove inadequate to control change within the

context of local values. Although the response capacity may vary between communities, for purposes of analysis, a generalized approach is used.

Currently, the community residents do not have adequate information regarding the nature and potential consequences of Susitna hydroelectric development, especially at the local level. Much of the needed information has only been recently gathered, and copies of the Feasibility Report as well as the documents it is based on need to be made available to community residents.

Although there is a general agreement that small, rural towns or wilderness areas are a far more favorable place to live than more urban environments, residents in the southern study area do not agree on either community priorities or what should be done to protect common values. As should be clear from the preceding discussions on settlement patterns and politics, there is no consensus of opinion in the area. Rather, individualism and self-reliance seem to be more prevalent. Because division weakens the local ability to control, the trend towards political organization may continue as rural residents band together to protect their rural environment.

At this point, without any real knowledge of what to expect, the communities are not in a position to know what needs to be done. As more information becomes available to local residents, they can begin to formulate what has to be done to adequately respond to potential community impacts. Although none of the communities currently have an adequate system by which they can respond to development impacts, Trapper Creek is building a viable organization of interested people who actively represent the community. Even though it only has an advisory capacity, the Trapper Creek Community Council is recognized by the Borough. The Chase Community Association,

on the other hand, does not have easy access to its members because they live in more remote areas. In addition, the Chase organization has an image that it works more against development as opposed to working to provide community facilities and services. In some cases, this lessens their effectiveness with higher levels of government. The pending hydroelectric development could serve to help form additional political organization in the communities if the potential impacts are considered inconsistent with common values. Talkeetna may form a community council or consider a second class city.

The ability to exercise land control through planning and zoning and the taxing authority in the area belong to the Borough. The State, the Borough, and Cook Inlet Region, Inc. are the major land owners in the general vicinity. Thus, the most common tools by which local residents usually control local development are not controlled at the community level. In this context, it is important to note that the Borough represents all residents within its boundaries, not just those who live in the study area. Related to the exercise of these powers, the important question centers around how well the communities provide local input into the Borough planning and decision process.

Related to the local human resources required to effectively guide change, there are some inherent conflicts in the necessary process. There is little doubt that capable leaders live in all communities. The problem rests in the conflict between local rural values and the necessary political organization likely required to adequately control growth. Successful response to the development project may likely compel people who wanted to get away from people and government to band together with one another and form consensus to meet a common goal or threat.

In effect, residents have to form government to fight government and industry. Above all, this is time consuming, requires considerable energy, disrupts emotional peace, and detracts from individualism -- a process generally in conflict with rural values in the southern study area. Rural people are already very busy tending to basic chores not necessary in urban areas. During the interviews, numerous people expressed fatigue related to the effort they had already expended to fight State land disposals and the Intertie. They explained that they moved to the area to escape government and congestion, not to spend all of their time at meetings. Unfortunately, nearby development projects which cause above average growth generally force local government to become more active and expansive in the lives of community residents.

2.4 ATTITUDES TOWARD GROWTH, CHANGE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Two different philosophies toward economic development and rural growth emerged in the southern communities. Because these two factions, which represent extremes on a continuum of attitudes and opinions, were found in Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and the railroad communities north of Talkeetna, all communities are discussed together in this section. These different attitudes toward economic development and growth in rural environments include:

1) On one end of the continuum, residents have a desire to protect rural, small-town and wilderness atmospheres, minimize change, avoid industrial development in the area, as well as preserve wildlife and recreational areas. Residents in this group take issue with the charge that they are against growth and economic development. Rather, they point out that economic development does not only mean industrial growth. They believe that the real, long-range value for the upper Susitna valley is not its minerals or hydro potential, but its untapped potential for visual and recreational enjoyment, both summer and winter. These residents argue that a recreational/tourist economy caters to people who enjoy the land without defacing it, which is preferred to a commercial, industrial economy which does scar the landscape.

Typical comments by people with this attitude include:

> They are talking about using the Petersville Road clear up to Tokositna Visitor's Center, which will open it up to tourism. I object to the fact that that beautiful wilderness area will be open, but I am also objective enough to realize that if we have a tourist economy we have to put the bulk of them somewhere RATHER THAN the Susitna Dam opening up this entire area to industrial growth. We have a choice. We have no choice, but we have a choice. We are going to be inundated. This area is prime. So our questions are "Are we going to be inundated with tourists that will be here six months of the year and not deface the land too badly?" We know they are going to do some damage, or "Are we going to have a Susitna Dam that opens up this entire area to industrial and commercial growth." We will get both probably because of the energy crisis.
>
> I do not necessarily propose non-development of the area. I propose planned, reasonable development of the area, and I propose that the people that live here and have a love and interest in the land, have a say, a major say, in what that plan is.

Similarly, people who support recreation and tourism do not favor big game guiding in the area. As one recreational guide said,

> ... seeks to utilize the beauty of the area and enhance its wilderness aspects and not become paid for the destruction of what is here. The animals are part of the pristine beauty of this area. If you kill the animals, you loose a certain amount of flavor of the wilderness ... Recreational development versus kill development.

These people tend to be opposed to the Susitna Hydroelectric Project as well as other large-scale development schemes in the area. Their concerns related to the Susitna dam include:

- It would likely introduce and encourage industrial development in the Susitna valley because it would generate excess amounts of cheap, or cost-stable, electricity.

- It would have a negative effect on wildlife and fish in the general area which would affect both the general well-being of local residents as well as nearby recreational areas.
- It is simply too large.
- Dam construction will attract construction workers, cause an influx of people into the area, inflate land values, crowd existing communities, and cause new towns to be built.
- The potential dangers associated with earthquakes cause concern.

Because of these concerns, these residents do not feel that the Susitna dam is compatible with a tourist and recreational economy which relies on a pristine, wilderness environment.

2) On the pro-development end of the continuum, residents do not necessarily desire industrial development in the area, but they cannot identify with what they feel is a no-growth attitude. Residents with an extreme development view tend to favor roads to open up additional country and believe that progress (including hydroelectric dams, more people, and roads) will come regardless of what they, or anyone else, want. Generally, long-time residents, many of these people have already witnessed considerable change in the area, and they do not view future developments as necessarily undesirable (see Settlement Patterns above). Most of these people are generally in favor of the Susitna project because they perceive that it will provide a needed economic boost to a depressed area.

