

# **SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT**

## **DRAFT SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT**

**TASK 2 - SURVEYS AND SITE  
FACILITIES**

**SUBTASK 2.10 - ACCESS ROAD**

**SEPTEMBER 1961**

Prepared by:



**SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT  
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SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

DRAFT SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

TASK 2 - SURVEYS AND SITE  
FACILITIES

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Access Road Environmental Analysis Summary

An environmental analysis was conducted of the eight access plans under consideration. Each plan was evaluated in terms of its potential input to vegetation, wildlife(furbearers, big game, birds and small mammals), fish and culture resources. Each access plan involves construction of a road or railroad in two or more of the following segments:

Parks Highway to Gold Creek

Gold Creek to Devil Canyon Damsite

Devil Canyon Damsite to Watana Damsite via the north side of the Susitna River

Devil Canyon Damsite to Watana Damsite via the south side of the Susitna River

Denali Highway to Watana Damsite

Table I indicates the access plans studied.

The major potential environmental impacts identified for each of the access segments were as follows:

Parks Highway to Gold Creek: Removal of wetland areas, disruption of furbearer habitat, disturbance of anadromous fisheries habitat in the Susitna and Indian river and disturbance of archaeological resources.

Gold Creek to Devil Canyon Damsite: disturbance of forested area along the Susna River.

Devil Canyon Damsite to Watana Damsite via north side of Susitna River; potential restoration difficulties, disturbance of cultural resources.

Devil Canyon Damsite to Watana Damsite via south side of Susitna River: disturbance of wetland area and furbearer habitat near Stephan Lake, Fog Lake and Fog Creek, disturbance of moose and caribou habitat, increased fishing pressure to resident fishes.

TABLE 1. SUSITNA ACCESS PLANS

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.	Road from the Parks Highway to Devil Canyon, continuing to Watana on the south side of the Susitna River.
2.	Railroad from Gold Creek to Devil Canyon, continuing to Watana on south side of the Susitna River.
3.	Road from the Parks Highway terminating at Devil Canyon. A second road from the Denali Highway to Watana.
4.	Road from Gold Creek Terminating at Devil Canyon. A second road from the Denali Highway to Watana.
5.	Road from the Parks Highway to Devil Canyon on the south side of the Susitna river, crossing the Susitna and continuing to Watana on the north side.
6.	<del>Road</del> <sup>Rail</sup> Road from Gold Creek to Devil Canyon on south side of Susitna River; connecting road between two dams on north side Susitna River. Road from Denali Highway to Watana
7.	Road from Gold Creek to Devil Canyon south side of Susitna River; connecting road between two dams on north side of Susitna River. Road from Denali Highway to Watana.
8.	Road from Gold Creek to Devil Canyon on south side of Susitna River, crossing Susitna and continuing to Watana on north side.

Denali Highway to Watana Dam site: disturbance of fox denning sites near Deadman Mountain, interference with migration and calving of portions of the Nelchina caribou herd, disturbance to cultural resources.

In addition to these specific concerns, a major concern for all access plans was the creation of access to areas previously inaccessible or relatively inaccessible. This increased access could lead to impacts to furbearers (through trapping) and to big game through hunting. In addition, detrimental effects could occur to all wildlife through disturbance and destruction of habitat by ATV's. Cultural resources would also be vulnerable to amateur collectors and ATV traffic.

Considering the potential of these impacts to occur in each plan resulted in the conclusion that plan 8 would cause the least environmental disturbance. This was because the utilization of roadway beginning at Gold Creek and continuing to Watana will preclude public access into the area. Furthermore, the road from Devil Canyon to Watana on the north side of the Susitna River covers areas that are not of great importance to wildlife or fisheries.

Plans 1,3,5, and 7 would provide increased access into the area. This is because the roadways would begin at the Parks Highway which is accessible to all outside traffic. For this reason, these plans were found not to have the potential for greater impacts than Plan 8.

Plans 1 and 2 connect the Watana and Devil Canyon dam sites via a road on the south side of the Susitna river. Because these plans would cross wetlands and furbearer habitat near Stephan and Fog Lakes and open this area to increased fishing pressure, the plans were considered to be less desirable than Plan 8.

Plans 3, 4, 6 and 7 all involve a road from Watana dam north to the Denali highway. Because of the increased access this road would provide and the potential for impacts to portions of the Nelchina caribou herd, to furbearers (particularly fox denning areas) and to cultural resources,

these plans were also considered less desirable than Plan 8.

The above evaluations were conducted without consideration of mitigation plans. Certain mitigation techniques could be utilized to substantially reduce the potential for impacts and permit utilization of plans other than plan 8. For instance, timing restrictions for stream crossings and utilization of siltation control devices could reduce impacts to anadromous fish; final alignment of the road bed above wetland areas would reduce impact to aquatic furbearers; strict patrols and control of access may reduce impacts to caribou.

Final plan selection will incorporate engineering, economic and environmental considerations, including utilization of mitigation techniques.

## Access Roads

### Socioeconomic and Land Use Analysis Summary

Each of the access plans under consideration originates at one or two of the following points: the Parks Highway at Hurricane, the Alaska Railroad at Gold Creek and the Denali Highway near Denali. For purposes of socioeconomic and land use analysis, the point of origination is the dominant variable, with mode (road or railroad) an important variable and actual alignment a minor variable.

Each of the access plans was evaluated in terms of its effect on socioeconomic conditions and land use in the area. Socioeconomic parameters evaluated included effects on population levels, cultural activities, community, political and social organizations, housing, public service, government finance, labor and economic base. Land use parameters evaluated included land uses and associated site-specific activities, dispersed and isolated activities, land management activities, and related concerns and natural aesthetics.

Impacts were evaluated for three general geographic areas:

- Parks Highway-Railroad corridor on Westside, containing the communities of Healy, Cantwell, Chulitna, Talkeetna, Willow and Wasilla
- Richardson Highway corridor on eastside containing the communities of Glennallen, Gulkana, Paxson and others along the Richardson Highway
- Anchorage, Whittier and Fairbanks

Evaluations showed effects on Fairbanks to be the same for each access plan and therefore was not included in the comparisons.

Acres plans (lands) with a roadway originating at Hurricane will significantly impact the westside communities in terms of demand for

increased services, changes in population, housing availability, government expenditures and revenues, labor demand and unemployment. There will also be significant effects on construction, retail trade and tourism. Many of the changes will occur as construction workers attempt to relocate to the communities near the construction site.

Significant land use changes would occur in the Westside communities, particularly in residential and commercial uses.

Except for a possible significant increase in wholesale trade, roads from the west should have only slight socioeconomic and land use effect on Anchorage, Whittier and the eastside communities.

Access plans 2 and 8 originate at Gold Creek. As such, impacts would be concentrated on the Westside communities as described for plans 1 and 5. However, the effects would be magnified in Talkeetna and Hurricane because of their location at rail-highway intersections.

The Anchorage/Whittier area would be significantly or moderately effected in construction, port and rail transportation, wholesale and retail trade and service industries. In addition, Whittier would experience moderate effects on employment.

Only negligible effects would be felt on eastside communities.

