U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Tanana River Recreation Access Improvements Project

AK FNSB TANANA(1)

Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska

This Finding of No Significant Impact is submitted pursuant to: 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)

Decision

The Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in partnership with Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Parks & Recreation, has determined that the selected course of action for access improvements to the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area (TLRA) will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. The selected course of action is described as the Preferred Alternative in the *Tanana River Recreation Access (TRRA) Improvements Project Environmental Assessment* (EA) (FHWA, June 19 2021), hereafter referred to as the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative and its mitigation measures meet the stated purpose and need of the project while minimizing impacts to the human and natural environment. Comments were received during the public comment period and minor changes to the project were incorporated that warrant the preparation and distribution of an errata sheet on the above referenced Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. The errata sheet will become part of the project file. Comments received through the public involvement process and review of the EA were considered in this decision; the comments and FHWA's responses are attached.

The EA was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which considers the effects of federal, federally-funded, and/or federally-permitted projects on the quality of the human and natural environment. The TRRA Improvements Project is funded through the Alaska Federal Lands Access Program (AFLAP), the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning, the Alaska Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program, and the FNSB. FHWA is the federal lead agency for NEPA compliance and FNSB is a partner. In addition to NEPA compliance, FHWA will complete the project design, issue a construction contract, and administer construction of the Selected Alternative with the exception of the

overhead power construction. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AKDOT&PF) will design the overhead power line extension and Golden Valley Electric Association (GVEA) would construct, maintain, and own the infrastructure, as well as provide service.

Selected (Preferred) Alternative

The project is located 10 minutes south of downtown Fairbanks, 14 miles northwest of the City of the North Pole, and 3 miles southwest of the Army's Fort Wainwright main gate. The Army's Tanana Flats Training Area (TFTA) is the nearest federal land, located across the Tanana River from the TLRA. The project is within Sections 21, 22, 27, and 28, Township 1 South, Range 1 West, Fairbanks Meridian. The TLRA is located on the south (river) side of the Tanana Flood Control Levee (TFCL) in south Fairbanks. The project footprint of the Selected Alternative comprises approximately 18.5 acres, which includes five acres of undeveloped habitat and three acres of wetlands.

The Selected Alternative will establish a new entrance point to mitigate the existing speeding, safety, and dust concerns associated with the existing Northlake Lane entrance; construct roadways and other improvements to provide access to the motorized and non-motorized boat launches within the TLRA that serve as the primary access points to reach the TFTA; connect the swim beach to the extension of South Lathrop Street that will provide access to all TLRA facilities from the new entrance point on South Lathrop Street; install ADA-compliant facilities to provide access to a wider group of recreation users, and install outlets for vehicle headbolt heaters at the boat launch parking areas. The Selected Alternative meets the purpose and need for the project because it will resolve indirect access to and within the TLRA, meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for parking and restroom facilities, improve road surfaces and road visibility, provide electrical service, and provide an area for a central entrance station. The Selected Alternative also is consistent with the TLRA Master Plan (2007).

The Proposed Action comprises the extension of South Lathrop Street and Northlake Lane, an area for the future placement of an entrance station, parking improvements, restrooms, accessibility improvements, road surface paving and gravel improvements, and overhead power line installation.

Construction activities will include:

1. Install erosion and sediment control, stake sensitive areas, and mark clearing limits.
2. Install traffic control devices and establish detours.
3. Mobilize equipment and materials.
4. Clear and grub the project footprint.
5. Excavate the existing grade .
6. Place geotextile fabric.
7. Place and compact various embankment materials.
8. Place culverts.
9. Place asphalt pavement and striping or apply surface course gravel and dust palliative.
10. Install overhead power line.
11. Apply seeding to slopes.
12. Install signs, gates, and other appurtenances.
13. Demobilize and remove equipment and materials, traffic controls, and sediment and erosion controls.

Environmental Consequences of the Selected Alternative

The EA analyzed the effects of the Selected Alternative on numerous resources, including: transportation; land use and utilities; recreation; water resources; water quality; floodplains; wetlands and non-wetland waters; vegetation, fish, and wildlife; social and economic changes; soils and geology; cultural resources; air quality, noise, and energy; visual quality; hazardous materials; and cumulative effects for all of these resources. There were no Environmental Justice (EJ) populations identified in the project impact area; therefore, EJ was dismissed from further consideration.

No significant impacts to these resources were identified.

These findings are based on the evidence and conclusions set forth in the EA, which is incorporated by reference here. Table 1 summarizes the environmental consequences of the Selected Alternative by each evaluated resource.