It should be pointed out that these residents do not generally desire to see their community radically changed, nor do they necessarily wish for industrial development to become the economic base in the area. Like their neighbors, they enjoy small-town qualities and desire to live in a non-industrial, relatively isolated, rural environment. But, they view change as inevitable, feel the local economy will benefit from development, and as long as there is no danger to life, not necessarily lifestyle, the Susitna project is acceptable.

As discussed throughout this report, few people, in recent years, have moved to Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, or the area north of Talkeetna for economic or job opportunities. In fact, according to many local residents, one of the largest limits for growth in Trapper Creek and Talkeetna is the lack of local jobs. Some of these residents, with a conservative attitude towards economic development, maintain that if jobs were available, they would not want to live in the area because the increased job opportunities would attract more people. This population influx would, for these residents, make Trapper Creek and Talkeetna less desirable as rural places to reside. Others, for example homesteaders who raised their families in Trapper Creek, or long-time Talkeetna residents, desire economic development in the area so their children have access to local employment.

There is a wide variety of opinions, discussed throughout this report, related to economic development in the area, which ranges from pro-Susitna and associated development to anti-Susitna and preservation of surrounding wilderness. Generally, the difference of whether a resident is in favor of or opposed to the Susitna dam depends on how he perceives it will impact the area. If it is characterized as a

massive, unnecessary project which will provide excess energy and lead to total industrialization of the area, which some people believe, then very few rural residents are in favor of it. But, on the other hand, if the project's impacts will be relatively minor, and it will provide constant and cost-stable electrical power in the area, as well as jobs, then more people are pro-Susitna. Consequently, consensus related to the Susitna Project may likely only emerge once residents of this subregion have adequate information about the project and its impacts upon which an intelligent dialogue and decision can be made.

Based on the recent settlement patterns in the southern study area, it appears as though the trend is towards those who favor the development of tourism and recreation, minimum disruption of small-town qualities, the reasonable preservation of local wildlife and fish, and the enjoyment, not deterioration, of the natural environment. Concomitantly, these people oppose industrial development, rapid growth, and urbanization in the area. A recent survey (Policy Analysts, Ltd, 1980) in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough helps verify this conclusion. According to the survey, Borough residents who live north of Willow, which includes the southern study area, tend to be less in favor of economic development than residents who live south of Willow. Based on the survey findings, the highest economic priority in the communities north of Willow was the development of tourism. Further indication of this trend is found in how people who are pro-Susitna tend to express their opinion on the subject. Rather than say, "I am for the dam," most people who were interviewed said, "I am not opposed to Susitna." As one long-time Talkeetna resident said, "It is not acceptable to speak out in favor of development these days."

2.5 LAND AVAILABILITY

Between 1979 and 1981, the State of Alaska offered seven disposals in the Talkeetna area (four agricultural, two subdivisions, and one remote parcel). In 1980-81, six disposals (one agricultural, four subdivisions, and one remote parcel) were offered in the Trapper Creek area. In 1980, the State of Alaska offered the Chase Remote Parcel area and in 1981, the Chase II Subdivision. Similarily, the State offered the Indian River Remote Parcel area in 1980 and the Indian River Subdivision in 1981. Thus, the State of Alaska had offered a total of 17 land disposals in the Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, Chase, and Hurricane area in the past three years. (This is in addition to the early Open-To-Entry Program which was in effect from 1968 to 1973).

Although not all of the lands are accessible by road, these land disposals as well as numerous large unsubidivided homesteads and other tracts in the Trapper Creek and Talkeetna area provide a more than adequate land base for substantial growth. In addition, if the highway is relatively close, subdivision roads are relatively inexpensive to construct in this area, and large tracts can be converted into subdivisions fairly quickly. Given any economic incentive for development, it is likely that numerous subdivisions will rapidly appear in the upper Susitna valley.

Related to the state land disposals, a relatively common trend in residents' attitudes has developed in the study area. Once an area is opened up to settlement (either recreational or residential), those people who first acquire land are generally opposed to any further land disposals in the immediate area which would increase the population density to levels beyond what they believe the land can support. Most people were attracted to these land disposals because the land is relatively isolated in a wilderness area. Generally, persons who acquire a remote parcel or establish residency on the land wish to preserve the unpopulated, wilderness flavor of the area. They perceive that additional state land disposals, especially subdivisions, conflict with this desire. Although at first this may seem like a selfish motive, it should be kept in mind that the State of Alaska has virtually bombarded this area with public land disposals (seventeen in three years). During the interviews, some people claimed had they known what the State had in store for this region, they might not have acquired this remote land in the first place. (Many newer, absentee land owners from Anchorage do not fall in this category).

2.6 SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS

2.6.1 Introduction

The sociocultural impacts are based on study area population, school-age children, and housing stock projections supplied by another subcontractor. In this section, the Base Case refers to baseline forecasts (i.e. future projections without the Susitna Project). These Base Case projections are then compared to the forecasts of population, school-age children, and housing stock in the local communities which have resulted from the project. The difference between the two forecasts results in the project impacts. These community level forecasts are only available for Trapper Creek and Talkeetna; therefore, the discussion of impacts related to the railroad communities north of Talkeetna is totally qualitative.

For purposes of analysis, only the population projections specifically allocated to Trapper Creek and Talkeetna were used. If those project-related people who locate outside of the immediate communities ("Other" category) are proportionally allocated to the greater Trapper Creek and Talkeetna "areas", the impacts would be greater.

2.6.2 Trapper Creek

According to the forecast information, the Susitna Project will cause a 61 percent population increase in Trapper Creek from 1986 to 1987. (The project adds 175 residents to a Trapper Creek Base Case population of 285 for a total population of 460). Included in this one year population influx are 45 school-age children. By 1990, the Watana peak, Trapper Creek is projected to have a population of 661, over twice as many people as without the project (320). Included in these cumulative figures for 1990 are an additional 88 school-age children (a 117 percent increase over the 75 Base Case projections). Also, by 1990, project related families who move to Trapper Creek will require an additional 133 houses over the Base Case housing stock.

