



## **FALSE PASS AIRPORT MASTER PLAN**

### **AGENCY SCOPING MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2005**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

---

The agency scoping meeting was held February 8, 2005 in DOWL Engineers (DOWL) Training Room. Meeting participants included the following:

Allen Kemplen, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Mark Mayo, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Dan Golden, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Katrina Moss, Federal Aviation Administration

Jack Hewitt, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Medrick Northrop, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dana Seagars, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Charla Sterne, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Stefanie Ludwig, Office of History & Archeology

Melanie Hoblet, Aleutians East Borough

Sharon Boyette, Aleutians East Borough

Bob Juettner, Aleutians East Borough

John Nickels, Mayor, City of False Pass

Chuck Martinson, Isanotski Corporation

Kristen Hansen, DOWL Engineers

Tom Middendorf, DOWL Engineers

Rachel Crittenden, DOWL Engineers

John Jones, DOWL Engineers

Emily Creely, DOWL Engineers

Nan Llewellyn, DOWL Engineers

After meeting attendees introduced themselves, Kristen Hansen of DOWL opened the meeting. She stated that the purpose of the meeting was to initiate the NEPA scoping process and solicit the agency comments. After verifying that everyone had received a copy of the scoping letter, Kristen indicated that the deadline to submit a comment for the agency scoping phase is February 28, 2005.

John Jones with DOWL presented an overview of the airport master plan process. He explained what an airport master plan is and its purpose, the steps involved, and the status of the False Pass Master Plan process in particular. He discussed each of the proposed alternatives, and a description of each. The four alternatives in the Draft Master Plan include:

Alternative A: No-build

Alternative B: Extend current runway

Alternative C: Realign current runway

Alternative D: Shift current runway

Rachel Crittenden with DOWL discussed the environmental issues that DOWL anticipates covering in the NEPA document and the environmental studies that will be conducted, along with the agency permits and authorizations that will be necessary to obtain. A list of the planned studies can be found in the attached presentation. Rachel also provided an overview of the DOWL project team's recent visit to False Pass to conduct an Eider survey.

The following is a summary of comments and discussions that occurred during the meeting. Comments in *italics are answers* to questions.

Does the "inventory" phase of the master planning process mean an inventory of the natural resources?

*For airport master plan purposes, the inventory phase is a documentation of all current aviation facilities at the Airport. This inventory does briefly touch on some of the other aspects (the community and surrounding environment).*

What is the prevailing wind direction? Are there any intentions to construct a crosswind runway off the current runway?

*Winds are generally aligned with Isanotski Strait, predominantly from the southeast, but the valley near the airport can produce severe crosswinds. Because of the mountainous terrain surrounding this valley, aircraft departing or conducting a missed approach from a crosswind runway would be boxed in by the valley. A runway extending up the valley is not a safe, practical option, so one was not included in the master plan.*

Community members currently access the beach via the runway. If Alternative D, shifting the runway, is chosen, the current runway may possibly be converted to a taxiway.

*There are currently access and control issues with people driving down the runway. If the runway is shifted over, and the current runway is converted to a taxiway, either ADOT&PF or DOWL and ADOT&PF will look at other ways residents can access the beach and stream at the south end of the runway.*

ADOT&PF has not completely ruled out the possibility of extending the runway north across Round Top Creek.

*Currently the Draft Master Plan lists bridging the runway over Round Top Creek as an alternative that was analyzed but not carried forward. During the hydrology analysis in the NEPA documentation phase this option will be analyzed further. DOWL will determine how difficult it will be to extend the runway across the creek. Even if extending the runway across Round Top Creek is not an option, DOWL will confirm how difficult it will be to keep the runway in its current location next to the river, and how best to protect it from erosion.*

What is the status of the fuel farm north of the runway?