Land use impacts are expected to be minor in the interior of the project area, because access to the site would require utilizing the Alaskan Railroad to Gold Creek. Significant land use change would occur in the westside communities, particularly in residential and commercial uses in Talkeetna and Hurricane.



Access plans 4 and 6 move the access origin from the Railbelt corridor to the Denali Highway in the north. Workers' families would tend to locate in more communities and possibly concentrate in Anchorage. Significant or major effects would likely be felt in Cantwell in terms of population, culture/way-of-life, community, political and social organization, housing availability, government expenditures and revenues, labor demand, unemployed labor, public services, construction, public utilities, communications and retail trade and services.

Anchorage would experience a significant effect on wholesale trade and Whittier would feel moderate effects on employment, retail trade and service.

The eastside communities would experience moderate changes, due permanently to spillover effects of increased tourism from access on the Denali Highway.

Land use changes would occur in Cantwell, primarily in residential and commercial use. There would also be changes in land use in the area between Denali Highway and Watana, due to increased access.

#### Access Plan 3 and 7

These effects will be essentially the same as plans 4 and 6. Westside communities would be effected as workers' families move further up the corridor. Significant changes would occur in many of the communities as road access would begin at both Hurricane and Cantwell.

Evects to Anchorage, Whittier and the Eastside communities would be the same as for plans 1 and 5.

Land use changes in the interior may be great, as road access is provided at two places. In addition, commercial and residential land use changes would occur in the westside communities.

## Access Road Environmental Summary

### Public Preference

Public preference regarding the access and recreation development plans was acquired through mail-in questionnaires, workshop questionnaires, personal interviews and other forms of written and verbal communication. As different groups were reached through these various media the results acquired from each are not directly comparable.

### Mail-In Questionnaires - Recreation

As a component of the recreation planning program a mail-in questionnaire was forwarded to 2145 residents, 715 to each of the Fairbanks, Anchorage and Railbelt (excluding Fairbanks and Anchorage) areas. 502 or 23 percent of the questionnaires were completed and returned. As shown on Table I the general consensus from all three regions was that 15-20% of the respondents favored no or restricted access and no recreation development 21-26% favored access with little or no recreation development and 56-60% favored access with moderate to high development. It must be noted that when this questionnaire was distributed the option of providing access to the site by rail was not offered as an alternative and thus the results of this survey do not take the option of a rail access into account. In addition, this questionnaire was distributed for the purpose of accessing the degree and type of recreation development preferred. Thus the responses may have differed somewhat had the primary questions been directed towards the degree, mode and point of origin for access roads.

### Public Workshop Questionnaire - Recreation

The results of the recreation questionnaire as received through the March 1981 public workshop differed significantly from the mail-in responses. The exact reasons for this difference is unknown although speculation is presented. A total of 82 responses were received with 18, 35 and 29 from Fairbanks, Anchorage and the Railbelt (excluding Anchorage and Fairbanks) respectively. As shown on Table 2 the results from these sectors varied

greatly. In Fairbanks 72% of the respondents favored no or restricted access with no recreation development, and 8% favored access with moderate to high recreation development. Anchorage was almost the reverse with 6%, 9% and 71% favoring no or restricted access, access with minimum development and access with moderate to high development, respectively. The results of the central Railbelt as reflected by the responses from the Talkeetna workshop were more evenly divided with 45% favoring no or restricted access, 17% favoring access with minimal recreation development and 38% favoring access with moderate to high development.

It is speculated that the results from the Fairbanks workshop tend to represent the views of concerned interest groups that had a large representation at the Fairbanks workshop. The dicotomy of the responses from the Talkeetna workshop are probably a reflection of the attitudes that exist in this community as indicated by the results of the socio-cultural studies. In Anchorage the very high level preference for access with moderate to high recreation development differs in degree from the mail-in results although both surveys demonstrate a preference in Anchorage for access with development.

TABLE I: RESPONSE FROM MAIL-IN QUESTIONNAIRES ON RECREATION

	Fairbanks %	Railbelt %	Anchorage %
A) No road access or restricted access	15	19	20
B) Access but little or no recreation development	26	26	21
C) Access with moderate to high development	59	56	59

TABLE II: RESPONSE FROM THE PUBLIC WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE ON RECREATION

	Fairbanks %	Railbelt %	Anchorage %
A) No road access or restricted access	72	45	6
B) Access but little or no recreation development	0	17	9
C) Access with moderate to high development	8	38	71

Public Workshop Questionnaire - Access

The results of the access questionnaire as received through the March 1981 public workshop are presented in Table 3 below.

Route	Fairbanks %	Talkeetna %	Anchorage* %	Total %
A) Road access from Parks Hwy to both dam sites	6	17	7	10
B) Rail access from Gold Creek to both dam sites	72	67	40	59
C) Road from Denali Hwy to Watana rail from both Creek to Devil Canyon	17	11	20	16
D) Road from Denali Hwy and Parks Hwy	0	0	33	10
No Preference	6	6	0	4

\* Mail responses were mostly from the Anchorage area, reflecting the thinking of that area, and were thus included in the Anchorage results.

A total of 51 responses were received with 16, 15, and 18 from the Fairbanks, Anchorage and Talkeetna areas respectively.

In Fairbanks 72% of the respondents favored a rail only access, 17% favored a combination of road rail and 6% favored road only access. None of the respondents favored road access from both the Denali and Parks Highway.

In Talkeetna a similar trend emerged with 67, 11, 17 and 0% favoring rail access only, road and rail access, road only and road access to both Denali and Parks Highways, respectively.

In Anchorage 40% of the respondents favored rail access only, 20% favored road/rail access, and 41% favored road only. 33% of the total respondents favored road access from both the Denali and Parks Highways.

Those trends demonstrated by these results are comparable with the results of the public workshop recreation questionnaire although the degree of preferences vary. The Fairbanks respondents, which favored no or restricted access with no recreation development also favored rail access only (72%). In Talkeetna the dicotomy expressed in the public workshop recreation questionnaire response is also reflected in the access questionnaire results, however, a definite preference (67%) was shown for the rail only access (40%) and higher preference for some type of road access (60%) is again comparable to the results of the workshop recreation questionnaire. The greatest difference between the Anchorage and the Fairbanks/Talkeetna results in the 33% for no preference for road access from both the Parks and Denali highway.

### Questionnaire Interpretation

Interpretation of the results from the public preference questionnaires must be made with caution. The largest sample size with 502 responses was associated with the recreation mail-in questionnaire. In addition, the fact that the questionnaire had a random distribution, improves the probability that it more accurately reflects the attitudes of the general public. Its main drawback was that it was directed mainly towards the question of recreation development with access being a secondary issue. The problem in interpreting the results of the workshop questionnaires is a confirmation of sample size (Recreation questionnaire - 82 responses; Access questionnaire - 51 responses) and an evaluation as to what component of the communities are actually represented.

### Sociocultural Studies - Access Report

#### Railroad Communities north of Talkeetna

These communities prefer the access system which allows the minimum amount of public access and least amount of population and industrial growth. They feel that the rail access only would lead to the minimal disruption to existing residential and recreational patterns.