As Watana winds down, the work force is reduced, and some families leave the area. The low point between Watana and Devil Canyon construction occurs in 1995, when project related persons in Trapper Creek drops to 198 (from a high of 341 in 1990). As a result, Trapper Creek's population drops from a high of 661 in 1990 to a low of 588 in 1995 (11 percent drop). (Although 143 project related people leave the community, Base Case growth adds 70 persons during the same period. Consequently, a total of 213 move in and out of Trapper Creek.) At the peak of Devil Canyon construction in 1999, the project accounts for 245 of Trapper Creek's 701 people (a 54 percent increase over the Base Case population of 456). By the end of the project forecast period (2002), 70 project related people (29 percent of the 1999 peak) leave Trapper Creek. It is assumed that Base Case growth accounts for 57 additional in-migrants for a net population loss of 13 people between 1999 and 2002.

There can be little doubt that, although the long time frame of the Susitna Project cushions any final decline (one is hardly noticeable by the year 2002), the projected rapid influx of project related persons in Trapper Creek between 1986 and 1990 results in a boom situation for the community. According to Davenport and Davenport (1979:1), a "boom town" is defined as

1. A community experiencing above average economic and population growth;
2. which results in benefits for the community, e.g. expanded tax base, increased employment opportunities, social and cultural diversity;
3. but which also places or results in strain on existing community and societal institutions (e.g. familial, education, political, economic).

Related to impacts on residents who live in the community prior to the rapid population growth, social scientists have identified social impacts which seem to apply whenever small rural communities become boom towns (see Davenport and Davenport 1979; 1980a).

Not all impacts associated with boom towns are negative. For example, positive consequences include substantial benefits to the local economy such as more jobs, more businesses, higher pay scales, increased prosperity, and an increased tax base. In addition, an expanded and updated educational curriculum may result from the new demands made by incoming students and their parents. Generally, the benefits associated with rapid growth caused by a large development project are primarily economical. In the case of Trapper Creek, for the segment of the population which is not primarily motivated by economic advancement, the negative effects of rapid growth will likely overshadow any benefits.

Among the consequences and human costs associated with boom towns, the following major problem areas have been identified (Cortese and Jones 1979; Davenport and Davenport 1979):

- Demands for and strain on existing facilities and services, including human services, that exceed the capacities of local systems to meet them. Included are municipal services (school, police and fire protection, street and road construction and maintenance, water, and sewer) and human (marital, child abuse, and delinquency counseling) services.
- Economic problems centered around high inflation caused by increased demands of large numbers of incoming project related personnel and families (increased cost of living, especially for housing; new pay scales beyond the limits of some local businesses; more formal way of conducting business; and hardships associated with inflation on those living on fixed incomes such as the elderly or chronically unemployed).
- Increases in the incidence and nature of many "people problems" (rise in alcoholism, child abuse, crime, suicide attempts, divorce, and the lack of trained medical personnel), likely associated with stress related to rapid change.
- Potential conflict between the values, norms, beliefs and lifestyles of local residents and the newcomers.
- Local government is forced to take a more active and expansive role in the lives of community residents as it tries to expand services and respond to rapid growth. Generally, a time lag exists between the demand for services and their availability.

Based on its lack of infrastructure, its small rural nature, and the characteristic that a significant portion of its residents are not primarily motivated by economic advancement, most of the preceding general comments related to boom town problems seem to apply to Trapper Creek. In addition, the problems are compounded by the 1995 lull and a second project peak in 1999. Based on the projections, Trapper Creek will experience a boom (1986-1990), a downswing (1991-1995), and upswing (1996-1999), and a slow decline in project-related persons beginning in 2000. The lull in the early 1990's could be especially problematic as people (especially indirect and induced) will live in anticipation of another project. This period will likely be easier for primary workers because they will likely go elsewhere to work.

Uncontrolled rapid growth generally results in negative consequences. Local residents who live in the small community prior to the growth tend to blame the developer and the new residents for problems associated with population influxes. These problems are exacerbated if the community does not have the infrastructure to accommodate the new growth. Resentment between current residents and newcomers may develop because the former often bears the burden of the expense for new facilities and services, often in the form of higher taxes. The result is often citizen against citizen; the town against the developer; and local government against higher levels of government (borough and state).

One way to diffuse many of these potential conflicts is to distribute the costs and benefits of the project equitably (Jirovec 1979). In this case, those who gain the benefits (the developer, the state) help pay the costs. In this way, those who

generally pay the costs (the rural community resident) are hopefully protected and their quality of life preserved.

Generally, a town facing rapid growth desires to develop the local capability to assure that the effects of growth will be as beneficial as possible. Controlling the impacts of rapid growth on small, rural towns within the context of local values begins with community planning, community organization, and research (see Jirovec 1979 upon which much of this discussion is based). As Jirovec points out, urban planning techniques may not apply; a rural community needs rural planning. The success of any plan depends on community support and organization. In addition, it requires the developer to share with the community detailed information about the project. Finally, a community requires time (i.e. 2 years) for planning and preparation for rapid growth.

Even if it is effectively managed, boom growth apparently results in urbanization and modernization of the rural style of living -- the population becomes more diverse; current residents know a smaller percentage of their neighbors; more and more interactions between people become formal and contractual rather than personal and face to face (Cortese and Jones 1979). Planning and community organization to prepare for the boom become part of the problem. The planning process adds anonymity, differentiation, bureaucratization, impersonalization, and so forth (Cortese and Jones 1979). In effect, in rural communities, the solution becomes the problem. According to Jirovec (1979:83) prospective boom towns must choose between uncontrolled rapid growth (with many negative side-effects), managed or controlled rapid growth (with greater urbanization and modernization), or moderate or no growth (which would maintain the status quo). Unfortunately,

from the community perspective, local residents do not always have the latter choice.

2.6.3 Talkeetna

Based on the population forecasts (both Base Case and project-related), the most significant feature of Talkeetna's future is the constant growth without the project. Whereas Trapper Creek experiences a boom between 1986 and 1990, Talkeetna's project related population, during the same period, only increases 6.5 percent per year over the Base Case projections. During the biggest year of project impact, 1986-87, the project adds 138 persons to a Base Case population of 862. This represents a one year increase of 16 percent where Trapper Creek had a 61 percent project related increase in the same year. The forecast situation in Talkeetna emphasizes that although project impacts are much less than Trapper Creek, the cumulative effect of both the Base Case population increase and the project induced growth is significant and represents the real change with which Talkeetna must contend.

Without a community effort to identify and implement common goals, this growth in Talkeetna may result in the community losing its small-town, rustic, frontier flavor which attracts many tourists. It will likely continue as a tourist town and staging area for McKinley climbing parties. The increased population and access related to the project will likely result in increased rate of decline in local wildlife populations, which local residents highly value. Increased human populations in the work camps and increased aerial activity will likely contribute to this trend.

