

# MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

350 E Dahlia Ave, Palmer Alaska 99645

## CHAIRPERSON

Mike Wood

## VICE CHAIR

Andy Couch

## MSB STAFF

Ted Eischeid



## BOARD MEMBERS

Howard Delo

Larry Engel

Tim Hale

Peter Probasco

Jesse Sumner

Kendra Zamzow

*Ex officio:* Jim Sykes

# FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

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Planning and Land Use Department - Planning Division

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**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH**  
**MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission Agenda**

Edna Devries, Mayor

Mike Wood – Chair  
Andy Couch – Vice Chair  
Howard Delo  
Larry Engel  
Tim Hale  
Peter Probasco  
Jesse Sumner  
Kendra Zamzow  
Jim Sykes – Ex officio member

Ted Eischeid - Staff



Michael Brown, Borough Manager

PLANNING & LAND USE DEPARTMENT  
Alex Strawn, Planning & Land Use Director  
Kim Sollien, Planning Services Manager  
Jason Ortiz, Development Services Manager  
Fred Wagner, Platting Officer

*Lower Level Conference Room  
Dorothy Swanda Jones Building  
350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer*

**April 21, 2022**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
4:00 p.m.

Ways to participate in MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings:

IN PERSON: Lower Level Conference Room.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

**Microsoft Teams meeting**

**Join on your computer or mobile app**

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I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
*We acknowledge that we are meeting on traditional lands of the Ahtna and Dena'ina people, and we are grateful for their stewardship of the land, fish, and wildlife throughout time immemorial.*

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 17, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes

- VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*three minutes per person at Chair's Discretion*)
- VII. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
  - 1. West Susitna Access Road Project
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
  - 1. MEA Utility Project, RS FWC 22-02
  - 2. Special June 2 FWC Meeting Planning – Water Reservation Questions
  - 3. Recreation Rivers Act/Board discussion.
  - 4. BOF/BOG Nominees Recommendations
- X. MEMBER COMMENTS
- XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, May 19, 4 PM, LLCR.
- XII. ADJOURNMENT

**Disabled persons needing reasonable accommodation in order to participate at a MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting should contact the borough ADA Coordinator at 861-8432 at least one week in advance of the meeting.**

**MSB FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION Regular Meeting: March. 17, 2022****Minutes**

DSJ Building, Lower Level Conference Room //TEAMS Remote Participation

*Minutes prepared by Ted Eischeid, Planner*

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I. CALL TO ORDER

Call to order at 4:05 by chair Mike Wood.

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Present: Mike Wood (MW), Andy Couch (AC), Howard Delo (HD), Larry Engel (LE), Pete Probasco (PP), Kendra Zamzow (KZ), Jim Sykes (Sykes), Jesse Sumner (arrived late).

Absent: Tim Hale

*We acknowledge that we are meeting on traditional lands of the Ahtna and Dena'ina people, and we are grateful for their stewardship of the land, fish, and wildlife throughout time immemorial.*

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by MW, Second by LE.

No objection to changing order as follows: move VII-2 to after the pledge.

Motion passes unanimously.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. PRESENTATION

1. Alaska Recreation Rivers Board (RRB) representatives, MW gave an introduction.

Presenters: Monica Alvarez (MA), and Isreal Mahay (IM).

IM: Makes his living from the Rec Rivers (RR) area; have had three meetings so far, no major decisions, waiting for the scoping process from DNR, it has been 30 years since the mgmt. plan was written; feels public comment is very important to the RRB.

MA: Governor has reconstituted the RRB after 30 years of inactivity; the advisory board is needed to modify the plan if needed; have not officially kicked off the process yet, but soon; regarding public participation, the scoping process will involve public input which will inform the scope of work on exactly how much of the plan will be changed, and the final plan revisions will also be open for public review and comment.

HD: It is thought the reason for this plan to be reviewed is due to the West Susitna Access Road (WSAR) project, and given the history of trying to get rid Rec Rivers Act, I'd like to point out that on the packet red p. 24, conservation of fish and wildlife is key; if WSAR goes in, who will maintain it, will it be built to state standards, and what actions will occur to preserve fish/wildlife populations?

IM: we want to protect the fish, and we have a good group on the board; unfortunately I can't answer any of the specific questions at this point from the Board position yet as we haven't

gotten that far into the process;

HD: I hoped by raising the questions that it would create a concern for these issues among the board members.

LE: for MA, we are aware that the RRB has started work, but little has been raised about the RR planning team, what is the membership of this planning team right now?

MA: There is a planning team, just recently established, on the web, normal members for such a meeting, but the planning team hasn't had any meetings yet.

Stephen Braund for MA: what are the small changes that people want to make? Is there a summary?

LE: when this was started it indicated that DNR had found some issues with the RR program, so what is driving this program of updating?

MA: The problem with the RR act is it is required the RRB to be re-constituted to update I periodically, and there has never been a governor that who did this. Over time there have been tweaks needed to update the plan.

J. Sykes: follow up to LE question, many RRB members are agency members which seems to be a new practice – is that correct? MA: the RRB is different from the planning team.

MW: How many paid staff on RRB? MA: there are two, forestry rep and a DEC rep.

IM: So MA, where is the money coming from to finance this process and cost/budget? MA: There has been no specific allocation for this plan revision.

PP: Monica, what kind of timeframe to review and revise the plan? MA: we will know more after scoping, which will define the scope of work and the time needed. I'm thinking we will probably need a full revision, which will take longer.

KZ: Related to the public process, will the public be able to see each specific comment versus a "comment summary", and who is determining the "purpose of need" for the scoping work? MA: the scoping is literally putting it out, gathering info, not like an EIS scoping process; not sure how we will treat the comments, we usually do a summary, but can put individual comments out with the proper redactions.

MW: related to KZ, are the changes requested being driven by the public or the state? MA: probably from both.

KZ: looking at the planning process, looks like there will be certain time periods, wondering about the timing as you might have to get field information, so does that affect things? MA: yes, that could impact things. If we need to take more time we will.

AC: whatever we do with the RR plan, I would like us to work hard to maintain access of these areas to the public. IM: I agree with that concern.

J. Sumner: my understanding the RRB was reconstituted to meet state statute. IM: yes that's correct, but I also see the RRB as critical as we are representing the public.

MW: I think there will be more comments and public participation once DNR rolls out some proposed plan changes; I thank you both for your participation today.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (previously known as MIUTES)

A. December 13, 2021, Special Meeting Minutes

AC moved to approve; LE seconded.

AC – added the PU data, not a change, but an addition.

KZ made correction on red p. 7.

Motion Passes Unanimously as corrected.

B. February 17, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes

LE moved to approve; AC seconded.

Correction made on r. p. 12 regarding spelling of “minutes” (miutes).

Motion Passes Unanimously as corrected.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*three minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing*)

Neil Dewitt: wanted to say the RR process is very important; have attended the WSAR public input meetings; the WSAR public meeting had no clue on putting in fish passage culverts.

Bill Stoltze, staff lobbyist; the Assembly repealed the shooting range ordinance unanimously; visited Senator Revak and looks like we will have a Senate Resources Committee presentation in the future.

Amber McDonough: Update on the MEA Fishhook to Pitmann powerline project; on March 14 MEA approved the northern route which will impact salmon habitat and wildlife habitat; did an informal survey; MEA will be submitting the Decisional Document to MSB next week, which makes everything public and starts a 21 day appeal process; would ask for a FWC resolution against, and would request Mr. Delo write an article.

Rep. Rauscher

Stephen Braund

John Head: MEA has kept their project quite; this project will have a negative impact on fish and wildlife; concerned about ATV damage; line will cross 10 spawning streams; would like FWC add this to the April agenda.

J. Sumner: would have to recuse himself on MEA issue potentially.

VIII. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

1. Mat-Su Delegation representative, District 9 House Rep. George Rauscher

I appreciate being here; I thank you for inviting me;

Rep. Rauscher gave a legislative update.

3. Staff Report

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Hatchery Pink Salmon Impacts

HD: move adopt draft 3, blue page 3-4; second by PP.

Discussion: PP – correction , this should be addressed to the committee on hatcheries. Not a pink hatchery issue.

AC: Under comments, I would think we should write this as “supports benefits of the Alaska salmon hatchery program”; also concerned about the last sentence in the last paragraph;

PP: Management is two pronged; managing for one stock can negatively impact a different stock.

J. Sykes: to PP, it seems we don’t know how hatchery fish are affecting wild stocks; PP answered.

AC: I understand PP’s answer, but when I read this I find this a bit confusing;

LE: I was also confused

Motion to Amend: AC, seconded by LE. Minor changes to the wording the last sentence.

Motion to amend passes unanimously.

Motion to Amend: AC, add words “benefits of” into first sentence under “comments”, seconded by PP.

Motion to amend passes unanimously.

Motion to Amend: LE, to strike part of the first sentence saying “formerly the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Commission”, second by PP.

Motion to amend passes unanimously.

Main motion, as amended, passes unanimously.

## 2. West Susitna Access Road Proposal Comment RS FWC 22-01

LE moved to approve RS FWC 22-01 as presented; AC seconded.

Discussion:

KZ: made some minor changes to text of.

PP: looks good to me.

Motion passes unanimously with Mr. Sumner recusing himself.

## X. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. DNR Water Reservation Public Notice Concerns

KZ: gave overview; sent questions to DNR; would like to see DNR add the background links to the original Public Comment notice, as well as the comment period being lengthened.

AC: Thanks Kenda for doing a great job; discharge chart was illuminating.

LE: this is a critical issue that the FWC should look into. Need a DNR/ADFG presentation about their methodologies and their decision making processes; how do they pick and choose streams to review?;

AC: Its like DNR does not want comments.

PP: How can we get more involved?

AC: Maybe get involved with legislators.

LE: We could get a DNR supervisor here for a dialogue and presentation; involve DNR at one meeting, and ADFG for a second meeting.

PP: Maybe a special meeting should be set up;

KZ: some of the tribal entities have reservation applications in that haven’t been acted on; this is a concern for some of the tribes.



AC: Moves that Ted attempt to set up a special meeting on this issue with DNR for this before the summer break. PP: second.  
Motion passes unanimously.

XI. MEMBER COMMENTS

LE:

PP: Thanks for the meeting, St. Patrick’s day;

HD:

J. Sumner: Excited to see RRB set back up and operating; thank you.

KZ: keep an eye on the wetland permitting proposal by the state in lieu of federal permitting.

AC: Moose Management Letter, would like to share this with the Assembly, and to use this letter as a basis for future communications, and to set up an annual special meeting with ADFG for on game issues.

J. Sykes: thank you all;

MW: I miss everyone, sorry I couldn’t be there. I agree with KZ about concerns over state taking over the wetland permitting.

XII. NEXT MEETING DATE: April 21, 2022. 4 PM. LLCR-DSJ Building and Remote.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

*AC moved, LE seconded.*

*Motion passes unanimously.*

*Meeting stands adjourned at 6:26 PM.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Wood, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ted Eischeid, Planner II Staff

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

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[Member](#)

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[Johnson](#)

# HOUSE DELENA JOHNSON

30TH-32ND LEGISLATURE (2017  
-2022)



## Representative DeLena Johnson

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District: 11

Party: Republican

Toll-Free: 866-465-4958

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### Legislative Service

2019-2020 Representative House Minority Whip

2017-2022 Representative

[Bio](#)

[Committee  
Membership](#)

[Legislature Bill  
Sponsorship](#)

[Voting Record](#)

DeLena Johnson, state representative for District 11, Palmer, Alaska grew up in Talkeetna, a small community with less than 900 people. She graduated from Susitna Valley High School in 1981, married her husband, Steve Johnson, and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from UAA and an associate degree in Electronics from Mat-Su College.

DeLena and Steve raised and schooled their five children in Palmer and now have three grandchildren. In 1984, DeLena started an award-winning property development company specializing in unique Alaskan properties. She went on to serve as president of the Palmer Museum of History and Arts, and she served two terms as Mayor of the City of Palmer, eventually being elected President of the Alaska Conference of Mayors.

DeLena has been elected three times to serve in the Alaska State Legislature. In the 30th State Legislature she served on the House Resources, State Affairs, and Energy Committees. She was elected House Minority Whip while serving in the 31st Alaska State Legislature and was a member of the Education, Legislative Ethics, Legislative Council, and Rules committees. Currently serving in the 32nd Alaska State Legislature, she is serving on the Finance Committee, Legislative Ethics Committee and the Judiciary, University, and Commerce and Economic Development finance subcommittees.