Talkeetna

Two factions were identified:

- 1) The first group desires minimum impact on the community as well as the wildlife and general environment of the surrounding area. If the dam is constructed they perceive the railroad as the best means to limit access and change in the study area.
- 2) The second group tends to be pro-economic development and was divided into two subgroups.
  - a) This group is in favor of the dam although they still value the rural, small-town atmosphere in which they have chosen to live. As such, to limit the impact on the community and surrounding wilderness they prefer a railroad access only to the dam sites.
  - b) The second subgroup of Talkeetna residents which favor economic development in general are also in favor of roads to open the country. Views in this category represent the minority opinion of those interviewed.

Trapper Creek

As with Talkeetna two factions emerged.

- 1) This group is against the Susitna project as well as other large scale development in the area. This group expressed concern about road access from the Parks Highway or Denali Highway. As the alternative that would have the least impact on their community as well as the environment in general they preferred the railroad only plan.
- 2) The second group although in favor of Susitna was divided on the issue of access modes and routes.
  - a) The first subgroup preferred not to see the area opened up with roads. They preferred the railroad only plan and were opposed to highway access from Hurricane to Gold Creek.

- b) Members of the second subgroup preferred road access in order to provide the maximum public access to otherwise inaccessible areas. This subgroup is comprised mainly of older residents who have already experienced considerable change in the area.

### Cantwell

In regards to access the following groups emerged:

1) Pro the Denali Spur:

- 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 economic progress of the community. This group was also in favor of upgrading of the Denali Highway. 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 appreciate the logic and engineering compatability of the Denali Spur. However, they are very concerned about the potential adverse impacts on wildlife in the area and would only be in favor of the Denali Spur if stringent hunting regulations were implemented and enforced. This group represented the majority opinion in Cantwell.

- 2) This group has considerable concern regarding the potential impact on the fish and wildlife of the area. This group, which represented the minority of those interviewed, was comprised mainly of local trappers, non-locals with recreational cabins and locals who felt the potential adverse impact on wildlife outweighed the use of this corridor.

### Native Preference

The CIRI Corporation has stated that it is their intent, with or without the project, to develop the lands surrounding the Devil Canyon and Watana



proposed damsites mainly for its mineral potential. As such they are strongly in favor of a permanent road to the damsite and have stated their preference for the Southern Road from the Parks Highway. They do not favor a railroad but if a railroad is built they feel the railroad bed should be converted into a permanent road with access to the Parks Highway. It is also their contention that since much of the land in question is private land, belonging to CIRI, access should be subject to their wishes.

ALASKA POWER AUTHORITY  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OFFICE

ACCESS REPORT

October 9, 1981

## Section I

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### March 1981 Workshop Results

The results of three workshops held and questionnaires sent out by the Public Participation Office concerning the question of access to the proposed Watana and Devil Canyon hydroelectric sites show a preference for a rail only alternative. Sixty (60) percent of the participants in the workshops held in Fairbanks, Talkeetna, and Anchorage preferred rail access. Almost 80% of the Talkeetna respondents and more than 80% of the Fairbanks participants favored the rail only alternative. Likewise, a sizeable portion of the game guides registered in Unit 13 (Upper Susitna Basin) who responded to a questionnaire favored the rail access.

The reasons for this preference varied somewhat among communities and interest groups. Nevertheless, a pattern did emerge. The participants at the Talkeetna meeting felt that their way of life would be altered if road access through any nearby community was selected. The workshop participants' choice of rail only access reflects their concern for the potential amount of change that could occur if such an access road were selected.

A second factor in the choice of the rail only route was the desire to limit the impact on wildlife and the ecology of the Upper Susitna Basin that increased recreational opportunity would cause. This was especially true of the participants in Fairbanks and the responses of the game guides. Both these groups did not respond to limiting impacts on the communities along the Parks Highway, but tended to focus on the potential impacts on game and the environment. Of primary concern was the Nelchina caribou herd and also the moose and bear populations. All three groups mentioned potential impacts from all terrain vehicles (ATV's) and increased hunting and fishing opportunities.

In analyzing these responses and in recent discussions with Robert Anderson of Terrestrial Environmental Specialists (TES), Peter Rogers of Frank Orth & Associates, and Stephen Braund who is conducting the socio-cultural study, several variables need to be considered in respect to a rail only alternative. It is our thinking that several potential impacts could result from a rail only access that were not considered by these communities. One would be the size and location of a staging or stockpiling area for construction materials (and its possible visual impact or the size of the work force needed to operate it). A second would be the regularity that workers would be allowed to ride the train to the construction site. If workers could ride in either daily, weekly, or bi-weekly, impacts in the southern communities could be nearly as great as with a road access. This would include the need for parking facilities in Talkeetna or Hurricane, and the result of workers and their families relocating in the southern communities. The increased demand in service could potentially impact a broad range of activities that the Talkeetna participants expressed an interest in limiting.

The Public Participation Office (PPO) intends to point out these things to the communities when we hold our next workshop sessions the week of October 19. As the result of recent discussions among the PPO staff Stephen Braund, Peter Rogers, and Robert Anderson, one possible way to reduce impacts on the southern communities is a northern access from the Denali Highway, with a full service construction camp, commuter schedules, and clearly defined state policies, in combination with no access from the west (either rail or road). Although a northern route only was originally considered, it was not among the options presented at the community workshops in March 1981. Another option to reduce impacts would be all rail or rail to Gold Creek with workers commuting to and from Anchorage by airplane. This option was not presented either. We suggest that these access options and the explanation of the possible impacts of the rail only access need to be presented to the southern communities in order that a more informed decision can be made. Especially because the thinking of these communities tended to reflect the idea that the rail only access would have the least

impact on their communities. It is possible that the full range of impacts, both primary and secondary, have not been understood or considered. The primary consideration appeared to be the long term implications of public access after construction. Nevertheless, construction related impacts may be of greatest concern to these communities given the 10 to 15 year time span of construction.

In addition, the results of the recreational development questionnaire that was also distributed at the community workshops also showed a preference for limiting development and access. More than 60% of those who responded to the recreation questionnaire favored a minimally developed and managed wilderness. This choice demonstrated a desire to either limit or permit no access to the project area. Rail access was mentioned several times as the best method of access.

#### Communities Where No Workshops Were Held

Willow, Houston, Wasilla, and Palmer:

It should be pointed out that community workshops were not held in the communities south of Talkeetna (Willow, Houston, Wasilla, and Palmer) and no one from these areas attended the March 1981 workshop in Talkeetna. Generally, the Mat-Su area has been economically slow in recent years (the capital move to Willow has not occurred) and people in some of these communities may well perceive changes and impacts brought about by the Susitna project as beneficial if economic development is stimulated. Data from a study conducted in the Mat-Su Borough by the Overall Economic Development Program, Inc. (Economic Conditions, Development Options and Projections, July 1980) indicates that people in Willow, Houston, Wasilla, and Palmer tend to favor a higher rate of development than the communities north of Willow. Additional information from planners at the Mat-Su Borough, the Borough Manager, Assembly, Planning and Zoning Commission, and local residents might be useful.