It is possible that many more people than are anticipated will move to Talkeetna as a result of the project. This partially depends on the work schedule, whether Trapper Creek successfully accommodates its projected growth, and the possibility that people find Talkeetna, despite its additional 30 miles from the project, a more desirable place to live. Because Talkeetna and Trapper Creek are similar communities, all of the potential problems discussed for Trapper Creek increasingly apply to Talkeetna as its population (both with and without the project) increases, and therefore are not discussed here.

2.6.4 Railroad Communities North of Talkeetna

Although there is an abundance of land available, primarily due to the State land disposals, it is unlikely that the permanent population in the Chase/Curry area will increase dramatically, either with or without the project. Without the project, employment opportunities will likely remain relatively non-existent, and the main attraction to the area will continue to be recreational for most people and residential for only a few persons. In this area, the recreational impact, again both with and without the project, could be significant. Without the Susitna project, recreation seekers will continue to use the area as Talkeetna continues to promote tourism. As more and more people visit this subregion, the chances that they will apply for some of the surplus available State land increases. The railroad will continue to provide access into the area, and although it will likely remain relatively unpopulated, seasonal recreationists will probably increasingly visit it. As more and more of the existing residents in this area have families, they will likely desire additional services, such as a school and better access to Talkeetna.

With the Susitna project, recreation in the area will more than likely significantly increase (i.e. more than without the project). Workers and their families who move to the area will certainly hunt, fish, and participate in other outdoor activities. Improved access to and increased awareness of the area east of the Susitna River, due to the project, will likely attract more recreationists. The proposed access road will provide vehicle access to the east side of the Susitna River and therefore make the general area more accessible to more people. (Policies related to public use of this road during project construction could postpone some impact). As more and more people recreate in this area, the chances for conflict between them and local residents increases.

The Susitna project will result in increased employment opportunities for residents in this area, which will enhance the well-being in these communities by providing potential jobs. At the same time, the increased employment opportunity created by the project will attract more people into the general area. This population influx will likely have a negative effect on the existing small town or rural way of life for those people in the railroad communities who value relative isolation in a wilderness environment.

With the project, the Gold Creek area is likely to be the most heavily impacted. If the proposed access route is chosen, Gold Creek will be connected by an 18 mile road to the Parks Highway. The patented homesteads in the vicinity comprise a private land base that could accommodate future expansion and growth, a likely occurrence if the area becomes easily accessible by road. People affected by this potential development will be mainly local miners, a few local residents, and absentee, recreational property owners, all of whom value their wilderness retreat.

If vehicular access occurs in this area, local residents and absentee landowners between Hurricane and Gold Creek, as well as entrants in the Indian River Remote Parcel land disposal will be subject to increased traffic, noise, and congestion.

2.6.5 Hurricane/Parks Highway Area

Currently, no one lives in the Hurricane/Parks Highway area nor are any services available. But, three factors indicate that some development may occur here related to the project: it is the intersection of the proposed access road and the Parks Highway, private land is available, and it will be only 44 road miles from Devil's Canyon. In the spring of 1981, the State of Alaska offered the Indian River Subdivision. Located at the junction of the Parks Highway (Mile 168) and the Alaska Railroad (just south of Hurricane), access is available from both the Parks Highway and the railroad. The 140 separate four to five acre lots in this subdivision as well as the roads are surveyed and platted, although the roads within the subdivision are not constructed. Currently, none of the lots have any structures on them.

Because of their location, it is likely that some people will buy these lots, and, if the project proceeds, a small settlement will probably develop. Currently, there are no services here, and, even with the project, it is unlikely that a school will be constructed in the vicinity. Families that locate in the Hurricane area could use the Trapper Creek Elementary School and the Su-Valley High School; these facilities are 54 miles and 69 miles away respectively. Because of the relatively long distance to these schools, it is unlikely that many families with children will locate

in the Hurricane area. It is more reasonable to assume that single persons or couples without children will acquire lots in the Indian River Subdivision and move a trailer or build a small cabin on their land.

Once the project begins, it is likely that a limited amount of services will appear near the subdivision: for example, a service station, restaurant, bar, and motel (lodge). Because no one currently lives in this area, this development will not impact an existing community. Without the project, people may purchase lots from the State, and a few persons may build recreational cabins. Once the proposed access route becomes final, it is likely that people will purchase lots in the Indian River Subdivision for speculation. In this respect, the project, whether it is built or not, will influence land values in the area.

3.0 NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

3.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this section is to highlight those similarities and dissimilarities between Cantwell and McKinley which account for both their stance and likely responses to certain aspects of energy project.

Both Cantwell and McKinley are small, relatively new communities created in large part by actions of federal and state agencies. While Cantwell has a much longer history as a Native village, its present size, economy, and ethnic composition is accounted for, in large part, by public transportation systems (railroads, highways), public employment, homestead opportunities, and Native claims settlement. McKinley was created almost entirely by the designation and development of Denali (formerly McKinley) National Park. Its population is comprised almost entirely of persons who are or were employees of the Park or businesses serving Park visitors.

Both communities are unorganized communities within an unorganized borough; therefore, both are dependent upon services provided directly by the State and, in the case of McKinley, limited community support by the Park. Among the consequences of being unorganized is an inability to tax; to control the provisions of local services; to engage in planning, zoning, and litigation; to have formal

representation in public decisions; and to have accurate representation (census) of its residents and of its economy.

The growth of both communities is severely limited by the unavailability of land. Both communities are closely hemmed by large and dedicated public lands and lands being conveyed to the Ahtna Corporation. The consequences of lack of lands are: preservation of rural and pristine environments, inability for seasonally employed persons to permanently settle in the area, lack of secondary (construction, services) economic growth from primary economic activities (tourism, energy projects), escalating costs of land acquisition, increased density of construction and residence on available lands; and potential inability to accommodate major growth from new enterprises.