DeLena continues to focus on long-term safety, financial stability, and the prosperity of her constituents. She remains committed to being pro-life, fiscally responsible, and conservative.

Long Comments

Becky Long Comments: Request to be shared with FWC via email dated 4/13/22

Feedback Comments regarding the Revision of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan (Plan): DMLW (ADNR) Planning Process and Discussion of Chapter 1 and 2 of the Plan

To: Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Advisory Board  
The Alaska Department of Natural Resources Planning Team  
The Mat Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission

From: Becky Long, residential property owner to the Talkeetna Recreation River and Corridor

1. The Revision Planning Process has 9 parts to it. The first part is public scoping which is identification of issues by the public for the Draft and Final Plan. The second part is the updated information on natural resources, present land and water use, land ownership, public use, important public use sites, etc.

I believe the order of these two parts should be reversed. We, the public, do not really know how this plan was implemented the last 31 years. What were the results? Plan chapters one and two along with Appendix D lists the recommendations for future actions to carry out the plan. 27 new regulations and 3 new statutes were proposed.

- *I would like to know if these recommended actions happened.*
- *Did the areas recommended for Recreation Rivers additions happen?*
- *There were boating/aircraft/Off Road Vehicle and Long Term camp restrictions in chapter 1 for the rivers and corridors. How did these restrictions work out? Were they successful or abandoned?*
- *Motorized and non-motorized areas were decided in the Plan. Did these work out?*
- *Are there still 100 commercial operators active on the river, 430 private parcels in the corridors, 30 lodges in or adjacent to the corridors, 30 docks, 16 airstrips, 7 major bridges and numerous boat launches?*
- *Were there additions/deletions to special management areas or public use sites?*
- *Were private parcels acquired as stated on page 2-57?*
- *Did DNR remove any unauthorized cabins?*
- *How many and what were the amendments or minor changes made to the Plan?*
- *And if the Plan was not implemented much at all, what were the reasons.*

This is background information that is necessary for a successful revision. These things should be known so that the public can make good scoping comments with some background. **Basically what is the 31 years history of what this Plan has done?**

2. The Governor tried to repeal this Plan in the 2021 legislative session. The Commissioner of DNR stated at the first advisory board meeting in December that the plan has not served the area well. *What does this mean? Is it an impediment to state development plans?*

I do not see that this is an impediment to development. A close reading of chapters 1 and 2 shows these guidelines for development. The Plan does not stop oil and gas leasing, earth material extraction, logging, or agriculture. There are some restrictions on some development.

Long Comments

Development that can coexist with the Plan goals of maintenance and enhancement of the land and water for a variety of uses is allowed. These uses are: fish and wildlife, recreation, public enjoyment, economic use, multiple use of the uplands and accommodation of access.

This whole recreation river process was started around 35 years ago in order to be reserved as a Special Purpose Area under the Alaska Constitution VII section 7 in response to the negative impacts occurring to those waterways.

Becky Long  
Talkeetna River  
4/12/2022

April 5, 2022

# **MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION**

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## **Fishhook to Pittman Power Improvement Project**

*Decisional Document*

**PROJECT NUMBER:**

168584

**PROJECT CONTACT:**

Derik Vowels, PMP

**EMAIL:**

Derik.Vowels@powereng.com

**PHONE:**

503-892-6873



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*Decisional Document*

**PREPARED FOR:** MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

**PREPARED BY:** DERIK VOWELS, PMP

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ATTACHMENT A ROUTING AND SITING STUDY REPORT

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) prepared a Transmission Line Routing and Substation Siting Study (Study) to identify and evaluate alternative transmission line routes and substation sites, and to select a preferred transmission line route and two substation sites for the Fishhook to Pittman Power Improvement Project (Project). The Project is located near the communities of Palmer and Wasilla in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) in the south-central part of Alaska. The Study is included in this document as **Attachment A**.

MEA's 2020 long-range plan, indicates that additional transmission and substation facilities are necessary to meet current and future demand for electricity in the fastest growing region of the state. MEA developed a five-year capital work plan (CWP) to meet the requirements in the 2020 long-range plan, and this Project plays a key role in the CWP. It will increase capacity to meet the growing demand for electricity and provide enhanced reliability for residents and businesses in the Project area as well as benefit members within MEA's entire service territory. The Project is needed now to minimize future outages.

The purpose of the Project is to install a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission system and two new substations. These facilities are necessary to serve future load and to provide redundant transmission feeds to multiple substations. The new 115 kV transmission line would connect the existing O'Neill 115 kV transmission line to the existing McRae Substation. Additionally, the new transmission line will provide a parallel path for power to flow from MEA's Eklutna Generation Station into the areas of Palmer and Wasilla. The new line will increase capacity and provide redundancy. If the Project is not constructed MEA will not be able to serve future load increases, assuming growth continues at rates similar to those seen over the past five years. In addition, the reliability enhancements will not be realized if the Project does not move forward.

More specifically, the Project includes the following facilities:

### **Transmission Line (General)**

A new, approximately 20-mile-long, 115 kV transmission line will connect the O'Neill Tap to the McRae Substation. The transmission line between the O'Neill Tap and Fishhook Substation will be constructed as a double-circuit 115 kV line with space for fiber optic, and 12.5 kV distribution underbuild. The transmission line between the new Palmer-Fishhook Substation and McRae Substation will be constructed as a single-circuit 115 kV line with space for fiber optic and 12.5 kV distribution underbuild. It will be looped between existing transmission sources at McRae Substation and the O'Neill Tap.

### **O'Neill Tap to Palmer-Fishhook Substation Facilities**

The 115 kV transmission line will begin by intersecting the existing O'Neill Tap and continue to the new, not yet constructed Palmer-Fishhook Substation. A minimum of four acres is required for the Palmer-Fishhook Substation site which is being sited in an area near Independence Ave & Wasilla Fishhook Road. The substation will include a power transformer that will serve distribution loads in the Fishhook area with new ties to the existing distribution lines surrounding it. The substation will provide sectionalizing of the transmission line to isolate faults and allow the power transformer to be fed from either the McRae side or the O'Neill Tap side.

### Palmer-Fishhook Substation to Meadow Lakes Substation Facilities

The 115 kV transmission line generally will continue west and then south, along the north side of Wasilla, from the Palmer-Fishhook Substation site to a location within one mile of the corner of Church Road and Seldon Road where it will feed the new, not yet constructed Meadow Lakes Substation. A minimum of four acres is required for the Meadow Lakes Substation site. The substation will include facilities similar to those listed for the Palmer-Fishhook Substation in order to feed distribution loads in the Meadow Lakes Area.

### Meadow Lakes Substation to McRae Substation Line

The 115 kV transmission line will continue southwest from the Meadow Lakes Substation and tap into the 115 kV source at the existing McRae Substation.

MEA developed and employed a comprehensive, systematic process for identifying, evaluating, and selecting a preferred transmission line route and substation sites for the Project. Among the factors that MEA must consider to ultimately make a decision are engineering and design requirements, system planning, constructability, regulatory requirements, environmental constraints and opportunities, public input, permitting, lands and realty, and cost. During this Study, more than 97 miles of route alternatives were analyzed in an approximately 100-square-mile Project Study Area.

Integrated as part of the Study process, MEA committed to implementing a comprehensive public outreach and engagement program to share Project information with and solicit feedback from the communities in and adjacent to the Study Area. From the beginning of the Study MEA conducted briefings with local community leaders, community councils and other agencies to inform them about the Project and solicit feedback. Project briefings were also conducted throughout the process to report the status of the Study and development of route options. A community Focus Group was convened, consisting of 15 local citizens representing diverse interests in the Study Area, who participated in the Project's routing and siting study process, providing feedback to MEA Project Team members throughout the process, which helped contribute to the development of route options and consideration of community concerns and sensitivities. MEA also hosted two public open house meetings (May 17 and September 29, 2021) and one formal Public Hearing (January 19, 2022) at key milestones of the Study process to share Project information with, and solicit questions and comments from, potentially affected landowners and other stakeholders. Section 3.5 (Public Outreach and Engagement) of **Attachment A** provides a detailed overview of the public engagement process.

Based on all decision-making factors, the two better performing route alternatives identified in **Figure 1** minimize impacts within the study area and provide the most feasible opportunities to meet constructability, permitting, and right-of-way (ROW) considerations. A summary of the reasons for and risks associated with the two better performing routes is outlined in **Table 1**. Section 4.4.4 (Level 4 Comparison Results) of **Attachment A** provides a more detailed comparison of the top two best performing routes.

Considering the reasons for and risks associated with the better performing routes and ability to mitigate for many of the public comments raised, the best performing route that minimizes potential property owner impacts while minimizing effects on community resources is the **Northern Route (route segments East C + Central E + Central G + West F + West E)**. MEA intends to pursue this route for design, permitting, and construction as identified by the green line in **Figure 1**. MEA will work through the proper channels to accommodate, to the greatest extent possible, the needs of the community as a responsible steward and neighbor.

MEA is currently in negotiations with landowners to choose two substation sites that meets the factors described above and are most compatible with the Northern Route.