*The fuel farm, owned by Peter Pan Seafoods, provides boat fuel, heating oil, and diesel and gasoline for vehicles. Peter Pan Seafood Company would like to sell the property, but there have been no buyers to date. The fuel tanks are not in very good condition, and many local residents feel that if there is a major maintenance issue with the tanks, Peter Pan will simply shut them down because it would not be cost-effective to fix them. There are bulk fuel storage tanks near the City-owned dock that could serve as an alternative and provide gasoline and heating oil if Peter Pan ever did shut down. These tanks would not provide boat fuel, but at least the community could get by in the event that Peter Pan would close their fuel tanks down.*

Does the False Pass Airport have a fuel facility for aircraft?

*No, aircraft obtain fuel in Cold Bay, a twenty-minute flight from False Pass.*

False Pass Mayor John Nickels clarified the anadromous stream adjacent to the Airport is not Whirl Point Creek; it does not have a name. Whirl Point Creek is located two miles south of the airport.

Mayor Nickels also stated there used to be a Russian Orthodox Church in Trader's Cove, but not in False Pass as far as anyone in the community knows. The State Historical Preservation Office's (SHPO) records indicate there is a Russian Orthodox Church in False Pass. However, during their recent visit to the community the DOWL project team could not locate it.

Stefanie Ludwig, with OH&A, said from looking at the aerial photograph and based on SHPO's records it looks like the area has potential for historical sites and so a survey should be completed. If it is determined that there is not a Russian Orthodox Church site in False Pass, SHPO will need to update their records.

What does the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) say about Stellar Sea Lions?

*DOWL has not received NMFS's comments yet. For the study completed for the planned harbor project, NMFS did not consider Sea Lions an issue.*

Where is the current landfill site?

*The current landfill is up the valley a ways from the airport. The landfill is scheduled for closure when the money is available to build a road to the planned landfill site north of town.*

On your January visit to False Pass, what did you see in the way of water birds in the borrow-pits adjacent to the runway?

*While conducting the Eider study, DOWL's project team monitored the borrow pits also, and only saw a few Common Mergansers in the pits.*

How will the possibility of adding the alternative of extending the runway over Round Top Creek affect the Master Plan?

*Finalizing the Master Plan will be the last step. After the Hydrology study is completed this summer there will be time to include this alternative in the environmental assessment if it is determined to be a feasible option.*

Will the Hydrology Study include long shore movement studies and circulation studies if the runway is extended into Isanotski Strait?

*The extended runway may change circulation and sedimentation patterns, and will likely result in additional sedimentation at the mouth of the creek. How will the additional sedimentation created by the runway extension affect the eddy near the beach? The project team will want to analyze how this will affect the marine life in the area. The extent of the Hydrology Study is not certain at this point. These are good comments that the project team will consider as they prepare for the Hydrology Study.*

An issue with these types of fills in marine waters is that juvenile fish are pushed out into deeper waters and are more at risk of being preyed upon by larger fish. Consider incorporating a "bench" in the design of the runway extension to provide shallower habitat where juvenile fish can hide from predators.

As a point of clarification, there is designated critical habitat for Eiders near False Pass, but not actually in False Pass.

The USFWS will need to know the amount of wetland acreages that will be impacted by each of the alternatives. Once the wetland delineation and sub-tidal and inter-tidal surveys have been completed in summer 2005 DOWL will be able to provide that information, and will send out a notice that the information is available.

USFWS suggested that NWI maps for the False Pass area could be completely in conjunction with DOWL's wetland delineation for this project, for a relatively small cost.

What were the reasons for not carrying forward some of the alternatives?

*In the initial Master Plan process, several sites were carefully analyzed, and it was determined these would not be feasible options for a variety of reasons. There were extremely high estimated construction costs associated with the sites away from town that were studied. Many of these sites would have required building a road through the adjacent National Wildlife Refuge.*

DOWL noted copies of the report are available from ADOT&PF and the report has been posted to the project web site. The meeting concluded at 11:00 a.m. with informal discussions continuing on afterwards.

Attachments: Sign-in sheet  
Agenda  
Power Point Presentation