The growth of both communities is equally severely limited by the unavailability of employment; there is an unavoidable interaction between lack of lands and lack of employment. Employment in Cantwell is based, in the main, on direct public employment -- transportation, communications, public health and safety, and education. The small private sector is based upon services to public sector employees and to the seasonal visitors to the general recreation area. Employment in McKinley is based almost exclusively on year-round maintenance of the Park and seasonal visitation to the Park. Residents of either community who are employed full-time in public employment usually have the means to purchase land, build homes, and maintain themselves in admirable, though seldom extravagant, lifestyles. Residents of either community who are employed only seasonally or are retired have a far more difficult time in obtaining land, acquiring housing, and being comfortable during more harsh seasons. They tend to seek a wide range of different occupations

to sustain themselves from season to season. Thus, many more persons would and could live in these communities were only land and employment more available.

Both communities have undergone considerable growth in the past few years due to major improvements of the road system, the communications system, government expenditures, and the growth of visitation. This has resulted in a greater ability to remain in the communities year-round, raise children, obtain supplies, and withstand the physical hardships of weather and isolation. These changes have sustained a larger permanent population than have been carried historically and may be reaching or exceeding the physical carrying capacity of adjacent lands and wildlife.

These changes may also be close to exceeding the carrying capacity of local social systems; sufficient numbers of persons may be residing in the communities or attempting to settle there that the capacity of the existing forms of social organization, amity, and decision-making may be exceeded. Differences among values and requirements of residents may be more extreme than at any previous point in recent history, leading residents to fear for the future of community life, to be pondering the creation of community government, and to be reassessing their own attachment to the immediate area.

This, then, is the critical stage in the life of each community, in terms of attitude toward growth, forms of economic development, tolerances of change, community organization and identity, and attachments to the non-rural world. The introduction of the Susitna Hydroelectric Project and the Willow-Healy Intertie is only one of several forces which appear in these communities' perceived range of opportunities and risks; these energy projects are, however, most immediate realities.

Both communities are desirous of long-term economic development, not merely short-term economic growth. This is due to their desire to provide an economic base compatible with environmental values and sufficient to maintain them there indefinitely into the future. They wish to be neither overwhelmed nor bypassed by economic opportunity; they are concerned with balance.

Cantwell and McKinley differ significantly in their perceptions and stance toward these energy projects, based on differences in history, geography, economics, population, and values. Located at the juncture of the Parks and Denali Highways, Cantwell sees itself at the center of these energy projects as well as secondary industries leading to long-term development of population, economy, and employment. If lands around Cantwell can be made available to accommodate the thousands of workers anticipated to be associated with these projects, the economic growth of Cantwell will be assured. This would result in economic security for current residents and, perhaps as important, for their children who currently have few local employment prospects. As a result, Cantwell residents are pinning their hopes on the Hydroelectric Project and are almost indifferent to the Intertie. The Intertie is of interest in terms of residents' ability or inability to draw power from it, as currently they must generate all electricity locally; they do not believe that the Intertie will be a significant employer. More importantly, they do not believe that local distribution of power from the Intertie is necessary for the economic development of Cantwell; if hydroelectric and other industrial projects generate large local magnitudes of population and economic activity, there will be, they believe, sufficient money to construct and distribute locally-generated power. In addition, if such large scale industrial development occurs, it will be, they believe, in the State's interest for governments and utilities to provide a local substation from the Intertie at a later point.

The orientation and interest of McKinley is almost totally with the Intertie (and other physical alterations in the highway-railroad corridor) since it finds itself too distant from any direct relationship with the Hydroelectric Project, other than a generalized environmental concern. Given the lack of land and services and the distance from the Hydroelectric Project, McKinley sees little that would change. On the other hand, the visual, economic, health, and other aspects of the Intertie (and other transmission lines) are paramount in the minds of McKinley residents. They also have little interest in any short-term economic activity related to the construction or maintenance of the Intertie and only slight interest in drawing power from it. McKinley sees itself bearing major costs and absolutely no benefits from the Intertie. They argue that the urban communities who expect to receive benefits from the Intertie will not receive them and will still bear the environmental burden of visual losses to their favorite major recreation area. McKinley residents disagree with the economic justifications for the Intertie and argue vociferously that the line will significantly alter the visual amenities of the area, damaging both their personal aesthetic values and limiting the recreational-economic potential of the region; routes which avoid the visual corridor, they also argue, will damage wilderness areas and wildlife already in jeopardy from excessive guiding, road-hunting, and human use and settlement patterns. McKinley is also extremely concerned about the growth of visitation within the Park as an environmental impact and growth outside the Park as damaging to current lifestyles. If more land becomes available, they fear a huge growth in recreational housing; if land remains restricted, they fear continued inability to remain employed and housed in the area. Land unavailability is also predictive of continued escalation of property values and eventual conversion of highway residential properties (most residences are adjacent to the highway) to strip commercial properties, altering both the values and character of the community.

Both communities feel that their futures are dependent upon the decisions made by urban interests and that they are generally helpless in the face of these interests. Each appears hopeful but not optimistic that its interests, values, and character will be protected in these decisions and also by the historical volatility and uncertainty of Alaska development, which has variously produced huge projects and abandoned projects. Each would prefer more gradual, planned, and certain forms of economic development but is not politically or economically organized to assure this kind of development.

3.2 SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS: CANTWELL

Cantwell, situated 85 road miles from Devil's Canyon, lies at the extreme boundary for worker commutation to the construction site. However, in practical terms, the 41 highway miles between Hurricane and Cantwell are winding and seasonally hazardous. This distance, combined with lack of available private property, makes it unlikely for construction workers or secondary or induced workforces to make Cantwell their place of primary residence.

This is not to say that Cantwell will not see itself as significantly affected by the design of the project. Briefly, the growth and development of Cantwell is limited by unavailability of private land and of economic opportunity (jobs or businesses). As a consequence, neither incoming populations nor the children of current residents perceive much opportunity to settle in this otherwise attractive locale. Many local residents rely on seasonal and/or nonlocal employment in order to continue to reside in Cantwell.

While recognizing the profound implications of rapid major industrial growth in the immediate area, many Cantwell residents were counting on such growth in order to underwrite their own and their children's continuance in Cantwell. The access determination which placed Cantwell many road miles from the project may have dashed these hopes for economic growth by creating feelings of relative deprivation among many residents.

With a primary industrial access road to the construction sites on the Denali Highway, Cantwell saw itself filling a number of useful functions:

- housing a workforce of 3,000 people;
- providing R and R, shopping, and other services for the workforce;
- providing access for construction materials from the railroad to the highway, including trucking and warehousing functions; and
- providing direct services in the construction of housing, roads, and other required facilities.