Trapper Creek:

The lack of representation from Trapper Creek at the March workshop at Talkeetna also limits the information from that meeting. The community

of Trapper Creek did not seem to perceive the Susitna projects as having a potential impact on their community. One member of the community council later expressed the perception that Trapper Creek would be less affected than Talkeetna would be by Susitna. In addition, the workshop was held in Talkeetna which is a 60 mile round trip for Trapper Creek residents and, given the public sentiment as reflected by the above statement, it doesn't seem likely that people would make the trip. Stephen Braund has recently spent some time in the Trapper Creek area and his information should help in assessing the preference of that community. A joint meeting with Trapper Creek and Talkeetna is being planned for Wednesday, October 21. It will be held at Susitna Valley High School, located half way between Trapper Creek and Talkeetna, and we hope to get representation from both these communities.

People living along the railroad north of Talkeetna:

The small clusters of people north of Talkeetna along the railroad were also not well represented at the Talkeetna workshop. Some people from the Chase area attended the workshop, but people further north along the railroad (Lane Creek, Sherman, and Gold Creek) did not attend. The PPO did communicate with people living or owning land at Lane Creek and Sherman during the public participation work on the intertie project. The general feeling in these areas was one of strong opposition to the transmission lines because people had moved to the area to get away from development. We would expect strong resistance to any access choice which would cause changes along the railroad in these areas.

Cantwell and McKinley Park areas:

Another area where the PPO had no contact concerning access is the Cantwell and McKinley Park areas. In communications with both these areas on the intertie issue, Cantwell has been generally pro-development and pro-intertie. Community sentiment indicated the desire for a substation at Cantwell (along with distribution lines) so the community would not have to rely on diesel generation for electricity. Discussions with Stephen Braund and Tom Lonner have indicated that the McKinley

Park area would not be affected by access plans, but Cantwell would, especially if the Denali Highway access is selected. To better understand the concerns of the Cantwell community, a community workshop is being planned for Thursday, October 22.

#### Indian River Subdivision and Indian River Remote lands:

A final group of people whose preference was not obtained was the Indian River Subdivision owners and the Indian River remote parcel owners. The subdivision contains about 140 parcels on or near the Parks Highway in the area of the proposed road access to Devil Canyon. The Department of Natural Resources estimates that 90 of these sites have been awarded since July 1981. Consequently the people who are now owners have not been contacted concerning their views on either Susitna in general or on the question of access. DNR also reports that demand was not great for the subdivision lands except along the highway. This was not the case for the Indian River remote parcels. Because these remote parcels had railroad access and most remote parcels have no access at all, DNR reports that it was one of the more popular remote parcel offerings the state has had. Seventy-five person were given authorization to stake in this area.

#### Conclusions

1. What emerges from the responses received in the community workshops, both on access and recreation, is the desire to limit growth and development that could occur should the Susitna project be constructed, especially in the Talkeetna area and the railroad communities north of Talkeetna. One of the drivers of the type and magnitude of the impacts on the southern communities is the location of the access route and the mode of transportation used on the route. Although the clear preference stated is for a rail only access, more information needs to be presented to the potentially impacted communities concerning the nature of impacts during the construction phase if a rail only route is selected.

2. In recent discussions with Stephen Praund, Robert Anderson, and Peter Rogers, it has become clear that the question of access and mode alone are not the only considerations that need to be presented to the potentially impacted communities. An equally important consideration is the size and nature of the construction facility. Various options are available and depending on what is selected the impacts on the surrounding communities will vary. A full service, planned community providing the widest range of services for the workers and their families would have a much different impact than a low service, construction camp with no family facilities. This type of decision, as well as the policies that the State of Alaska (through the Power Authority) would adopt or not adopt concerning the nature of the construction site, access to the site, and the scheduling of commuting workers to and from the site will be the primary factor in determining the impacts on local communities.

3. PPO suggests the following method for looking at how various options would either decrease or encourage the amount of change that could potentially occur in local communities. Six possible objectives are given below. We recognize that some of these objectives appear mutually exclusive. They do, however, reflect the range of preferences that have been heard in the communities so far. PPO would like more community input to determine which preference reflects the majority of a given community.

The six objectives are:

1. To encourage changes in the Willow, Houston, Wasilla and Palmer areas.
2. To limit changes in the railroad communities north of Talkeetna.
3. To limit changes in the Talkeetna and Trapper Creek areas.
4. To encourage changes in the the Talkeetna and Trapper Creek areas.
5. To encourage changes in the Cantwell area.
6. To limit changes in the Cantwell area.



The next four pages are a preliminary discussion of how decisions could be made to implement either one or a combination of these objectives. The information on these pages was written in a work session with Robert Anderson, Peter Rogers, Stephen Braund, and PPO staff. More time could be spent in refining this. In addition, the thinking of several other disciplines is needed to make the picture more complete.

Based on what we know now, the Power Authority's "access/recreation/construction facilities/construction policies" objectives would be to: 1) encourage change in the Willow, Houston, Wasilla, and Palmer areas; and 2) to limit changes in the railroad communities north of Talkeetna. We do not yet have enough information to establish clear planning objectives for the Trapper Creek, Talkeetna, and Cantwell areas. \*\*\*

The remainder of the report (Section II) is the back-up data that supports the summary and conclusions from the workshops and questionnaires. Included as exhibits are copies of the various questionnaires used to solicit responses.

\*\*\* PPO is relying on the sociocultural study being conducted by Stephen Braund and Associates to supply additional information in order to better articulate these objectives. In addition, we intend to check our perceptions of community preferences one more time with the communities the week of October 19th.

OBJECTIVE I: To encourage changes in Willow, Houston, Wasilla, and Palmer areas.

PLAN A:

1. Access Corridor: access from the west; no access at all from the Denali Highway.
2. Mode: road.
3. Nature of construction camp facilities: Minimal construction camp: trailers, mess hall, recreation hall, some family facilities for supervisory personnel.
4. Policies:
  - a. Individuals drive their own private vehicles to the sites.
  - b. No policies about when workers come and go, from where, or use of private vehicles.
5. Commuter Schedules.
  - a. None.
  - b. No policy on public access.
  - c. No policy on use of fish and game.

Objective I: To encourage changes in Willow, Houston, Wasilla, and Palmer areas.

PLAN B:

1. Access Corridor:  
rail access, either through Gold Creek with road to site or  
rail directly to Devil Canyon.
2. Mode: rail
3. Nature of construction camp facilities: Minimal construction camp: trailers, mess hall,  
recreation hall, some family facilities for supervisory personnel.
4. Policies:
  - a. Policy regarding use of personal vehicles by workers.
  - b. Policy to control public access to area.
5. Commuter Schedules: Organized commuter schedule using aircraft from the Wasilla-  
Palmer area.

Or organized rail commuter schedule with workers getting on and off the train  
in the Palmer and Wasilla areas.

OBJECTIVE II: To limit changes in railroad communities north of Talkeetna.

PLAN A:

1. Access Corridor: Road from Denali Highway to Watana; service road from Watana to Devil Canyon; no access at all from the west (neither rail nor road).