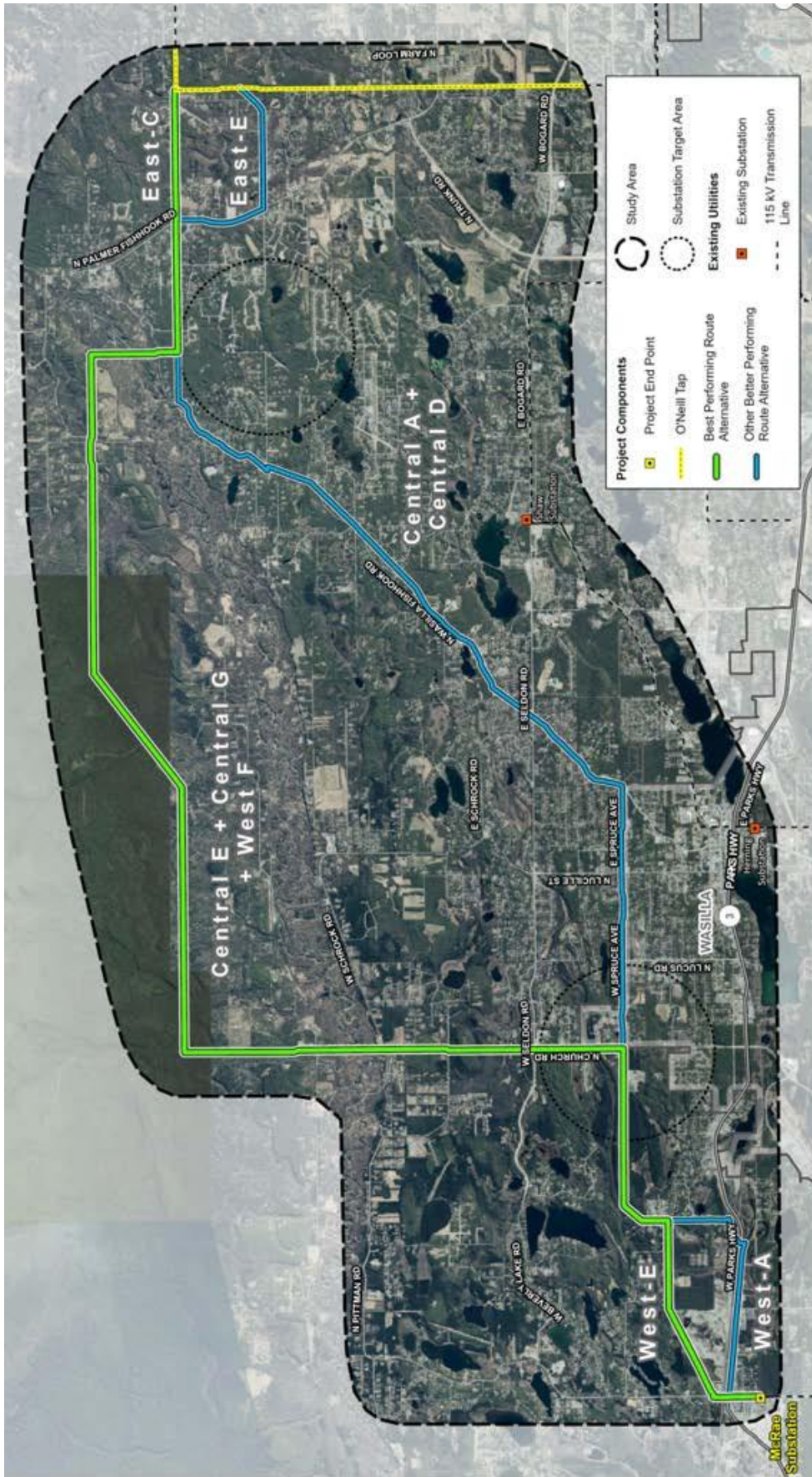


FIGURE 1 BEST PERFORMING ROUTES



**TABLE 1 BETTER PERFORMING ROUTES COMPARISON**

	<b>NORTHERN (WEST E &amp; F / CENTRAL E &amp; G / EAST C)</b>	<b>SOUTHERN (WEST A / CENTRAL A &amp; D / EAST E)</b>
Reasons For Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Least number of parcels crossed (154 parcels, 57% less)</li> <li>Fewest residential buildings within 75 feet (13 buildings, 76% less)</li> <li>Follows section lines (secondary benefit for public access)</li> <li>Many community concerns can be mitigated in design</li> <li>39% of parcels along Central route are state/borough owned</li> <li>Department of Transportation will not allow aerial easement on Parks Highway but open to perpendicular crossing</li> <li>Lowest estimated total cost (reasonable order of magnitude) – \$16,800,000, 33% less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follows existing roads and distribution</li> <li>Least new ROW clearing (8 miles, 53% less)</li> <li>Existing operations and maintenance access</li> <li>Established public access on existing distribution easement</li> <li>Fewest miles of agricultural land crossed (0.5 mile)</li> <li>Avoids crossing of Little Susitna River &amp; tributaries</li> <li>Few oppositional comments on record for the route</li> </ul>
Risks With Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New ROW clearing introduces unwanted public access to neighbors</li> <li>DOT will limit use of aerial road ROW on Church Road</li> <li>Rural access requirements that may affect long term operations and maintenance</li> <li>Additional mitigation may be needed to address Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulatory requirements as a result of Little Susitna River crossing</li> <li>Landowner objection to route may complicate voluntary easements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DOT will not allow aerial easement on Parks Highway and will limit use of aerial road ROW along Wasilla-Fishhook Road.</li> <li>Higher number of parcels crossed (357 parcels, ~2x more)</li> <li>More residents within 75 feet (55 buildings, 4x more)</li> <li>Highest Estimated Total Cost (reasonable order of magnitude) - \$24,900,000, 1.5x more</li> <li>Construction assumes live-line work to minimize outages</li> <li>More complicated landowner coordination during construction due to existing facilities</li> </ul>

**2.0 MSB 17.05.040 TYPE II ESSENTIAL SERVICE UTILITIES-MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

This Decisional Document has been prepared to meet Matanuska Susitna Bourgh Code 17.05.040 for Type II Essential Service Utility requirements for the Pittman to Fishhook Power Improvement Project. The following responses outline how MEA met each of these requirements.

**2.1 MSB 17.05.040 (A) & (B)(1) REQUIREMENT**

*(A) All proposed Type II essential service utilities shall require a public involvement program in accordance with a public participation plan as submitted by the utility in all areas of the borough excluding the cities of Houston, Palmer, and Wasilla.*

(B) *Within 20 calendar days of receipt of the proposed public participation plan, the director shall provide the applicant with written acknowledgement of receipt of the plan, along with any recommendations concerning the proposed process. The public involvement program, at a minimum, must contain the following:*

1) *Minimum requirements.*

- a) *the utility's public involvement program must comply with established state and federal guidelines governing the utility including adequate public notice, public process, public meetings, or public hearings;*
- b) *if no established state or federal guidelines apply to the proposed action, the utility shall follow its own utility board adopted guidelines for public notification and involvement;*
- c) *if there are no established state, federal or utility board adopted guidelines, the public involvement program will consist of the minimum requirements outlined in subsection (B)(2) of this section, Public Involvement; and*
- d) *if a state, federal or utility board adopted public involvement program is used, they must at least meet or exceed the minimum guidelines in subsection (B)(2) of this section, Public Involvement.*

## 2.1 - MEA RESPONSE

MEA submitted a Public Participation Plan (Plan) to the MSB on April 12, 2021. The MSB confirmed the Plan “meets or exceeds the requirements of MSB 17.05,” along with additional follow-up recommendations in a June 2, 2021 letter. The Plan, as well as the MSB approval and MEA’s plan to incorporate recommendations are provided in **Appendix B of Attachment A**.

MEA met or exceeded the minimum public involvement guidelines of MSB Code 17.05.040 (B)(2) below. There were no applicable federal or state public involvement guidelines. MEA incorporated on-going public involvements practices, such as community council briefings and member mail and email notifications starting from the beginning of the study in January of 2021 through February of 2022.

Below includes the dates of community council presentations, other agency presentations, project mailings, project emails, printed newsletter mailings, focus group meetings and other public outreach efforts:

- Meadow Lakes Community Council – January 13, 2021, Study Introduction Presentation
- Transmission Routing and Substation Siting Project Webpage published/live January 19, 2021
- Fishhook Community Council – January 21, 2021, Study Introduction Presentation
- Tanaina Community Council – January 26, 2021, Study Introduction Presentation
- North Lakes Community Council – January 28, 2021, Study Introduction Presentation
- Monthly Member Email – February 19, 2021, Study Introduction and link to online project page (sent to 39,880 member email addresses with 55% read rate)
- Project Focus Group Meeting #1 – March 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Matsu Borough Assembly & Planning Commission Meeting – March 9, 2021
- Project Focus Group Meeting #2 – April 7, 2021
- Fishhook Community Council, April 15, 2021, preliminary route links shown, and first open house invite

- Monthly Member Email –April 21, 2021, Project Open House Invite and study update (sent to 39,880 member email addresses with 55% read rate)
- Tanaina Community Council, April 27, 2021, preliminary route links shown, and first open house invite
- North Lakes Community Council, April 29, 2021, preliminary route links shown, and first open house invite
- Open House #1 Postcard Invite Mailer – Sent April 29, 2021
- MEA Power Lines Quarterly Member Printed Newsletter, Study Article and Open House Recap, sent in May in 40,000 bills
- Wasilla City Council Meeting, May 10, study presentation
- Meadow Lakes Community Council, May 12, 2021, preliminary route links shown and first open house invite
- Monthly Member Email –May 18, 2021, Project Open House Event Reminder and Feedback form link (sent to 39,880 member email addresses with 55% read rate)
- First Project Public Open House, May 19, 2021 at Government Peak Chalet
- MEA Power Lines Member Printed Newsletter, Study Update Article, June 2Q Publication (inserted in 40,000 member bills)
- Study Debriefing with Alaska Farmland Trust, June 15, 2021
- Project Focus Group Meeting #3, September 1, 2021
- Open House #2 Postcard Invite Mailer – Sent August to nearly 8,000 mailing addresses
- Monthly Member Email –September 6, 2021, 2<sup>nd</sup> Project Open House Event Invite and Updated Route Options (sent to 39,880 member email addresses with 55% read rate)
- Meadow Lakes Community Council, September 8, 2021, Study Update Including Northern Area Expansion and Open House #2 Invite
- Tanaina Community Council, September 28, 2021, Study Update Including Northern Area Expansion and Open House #2 Invite
- Open House #2, September 29, 2021, held at Tanaina Elementary School, Study Update Including Northern Area Expansion
- North Lakes Community Council, September 30, 2021, Study Update Including Northern Area Expansion
- Monthly Member Email – October 21, 2021, Project Feedback Form link and link to video of Open House #2 Presentation (sent to 39,880 member email addresses with 55% read rate)
- Fishhook Community Council, October 21, 2021, Study Update and feedback/study timeline extension to include 3<sup>rd</sup> public meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- MEA Power Lines Quarterly Member Newsletter, Study Update Article and Feedback Period Extended Article, sent in November in 40,000 bills
- Project Focus Group Meeting #4, Dec. 15, 2021
- Public Hearing postcard invites mailed Dec. 23, 2021 to nearly 8,000 property owners
- Monthly Member Email –January 11, 2022, Public Hearing Invite and Zoom registration link (sent to 39,880 member email addresses with 60% read rate)
- Public Hearing Event, January 19, 2022, held at Wasilla High Auditorium
- Fishhook Community Council, January 20, 2022, Study and High Performing Routes Update
- Mat-Su Borough Assembly Meeting, February 1, 2022, Study Update
- MEA Power Lines Quarterly Member Newsletter, Study Update and Final Feedback Article – sent in February with 40,000 bills

## 2.2 MSB 17.05.040 (B)(2)(a) REQUIREMENT

2) *Public involvement.*

- a) *a minimum of one public meeting will be held by the utility and shall be held in an area central to the area impacted by proposed action;*

### 2.2 - MEA RESPONSE

MEA held two public open house meetings throughout the year-long study to provide updates to the public on the development of routes and solicit their feedback on specific route links and community concerns. Postcard invites to the open houses were sent in advance to property owners within the study area and additional event outreach included the following: radio ads, social media ads, newspaper ads, MEA monthly email newsletters, public event boards, and disbursement of open house invitations and materials by the community councils through their social media page and e-Newsletters. The first was on May 19, 2021 at the Government Peak Chalet in Palmer. The second was held on Sept. 29, 2021 at the Tanaina Elementary School in Wasilla. The goal of these meetings was to inform the broader public about the Project and solicit comments about the Project and in particular, the preliminary transmission line routes and alternative substation sites. More than 114 people attended the two public open houses and provided 400+ comments on the Project, which MEA considered in completing the Routing Study. See Section 3.5.4 (Public Meetings) of **Attachment A**.

## 2.3 MSB 17.05.040 (B)(2)(b) REQUIREMENT

- b) *a minimum of one formal public hearing will be held by the utility later in the process to allow for formal public testimony. The public hearing will be held in an area central to the area impacted by proposed action;*

### 2.3 - MEA RESPONSE

MEA conducted a formal public hearing at the Wasilla High School on January 19, 2022, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Nearly 8,000 postcard invites were sent out 4-weeks before the public hearing, and additional event advertising included radio ads, print ads, digital ads, social media posts, newsletters, public event boards and community council presentations/updates. During the hearing, MEA provided a presentation that recapped the need for and purpose of the Project, the approach employed for conducting the Study, the public outreach and engagement program, and comments received from the public and responses from MEA. The hearing also consisted of a question and answer period followed by an opportunity for the public to provide formal testimony about the Project. A video/audio recording of the hearing is available on the MEA Project website: <https://www.mea.coop/major-projects/fishhook-to-pittman-transmission-line-and-substation-siting-study>.

A full record of public hearing information is provided in Section 3.5.4 (Public Meetings) of **Attachment A**. A written transcript of the public hearing is also included as **Appendix G** of **Attachment A**.

## 2.4 MSB 17.05.040 (B)(2)(c) REQUIREMENT

- c) *notice of the public meeting and public hearing to occur a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public meeting or public hearing. The public notice will include:*

- i. *three notices in a newspaper of general circulation within the borough;*
- ii. *public postings in local areas such as libraries, public buildings, schools, stores, laundromats, lodges, on the utility's website, and on the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's website, etc.;*
- iii. *public service announcements on local radio stations starting 15 days before the public meeting; and*
- iv. *mailings, as appropriate, including notification of all affected community councils.*

## 2.4 - MEA RESPONSE

Announcements of upcoming public meetings were prepared, and notifications were made at least three to four weeks in advance leading up to each open house event and the public hearing (Borough requirement is at least 15 days prior to the meetings). Event notifications included direct mailers, media releases, radio ads, social media, public event boards, newsletters, and community council meetings. These announcements and the dates they were advertised are outlined below. See **Appendix C** of **Attachment A** for flyers, postcard, newspaper, and radio advertisements.