As some residents saw it, the need to provide permanent and transient housing for such large numbers of persons would result in the transfer of public lands into private hands. With the lands and front-end capital, the community would finally have jobs and small businesses would have customers. They recognized that such growth, by itself, could result in a serious economic decline at the end of the construction project; however, they felt that an energy project of such magnitude would surely result in increased industrial activity in the immediate area and that long-term prosperity would result for both current and future populations.

As a consequence of the current design, their hopes for economic progress based on proximate access to the project will be dashed. In order for them to participate effectively in the project, they will be compelled to move closer, individually, to the job site during the construction period (similar to workers coming from Anchorage to Fairbanks). While they may receive somewhat more highway traffic and highway business due to generally increased activity within the region as a whole, these benefits are likely to be offset by the personal, familial, and economic costs of temporary and permanent outmigration.

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APPENDIX 1

SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

A C C E S S R E P O R T

Submitted to

ACRES AMERICAN INC.

by

Stephen R. Braund

Stephen R. Braund & Associates
P.O. Box 1480
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

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During the interviews related to access possibilities to the Susitna Project, it became apparent that many people were viewing the map of the access routes for the first time. Generally, they felt that they did not have adequate information, they had not reviewed the feasibility studies, and they had not thought much about the problem. Consequently, many people did not feel capable of making an informed decision at that time and expressed an interest in a future public meeting related to access routes, modes, and points of entry.

Railroad Communities north of Talkeetna (Chase, Lane Creek, Curry, Sherman, and Gold Creek) [Thirty people interviewed]

Although the first preference for residents of these railroad communities is no dam the magnitude of the Susitna Project, they discussed access possibilities should the dams be constructed. Generally, residents in this region, including periodic recreational users, part-year residents (ie. six months), and more permanent year-round residents, unanimously favor the access route, point of entry, mode, and construction camp facility which will have the least environmental (both physical and human) impact in the area.

Because the vast majority of these people intentionally moved into this relatively unpopulated area to pursue a slower, simpler, wilderness life in a remote setting, they are generally opposed to industrial development, including large scale hydroelectric dams, in the local area. These people purposely settled in a relatively undeveloped area devoid of more urban services (public water, sewer, fire protection, electricity, and roads). Concomitantly, if a dam is to be

built, the thirty people interviewed in this area unanimously preferred an access route and mode that would most effectively limit public access into the general area and have the least environmental impact on existing ecosystems.

Residents of this area perceived a railroad only access as the best mode because it appears to be the method that limits access the most. Although it means more rail traffic in their area, the people who live (either temporarily or permanently) between Talkeetna and Gold Creek prefer this alternative over the construction of any roads into the general area east of the existing railroad. Generally, these people are accustomed to the railroad as a means of entering the area and feel that it effectively retards undesirable activities which a road system promotes (increased recreationists, ATV's, 4 X 4's, roadside shooting, and vandalism). In short, residents feel that less vehicular access translates into fewer impacts on wildlife and environment in general, both local priorities.

Local residents in this subregion felt that some access from the west would likely occur given the large amounts of materials (cement and steel) required by the Devil's Canyon dam. Based on this assumption, they preferred a rail only access system. When asked if they would prefer a road from the Denali Highway only, because it would seemingly minimize impacts in their area, most of the people who live along the railroad north of Talkeetna expressed concern for the wildlife and people who lived in the Denali Highway area. Because they lacked knowledge of the Denali Highway area and because they generally associated roads with unfavorable impacts, these people favored the railroad only route from the south. In relation to this choice, they unanimously oppposed any road connection from the Parks Highway to the dam site.

Thus, the residents of these railroad communities feel that the railroad gives greater control over access, limits the type of activity in the area, and tends to limit the number of people who enter the area both during and after construction. In summary, these people perceive that the rail only route is the next best thing to no access route at all. In other words, if they must accept the dam, then they favor the access system which allows the minimum amount of public access and the least amount of population and industrial growth. They feel that the railroad would lead to the minimal disruption to existing residential and recreational patterns.

Talkeetna (Twenty residents interviewed)

In Talkeetna, two factions emerged which represent different philosophies towards rural environments:

1) The first group is comprised of people who want to protect Talkeetna's rustic, small-town atmosphere and minimize change to the point that they are against the massive Susitna Project. These Talkeetna residents desire minimum impacts on the community as well as the wildlife and general environment of the surrounding area. They moved to Talkeetna because they value small town qualities and feel threatened by impending development. If the dam is constructed, they perceive the railroad as the best means to limit access to and change in the study area.

2) The second group includes people who tend to be pro-economic development, including the Susitna Project. People in this category are divided into two subgroups:

a) Although they are in favor of the dam, these Talkeetna residents still value the rural, small-town atmosphere in which they have chosen to live to the point that they do not want it changed extensively by the construction of a dam. Although they enjoy a community of 400, they would not like to see Talkeetna grow to 1,000 in the near future. They also enjoy and utilize the wilderness area around Talkeetna for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. Because these people perceive it to have the least impact on the community and surrounding wilderness, they prefer a railroad access only to the dam sites. Talkeetna residents are familiar with the railroad, and it does not pose the threat of unlimited public access like roads. They reason that the dam could give an economic boost to the community as well as provide power to the railbelt region, while the use of rail could minimize impacts in the general area.

It should be pointed out that during access conversations, not all Talkeetna residents understood the possible ramifications of a rail only route. Not all of them were aware that such an access system may include a large parking facility in Talkeetna. This needs to be addressed at the public meeting on access. Of those who were aware of this occurrence, two groups emerged. One group changed their access preference to road from the north (either Hurricane or Denali)

to avoid Talkeetna, while the other still preferred the temporary construction impacts associated with a rail only route to the permanent impacts related to a road system. In addition, some of the impacts associated with a parking lot to accommodate the rail only access could be dispersed to locations other than Talkeetna.

b) The second subgroup of Talkeetna residents in favor of economic development in general and the Susitna project in particular are also in favor of roads to open the country. At the extreme, these people would like to see a highway loop from the Parks Highway to Gold Creek to the dam sites and on to the Denali Highway. They tend to prefer the road access between dam sites along the south side of the river because it would open that area to both recreation and mineral extraction. For these people, public roads would maximize public access and development in the area. Ultimately, they would like to see a road connect Talkeetna and Gold Creek. Views in this category represent the minority opinion of those interviewed.