2. Mode: road.

3. Nature of construction camp facilities:

The larger the camp, and the more services, the less the impacts on surrounding local communities. Services that would help reduce impacts include: stores, post office, schools.

Proposal: to construct a "mixed camp", meaning a camp where workers live with their families if desired, or where workers live in trailers or barracks without families if desired.

Part of the construction camp could/would become a permanent city for the operating phase.

The temporary camp could be sited and located so that it would be inundated by water later.

The siting of a permanent camp for families would be important so that the experience is as pleasant as possible: meaning, it was sited on dry land so people could get out and walk, and near trees and sun exposure if possible. The more pleasant the place is to live, the more families will enjoy living there and impact existing local communities less.

Limited r & r would be available at camp; workers or families would periodically get out to other areas (larger areas like Anchorage and Fairbanks) for more extended r & r and cultural activities, etc.

4. Policies:

- a. strict regulations where people can go in the upper basin to protect resources, especially hunting and fishing.
- b. No private planes flying in and out.
- c. Policy regarding use of personal vehicles.
- d. Policy to control public access off corridor.

OBJECTIVE II: Plan A cont.

5. Commuter Schedules:

- a. ORGANIZED commuter schedule for those who don't live with families. Could be busing from Fairbanks, Anchorage, or Cantwell.
- b. ORGANIZED air commuting from Anchorage, or fom Palmer and Wasilla.

OBJECTIVE IV: To limit changes in the Talkeetna and Trapper Creek areas.

PLAN A:

1. Access Corridor: Road from Denali Highway to Watana (this would spread the impacts to include Cantwell). Service road from Watana to Devil Canyon; no access at all from the west (neither rail nor road).
2. Mode: road.\*\*
3. Nature of construction camp facilities: The larger the camp, and the more services, the less the impacts on surrounding local communities. Services that would help reduce impacts include: stores, post office, schools.

Proposal: to construct a "mixed camp", meaning a camp where workers live with their families if desired, or where workers live in trailers or barracks without families if desired.

Part of the construction camp could/would become a permanent city for the operating phase.

The temporary camp could be sited and located so that it would be inundated by water later.

The siting of a permanent camp for families would be important so that the experience is as pleasant as possible: meaning, it was sited on dry land so people could get out and walk, and near trees and sun exposure if possible. The more pleasant the place is to live, the more families will enjoy living there and impact existing local communities less.

Limited r & r would be available at camp; workers or families would periodically get out to other areas (larger areas like Anchorage and Fairbanks) for more extended r & r and cultural activities, etc.

4. Policies:

- a. strict regulations where people can go in the upper basin to protect resources, especially hunting and fishing.
- b. no private planes flying in and out.
- c. Policy regarding use of personal vehicles.
- d. Policy to control public access off corridor.

## Objective IV : Plan A cont.

### 5. Commuter Schedules:

- a. ORGANIZED commuter schedule for those who don't live with families. Could be busing from Fairbanks, Anchorage, or Cantwell.
- b. Assumption was made that air commuter would not be reliable enough because of weather.

\*\*Rail on this route could be feasible, but was not considered.

OBJECTIVE IV: To limit changes in the Talkeetna and Trapper Creek areas.

PLAN B:

1. Access Corridor: Either rail to Devil Canyon or Gold Creek, or all rail.  
No direct road access from the west or north.
2. Mode: rail.
3. Nature of construction camp facilities: Something less than a full service camp would be appropriate if the workers can commute in and out to be with their families on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.
4. Policies: the same policies would apply as in Plan A.
5. Commuter Schedules:
  - a. ORGANIZED commuter air and rail schedules from the Anchorage and Wasilla-Palmer areas.



OBJECTIVE V: To encourage changes in the Cantwell area,

1. Access Corridor: access from the Denali Highway only, with a railhead at Cantwell. No access from the west.
2. Mode: rail to Cantwell and road from Cantwell to the Watana site.
3. Nature of construction camp facilities: Minimal facilities: trailers to sleep in (or barracks), mess hall, recreation hall, some family housing for supervisory personnel.
4. Policies:
  - a. Individuals drive their own private vehicles to the sites.
  - b. No policies about when workers come and go, from where, or use of private vehicles.

Again, the same as in Objective III: the absence of policies by the state of Alaska (through the Power Authority) might result in the most changes in Cantwell.

Another kind of policy would be the lack of assertive action: for instance, a state policy to upgrade only the west side of the Denali Highway (and not the entire route) would encourage users to come from Cantwell and go back out to Cantwell, rather than driving on through to the Richardson Highway.

5. Commuter Schedules:
  - a. None.
  - b. No policy on public access.
  - c. No policy on use of fish and game along corridor.

OBJECTIVE VI: To limit changes in the Cantwell area.

1. Access Corridor: access from the Parks Highway on the west; no access at all from the Denali Highway.
2. Mode: either road or railroad.
3. Nature of construction camp facilities: Full service camp, with complete services for all who wish to bring their families. Same description that limits changes in the southern communities would also help to limit changes in Cantwell. See Objective IVa.
4. Polices:  
Same policies that limit changes in the southern communities would help to limit changes in Cantwell also. See Objective IVa.
5. Commuter Schedules:  
ORGANIZED commuter schedules on some regular basis (weekly or bi-weekly.)

## SECTION 2

### BACK-UP DATA

#### COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Community workshops were held in Fairbanks, Talkeetna, and Anchorage in March 1981 in an attempt to determine what concerns the people of these areas had relating to recreation and access planning on the Susitna hydroelectric feasibility study. Information was presented at each workshop concerning several access and recreation plans and comments recorded that could be used to help in access and recreation planning. In all, more than 300 comments were received in response to printed questionnaires. Of these 50 pertained directly to the question of access. Questionnaires were also received relating to recreation, but these comments also often related to access.

Participants in the workshops were presented with four alternative access plans which used various combinations of road and rail access in combination with existing routes (Figure 1). They were: 1) Access Route A - construction of a new road from Hurricane to the Devil Canyon and Watana sites; 2) Access Route B - construction of a railroad to both dam sites from Gold Creek; 3) Access Route C - construction of a road from the Denali Highway to the Watana site, construction of a service road from Watana to Devil Canyon, and construction of a railroad spur from Gold Creek to Devil Canyon; and 4) Access Route D - the same as Route C except that a new road from the Parks Highway would replace the rail spur.

The following table shows the response of the workshop participants.

Route	Fairbanks	Talkeetna	Anchorage	Mail*	Total
Route A	1	3	0	1	5
Route B	13	12	1	5	30
Route C	3	2	0	3	8
Route D	0	0	3	2	5
No Preference	1	1	0	0	2

\*Mail responses were mostly from the Anchorage area and reflect the thinking of that area.

This table shows that most of the people attending the workshops in Fairbanks and Talkeetna favor rail access during and after construction. Additionally, almost half the people in Anchorage favored the rail only alternative. Some of the reasons given were: 1) fewer environmental impacts; 2) easier to limit the number of people and types of activity in surrounding areas; 3) less expensive; and 4) more energy efficient.