- Approximately 8,000 postcards were mailed to members within 0.5 mile of route links within the Study Area at least three weeks prior to each event.
- Local radio announcements were run on 107.1 KHitz, KMBQ Valley Radio 99.7, The Pass 95.5, Classic Country 100.9 KAYO, and Morning Talk Valley Radio 1020 AM/92.5 FM.
- Newspaper advertisements in Frontiersmen (print and digital) and People's Paper (print only).
- MEA Facebook page (20,000+ followers) included events, and paid event advertisements geotargeted to users in the study area.
- MEA member monthly email (reaches 39,980 members with an average 55% read rate). Project event invites and registration links as well as links to the online project feedback form were included in the member email updates.
- Community Council social media and e-newsletters (Meadow Lakes, Tanaina, North Lakes, Fishhook).
- MEA Website- created webpage specific to the project and included event invite information and online project feedback form for those who could not attend the events.
- Posted public event news articles on the MEA homepage (April 18, Sept. 3, Dec. 16).
- Following requests made by members, MEA expanded comment deadlines up to two weeks following the second open house event and public hearing to allow additional time for the public to provide feedback.

## 2.5 MSB 17.05.040 (B)(2)(d) REQUIREMENT

- d) *Implementation of the public involvement program shall commence within 120 days from the issuance date of written acknowledgement.*

## 2.5 - MEA RESPONSE

The public involvement program commenced within 120 days from MSB acknowledgment of the Plan. As provided in **Appendix B** of **Attachment A** on June 2, 2021 the MSB acknowledged that the Plan met or exceeded the MSB 17.05 requirements. Member and stakeholder briefings related to the Project were already underway and the first open house was held on May 19, 2021.

## 2.6 MSB 17.05.040 (B)(2)(e) REQUIREMENT

e) *Upon completion of the public involvement program elements, the applicant shall create and submit to the director a decisional document that describes how the public involvement program was implemented, the nature of public comment, the chosen course of action, timeline for construction, and the public's appeal process. Copies of all written public comments and an audio record, if available, shall be included in the decisional document.*

### 2.6 - MEA RESPONSE

The following sections outline how MEA met the Decisional Document requirements of MSB Code 17.05.040:

- Section 3.0 - How the public involvement program was implemented
- Section 4.0 - The nature of public comment
- Section 5.0 - The chosen course of action
- Section 6.0 - Timeline for construction
- Section 7.0 – Public's appeal process
- Appendix G of Attachment A – Public Hearing Record
- Appendix H of Attachment A – Summary of Public Comments

## 3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

MEA implemented a comprehensive public outreach and engagement program, integrated with the Study, to share Project information with and solicit feedback with MEA members, landowners, and other stakeholders potentially affected by the Project. Briefings were arranged with local community leaders, City Councils of Palmer and Wasilla, the Palmer and Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, MSB Planning Commission, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Mental Health Land Trust, University of Alaska, Alaska Airmen's Association, Alaska Farmland Trust, the Knik and Chickaloon Tribes, and the Community Councils of Tanaina, Meadow Lakes, Fishhook, and North Lakes. See **Attachment A – Appendix D** – Agency and Community Leader Briefings for specific agency meeting information.

MEA also established a community Focus Group consisting of 15 citizens, local to the Project area, representing a range of opinions and diverse backgrounds. Meetings were held in a forum small enough to allow for thorough education about the Project, detailed discussions of issues and potential solutions, and informal open dialogue. Members were selected based on their knowledge of the Project area, capability to commit the time required to participate in the Focus Group throughout the Study, and willingness to participate in the process. Four Focus Group meetings were held at key milestones during the planning process on March 3, 2021; April 7, 2021; September 1, 2021; and December 15, 2021. See **Appendix E** - Focus Group Meeting Materials and **Appendix F** – Focus Group Meeting Summaries of **Attachment A** for more details.

Upon identification and review of the preliminary substation sites and transmission line route alternatives by the Focus Group, MEA hosted two public open house meetings on May 19, 2021, and September 29, 2021 as detailed in Section 2.2 above. The goal of the meetings was to inform the broader public about the Project and solicit comments about the Project and in particular, the preliminary alternative substation sites and transmission line routes. As detailed in Section 2.3, a formal public hearing was conducted on January 19, 2022 to ensure the public had an additional opportunity to provide comments on the Project. See **Attachment A, Appendix G** – Public Meeting Materials.

A complete overview of the public outreach and engagement process including detailed descriptions of community leader briefings, Focus Group meetings, public open houses, and the formal public hearing can be found in Section 3.5 (Public Outreach and Engagement) of **Attachment A**.

## 4.0 NATURE OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments received throughout the Project were compiled, reviewed, summarized and used by MEA to aid in the decision-making process. Comments provided, not only gave valuable insight from the community, but also contributed local perspective to siting and routing as well as recommendations for measures to minimize, avoid, or eliminate potential effects. Throughout the Project, 400+ comment submittals were received via comment forms submitted at the public open houses, through the Project website, and during and following the public hearing. MEA extended the public comment period to remain open until February 2, 2022, to allow the public to voice any additional concerns that may not have been previously submitted throughout the Study process. See **Attachment A, Appendix H and Appendix G-3** transcribed & written comments.

Agencies including the DOT&PF, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Mental Health Trust, University of Alaska, Alaska Farmland Trust, MSB, Department of Natural Resources, Knik and Chickaloon Tribes, and Community Councils within the Study Area also were asked to provide their thoughts and to voice any concerns or approvals on portions of the alternative routes and substation sites that were located in their respective jurisdictions. See **Attachment A, Appendix D** for Community Council and agency comments.

Upon MEA's review of the comments it could be concluded that the majority of public concerns were similar in nature and overall, comments expressed a preference for use of routes with an existing power line (e.g., along Wasilla-Fishhook Road) or along heavily traveled roads with no existing power lines. Comments suggested that the use of Right-of-Way that already has MEA's facilities in it would minimize adverse effects on the environment and communities since the area has been disturbed previously. These routes would also require less clearing and access would be easier. While many of the comments that included a route preference from both open houses and the hearing were not in favor of the northern route (route sections East C + Central E + Central G + West F + East E), some did support it.

While there were over four hundred comments received, the majority focused on several key issues that are noted below along with how they will be or have been addressed. The below list is only a summary of some of the key issues raised. **Attachment A, Appendix H** has a more comprehensive list of the comments received. There also were a number of additional comments received at the public hearing that had not been voiced previously by the public. Based on comments received, public concerns centered around:

- Increased motorized traffic and trespass in the transmission ROW:

To mitigate trespass on transmission lines ROWs utilities have used a variety of deterrents, such as bollards, boulders, fences, gates, and signs. These types of deterrents have successfully been deployed on Powerline Pass in Anchorage to reduce ATV use on that transmission line ROW. Similar deterrents will be used by MEA on this project's transmission ROW, if it is allowed by the agency having jurisdiction. Assuming deterrents are allowed, MEA will work to minimize impacts on residents and wildlife habitat along the ROW using deterrents similar to those noted above. A vegetated buffer also could be left in place to limit how the public could use the ROW.

- Impacts to residential areas:

Residential areas have been categorized as a high impact area and this categorizing played a significant role in selecting the northern route.

- Increased costs of northern route relating to installation, maintenance, and increased rates for members:

The northern route (East-C + Central E + Central G + West F + West E) has an estimated cost of \$17 M. The southern route (East E, Central A + Central D, and West A) has an estimated cost of \$25 M. While these estimates are an order of magnitude estimate that could vary +/- 25%, the estimates are correlated. This means if the cost of materials goes up 25% for the southern route, it would most likely also go up 25% for the northern route. If property value decreases 25% on the northern route, it would most likely decrease 25% on the southern route. The southern route is higher in capital cost due to several factors. First, the route is not as straight as the northern route. The straighter the line, the fewer angle structures and overall number of structures required. Second, the southern route has energized distribution in the existing ROW. It takes more time to install new transmission lines next to lines that are energized at 12,500 volts than installing transmission lines in an unimpeded 100' ROW. Regarding maintenance cost, both clearing and pole repair are considered. While more clearing is required in the northern route, there is a higher pole repair potential in the southern route. The estimated total operations and maintenance costs are estimated to be \$46,000 per year for the northern route and \$42,000 per year for the southern route. The northern route is more remote and restoration after an event will likely take longer than the southern route. However, MEA has experience operating and maintaining transmission infrastructure in remote areas. Transmission lines are also significantly more reliable than distribution lines due to the larger ROW's and the fact that the lines are higher in the air. This was reflected in the January 2022 windstorm when hundreds of distribution lines lost power due to trees in the lines and only a single transmission line lost power. Rate impacts will be minimized by selecting the northern route.

- Effects on the environment, wildlife, rivers, salmon habitat, and conservation efforts.

MEA has been in contact with agencies and organizations such as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers throughout the Study process to inform them of the Project and to request any comments and concerns that they might have in relation to the potential impacts of a transmission line in these areas. After consultation with these agencies, MEA received no indication that the Project could not be constructed along either route. This response from agencies was anticipated since MEA works with them on a regular basis to cross bodies of water and go through environmentally sensitive areas in a responsible manner. For example, MEA has historically built new powerlines across three to five bodies of water



annually, so crossing rivers or streams will not be unusual for MEA or agencies. MEA plans to address concerns during the detailed design and construction phases of the Project. Prior to construction, during the permitting phase of the Project, MEA would be required to consult with local, state and federal agencies to discuss mitigation measures that would be required as part of the Project. Based on similar past projects, mitigation measures can be expected to include:

- Spanning of bodies of water, with no facilities in the ground at or below mean high tide.
  - Targeted vegetation removal to avoid removal of old-growth trees or trees that screen properties.
  - Construction during the winter in wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive areas to avoid significant disturbance to the area.
  - Avoidance of river crossings by vehicles and equipment during construction and leaving vegetation or other barriers to minimize disturbance adjacent to and in rivers.
  - Implementing avian protection measures to protect raptors and other sensitive species.
  - Construction in proximity to raptor nests and bear denning outside of raptor nesting and bear denning periods.
  - Working with agencies to restrict public access along easements and/or allow public access in designated areas depending on the requirements of the agency that has jurisdiction.
- Forest fire hazard.

The ROW would be cleared of vegetation on a regular basis to remove fuel that could ignite a forest fire. This would also create a path for authorized personnel to access remote locations where a fire could potentially occur. Typically, the width of the ROW and the placement of the line at a great enough height above ground level would ensure that trees do not come in contact with the wire. Historically in Alaska, transmission line ROWs have acted as a fire break and allowed forest firefighters better access to fight fires. This happened during the 2019 Swan Lake fire on the Kenai Peninsula. The forest fire was caused by lightning and firefighters used the 115 kV transmission line as a fire break and also used it to access remote areas to fight the fire. To date, MEA is not aware of a fire that was started in Alaska because of a tree coming in contact with a transmission line.

Public comments and MEA's response are further summarized in Section 3.5.5 (Public Comments) of **Attachment A**. Public comments received are included in full text as **Appendix H** of **Attachment A**.

## 5.0 CHOSEN COURSE OF ACTION

Based on all decision-making factors listed previously, the two better performing route alternatives identified in **Figure 1** minimize impacts within the Study Area and provide the most feasible opportunities to meet constructability, permitting and right-of-way considerations. A summary of the reasons for and risks associated with the two better performing routes is outlined in **Table 1**. Section 4.4.3 (Level 4 Comparison Results) of **Attachment A** provides a more detailed comparison of the top two best performing routes.

Public comments on the routes outlined several concerns which can be addressed during detailed design and construction to minimize impacts from the construction of a transmission line and substations.

Possible mitigation measures could include:

- Working with landowners to accommodate site-specific concerns.
- Working with agencies to restrict public access along easements and/or allow public access in designated areas.
- Spanning of wetlands and floodplains.
- Targeted vegetation removal to avoid removal of old-growth trees or trees that screen properties.
- Construction while the ground is frozen to avoid disturbance to environmentally sensitive areas.
- Avoidance of river crossings by vehicles and equipment during construction.
- Implementing avian protection measures to protect raptors and other sensitive species.
- Construction in proximity to raptor nests outside of raptor nesting periods.

The above mitigation measures would be further refined upon consultation with landowners, borough, state, and federal agencies during the permitting process and design phase of the Project.

Considering the reasons for and risks associated with the better performing routes and ability to mitigate for many of the public comments raised, the best performing route that minimizes potential property owner impacts while minimizing effects on community resources is the **Northern Route (route segments East C + Central E + Central G + West F + West E)**. MEA intends to pursue this route for design, permitting, and construction as identified by the green line in **Figure 1**.

MEA is currently in negotiations with landowners to choose two substation sites that meets the above factors and are most compatible with the route.