Trapper Creek (Twenty residents interviewed)

As was the case with Talkeetna, two factions, which represent different philosophies towards economic development and rural growth, emerged in Trapper Creek:

1) Similar to the corresponding group in Talkeetna, this group is against the Susitna project as well as other large scale development in the area. (They

prefer smaller hydroelectric projects where the potential impacts are not so great). These people find Trapper Creek a desirable rural place to live — a small community with a wilderness setting, good hunting and fishing, near Mt. McKinley, but with road access to Anchorage or Wasilla for shopping. Generally against any roads in wilderness areas, these Trapper Creek residents fear the impacts on their community of any highway access to the dam sites, whether via Hurricane or Cantwell. Although a road which connects Hurricanee to Gold Creek would seemingly have greater impacts on Trapper Creek (Trapper Creek would be less than 100 miles from the Devil's Canyon site), these residents also expressed concern about increased Parks Highway traffic should the Denali Highway access be constructed. Because it would have the least impact on their community as well as the environment in the general area, these residents preferred the railroad only route out of Gold Creek.

2) Again, similar to Talkeetna, the Trapper Creek residents who are in favor of the Susitna project are divided on the issue of access modes and routes. The following two subgroups emerged:

   a) Although they are in favor of the dam, these Trapper Creek residents prefer not to see the area opened up with roads. They consider Trapper Creek a unique wilderness area with good hunting and fishing as well as relatively easy access to Anchorage. Because they prefer to minimize the impacts on their community and because they feel that the dam could be constructed without opening up the entire area with roads, they prefer the railroad only access out of Gold Creek. Residents in this subgroup are opposed to highway access from Hurricane to Gold Creek.

b) Members of this Trapper Creek subgroup tend to believe that progress (which includes hydroelectric dams, people, roads, and industrial development) will come to their area regardless of what they want. These residents prefer road access in order to provide the maximum public access to otherwise inaccessible areas. They quickly point out that Alaska has far too few roads, and they would like to gain access to areas that are currently inaccessible by road. They also argue that because eventually a road will be needed so people can utilize the area for recreation, it would be wasteful to build a railroad now and later build the inevitable road. They feel that the public should be allowed easy access to the dam sites to enjoy their recreational and visual potential. A continuous road loop from Hurricanee-Gold Creek-Devil's Canyon-Watana-Denali Highway would facilitate this goal. In Trapper Creek, this subgroup is comprised mainly of older residents who have already experienced considerable change in the area. They point out that there is no permancy with the railroad as most of the railroad towns in Alaska died.

Although it is difficult to determine the prevailing opinion related to either the dam or access route in Talkeetna and Trapper Creek (due to both the lack of a formal survey and the changing opinions as people gain new knowledge), the interviews tend to indicate that although the majority of Talkeetna residents may favor the Susitna project, they prefer the access route, mode, and point of entry which least impacts the community and the surrounding environment on a long term basis. Generally, this is percieved as a rail only route out of Gold Creek. Although a rail only route may have implications for Talkeetna related

to a large parking facility nearby (which was not adequately addressed during the interviews), most Talkeetna residents utilize the surrounding area and do not want to see permanent, year-round roads left in this region after the construction period. For these reasons, they are generally not in favor of the highway connection between Hurricane and Gold Creek. Similarly, proportionately more people in Trapper Creek seem to favor less development and less impact related to the Susitna project.

In conclusion, although the majority of residents in the southern communities of the study area (Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, Chase, Lane Creek, Curry, Sherman, and Gold Creek) do not seem to agree on whether the dam should be built, they do tend to favor a limit on public access and development in the general area. Related to this, they tend to think that a rail only access from the south would have the least impact, both during and after construction, on their communities and surrounding environment.

Cantwell (Thirty residents interviewed)

Although Cantwell residents are generally in favor of both the intertie and the Susitna Project (the people desire an electrical substation as well as distribution lines), the community is split on the issue of access via a road from the Denali Highway to the Watana site (Denali Spur). Based on the interviews in Cantwell, the following groups emerged:

1) Pro the Denali Spur. Although one portion of this group favored the construction of the Denali Spur without qualification, another segment only favored this route provided certain safeguards could be implemented.

a) Many Cantwell residents, especially local businessmen and those in search of a job, are strongly in favor of the dam, a railhead at Cantwell, the Denali Spur, and any additional development which would enhance the economic progress of the community. If roads are necessary for the construction and operation of the dams, these people are in favor of them without hesitation. In addition, if access to the dams from the Denali Highway is constructed, they feel it will increase the likelihood that the Denali Highway will be upgraded, an occurrence that would be good for the local tourist business. Also, these residents look forward to the local jobs which would be provided by the upgrade of the Denali Highway as well as the construction of the Denali Spur and Susitna dams. Based on the interviews, people in this category had a strong voice, but did not represent the majority opinion in Cantwell.

b) Members of this subgroup acknowledge that Cantwell needs the economic stimulation and electricity that may result from the Susitna Project and they appreciate the logic and engineering compatibility behind the Denali Spur, but they are very concerned about the potential adverse impacts such a road will have on the wildlife in the area (moose, caribou, bear, sheep, and fish). They fear that the Denali Spur will ruin the hunting and fishing in the area — a region that locals currently utilize.

What separates members of this group from those in the third group (see below) is that although these residents wish to protect the wildlife in the area, they feel that this could be accomplished even though the Denali Spur is constructed. For example, if this access road is only used for the dam site construction and is not opened to the public, the impact on the wildlife may not be so great. Methods local residents suggested to accomplish this goal included: provisions for no road hunting, close the road to motorized vehicles for hunting purposes, walk-in hunting only, or no hunting within one mile of the road. Without these or similar limitations, members of this group may be opposed to the Denali Spur.

In sum, these people are generally not opposed to the Susitna Project, but they do have serious concerns, centered around wildlife, with an access road from the Denali Highway. Based on the interviews, members of this group represent the majority opinion in Cantwell. But, as was the case with the communities further south, many Cantwell residents viewed the access map for the first time during the interviews. Because a community dialogue has now developed, a public meeting would be useful to identify if this is in fact the majority opinion in Cantwell as well as determine if the concerns associated with the wildlife are so great that they make the community not favor the Denali Spur.

