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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

NORTHERN REGION, PRECONSTRUCTION

January 18, 2005

Re: Nulato Runway Rehabilitation
Environmental Scoping
ADOT&PF Project No. 62603

Dear Staff Member:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is proposing a project to resurface the runway, taxiway, apron and access road at the Nulato Airport. Nulato is located on the west bank of the Yukon River, 35 miles west of Galena and 310 air miles west of Fairbanks. It lies in the Nulato Hills, across the river from the Innoko National Wildlife Refuge, at approximately 64.7° North Latitude and -158.1° West Longitude. (Sec. 08, T009S, R004E, Kateel River Meridian.) (USGS Quadrangle Nulato C-5) (Refer to [Figure 1](#)).

Existing Condition

The community of Nulato is accessible by air and water, but is dependent on air travel for year round access. The U.S. Postal Service contracts with air taxi services for all mail delivery and all medical evacuations are done via air ambulance. It is vital that this airport continues to safely serve the public. The existing airport facility consists of a 100 x 4,000 foot lighted runway with a 150 x 4,600 foot safety area, a 35 x 175 foot taxiway with an 80-foot wide safety area, and a 200 x 400 foot apron. The apron is located 250 feet away from the runway centerline with a 24-foot wide access road. Navigation aids include a beacon and a medium intensity runway and taxiway lighting system.

Purpose and Need

The following issues will be addressed in this project:

- The surface course on the runway, taxiway, apron, and access road is nearly gone and there is no crown. The geotextile separation fabric is exposed and has been ripped up during snow removal operations on the runway, which is a safety concern.
- The access road has significant rutting problems and also experiences flooding during high water events.
- Slope failures are resulting in the loss of surface course.
- There is significant longitudinal cracking along the south side of the runway that needs to be stabilized.
- There are trees in the runway 20 approach.

Proposed Action

The planned project will resurface the runway, taxiway, apron, and access road, add dust palliative to reduce the loss of surface course and armor the silt embankment to keep erosion from causing serious deterioration. The grade of the access road near the bridge may be raised and armored to minimize flood

damage. Any trees penetrating the runway 20 approach will be removed. Finally, the geotextile separation fabric that is currently exposed on the runway will be covered or removed (Refer to [Figure 2](#)).

Material for the airport improvements will be obtained from the South Fork Nulato River at the mouth of the Yukon River. The appropriate permits and agency coordination will take place prior to any material removal. (Refer to [Figure 3](#)).

In September 2004, DOWL Engineers conducted a study of the airport property that included classification and mapping of wetlands (Refer to [Figure 4](#) and [Figure 5](#)). This data was used to determine that no wetland impacts would occur as a result of the proposed improvements on airport property. The improvements to the access road, however, may involve some minor impacts to wetlands. Survey information combined with photo interpretation will be used to delineate wetlands in this area.

This project is being developed in accordance with the 2003 Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wetland Impacts and Other Aquatic Resources, Mitigation and Airport Improvement Projects in Alaska. Impacts to jurisdictional wetlands will be compensated in accordance with the agreement.

At present ADOT&PF does not anticipate any significant environmental impacts or unusual circumstances associated with the proposed project. The links below contain preliminary research collected through a review of federal and state documents. To ensure that all factors are considered in the Environmental document, your comments are requested by Friday, February 18, 2005. In addition to identifying any concerns and/or issues your agency might have with the proposed project, the following links identify agency specific information that is requested. Please click on the organization that you represent. This will take you to a list of questions specific to your purview.

[ADEC](#) [ADF&G](#) [ADNR-POR](#) [ADNR-RAD](#) [ADNR-NRO](#) [ADNR-OHMP](#)

[Air Carriers](#) [BLM](#) [Native Corporations](#) [City Government](#) [USACE](#) [USEPA](#)

[USFWS](#) [USNMFS](#) [Tribal Organizations](#)

If you have any questions regarding the project feel free to call our Environmental Consultant, Kristen Hansen, at DOWL Engineers, at 562-2000, or by e-mail at khansen@dowl.com. Should you have any questions on the design of the proposed project, contact me at 451-2284 or by e-mail at cindie_little@dot.state.ak.us.

Sincerely,



Cindie Little, P.E., Project Manager
Northern Region ADOT&PF Design

Links: [Appendix A](#)
 [Figure 1 – Location/Vicinity Map](#)
 [Figure 2 – Plan View](#)
 [Figure 3 – Proposed Material Site](#)
 [Figure 4 – Wetlands Map](#)
 [Figure 5 – Habitat Map](#)