## 6.0 TIMELINE FOR CONSTRUCTION

MEA plans to begin ROW Acquisition, Permitting, and Design in 2022 and will plan to begin construction when the necessary ROW is acquired, which could be as early as 2024. MEA estimates 2 to 5 years for ROW acquisition, with the longer timeframe necessary if there are unforeseen permitting obstacles, or if alternative routes need to be pursued.

## 7.0 PUBLIC APPEALS PROCESS

The following steps are provided to consider public appeals raised in relation to the Siting and Routing Study Report and Decisional Document.

**Appeal period begins the day following the occurrence of the following two items:**

- Filing of Decisional Document with MSB (filed on 4/05/22)
- Posting of Decisional Document on MEA website (posted on 4/05/22)

**Appeal Submittal:**

- When: within 21 days of filing and posting (not later than 5pm on Wednesday, 4/26/22)
- How: in writing and limited to five pages, double-spaced, with route maps attached where applicable:
  - submitted by email to: [RoutingStudy@mea.coop](mailto:RoutingStudy@mea.coop)
  - or
  - mailed, or delivered in-person, to 163 E. Industrial Way, Palmer AK 99645, Attn: Will Klatt.
- What: appeal must contain:
  - Clear and concise statement of the objection to MEA routing decision.
  - Basis for the objection.
  - Support for the objection signed by a minimum of five persons over the age of 18 that are not within the same immediate family. Individuals are limited to signing one appeal.
  - Proposed alternative route.
  - Contact information for persons signatory to the appeal where written decision can be provided: name, address and/or email address.
- Where: appeals will be read and heard at the Palmer Train Depot, 610 S Valley Way, Palmer AK by a three-person Appeals Committee, appointed by MEA's CEO, and led by an MEA executive staff member.

#### **MEA Appeal Committee Process:**

- An appeals hearing is scheduled for April 28, 2022 beginning at 6 pm, where verbal testimony may be given by persons signatory to an appeal, in the order that written appeals were received. Appeals with multiple speakers will be required to provide testimony together. Attendance at the hearing is not mandatory; written appeals will be considered by the appeals committee.
- The testimony for each appeal will be limited to three minutes per person and up to five persons signatory to an appeal may provide testimony. Testimony may only be provided by those present at the appeals hearing or if they sign up to be heard virtually prior to 5pm on April 27<sup>th</sup> the day before the hearing. Public attendance will be limited to persons signatory to an appeal.
- Questions from the Appeals Committee to clarify an appeal may be asked during the hearing.
- The MEA Appeals Panel will issue a final written decision on an appeal to persons signatory to the appeal and to the Mat-Su Borough Director of Planning within 30 days of the appeal hearing (not later than 5/28/22).

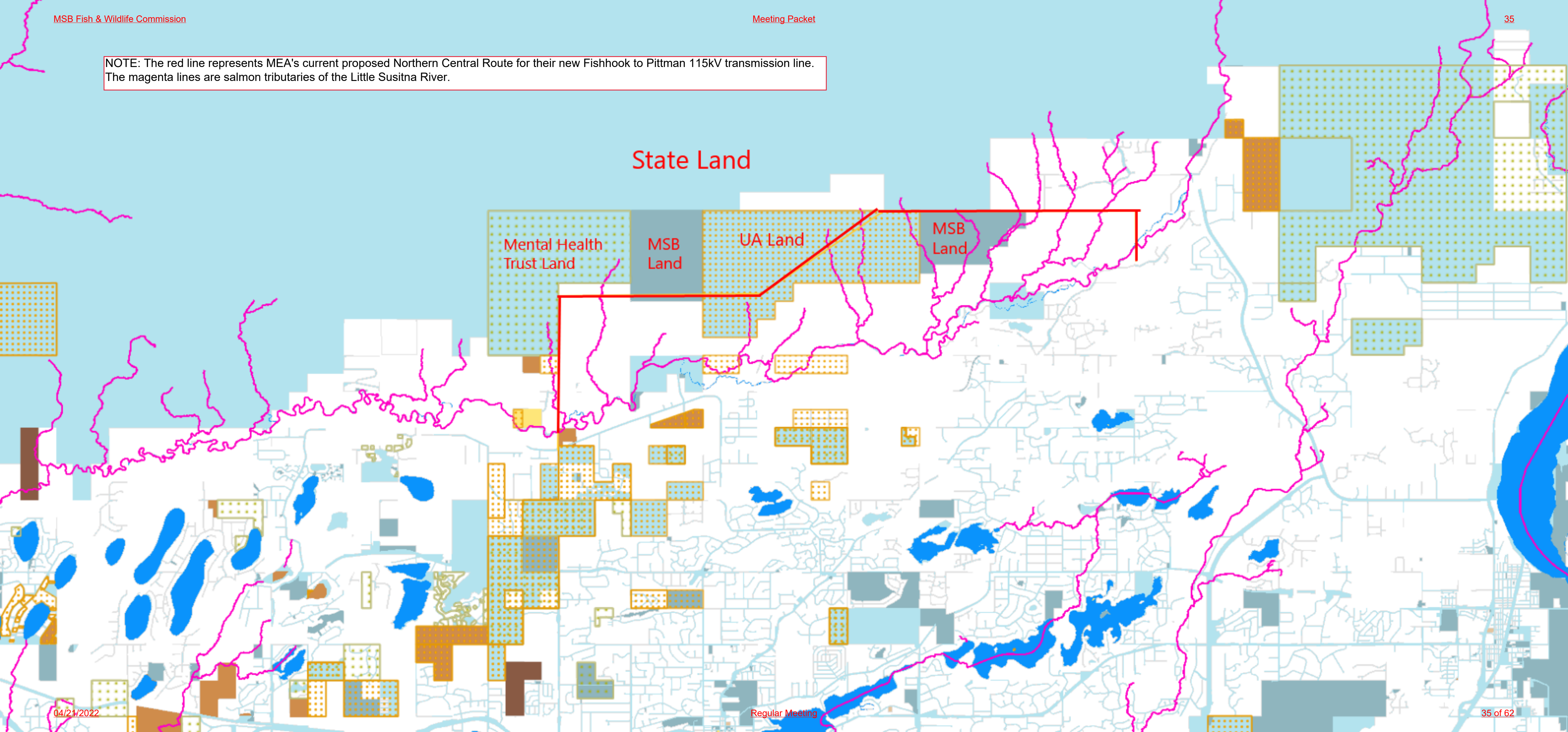
For questions related to the appeals process, please contact MEA at [RoutingStudy@mea.coop](mailto:RoutingStudy@mea.coop), or by calling (907)761-9317.

*See next documents for:*

*Fishhook to Pittman Power Improvement Project:*

- *Attachment A –Transmission Line Routing and Substation Siting Study*
- *Appendices A through E*
- *Appendices F through G*

NOTE: The red line represents MEA's current proposed Northern Central Route for their new Fishhook to Pittman 115kV transmission line. The magenta lines are salmon tributaries of the Little Susitna River.





**From:** [Myers, Sarah E E \(DFG\)](#)  
**To:** [William A. Klatt](#)  
**Cc:** [Peltier, Tim C \(DFG\)](#); [Ivey, Samuel S \(DFG\)](#); [Dubour, Adam J \(DFG\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: MEA Routing Study - Fish & Game Review  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 11:01:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Hi Will,

I have sent a request for comments to the area wildlife biologist Tim Peltier, area sport fish biologist Sam Ivey, and Adam Dubour from Access Defense. I have received the following comments:

Sport Fish:

I do have some concerns over routes that would cross the Little Susitna River in currently undeveloped areas, especially if a route would create new access points to the upper river or trails that would cut across upland tributaries draining into the river. Routes that potentially could impact salmon habitat either through development of the route or by eventual ATV usage (river and tributary crossings) should be avoided, especially if alternative routes along existing roads are options. The Little Susitna River is major producer of Chinook, coho, chum, sockeye and pink salmon and the river supports approximately 30,000 angling days of sport fishing effort in its lower reaches. About 10,000 coho salmon are harvested annually. Chinook salmon have been in low abundance since 2007; the need to preserve habitat associated with spawning and rearing is of high importance. Route E G F, from west to east, encompasses an area that past aerial surveys dating back to 1979 have shown to be the main spawning grounds for Chinook salmon. The creation of a crossing at the east and west ends of this route could impact Chinook spawning habitat and increase illegal poaching of salmon if new access points were created. The Little Susitna River is closed to all salmon fishing upstream of the parks highway. Poaching on spawning salmon is already an issue at other crossings in the vicinity of this project. There are numerous small tributaries draining into the Little Susitna that the E F G route would cut across on its way west through upland terrain and then south to Church Road. New trails may lead to future ATV use where tributary crossings may impact habitat associated with downstream salmon production.

Wildlife:

Tim Peltier- I don't think I could put it better than Sam has. I too have concerns about the most northern route. I think that it would open up the area to more ATV use, which in itself may not be a bad thing, but they also mention that the area would cross wetlands, and we have seen plenty of damage from ATVs in wetlands. I think that in terms of impacting wildlife, sticking to routes that go along existing road corridors would have less of an impact, and if the vegetation is kept down, might actually decrease the chances for moose vehicle collisions along the proposed routes. We should encourage the MEA to stay clear of undeveloped areas. It is not that a power line in an undeveloped area would alter wildlife movement, but if there was a lot of human activity in these areas as a result of the clearing that may. In addition, while a lot of the northern route bisects an area where trails already exist, it may also go through some of the non-motorized portion of the Hatcher Pass area. Above ground powerlines may also be a migratory bird hazard, but I guess that's for the feds to address.

Access Defense:

I looked at this but I don't see any legal public access issues except to note that the utility lines would cross multiple section line easements that would remain valid for public access purposes.

Habitat:

In regards to comments from the Habitat Section, a fish habitat permit may be required for activities associated with the bed or banks of fish bearing water bodies. In addition, in selecting routes, routes that minimize opening up unauthorized off-road vehicle (ORV) access on anadromous water bodies is preferable. We recognize that this can be difficult to accommodate however, once a route starts and knowledge spreads, unauthorized ORV use can denude the banks of vegetation, degrade the banks, widen the stream channel, and depending on the location, ORVs may drive through spawning areas and increased turbidity can entomb and kill eggs in the gravel downstream. I'm not sure what can be done on MEA's end to prevent unauthorized ORV use in the utility corridor but preventative measures are appreciated.

Sincerely,

**Sarah E. E. (Wilber) Myers**

Habitat Biologist IV, Mat-Su Area Manager

ADF&G Habitat Section, Palmer Office

Office: 907-861-3206

Fax: 907-861-3232

[\\*ADF&G Habitat Section Permits Link\\*](#)

---

**From:** William A. Klatt <William.Klatt@mea.coop>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 2:59 PM  
**To:** Myers, Sarah E E (DFG) <sarah.myers@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Jon D. Sinclair <jon.sinclair@mea.coop>; Jennifer I. Castro <Jennifer.Castro@mea.coop>  
**Subject:** MEA Routing Study - Fish & Game Review

Hi Sarah,

Thanks for speaking with me today. As a follow up to our conversation, here is a link to more information regarding MEA's study for routing a new transmission line and siting two new substations: <https://www.mea.coop/major-projects/fishhook-to-pittman-transmission-line-and-substation-siting-study>.

We received feedback from residents that they would like us to contact Fish & Game concerning potential impacts of a transmission line to fish habitat & spawning activities, moose, birds (such as



cranes), etc. This has mostly been a concern with residents along the northern routes that go through relatively undeveloped areas or near wetlands. It seems that much of their concern is not directly relating to the lines themselves, but rather the removal of trees and cleared easements that encourage trespass. We've heard a lot about potential ATV trespass for hunting, fishing, and recreation that could cause disturbance of creeks, wildlife, habitat, and to livestock such as Elk. We've considered ways to limit access to easements, primarily through barricades and signage, since many are through private property or along section line easements. Could you weigh in on these routes and let us know if you have concerns and/or ways to reduce impact.

Our Public Open House is coming up on September 29<sup>th</sup> from 6-8:30pm which would be a good opportunity to learn more about the project, or we can schedule a Zoom meeting to provide more information to Fish & Game. I'm also more than happy to answer any questions and can be the MEA contact for any groups involved within Fish & Game.

