



FD 35095

EI-18952

Note - copy of CRM report available at OEA.

August 15, 2012

PROJECTS MAINTENANCE AND ENGINEERING

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Judith Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer
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Anchorage, AK 99501-3565

Catherine Glidden
Environmental Protection Specialist
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800) Compliance
Port MacKenzie Rail Extension Project
May 2012 Archaeological Surveys - Segment 6

Dear Ms. Bittner and Ms. Glidden:

In May 2012, in accordance with the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension (PMRE) Programmatic Agreement (PA), staff from HDR Alaska, Inc. and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) Cultural Resources Division conducted archaeological surveys in selected areas within the Area of Potential Effects (APE). This letter submits the final PMRE project 2012 Survey Report for Segment 6 documenting the results of those surveys.

Segment 6 of the PMRE project is planned for construction during fall 2012. Cultural resources staff conducted surveys within the portions of the Segment 6 APE for direct effects that had not been previously surveyed. Both moderate and selected low probability areas were surveyed. The level of effort and methodology were based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Surface Transportation Board (STB).

The enclosed report was prepared by ARRC, the MSB, and the Knik Tribal Council (KTC), collectively referred to as the Working Group, and all parties are in agreement with the recommendations and findings. Consultation with other parties was in accordance with the MOU, with KTC representing other Tribes who were concurring parties to the PA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

The 2012 Segment 6 survey documented several cultural resources within the APE; however, most of these resources are modern in age and included 55-gallon barrels, an

abandoned vehicle, automobile tires, other modern debris, and areas of ground disturbance that may be material testing/assay pits. Resources that are less than 50 years old do not require reporting to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of History and Archaeology (ADNR, OHA) for recording in the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs). In addition, as these resources are not of exceptional importance, they do not meet the criteria consideration for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The survey also identified an area of scattered surface historic material remains (ANC-03741) that includes rusted metal bed springs, metal trunk latching, cook stove, cans, metal lamp base, and rectangular boxes; glass jars and bottles; a section of dimensional lumber with rusted nails; a rectangular depression possibly left from a removed building; and a smaller depression that may represent a privy pit. An additional historic period site, the Little Susitna River Railroad Bridge (ANC-00085), is located within the Segment 6 APE. Determinations of eligibility for ANC-03741 and ANC-00085 are included in Section 3.3 of the enclosed report and summarized below.

The survey also confirmed that another historic period site listed on the AHRs and located in the APE (Houston R.R. Station, ANC-00086) no longer exists. As all materials associated with the former siding along the rail embankment (e.g., rails and ties) have been removed, this site does not meet the NRHP significance criteria or aspects of integrity. Therefore, no determination of eligibility for ANC-00086 is included in the enclosed report.

Based on the information in the enclosed report and in accordance with the PA, we recommend the following findings for STB's consideration.

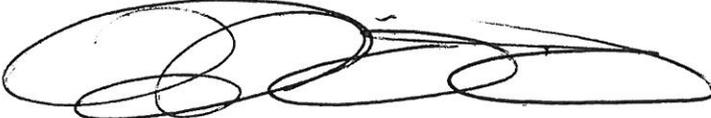
- ANC-03741 is not eligible for listing in the NRHP because this site has no documented association with important historic events and has lost its depositional context; only scattered surface materials remain.
- The Little Susitna River Railroad Bridge (ANC-00085) was determined not eligible for listing on the NRHP in 2005; however, no concurrence with SHPO was reached on eligibility. In order for the project to proceed in a timely manner, the Working Group recommends that ANC-00085 be assumed eligible for the NRHP for the purposes of this project and that proposed project construction and operation would have minimal impact on the structure. The bridge will remain in place and will continue to be used by ARRC, and a new bridge of similar scale will be constructed adjacent to the older structure. There will be no direct effect to ANC-00085; however, there will be a minor indirect (visual) impact to the setting. The introduction of another railroad bridge into the setting of ANC-00085 would be consistent with its character of use and would be a minor visual change that would not diminish its integrity. Therefore, the proposed new railroad bridge would result in "no adverse effect" on ANC-00085 pursuant to the criteria set forth in 36 CFR 800.5. In accordance with Stipulation IV.B. of the Programmatic Agreement, no mitigation is required because adverse effects were avoided.

Per our discussions regarding reporting for the additional surveys to be conducted in 2012, we will refine the reporting process to facilitate efficient review and comment. Reports for future segments will include pertinent information associated with survey

results and may reference appropriate sections of previous reports rather than repeat information that has not changed. If possible, we will combine reporting of surveys for more than one segment into one report rather than creating separate reports. However, please note that this may not be possible, given construction schedules, field season limitations, and property acquisition considerations for the various segments.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the address above, at (907) 265-3095, or by email at LindamoodB@akrr.com. You may also contact Barbara Hotchkin at (907) 265-2313 or hotchkinb@akrr.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the typed name.

Brian Lindamood
ARRC Project Manager

Enclosure:

PMRE Project 2012 Survey Report Segment 6 (August 2012)

cc:

Victoria Rutson, STB
Shina duVall, OHA
Brad Sworts, MSB
Barbara Hotchkin, ARRC
Fran Seager-Boss, MSB
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