About half the people in Anchorage and one-third of the people in Fairbanks and Talkeetna favored some type of road access because they could gain access to areas they feel are currently inaccessible. The Anchorage people tended to favor the Denali route, but in Fairbanks several people spoke out against it because of the potential adverse effects on caribou calving grounds near that route.

In addition, some people at each workshop indicated they favored no access or very limited access. Suggestions ranged from brining in supplies during the winter on snow roads to access by air. Those in favor of air access suggested it as a way to bring workers to the construction site that would lessen impacts on other railbelt communities.

The following is a detailed breakdown of the reasons behind the preferences expressed in the Fairbanks, Talkeetna, and Anchorage workshops.

FAIRBANKS (36 attended, 17 responded)

One who preferred access Route A gave this reason:

1. As a land owner (lottery winner - 20 acres in area east of Indian River and north of Susitna) I'm in favor of access Route A for accessibility into my property. There are a total of 75 people who will be staking up to 20 acres each in the area I've mentioned...

Marilyn Stark

Those who preferred access Route B gave these reasons:

1. Less environmental damage; less public access the better. Also lower cost. I don't want any access.
2. Route B would give the least access and thus cause the least human impact onto land and wildlife. This is the only hope for preserving any of the Nelchina caribou herd.
3. I prefer the all rail alternative because it curtails unlimited public road access. If a road is built, I don't think there's any doubt that pressure will be exerted eventually to open it to the public (as with the haul road). The mere presence of the reservoir(s) will greatly increase boat and float (and ski) plane access, and I think that's enough (too much, in fact). A railroad is the best approach to controlling unlimited access. If alternative route A-2 is feasible, then a rail link from Gold Creek to Devil Canyon should be included, and a road on the north side to Watana, just so there isn't road access all the way in.
4. a) lowest \$ cost to build and operate  
 b) possible interruptions in imported oil supply make more fuel-efficient railroads desirable

c) I'm concerned about impact on Denali Highway

5. Minimal cost; minimal impact on fish and wildlife, wetlands; minimal access; minimal fuel consumption; minimal other energy waste.

In short RAIL ONLY IS THE NEXT ROUTE TO NONE AT ALL.

6. This choice minimizes impact if I must choose an access.

I also see this as a way to control access as if it is a public project sponsored by public \$ and the public can legally demand access (i.e. the haul road). But -- if A, could be fully controlled I'd go with that because as reads -- it causes minimal impact.

7. I would prefer no access from the Denali Highway and I think this is the only access route that prevents this. Also, I think maybe a railroad line could be built to Devil Canyon then a service road could be built on the north side of the river to Watana. The engineering concerns might put construction back two or three years, but this would save 100 years effect on wildlife and environmental concerns.

8. Since feasibility studies on the whole hydro studies are incomplete and inconclusive, as well as studies on access routes, one cannot make a well informed decision at this time. Therefore, I cannot find any particular route acceptable. However, since a rail access route would be most limiting to private vehicular traffic, I favor it over others, since I value the existing recreational and scenic potential, and hope for a minimal change in those potentials.

9.
  - a) railroad right-of-way has less impact than a road or highway.
  - b) access of the general public is better controlled into the area.
  - c) construction of the railroad appears to be less costly way to go. You can haul more material or freight on one train than what 60 trucks could do

10. to limit the access to recreationalists: no recreational vehicles:  
no speed boats.
11. no road; costs less; costs less to maintain road.
12. Rail only has the least long term impact. I feel this should be considered even if it puts your starting date for construction back 1-3 years. The added time (i.e. setback) will be the best for the long term. I favor as little impact. (I prefer no Susitna dam).  
If the dam was built -- rail should be the only access.
13. With a railroad spur which will be needed to move in the big turbines and other pieces of equipment you will not need a road system and it is also the less costly of all of the access routes and it will keep the area wilderness and limit public access.

Those who favored access Route C gave these reasons:

1. The highway access via the Denali should be eliminated if "C" is considered (environmental concerns and mainstream development to the south are prime reasons for this choice. I would like to see interconstruction development at rail nodes kept to a minimum and a consistent awareness for the local habitants kept as a forerunning concern.
2. Most expedient, hence lowest cost especially as regards Watana.
3. Apparently lowest impact on wildlife habitat along Denali Highway.  
Watana route, depending on recreational plan decided on.
4. The least environmental impact.

No reason for favoring Route D.

I e comment with no choice.

1. I don't feel I have enough information as to the pros and cons of



route.

Each one interferes with wildlife habitat and migration routes in about equal ways, it seems.

Using a railroad seems a less disturbing way -- it can control access -- but a road cannot. Even the railroad will allow off road vehicles to get in there.

TALKEETNA (38 attended, 17 responded)

Those who favored access Route A did so for these reasons:

1. Keep the countryside as much like it is as possible.
2.
  - a) Retain the wilderness status of this area as much as possible.
  - b) I do not accept the assumption that there will be public access.
  - c) Rail access from Gold Creek with tourists riding in and out may be acceptable.
  - d) I especially don't want to see boats on the lake and their associated hunting and fishing, camping, etc. pose a great threat to the wilderness.
  - e) Large buffer zones of no access on the lake and power lines.
3. Minimum road access.

Those who favored access Route B did so for these reasons:

1.
  - a) restrict private and commercial vehicles to the sites.
  - b) environmental impact of railroad (after construction) would appear to be much less severe than a road.
    - 1) no stopping, parking, shooting, etc. from the side of the road.
    - 2) no 4 x 4's or ATVs driving off into the wilderness

c) cheapest alternative

d) least impact on communities.

1) would limit the manpower to air transport.

2. Least public impact, yet allowing those that are willing to go through the trouble to get there, the ways and the means to do so. Also, once completed possibly would be less problem maintaining.
3. Least adverse effect on environment over long term.
4. The railroad would at least minimize impact on the area.
5. Limit access for construction and maintenance only; no public road needed; railroad easiest to regulate in this manner could be removed after construction is finished.
6. Railbelt area already handles population. Expanding this service is easier than developing new population centers or areas. Public access is contained to certain places (designated by train stops).
7. Railroad only gives greater control over access. Americans must and can learn to divorce themselves from their vehicles. With railroad only, you gain greater control over total numbers going to the site and also control over developments along the route.
8. Would get the project completed with the least amount of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The railroad would be far more economical way to move materials with the least long-lasting impact.
10. Least impact on area and future generations will get to see and enjoy it as it was. People don't bring their ATV with them on the train, nor do they have the ability to stop everywhere. The area along railroads is less impacted than areas along roads. And people in the future will travel via public transportation -- not private cars.
11. Limits access by the masses by train or air. I am 100% opposed to any road use especially as it applies to vehicular (private auto)

One favored C over A for this reason:

1. The reason for my choice between A or C is cost. I live close to Mile 99½ Parks Highway. I'm not necessarily excited about more roads but there is a need. If a road is put in hopefully the wildlife would be protected for all to see and enjoy. No hunting permitted close to the highway. Perhaps park rangers would teach people how to appreciate and care for their state. I'd just like to see people enjoy Alaska as we did 16 years ago before it became overcrowded.