Thanks again,  
Will Klatt, P.E.  
Site Engineer

Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.  
163 E. Industrial Way, Palmer, Alaska 99645  
Office: (907)761-9304  
Cell: (907)795-5636



## Little Susitna River Salmon Counts - AK Dept of Fish &amp; Game Sport Fish Website

Fish Species	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Count % Delta to 5-Year Peak	Sustainable Escapement Goal Range		2021 % Delta to Upper Escapement Goal	Years Lower Escapement Goal Met	Years Upper Escapement Goal Met	5-Year Average Count	5-Year Average % Delta to Upper Escapement Goal
Chinook	2,525	549	3,659	2,424	3,121	85%	2,100	4,300	73%	4	0	2,456	57%
Coho	17,781	7,583	4,226	10,765	10,923	61%	9,200	17,700	62%	3	1	10,256	58%
Sockeye	1,191	335	1,366	365	2,176	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,087	N/A
Pink	3,563	8,420	9,008	23,618	11,491	49%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11,220	N/A
Chum	89,597	26,227	21,806	16,145	18,952	21%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	34,545	N/A
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>114,657</b>	<b>43,114</b>	<b>40,065</b>	<b>53,317</b>	<b>46,663</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>59,563</b>	<b>N/A</b>



## **MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH**

### **Community Development Department**

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-7869

E-mail: [lmb@matsugov.us](mailto:lmb@matsugov.us)

[www.matsugov.us](http://www.matsugov.us)

January 11, 2022

routingstudy@mea.coop  
Matanuska Electric Association  
163 E. Industrial Way  
Palmer, AK 99645

#### **RE: Fishhook to Pittman Transmission Line and Substation Siting Study**

To whom it may concern,

The Borough Land and Resource Division (LRMD) is responsible for managing Borough-owned land. This Division was contacted in December 2021 by a MEA representative regarding the Transmission Line Study with a request for comment on potential transmission line routes. At the request of the Borough, MEA provided data allowing the LRMD to consider the effects of how those routes with their limited data would affect property in which the Borough retains ownership.

Based on the MEA map attached hereto as "Map A," Borough comments affecting the north route identified as Central E & G, West F are as follows:

1. Borough Tax Parcels 18N01E03B006, 18N01E04A002, 18N01E04B001 & B002, and 18N01E05A008 wherein the Borough retains ownership of the development rights of these agricultural parcels. Any conveyance of all, or part, of this specific land interest requires LRMD review and Borough Assembly approval. Enclosed is an example of the quitclaim deed recorded with the covenants and conditions affecting these parcels. MEA's right-of-way section should note the deed is subject to "immediate termination and annulment upon break of condition or restriction," and condition #4, Alienation of Property. IF so approved by the Assembly, fair market value for the Borough's interest in the development rights of each parcel will need to be researched, assessed, and paid. The Borough does not support a route affecting these parcels.
2. Borough Tax Parcel 5256000T00A located at the northwest corner of Church-Pittman intersection houses Public Safety Building 7-2 and is a small two-acre parcel with significant activity and emergency response from this site. The Borough does not support a route affecting this parcel.
3. Borough Tax Parcel 6757000T00A is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Church-Seldon intersection. This parcel was approved for a school site and whose location within the parcel is being determined at this time. The site will house future public facilities which are yet to be determined as to their size and location needs. The Borough does not support a route affecting this parcel.

*Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community.*

4. Borough Tax Parcels 1063B04L001 and 1241000T00B were acquired for right-of-way purpose and are managed by the Borough Public Works Department. An additional internal review request has been sent to Public Works asking they submit their comments directly to MEA.

Based on the MEA map attached hereto as "Map B," Borough comments affecting the west route identified as West-A are as follows:

1. The east-west yellow route negatively affects Borough Tax Parcel 17N02W02C003. The 50' wide section line easement is attached to a dedicated 50' wide public easement to provide legal and physical access through the south portion of C003 via extension of W. Stacy Street which is anticipated to become a collector road. This route overlays a permitted gravel material site with development plans already underway and construction startup in next 18 months. Material haul routes include utilization of the current right-of-way to access the rail line which appear to be in conflict with the yellow route. The yellow route is in direct conflict with the approved mining plan approved through 2038, its reclamation plan and the access plan under the Borough-approved permit. Access from W. Stacy Street along the southern boundary of C003 and to the west cannot be impeded.
2. The north-south red route along the west boundary of C003 lies within a 50' wide section line easement that has been identified for future road access to the public facilities projected for C003 once the mining operation is done and property reclamation completed. Access from the north cannot be impeded.
3. The north-south blue route may present operational challenges to the material extraction plans which will be conveyed to stockpile adjacent to the rail line serving the adjacent material site. The size, elevation, and location of stockpiles and train loading infrastructure is not presently available and LRMD suggest caution in considering the blue route as it may be negatively affected by the material extraction.
4. The northern purple route running along the north boundary of C003 is unlikely to generate conflicts with LRMD development plans for C003.

Routes running through the very northern part of Central E, G and West F are within remote areas and MEA must be mindful of dedicated public trails (18N01W04A001) which may cross MEA proposed transmission routes. If MEA is requiring a 100' wide right-of-way, consideration must be taken into account for all potential conflicts with such a large area suggested. The Borough leans toward supporting a line that follows Wasilla-Fishhook from the Parks Highway and looks forward to continuing close collaboration between MEA and the Borough to manage public infrastructure on Borough-owned land.



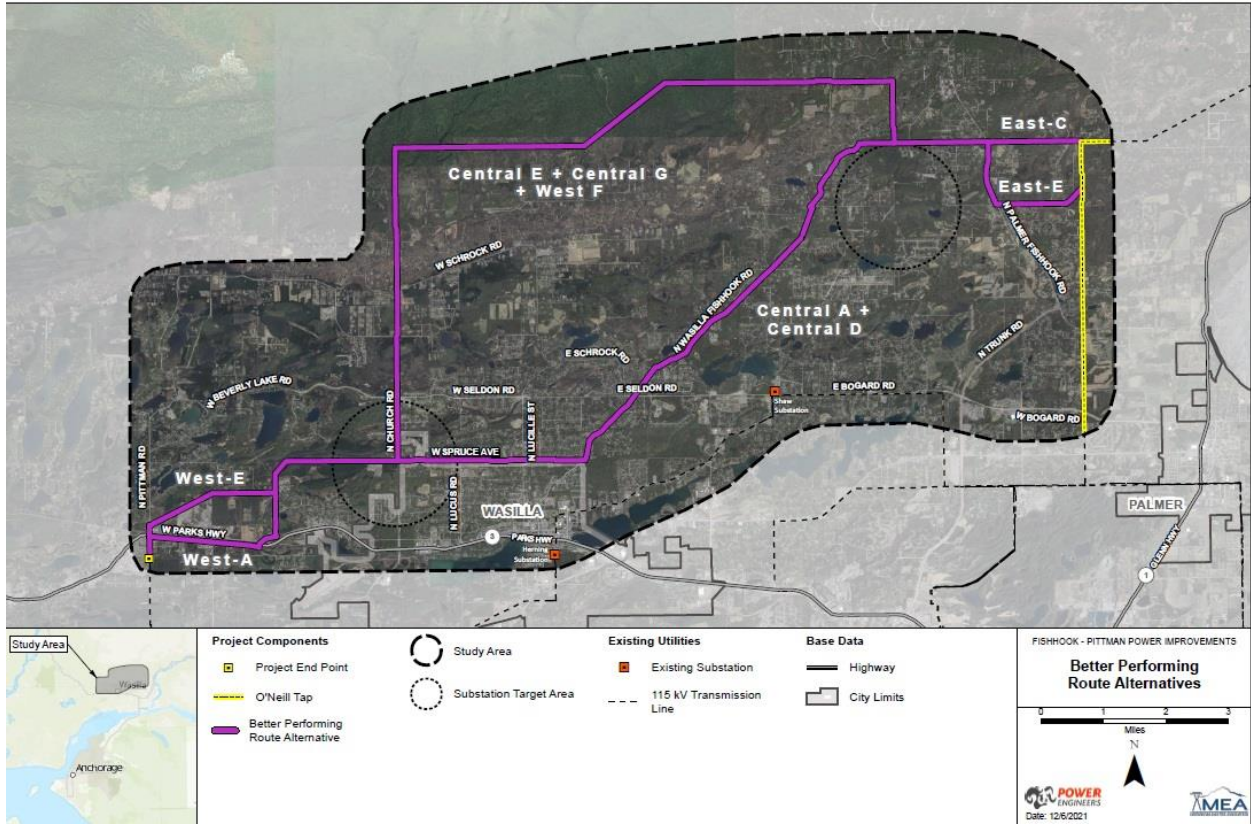
Emerson Krueger

Natural Resource Manager

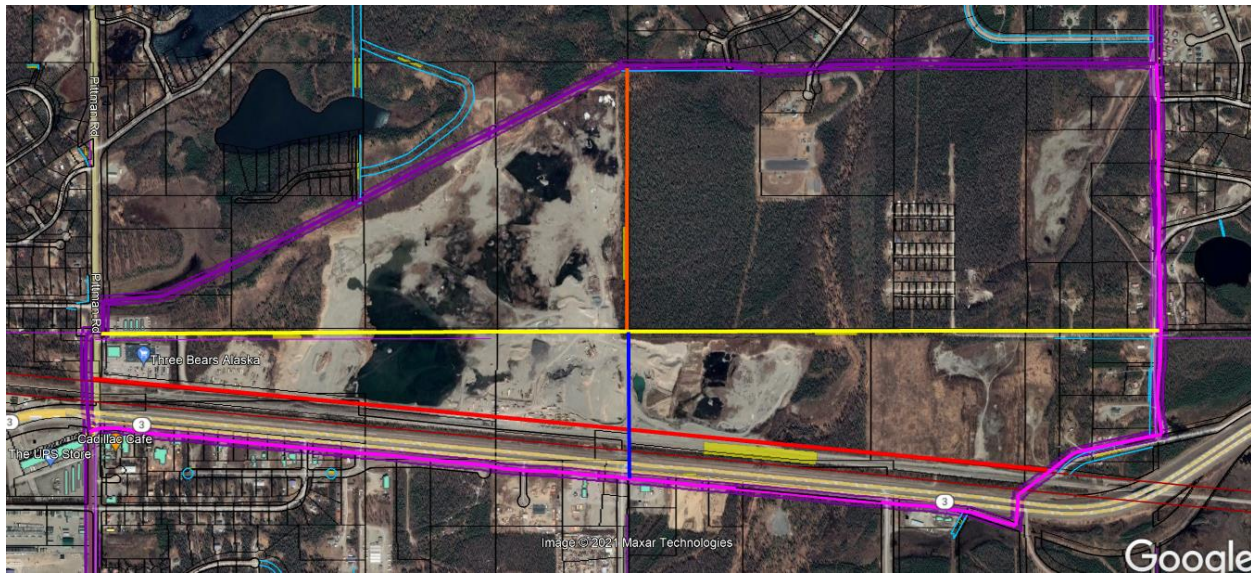
CF: Eric Phillips, Community Development Director  
Alex Strawn, Planning Director  
Mike Brown, Manager

*Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community.*

Map A: Mea Proposed Route Alternative (Purple line)



Map B: Focus Area Specifically Affecting Borough Tax Parcel 17N02W02C003



*Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community.*

**SAMPLE**

**Q.C.D. "1977"**

QUITCLAIM DEED

The Grantor, MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH, organized and existing pursuant to the laws of the State of Alaska, as a Second-class Borough, for and in consideration of the sum of TEN DOLLARS (\$10.00) lawful money of the United States, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, hereby conveys and quitclaims to

Alaska 99507, of State Route A-029, Anchorage,  
grantee(s), all agricultural rights in and to the land surface of the following described real estate, as is further defined and delimited in the CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS attached hereto and made a part hereof, all of which shall RUN WITH THE LAND FOREVER, lying and being in the Talkeetna Recording District, State of Alaska.

W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ; E $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$  East of the Parks Highway Section 20, Township 23 North, Range 4 West, Seward Meridian Alaska. Containing 195.00 acres, more or less.

Subject to the North 15' of the South 65' for utility easement. Subject to the East 65' and the North 65' for utility easement and road right-of-way. Subject to all existing utility easements and road right-of-ways on or abutting the Parks Highway.

INDEX  
B & P

SUBJECT to immediate termination and annulment upon breach of condition or restriction.