Because many Cantwell residents would probably resist governmental limitations on the use of a road, the limited access concept has many

problems. Even those who favor this approach have serious reservations. There is a large anti-federal government feeling in Cantwell which primarily grew out of the d-2 park expansions. Related to the access question, the reasoning is circular and points out the conflicting forces at work in Cantwell which leave many residents with mixed feelings related to access. They favor the project and acknowledge the possible need for the Denali Spur. But, because they fear the impacts on the game in the area, they tend to support a limited access road. This goes against their beliefs related to public use of public roads and lands in general. If a road is constructed they want to use it as well as the surrounding countryside. Many Cantwell residents feel that there are already enough parks in the area which restrict their activities. Consequently, they have argued for a public road which defeats their goal of wildlife protection through a limited access road.

2) Although members of this group are not necessarily opposed to the dam either, they feel that the Denali Spur will have such an adverse impact on the wildlife and general environment in the area that they would rather see a route from the south. They are not necessarily concerned about the potential impacts on the community of Cantwell itself, but focus their attention primarily on the wildlife and fish populations in the area. They refer to how game on both sides of the Denali Highway has been hunted out by road hunters. In addition, they point out that this area is very susceptible to ATV use, and a road from the Denali Highway would lead to a huge swath where game is taken by both road hunters and ATV's.

This group, which represented the minority opinion of those interviewed, was comprised mainly of local trappers, non-locals with recreational cabins in the area, and locals who simply felt the potential adverse impact on wildlife outweighed the use of this corridor.

If the Susitna Project resulted in the construction of a Denali Spur, many Cantwell residents felt a better route off of the Denali Highway is near Butte Lake. They pointed out that there was less snow in this area (it blows away), and the Butte Lake route would, for local hunting purposes, have less impact on game. According to these residents, during the fall hunting season, there are many caribou and moose in the foothills in the vicinity where the proposed road leaves the Denali Highway. They preferred not to have this area greatly impacted by a newly constructed road.

The following generalizations pertain to the route north or south of the Susitna River between dam sites:

- In Cantwell, people who expressed an opinion on this issue were generally those who hunted or trapped in the area. These Cantwell residents tended to use the area north of the river for hunting and fishing and therefore preferred any access road or rail to be located south of the river.

- Most people in the southern communities felt inadequately informed to address this decision. Those that preferred minimum impacts in their area,

perceived the route north of the river as best, while those Talkeetna residents who desired economic development in the area preferred south of the river so that region could be developed.

Generally speaking, most of those people interviewed were opposed to a new community at the dam site. Those who wanted development desired the economic benefits to occur in their community, not in some new community. Additionally, those who wanted to limit access and change in the area, did not favor the construction of a new community in the region. Therefore, both groups tended to prefer a temporary construction camp at the site.

APPENDIX 2

SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

A C C E S S R E P O R T
Addendum #1

Submitted to

ACRES AMERICAN INC.

by

Stephen R. Braund

Stephen R. Braund & Associates
P.O. Box 1480
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

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Because it is beyond the study area as identified in the RFP, the investigator did not visit the area between Gold Creek (ARR Mile 263.2) and the point where the Parks Highway and the Alaska Railroad intersect near Hurricane (ARR Mile 280). But, because this area may be affected by the Susitna project, especially if road access comes from the Parks Highway near Hurricane, every effort was made to interview all interested parties whenever the opportunity arose. In this area, three groups of landowners were identified: 1) those who acquired land prior to the state Indian River land disposals; 2) Indian River Remote Parcel entrants; and 3) Indian River Subdivision entrants.

1) Of those who acquired land prior to the recent state land disposals, only two were interviewed. Both of these parties had property south of Chulitna. One family primarily spent summers at their cabin, while the other said they lived year round in the area. In both cases, these landowners preferred to keep access to the area to a minimum (ie. railroad only). They had experienced the influx of people into the area as a result of the recent state land disposals and felt a road into the area would have too great an impact on existing land and resource use patterns. (Although no one from or north of Chulitna was interviewed, apparently a number of people own property in this area. Some were reported to live along the "Chulitna Road" — a rough road from Hurricane to Chulitna).

2) The Indian River Remote Parcel land disposal is a large area (approximately 6,500 acres) located adjacent to and east of the Alaska Railroad between

approximately Mile 267 and 273 and bordered on the south by the Susitna River. In the fall of 1980, the State of Alaska offered 75 successful lottery winners an opportunity to stake a remote parcel site in this selection area. The maximum size per entry is 20 acres, so theoretically 1,500 acres could be staked from May 30, 1981 through June 1, 1982. Althought the Parks Highway (Milepost 169 near Hurricane) is only 5 miles from the northwest corner of this remote parcel selection area, access is only by railroad or riverboat to the Susitna or Indian Rivers. To date, 34 lottery winners have entered, staked, and filed on their land. Of these, 5 were interviewed.

The five Indian River Remote Parcel lottery winners who were interviewed all resided in Anchorage and had acquired land in the Indian River area for remote recreational purposes. They felt that because the State of Alaska had offered this land as a "remote" parcel selection and had kept the number of entrants low, it would be improper for the state to now provide highway access to this relatively secluded region. The very reason these people had applied for and staked this land was because it was advertised as and is relatively remote. It is not easy to reach from Anchorage because the only access is by railroad or riverboat. If a road were built into the area, it would no longer be remote nor satisfy the purposes for which these entrants acquired the land. Many entrants staked along the Indian River and railroad -- the probable corridor for a road from the Parks Highway to Hurricane. All of those interviewed were building cabins and spent numerous weekends at their newly acquired property. In summary, although they were not opposed to the Susitna dam, they were against the construction of any roads in the area which, in their opinion, would ruin the remoteness of the area.

3) The State of Alaska offered the Indian River Subdivision in the spring of 1981. Located near the junction of the Parks Highway (Mile 168) and the Alaska Railroad (just south of Hurricane), access is available from both the Parks Highway and the railroad. This subdivision, comprised of 140 separate four to five acres lots, allows for a much greater population density than the remote parcel selection areas. The lots and roads are surveyed and platted, although the roads within the subdivision are not constructed. Although all 140 lots were available in the spring 1981 lottery, interested parties only filed on 74 lots. At present, it is not certain that all 74 successful lottery winners will actually purchase their lots. If they do, 66 lots still remain unsold. Of significance to the Susitna project, this subdivision, located adjacent to the Parks Highway just south of Hurricane, has existing road and rail access to 140 residential lots. No lottery winners from this land disposal were interviewed.