No one favored D.One didn't mark a choice, but noted this comment:

This meeting is supposed to be part of a feasibility study so you shouldn't be giving just four options to choose from. I resent the feeling you give me that you are trying to sell me a plan with a few options to choose from. If I must accept this dam then I favor access routes that allow the least amount of public access and the least amount of human population growth. The social and economic aspects of the dam will have the greatest impact on the natural environment, and they should be minimized. The haphazard way you gather comments is not good. It favors people who are most vocal and doesn't give a true consensus of opinion. The less people that enter the area the better. M. C. Schwab

ANCHORAGE (40 attended, 4 responded)

No one preferred access Route A.

One preferred access Route B for this reason:

1. Access B will limit impacts.

Is it possible to mail materials ahead of time so public can study?

Why hasn't Corps study been read?

Has effect of overall population on recreation been considered?

Why isn't more hard data available to public?

No one preferred C.Three preferred D for these reasons:

1. This alternative will provide quick access for construction with later maximum recreational benefit. C is second choice, A is third, B is fourth.

2. Provides maximum public access to otherwise inaccessible areas.

Provides better access from Anchorage to Denali Highway area. The greater length of highway system decreases hunting pressure on any segment of road or nearby fly in lakes.

Additional routes allow for flexibility and diversity in hauling in materials, equipment and supplies.

The service road between the dam MUST be open for the public as public funds will be used for \_\_\_\_\_. This access to this area is required regardless of dam construction.

3. Prefer D with modifications.

Road mode is most flexible during construction phase and most useable by the public after construction -- I am very familiar with the country and favor a road from Hurricane to Devil Canyon, then cross the river and on to Watana on the north side -- this segment will have south slope aspect (much better than south side of river), a lot of wind ex-

posure so will be easier to keep snow free -- I do not favor construction from Denali Highway south to Watana -- that is unnecessary if the above scheme were followed -- permafrost, wetlands impacts and deep snow problems abound on this route -- the preferred "Watana construction first" can be accomplished with this proposal as you will have to cross at Devil Canyon anyway -- this routing would also avoid some very difficult construction along south side of Su east of Devil Canyon.

MAIL (11 responded, mostly from the Anchorage area)

One who preferred access Route A gave this reason:

1. Felt a road to both dam sites would be of benefit to all parties, both during and after construction.
2. No practical reason to build road from Denali; the majority of workers will be coming from Anchorage and Fairbanks and for the few workers from Delta, Glennallen, and Paxson the extra distance wouldn't justify the cost. Tourists will come from Anchorage also.

Those who favored access Route 3 gave these reasons.

1.
  - a) minimal disruption to existing recreation patterns
  - b) minimal tax dollar waste to accommodate governmentally contrived recreation programs, frivolity in a time of serious national needs.
  - c) minimal imposed detriments to the habitat.
2.
  - a) rail access sufficient for construction and maintenance
  - b) delay is a plus - more time to study environmental implications such as impact on Cook Inlet fisheries.
  - c) rail access least expensive.

3. rail access lesser evil as access could be more effectively limited.  
The potential loss of wetlands and raptor nesting habitat is particularly disturbing.
4.
  - a) cheapest (don't waste money)
  - b) disturbs the wilderness least; can be removed when both dams are built.
  - c) access for maintenance by float plane or helicopter.
  - d) hard to maintain either a railroad or highway in heavy snow or cold winters.
5. restricts or limits access and has minimal effect to the area.

One who favored C or D gave these reasons.

1. Gets away from the scheduling problems of A and B.
2. Economically best after B.
3. Opens up large new area for recreation.
4. Preserves the environmental integrity of the roadless south side of the river.

Two who favored access Route C gave these reasons.

1. Having worked for the Dept. of Highways in the area for 20 years, observation that a road from the Denali would be easiest to build and maintain; less hills, less wetlands, and is more suited to road construction.
2.
  - a) provides easy access for construction and opens up beautiful areas for recreational purposes.

- b) highway access is important not only for construction but for continued public access not dependent of train schedules or passenger services limitations.

Two who favored access Route D gave these reasons:

1. Would let most all highway travellers see one dam area while keeping the Watana area under less pressure by people.  
Don't want to see State and Federal governments involved in railroad unless the State purchases the railroad before the dams are constructed.
2.
  - a) no service road between dams.
  - b) construct and service power lines between dams with helicopters.
  - c) boat access to reservoirs; road access would make it look like Big Lake.

#### MINERS AND GAME GUIDE QUESTIONNAIRES

Two separate questionnaires were distributed: one to game guides registered in Unit 13 of the Upper Susitna Basin; the other to members of the Alaska Miners Association in Fairbanks and Anchorage. The game guide questionnaire was mailed to 200 guides and 29 responses were received, a return of 15%. The miners' questionnaires were given to members of the Miners Association in Fairbanks and the Board of Directors in Anchorage. It is not known how many were distributed. Eighteen were returned.

Fifty-six (56) percent of the game guides were in favor of public access while 31% were opposed. Responses on what game habitats should not be disturbed were varied, but tended to indicate several areas of concern. One was the Deadman's Creek drainage and the area south of the

Denali Highway that is utilized by the Nelchina caribou herd. Other areas mentioned were the Susitna River proper and several of its major tributary areas. The project area in general was seen to be a prime game and fishing area. Over 40% of the guides favored rail only access and this was often mentioned as first choice with others listed second or third.

The questionnaire included a map (Figure 2) that showed four access routes. These were not the same routes that were presented at the community workshops. The reason for this is the route north of the Susitna was eliminated from consideration due to environmental and engineering problems around the Portage Creek area.

Almost all the miners (90%) favored some type of public access, but the questionnaire did not present alternative routes. Most of this group used the general project area for some type of mineral related activity and use was limited to summer months.



## GAME GUIDE QUESTIONNAIRE - February and March 1981

1. What areas of the Susitna River basin do you use?

General answers included Upper Susitna, Tsusena Valley, Clark Creek, Talkeetna River to Kosina Creek, Denali Creek area, Clarence Lake, Lake Louise, Watana Creek.

8 said they used all or most of it. 5 said they used none of it.

2. What kind of use?

25 considered themselves primarily game guides. Of these, 19 included the words "hunting and fishing" as part of their occupation, such as in "guiding hunting and fishing trips". A total of 22 included "hunting or "fishing" plus some other use, such as "mining, prospecting", "rock-hounding", "trapping", "rafting", or "photography".

3. What level of use do you give these areas?

The words "heavy", "moderate", and "light" were used in similar proportion. The seasons listed most were spring through fall. Three persons responded that they use the area from eight months to all year.

Specifically:

May - October:	3	July - Sept.:	1
June - October:	2	May - Dec.:	1
July - August:	1	10 mo./year:	1
June - Sept.:	1	Apr.-May/Aug.-Sept.	1
August - Sept.:	2		

4. What game habitats should not be disturbed?

Specific locations mentioned included Watana Creek, Kosina Creek, Jay Creek, the area along the Susitna River, Fog Creek, north and southwest of Moosehorn Lake, Stephan Lake, Clarence Lake, Big Lake, along the Alaska Railroad proposed, Portage Creek, Butte Lake, Otter Lake. One person expressed concern about the possible disturbance of swan and salmon spawning grounds. Several expressed concern for the habitats of moose, grizzly and black bear, and caribou. Some specific statements were:

Impossible to list, Big Su is a key game habitat; effort should be made to stay near water with all travel.