DATED this 25 day of May, 1977.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Ronald L. Larson  
Borough Mayor

Evelyn I. Thompson  
Borough Clerk

STATE OF ALASKA )  
                          ) ss.  
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT )

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that on the 25 day of May, 1977, before me, the undersigned Notary Public, in and for Alaska, duly commissioned and sworn as such, personally appeared RONALD L. LARSON and EVELYN I. THOMPSON, who are known to me and to me known to be the Mayor and Clerk of the MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH, and they acknowledged to me that they executed the foregoing Quitclaim Deed for and on behalf of said MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH freely and voluntarily and for the use and purposes therein set forth.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal the day and year hereinabove first written.

Ken Kalmbach  
NOTARY PUBLIC in and for Alaska  
My Commission expires: 7-29-78

**SAMPLE**  
**"1977"**  
**CONDITIONS & RESTRICTIONS**

CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

The CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS hereinafter set out are to RUN WITH THE LAND, and shall be binding upon all parties and all persons owning that certain described property, or claiming under them, described as follows:

W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$  East of the Parks Highway Section 20, Township 23 North, Range 4 West, Seward Meridian Alaska. Containing 195.00 acres, more or less.

Subject to the North 15' of the South 65' for utility easement. Subject to the East 65' and the North 65' for utility easement and road right-of-way. Subject to all existing utility easements and road right-of-ways on or abutting the Parks Highway.

If the initial grantee of such property or any of them, or their heirs or assigns, shall violate any of the conditions, covenants hereinafter set out, such violation shall automatically terminate the grantee's estate and persons taking thereunder.

1. Agricultural rights. The grantee's interest conveyed is to the surface of the land only for agricultural uses. Such interest includes the use of gravel and other road building material on the land for the use of constructing roads or other agricultural related improvements thereon.

2. Removal of timber. Standing timber on the demised land may be cut and used for agricultural related purposes on said land. All other cuttings shall first require written permission from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

1.

3. Removal of minerals. There shall be no extraction, mining or removal of any hydrocarbon, mineral, or other valuable natural deposit from the land.

4. Alienation of property. The agricultural interest, the sole interest herein conveyed, may not be sold, leased, or conveyed, in whole or in part, without first obtaining written approval from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

5. Water. Subject to proper prior appropriation, all water found or located on the land may be used for agricultural purposes, subject only to existing law.

6. Farm Use Development Plan. Adherence to the Farm Use Development Plan submitted to the grantee and as approved by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is mandatory. Such Plan, however, may be modified or amended upon written approval from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

7. Reservation for public access  
Twenty-five feet (25') is reserved for public access on either side of the creek.

8. Waste. No waste or destruction of the property shall be permitted, nor shall the land be used for any unlawful purposes.

9. Sanitation and pollution. All rules, regulations and ordinances as to sanitation and the restriction of pollution shall be complied with.

10. Laws and ordinances. All persons taking or holding any interest in that interest herein conveyed, shall take subject to all existing laws of the State of Alaska, ordinances of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and promulgations of any other proper governmental authority; and as such laws and ordinances may be amended from time to time.

77-000954  
9-

2. RECORDED-FILED  
TALKEETNA REC.  
DISTRICT

'77 MAY 31 PM 2 01

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
REQUESTED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PALMER, ALASKA 99645



**A RESOLUTION OF THE FISHHOOK COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
REGARDING MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION'S PROPOSED  
TRANSMISSION LINE ROUTING AND SUBSTATION SITING FOR THE  
FISHHOOK TO PITTMAN POWER IMPROVEMENTS WITH RESPECT TO  
THE PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY ASSETS**

WHEREAS the By-Laws of the Fishhook Community Council establish that a purpose of the Council is to improve communications between the Matanuska Susitna Borough and citizens of the community in accordance with Borough Code; and

WHEREAS the Fishhook Community Comprehensive Plan (FCCP) was adopted by the Borough Assembly on March 21, 2017; and

WHEREAS the FCCP provides guidance for growth while protecting the Fishhook area's natural beauty and re-affirming individual property rights with the goal of preserving and enhancing its scenic, recreational, rural, residential, and agricultural identity while allowing for expanded economic opportunities; and

WHEREAS the FCCP states on Page 13, LAND USE GOALS, that GOAL #1 is Respect Existing Private Property Rights while Minimizing Impacts to Neighboring Property Owners; and states on the same page that Strategies to Achieve this Goal include: "*Working with the Borough to ensure land use regulations are consistent with this comprehensive plan; Encouraging Fishhook residents to be active in the planning process to ensure their interests and rights are adequately protected*"; and

WHEREAS the FCCP states on Page 13, LAND USE GOALS, that GOAL #2 is Maintain the Rural Character of Fishhook; and states on the same page that Strategies to Achieve this Goal include: "*Supporting development along roads and waterways that maintains a natural vegetative buffer to protect the scenic quality of our community, support wildlife movement and is unobtrusive; Supporting existing agricultural activities and encouraging new agricultural activities; Guiding growth while protecting important environmental resources and community character*"; and

WHEREAS the FCCP states on Page 14, LAND USE GOALS, that GOAL #3 is Maintain the Area's Scenic, Recreational and Residential Qualities; and states on the same page that Strategies to Achieve this Goal include: "*Discouraging development that impacts access to public lands, fish and wildlife habitat, or threatens groundwater and drinking water supplies*"; and

WHEREAS the FCCP states on Page 33, WATER RESOURCE GOAL #3 is to Raise Public Awareness of the Impacts of Development on Watersheds to Protect Water Quality and states on the same page that Strategies to Achieve this Goal include: "*Encouraging local officials to direct the location of infrastructure (public facilities and roads) in areas that are suited for significant growth and development, and away from sensitive watershed areas*"; and

WHEREAS the FCCP states on Page 41, NATURAL COMMUNITY ASSET GOAL #1 is to Identify and Conserve the Natural Community Asset Network Alongside Development of “Gray Infrastructure” (e.g. roads, utilities, public facilities); and states on the same page that Strategies to Achieve this Goal include: “*Protecting natural resources to support the well-being of residents, the region’s tourism and local economy; Promoting the viability of local agriculture and access to healthy wild food; Protecting community water supplies for residents, fish, and wildlife; Encouraging development in a way that protects the natural function of the land*”; and

WHEREAS property values and quality of life for numerous residents and property owners, as well existing agricultural, recreational, and tourism activities in the Fishhook Community likely will decline if there is establishment of a high-powered electric utility line near them; and

WHEREAS natural assets of the Fishhook Community, such as its groundwater quality, wildlife biodiversity, fisheries, moose wintering habitat, wetlands, and timbered areas, may be negatively impacted by the establishment of a high-powered electric utility line through currently undisturbed areas and by potentially providing new access; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Fishhook Community Council strongly encourages the Matanuska Susitna Borough Assembly, Borough Planning Commission and Borough Planning Department to balance the overall community impact with the goals established by the 2017 Fishhook Community Comprehensive Plan and DENY approval of any transmission line route proposed by MEA if such line passes through the Fishhook Community Area in a manner that runs counter to these goals.

The Fishhook Community Council thanks the Matanuska Susitna Borough Assembly, Borough Planning Commission and Borough Planning Department for its consideration of this Resolution.

| Earl W. Almdale II

*Fishhook Community Council President*

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. FWC 22-02**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION DETAILING COMMENTS RELATING TO THE MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION FISHHOOK TO PITTMAN POWER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

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WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) was created in 2007 to represent the interests of the borough in the conservation and allocation of fish, wildlife, and habitat; and

WHEREAS, the FWC has been effective in representing these interests to political leaders, government regulators, and boards of fish and game; and

WHEREAS, the MSB has a vested interest in utilizing science-based standards and forward looking policies to help ensure a balance between the critical fish and wildlife resources of the region with other needs of the population, including responsible development; and

WHEREAS, the MSB FWC believes it is important that our citizens have accurate and robust information and opportunities to comment on major projects that could impact fish and wildlife resources that includes the benefits and costs of such projects; and

WHEREAS, the MSB has spent over \$20 million on fish habitat

restoration in the borough, replacing more than 100 culverts that have restored over 67 stream miles and 6,224 lake acres of anadromous fish habitat; and

WHEREAS, healthy habitat not only supports our fish and wildlife, but ensures clean water for our communities and creates economic opportunities for Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, economic studies in our region in 2007 and 2017 show the significant positive economic impact returning salmon have on the economy of the MSB, that included \$56 million in direct spending benefits to the MSB in 2017 alone, and there are additional economic benefits from healthy wildlife populations, both of which require adequate and quality habitat locally; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska Electric Association (MEA) released the Fishhook to Pittman Power Improvement Project decisional document on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, after soliciting public and agency comment; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff submitted concerns about negative impacts to fish and wildlife from the proposed Northern Route option being considered for this project relative to other route options under consideration; and

WHEREAS, MEA in their decisional document stated it intended to pursue the Northern Route option, which would cross the Little Susitna River, a major producer of salmon and supports a robust sport angler fishery; and

WHEREAS, the Little Susitna River also supports a run of

Chinook salmon, a species that has a recent history of poor run returns creating the need to preserve quality riverine habitats found on the Little Susitna River.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the MSB FWC submits the following comments regarding the proposed Matanuska Electric Association Fishhook to Pittman Power Improvement Project:

1. The FWC recognizes the importance of choosing development options that minimize impacts to critical fish and wildlife resources when available.

2. The FWC shares the concerns the Alaska Department of Fish and Game expressed about impacts to fish and wildlife from the Northern Route option on the Little Susitna River watershed.

3. The FWC believes impacts to critical fish and wildlife resources should be avoided when possible, and minimized and fully mitigated when not possible within the impacted watersheds.

4. The FWC recommends a route option with less potential impact on fish and wildlife resources in the Little Susitna River watershed.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission  
this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Wood, FWC Chair

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
TED EISCHEID, Staff

(SEAL)

DRAFT

**Draft FWC Questions on Alaska Water Reservation System for 6/2/22 Special Meeting**

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Question Set A:

1. What are the primary reasons that water reservation applications take so long to receive DNR approval?

What can be done to improve the application process?

2. Why have water reservation requests for such streams as Wasilla Creek and Sheep Creek near Caswell been under review and not approved for over a decade?

3. Issued water reservation certificates are, under the law, required to be reviewed by DNR at least every 10 years. Why isn't this requirement regularly occurring?

4. Please provide a list of water use applications (both applied for and granted) for Mat-Su Borough lakes and streams. It would be useful if the listing included:

- amounts of water requester or granted,
- reason for water request, and
- the name of applicant or certificate holder.

5. It seems many Alaskans don't understand the rules governing water uses and reservations. Presently there seems to be relatively few competing demands for water, but as time goes on competition will surely increase. Does DNR have plans to better educate the public regarding water laws and uses?

---

Question Set B:

1. Why is DNR starting 10 year reviews of certain Mat-Su Valley streams when there are many other Mat-Su streams whose water rights have not yet been adjudicated?

2. How does DNR determine that only a portion of a specific percentage of historic stream flow is needed for fish / wildlife / recreation on a stream with very limited stream flow like Cottonwood Creek?

3. When doing a water allocation review why is it that DNR only resets water allocations at the same level or at a lesser level? Does this equal or lessening pattern have a likelihood of negatively impacting the original reason for a specific water allocation?

4. If DNR wants to have a robust and meaningful public comment on instream flow reservations, why are reviews not better noticed? Why is the review period so brief? For example, the last review on Cottonwood Creek did not provide enough time for this Commission to comment -- even though we meet mostly on a monthly basis during the fall / winter / spring.

5. Does the miniscule amount of public comments about instream flow reservations for both Willow Creek and Cottonwood Creek raise any concerns with DNR that perhaps better public notice and more time to respond should be standard operating procedure?

---

Question Set C:

1. Could the public comment period be longer?

We would recommend a comment time period of 60 days, not 16 days

2. On what basis are you deciding which ISF certificates to review?

Cottonwood Creek certificate was granted in July 1988 and reviewed in February 2022 but Willow Creek near Willow was granted in May 2017 and reviewed in September 2021, less than 6 years after getting it's certificate, so it does not appear that these are being reviewed in any chronological order.

We recommend that streams that received certificates less than 10 years prior should not have the certificate reviewed unless there is a particular reason to do so, and that reason should be stated clearly in the public notice of review.

3. Would it be possible to provide the link to the original application for a certificate and the original DNR decision in the public notice?

Our recommendation: The FWC asked for this information when the Cottonwood Creek certificate was up for review, and DNR provided it to us. To avoid having to request the information each time, and to provide better overall information to the public, it would be useful to either have a link in or a document associated with the public notice with this information.

4. DNR has stated that when they review a certificate, their decision will be to either keep the flow reservation allowed in the certificate (as was done for Cottonwood Creek) or reduce the flow (as was done for Willow Creek).

Is the decision to reduce the flow unilateral (by DNR), or is the certificate holder contacted and conferred with before the decision is made?

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Question Set D:

How can I obtain a comprehensive listing of ALL water reservation requests made for the Mat-Su Borough from the beginning, including the following:

- what water body,
- who made the request,
- when it was filed,
- what is the current status of the request, and
- what criteria is used to determine the priority order in reviewing the requests.

Recommendation: Making this easily searchable/downloadable from the DNR's web site would be helpful.

DRAFT

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Office of Governor  
MIKE DUNLEAVY

You are here: [Home](#) / [Press Releases](#) / Governor Dunleavy Appoints Alaskans to the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game

## Governor Dunleavy Appoints Alaskans to the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game

**March 28, 2022**

**Monday, March 28, 2022 (Juneau)** – Governor Mike Dunleavy today appointed four Alaskans to fill open seats on the Alaska Board of Game and the Alaska Board of Fisheries, and made one reappointment to the Board of Game.

### **The Governor made three new appointments to the Board of Fisheries:**

**Floyd “Michael” Heimbuch** is a longtime commercial fisherman and has been active in fishing issues across the state for several decades. He previously served on the State of Alaska Board of Marine Pilots and the Homer City Council. He will join the board April 15, 2022.

**David Weisz** will take a seat on the Board of Fisheries starting July 1, 2022. He is the current President and CEO of Three Bears Alaska. His prior public service includes the Tok School Board and the Alaska Road Commission.

**Thomas Carpenter** served in the United States Coast Guard and has been a commercial fisherman and small business owner. He is Chairman of the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation Board. He will also begin serving on the Board of Fisheries July 1, 2022.

### **The Governor also made a new appointment and a reappointment to the Board of Game:**

**Beatrice “Ruth” Cusack** is a military veteran, avid hunter and holds assistant hunting guide license in Alaska. She currently serves on the SCI Alaska Board of Directors. Her term on the Board of Game begins July 1, 2022.

**Allen Barrette** was reappointed to the Board of Game. He is a licensed hunting guide and owns a fur tannery in Fairbanks. His new term begins July 1, 2022.

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## Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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## Alaska Board of Fisheries Members



The Board of Fisheries in October 2019. From left to right: Gerad Godfrey, John Wood, John Jensen, Märit Carlson-Van Dort, Fritz Johnson (former member), Israel Payton, and Reed Morisky (former member). Not pictured are McKenzie Mitchell and Abe Williams.



[John Jensen - Petersburg](#)

Term expires 6/30/2023

John was first appointed to the Board of Fisheries by Governor Murkowski in 2003. John lives in Petersburg and participates in crab and halibut fisheries in Southeast Alaska, and owns Jensen's Boat Rentals. John attended Yakar Valley College and has over 45 years of fishing experience in a variety of areas of the state.

John can be reached [by email](#).



[Israel Payton - Wasilla](#)

Term expires 6/30/2022

Israel Payton, of Wasilla, is a lifelong Alaskan. Israel was born in a 12x12 trapper's cabin near the Hayes River. His first fishing trip was on his father's back when he was 3 days old. He was raised in Skwentna and grew up harvesting fish and game, living a subsistence life spending nearly every day of his youth on the water or in the woods. Israel had many jobs taking him all over Alaska: guide, North Slope operator, welder, commercial pilot, construction, airplar mechanic, deckhand, and property manager, to name a few. Israel enjoys hunting, fishing, flying, and reaching out to sportsmen and user groups, getting different perspectives and understanding of fisheries issues. He has participated the Board of Fisheries & Game meetings for many years and is a past Advisory Committee member.

Israel can be reached [by email](#).

[Märit Carlson-Van Dort - Anchorage](#)

Term expires 6/20/2024



Märit Carlson-Van Dort is Sugpiaq from the village of Chignik Bay. She was born in Alaska and raised in Southeast Alaska and the southern Alaska Peninsula where she commercial fished for nearly fifteen years. Marit has a Bachelor of Science in Conservation Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and graduate work in Fisheries Science and Secondary Education. Märit has spent the past several years working in both the public and private sectors in public and government affairs with an emphasis on state and federal regulation, environmental policy, permitting, resource development, and community outreach and engagement. Currently she is employed as the President & CE of Far West, Inc. an Alaska Native village corporation formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCS). In addition to her work at Far West, she has served on the board of directors of STAR of Anchorage, a local non-profit providing advocacy and support services to victims of sexual trauma, and was a proud volunteer at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska.

Märit can be reached [by email](#).



#### [John Wood - Willow](#)

Term expires 6/20/2024

After earning his Juris Doctorate from LSU in 1971, John immediately moved to Alaska. His first job was working for the Alaska Superior Court as a law clerk and standing master. In 1973 John opened the doors to his law firm and practiced through the mid 90s before retiring. He has served in numerous appointed and elected positions including over 9 years on the Anchorage Assembly. Currently lives in Willow nestled in Hatcher Pass between two salmon streams and can be seen frequently during the summer fishing Southcentral waters either floating, wading or on his riverboat. John became intrigued by the unique approach of the BOF while employed as legislative staff in the 2014 cycle and welcomes the opportunity to help find solutions to some of long standing issues that seem to divide our community year after year. John's highest priority will be to protect and enhance the strength of our stocks both in the numbers and size of the returns and harvests.

John can be reached [by email](#).



#### [Gerard Godfrey - Eagle River](#)

Term expires 6/30/2022

Gerard Godfrey of Eagle River grew up commercial fishing in the Kodiak Island Fishery for twelve years. He spent fourteen years working on the North Slope and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline in the Port of Valdez. Mr. Godfrey has worked for Afognak Native Corporation since 2009, recently becoming the Vice Chair on the Board of Directors. Previously, he was Governor Walker's senior policy advisor on rural affairs and served for 17 years as the chairman of the Violent Crimes Compensation Board. Mr. Godfrey has held numerous other board seats including AFN, ANVCA, and the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

Gerard can be reached [by email](#).



#### [McKenzie Mitchell - Fairbanks](#)

Term expires 6/30/2023

McKenzie Mitchell received her B.A. in Economics as well as her M.S. in Resource and Applied Economics from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). Her graduate degree work was concentrated in fisheries management and she now teaches economics and recreation management courses at UAF. McKenzie has worked in Alaska's hunting and fishing industry for 10 years doing the jobs of hunting guide, boat captain, and sport fishing guide. Her passion for fisheries and Alaska's resources is supported by her industry work and education.

McKenzie can be reached [by email](#).

[Board Committee Assignments 2021-2022 \(PDF 272 kB\)](#)

[Previous Board Members \(Since 1975\)](#)

#### Contact

Please contact the Boards Support main office at (907) 465-4110, or [see detailed contact information](#).



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### Alaska Board of Game Members



#### **Jerry Burnett — Juneau, Chair**

Term expires 6/30/2024

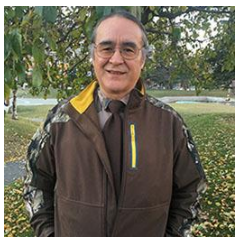
Jerry Burnett grew up in Washington State and moved to Juneau, Alaska in 1981. Jerry and his wife have lived in Juneau since then. Jerry grew up hunting (his mother taught him how to shoot at age 6) and fishing with his father and five brothers. He is retired from the State of Alaska where he was a director and deputy commissioner at the Department of Revenue for a number of years. He has long been involved with Fish and Game Management issues in Alaska having served on the boards of the Alaska Outdoor Council and Territorial Sportsmen. He and his wife own and operate Encounter Charters, a fishing and wildlife viewing business.



#### **Stosh Hoffman — Bethel, Vice Chair**

Term expires 6/30/2023

Stosh Hoffman is currently serving a fifth term on the Board of Game; he was originally appointed to the board in 2008 by Governor Palin. Stosh is a lifelong Alaskan. He was born in Bethel, raised in McGrath and now lives in Bethel, Alaska. He is employed by the AVCP-Regional Housing Authority as Director of Housing Management. Stosh is an experienced assistant guide and commercial fisherman. Stosh attended the University of Alaska Anchorage. His oldest son graduated from Stanford University during the spring of 2020, his youngest son is a Junior at Oregon State University, and his nephew is attending Mt. Edgecumbe as a Senior. Stosh enjoys subsistence activities with his family and flying with his sons.



#### **Orville Huntington — Fairbanks**

Term expires 6/30/2022

Orville Huntington was born in Huslia, Alaska and received a B.S. in Wildlife Biology from University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Mr. Huntington is dedicated to working closely with young people to promote the values of traditional Native elders combined with contemporary western knowledge. He is committed to protecting the aboriginal rights of Native people to continue to live a subsistence way of life and preserve the cultural beliefs associated with that way of life as it is consistent with State and Federal law. His primary responsibilities continue to be the preservation of Native subsistence hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping opportunities and the cultural events that surround those beliefs.



#### **Allen (Al) Barrette — Fairbanks**

Term expires 6/30/2022

Governor Dunleavy appointed Allen ("Al") Barrette to the Board of Game in 2019. Al resides in Fairbanks, Alaska which has been his home for over 30 years. He now shares this home with his wife Linda who is an Alaskan falconer. Al himself is a fur dresser by trade, class A assistant big game guide, and small business owner. He honorably served in the US Army before he began his tannery career in the early 1990s.

Al actively participates in the fish and game regulatory process. He has done so since 1995. He was elected to the Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (AC) in 2005 and has served as chairman of the game and trapping subcommittees. Al represented the AC at number Board of Game meetings and also represented the AC as a member of several working groups including the Fortymile Harvest Management Coalition, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, the Wood Bison Restoration Advisory Group, and the Dall sheep working group.

Al participates in subsistence trapping, hunting, and fishing, all activities that he shared with his late wife Laura and that they taught and passed down to their three children who are now fully grown. Al's son is now passing on the skills to his son, Ryatt, Al's first grandchild. Al also enjoys teaching fur handling and trapping methods.

**Jake Fletcher — Talkeetna**

Term expires 6/30/2023

Jake Fletcher was appointed to the Board of Game by Governor Dunleavy in 2020. Jake and his family live in Talkeetna Alaska. He has worked in the capacity of packer, assistant guide and registered guide for over 20 years in the state. He and his wife operate a small guiding operation that primarily hunts Kodiak Island and the Talkeetna mountains. Jake holds a Masters of Inland Waterways from the U.S Coast Guard and operates boats for Mahay's Jet Boat Adventures in the summer months. In the winter months Jake and his wife work for AK Sled Dog Tours in a variety of capacities. He broke trail for the Iditarod Sled Dog Race for many years and still volunteers actively. Jake and his wife take pride in homeschooling their kids which leaves ample time for outdoor exploration in our beautiful state.

**Lynn Keogh — Wasilla**

Term expires 6/30/2023

Lynn is a life-long Alaskan who was born and raised in Anchorage. He and his wife Merry just recently moved to Wasilla to be closer to their 3 children and 7 grandchildren. Lynn and Merry are the owners of Key-O's Guide Service for over 30 years, a family owned business offering sportfishing charters both saltwater and freshwater on the Kenai Peninsula. Lynn was the former chair of the South Central chapter of the Alaska Trappers Association and former Board member of the Alaska Trappers Association. He served two terms on the Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee and holds a U.S. Coast Guard License and registered Alaskan hunting guide. Lynn and his wife Merry spend much of their time hunting, Fishing and trapping with their children and grandkids.

**James Cooney — Eagle River**

Term expires 6/30/2024

James Cooney was appointed to the Board of Game by Governor Dunleavy in 2021. He resides in Eagle River, Alaska where he has lived for 14 years. James moved to Alaska in 2004 and with the exception of two overseas deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, has spent his entire career working for the Army in Alaska. He spent four years honorably serving as an officer in the Army on active duty before beginning his career as an Army civilian working in Operations as a Planner. James spends a majority of his free time volunteering and fundraising for Alaska non-profit organizations that support Alaska wildlife conservation and hunting rights.

Between work and volunteering, James loves nothing more than to hunt and fish in Alaska with family and friends.

**Previous Board Members:**

- [Board Members Since 1975](#)

**Contact The Board of Game Members**

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