Caribou migration routes, winter moose areas, black and grizzly bear denning areas.

The area bounded by Portage Creek to the west, the Susitna River to the south and east and the Denali Highway to the north is the best game country left in the Talkeetna Mountains.

Wintering areas in all major drainages should not be disturbed.

Those who saw no problems if game habitats are disturbed: 9.

Those who mentioned concern about the disturbance in specific locations, or of specific animals, or disturbance of the wilderness in general: 16.

5. Which access do you prefer?

The guides were given four choices: Corridor 1 - North side of Susitna River from Talkeetna; Corridor 2 - South side of Susitna River from Talkeetna; Corridor 3 - North from Denali highway; and Railroad - South side of Susitna River. They were also allowed to check all the boxes they felt were acceptable.

Corridor 1	6	Railroad	18
Corridor 2	11	Left it blank	4
Corridor 3	10	Answered "none of the above"	1
		Answered "whatever is cheapest and best"	1

6. Reasons for the above choice:

Comments supporting the railroad included: "less vehicle access means less impact on the animal population and the environment"; OR "It would be more direct." When specific corridors were chosen, the comments tended to be general about the possible disturbance of one or another animal population. Occasionally there was a specific individual comment, such as, "I suppose it's just selfishness but Corridor 1 come closest to the access I use."

7. Would you like to see public access to the project area by privately-owned vehicles after construction is completed?

Yes:	18	Not sure:	1
No:	10	Limited access only:	1
		No response:	2

8. Reason for position on public access:

Those who said yes: I'm paying for it so I'll use it; I support hydro power; all Americans have the right to all of America with the exception of land that is privately owned; we need tourist development and recreational development.

Those who said no: There will be an innundation of people; business will suffer; animal habitats will be destroyed along the river; would prefer the area be left a wilderness; what will happen to the fish; this is a power project, not a recreational facility.

Respondents to this questionnaire reside in:

Anchorage	9	Haines	1
Eagle River	1	Chugiak	2
Palmer	3	Homer	1
Cantwell	1	Ketchikan	1
Willow	3	Juneau	1
Gustavus	1	Kasilof	1
Fairbanks	1	Wasilla	1
Tok Highway	1	No name or address	1

## MINERS QUESTIONNAIRE -- February and March 1981

1. Member of what group or groups:

Fairbanks Alaska Miners	11
Anchorage Alaska Miners	6
Nome Alaska Miners	1
Interior Alaska Trappers	0
Southcentral Trappers	0
Registered guide	1
Other: Fur Takers of America	1

Miners reside in:

Fairbanks	10
Anchorage	6
Maclaren River	1
Palmer	1

2. What part of the Upper Susitna basin is of particular interest to you:

Almost every respondent had a different answer. Specifically they were:

Watana Creek	1	Butte Creek	1
Coal Creek	1	Clearwater Mtns.	1
Portage Creek-		Fog Lakes	1
Tsusena Creek	1	Gold Creek	1
Valdez Creek	1	Chulitna	1
Oshetna and		Maclaren	1
Black Rivers	1	All parts	4
Devil Canyon	1	No parts	1
		Upper Susitna Basin	1

One respondent who answered the form in detail said, "Of course, the Maclaren is of major interest to me since that is my home base. However, I would be violently opposed to using the Denali Highway as as dam access. Aside from the esthetic reasons, it would be an economic disaster for me, as a major portion of my trapline runs from Mile 7 Denali Highway to Mile 71."

3. What area of the river basin do you currently use:

Answers mirrored those above. Specifically:

Watana Creek	2	Butte Creek	1
Coal Creek	1	Clearwater Mtns.	1
Chulitna Canyon	1	Lower Susitna	1
Chulitna Creek	1	Upper Susitna	1
Stephan-Fog Lakes	1	Upper + Middle	1
South side-Susitna		Upper Tsusena Creek	1
drainage of		Devil Canyon	1
Fhunilma Creek	1	N/A	1
		None	4

4. What kind of use?

Minerals exploration	2	Recreation/rest	2
Trapping wolves that		Mining	5
prey on wintering	1	Hunting/fishing	4
moose		Hardrock minerals	1
Mineral development	1	None	1
Trapping	1	N/A	1

5. What level of use do you give the areas:

Light use was listed most frequently, though moderate and heavy use were also put down. Specific dates:

June - September	7
Oct. 15 - April 1	
plus Sept. deer hunt	1
None	1
N/A	1
Fall and Winter	2
Year-round	1
September - October	1

6. Would you like to see public access via privately-owned vehicle after construction is completed?

Yes	16
No	2

7. What is the principal reason for your position on access?

Yes answers:

Access to potentially productive mineral deposits	5
Public funds, public use	10
Recreation use	3
Hunting and fishing	1

One respondent who answered yes, added, "I strongly feel we should extract all minerals from this area before we complete the dam and begin flooding the area."

No answers:

The area is undisturbed now, don't want to lose that	1
The game population will be driven down	1



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SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

RECREATION PLAN

Public Forum Questionnaire

1. The development approach I most prefer is \_\_\_\_\_. (List only one.)  
(letter)

2. Do you have any suggested modification to the above selected approach?  
Please number each suggestion.

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3. Why did you chose your particular approach?

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4. a. In which region of the state do you live:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Anchorage  
\_\_\_\_\_ Fairbanks  
\_\_\_\_\_ Railbelt (between Anchorage and Fairbanks)

b. How would you classify the place where you live?

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| _____ Urban              | _____ Small town   |
| _____ Rural              | _____ Rural remote |
| _____ Other...list _____ |                    |

c. Do you represent a particular interest group? If so, please list.

---

You may use the back side for any additional comments.

Thank you.



## ALASKA POWER AUTHORITY

## ACCESS TO PROPOSED SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

1. What areas of the Susitna River basin do you currently use? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. What kind of use? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. What level of use do you give those areas? (Be as specific as possible: months of year? every year? heavy, moderate or light? etc.?)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  4. Please list the location of significant game habitats that you feel should not be disturbed. Be as specific as possible. Efforts will be made to avoid key game habitats.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  5. Look at the map on the back of the yellow flyer. Which access do you prefer?  
Check all the ones you find acceptable.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Corridor one \_\_\_\_\_ Corridor two \_\_\_\_\_ Corridor three \_\_\_\_\_ Railroad
  6. Please give your reasons for your choices in #5. (Your reasons give the planners important information to use in making their recommendations for an access plan.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  7. Would you like to see public access to the Susitna hydroelectric project area by privately owned vehicle after the construction is completed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  8. What is the principle reason for your position on public access to the project area  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your assistance! Please return this form before March 15th to:

Alaska Power Authority  
Public Participation Office  
333 West 4th Avenue, Suite 31  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501