Table 1 Summary of TRRA Improvement Project Impacts

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
Transportation	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be minor adverse impacts to transportation including: • Temporary delays and possible rerouting to traffic, businesses and TLRA users during construction. • Temporary closures or reduced capacity of park facilities. However, these impacts would be insignificant with the implementation of mitigation measures, including advance notice of construction schedule and rerouting, and because any potential delays would be temporary. **Direct and Indirect Effects** There would be beneficial impacts to transportation including: • Access to the TLRA would be improved and a more direct route to popular facilities would be provided. • New stop signs would improve safety at the railroad crossing and within the TLRA. • Speed and traffic volumes result in no significant impacts to safety performance with new intersections. • Providing safer access for users, eliminating visibility issues with clear line of sight, and providing improved, controlled access, and security, thus reducing illegal activities. • Rebuilding The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) road-crossing to provide a safer crossing. • Addition of three stop signs at the intersection of South Lathrop Street and Sanduri/Pomm Avenues would provide safer roadway conditions at the railroad crossing. • Decreases in the travel time and vehicle miles within the TLRA and access routes.

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
	• New trails, expanded parking areas, new wider roads, and non-motorized routes in the park would encourage multi-modal use and provide ample room for balancing bicyclist and pedestrian safety with vehicle access. • Minimizing the use of the levee system by off road vehicles and trucks. • The future entrance station provides an important interface with users and provide information about access to other recreation lands. • New roads designed to increase long-term reliability and accommodate the existing and future traffic capacity. • Reducing the annual maintenance obligations for FNSB.
Land Use and Utilities	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be minor adverse impacts to land use, including: Potential temporary delays to traffic and access to businesses. However, these impacts would be insignificant because: • Traffic would be accommodated through the work zone or alternate detours would be used around the work zone, which may result in delays of less than 10 minutes for users accessing local businesses and the TLRA. **Direct and Indirect Effects** There would be minor adverse impacts to land use resulting from: • Of the 18.5-acre project footprint, approximately 8 acres of undeveloped land would be converted to transportation use and utilities. These 8 acres represent approximately 0.7 percent of the remaining undeveloped land of the TLRA. • Bringing a source of electricity to the TLRA would benefit users and management of the TLRA. However, these impacts would be insignificant to Land Use and Utilities with implementation of mitigation measures. There are also permanent beneficial impacts, including: • Providing a more direct route to the TLRA and connection with south Fairbanks. • Providing electrical utilities to TLRA consistent with the 2007 TLRA Master Plan.
Recreation	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be minor adverse impacts to recreation including: Temporary closures that would affect users. However, this impact would be insignificant because: • Traffic would be accommodated through the work zone or alternate routes/detours would be established around the work zone, which may result in delays of less than 10 minutes for users accessing the TLRA.

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
	Direct and Indirect Effects There would be beneficial impacts to recreation including: • Improving access to the TLRA and other recreation lands by providing new and improved entrance and road network. • Providing new ADA-compliant facilities and trails would improve access to wider user pool and meet ADA requirements. • Bringing electricity to power headbolt heaters benefits recreationists, especially during winter months. • Fulfilling the TLRA Master Plan results in a net benefit to a Section 4(f) property under the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.
Water Resources/ Water Quality/ Floodplains	**Temporary Construction Effects** There could be minor adverse impacts to water resources, water quality, and floodplains including: • Soil disturbance, runoff, and spills could impact surface water quality, increase turbidity, reduce infiltration capacity, and increase surface runoff. • During road construction on the levee, existing access, operations, maintenance, and flood control capability of the local operator (FNSB) would not be affected. However, with the implementation of best management practices and compliance with all permit mitigation measures, these impacts would be reduced to insignificant and no adverse effect to the functionality of the levee system during construction. **Direct and Indirect Effects** There may be minor impacts to water resources, water quality, and floodplains, including: • Potential future degradation of aquatic resources from vehicle pollutants and increases in impervious surfaces, erosion, sediment deposition, and storm water runoff. • Vegetation clearing and filling of the floodplain for the roads and overhead power line construction. • PCPs from treated poles have the potential to impact water resources and water quality. However, these impacts would be insignificant with the implementation of storm water best management practices, such as treating runoff using vegetated strips for infiltration and reducing impacts to floodplains during the design phase. The minimal impacts to the floodplain during the design phase would be documented and quantified through the No Net Rise analysis and certification. In addition, most new roads would be paved, thus reducing the source of sediments. Impacts from PCPs would be reduced by treating wood offsite or away from waterways or wetlands and not cutting, drilling, sanding, or other measures onsite that will cause treated wood sawdust or coating to sluff off into waterways or wetlands. Beneficial impacts include:

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
	• Maintaining current drainage patterns.
Wetlands and Non-wetland Waters	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be minor impacts to wetlands and non-wetland waters, including: • Could introduce increased sediment to wetlands and waters from construction and clearing activities. • Could increase, temporarily, the turbidity of non-wetland waters, such as streams. • May require stream diversion during culvert installation to maintain water flows. However, these impacts would be insignificant with the implementation of best management practices and mitigation measures. **Direct and Indirect Effects** There would be minor permanent impacts to wetland and non-wetland waters, including: • Loss of approximately 3 acres of wetlands and waters within study area, out of approximately 650 acres of wetlands and waters in the TLRA. This is less than 0.5 percent of the wetlands and waters of the TLRA. • Loss of wetlands and waters would be avoided during design process to minimize impacts to the extent practicable (e.g., shifting road alignments and utility pole placement). • Introduction of nonnative species and pollutants to wetlands and vegetation communities adjacent to the new infrastructure. • Roads and trails would bisect wetlands and streams, potentially resulting in wetland function disruptions and degradation of habitat. • Impoundment of waters would be avoided through design by incorporating drainage features and maintaining existing drainage patterns. • PCPs from treated poles have the potential to impact water resources and water quality. However, these impacts would be reduced to insignificant through the implementation of mitigation measures and compliance with all permits, including Clean Water Act Section 404 and providing compensatory mitigation for loss of wetlands and waters of the U.S. Impacts from PCPs would be avoided by treating wood offsite or not near waterways or wetlands and not cutting, drilling, sanding, or other measures onsite that will cause treated wood sawdust or coating to sluff off into waterways or wetlands. Utility poles will not be sited in wetlands and waters outside of the new project embankments.
Vegetation and Wildlife	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be adverse impacts to vegetation and wildlife, including: • Temporary, localized disruption to local wildlife (including special status avian species) due to construction noise and vegetation clearing.

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
	• Construction activities potentially would remove or disturb nesting habitat for native birds (resulting in nest abandonment) if clearing and grading activities occur during the breeding season. However, these impacts could be reduced to insignificant through mitigation measures such as completing clearing and grubbing of vegetation outside of the bird breeding season and implementing mitigation measures such as restoring disturbed areas. **Direct and Indirect Effects** There may be permanent adverse impacts to vegetation and wildlife including: • Loss of approximately 8 acres of undeveloped land resulting in permanent loss of habitat used by wildlife. This is a small area (approximately 0.7 percent) of undeveloped land remaining in the TLRA and the abundant undeveloped habitat in the 1,000s of acres surrounding the TLRA. • Avian mortality from nest abandonment during vegetation clearing, vehicle or structure collisions and contaminants. • Avian injury or mortality due to collisions with overhead power lines and infrastructure. • Avian injury or mortality from electrocution due to contact with overhead power lines. Bald eagles and other large birds have a higher risk of electrocution. • Changes in activity patterns and increased energy expenditures due to human disturbance. • Increased mortality by attracting more predators to new areas. Utility poles provide perching areas for avian predators. • Increased mortality from hunting by providing improved access to the TLRA and TFTA. • Potential for non-native plant and invasive weed introduction or dispersal from recreational users. • PCPs from treated poles have the potential to impact fish and wildlife habitat. However, these impacts would be reduced to insignificant with the implementation of mitigation measures including minimizing clearing and grubbing areas to previously disturbed areas, working outside of the breeding bird season, implementing migratory bird and bald eagle nest surveys, delineating work areas, and implementing all permit compliance requirements. Collision and electrocution would be reduced to insignificant with implementation of Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) guidelines. Impacts from PCPs would be avoided by treating wood offsite or away from waterways or wetlands and not cutting, drilling, sanding, or other measures onsite that will cause treated wood sawdust or coating to sluff off into waterways or wetlands. Utility poles will not be sited in wetlands or waters outside of the new project embankments.

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
Social and Economic Changes	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be minor impacts to social and economic resources, including: • Adjacent businesses and park visitors may experience brief traffic delays. • Short-term construction-related employment would be provided that could result in an economic boost to residents of the community. **Direct and Indirect Effects** There would be beneficial impacts to social and economic resources, including: • Supporting the community's economic goals by providing better access for hunting, fishing, and other recreation activities that would in turn increase spending on recreational goods and services. Local business would benefit with entrance located closer to businesses. • Providing a more direct and accommodating route from the community and within the TLRA, as well as amenities like clean and secure restrooms, and ADA-accessible pathways and parking. • Reducing the illegal activities and dumping in the TLRA.
Soils and Geology	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be minor impacts to soils and geology including: • Cut and fill slopes, placement of utility poles, retaining walls, and stream crossings through currently undeveloped areas would disturb the existing soils and permafrost layer. • Exposed soils would be subject to erosion. **Direct and Indirect Effects** • Could impact erosion and drainage functions of the surface soils. However, these impacts would be reduced to insignificant with the implementation of mitigation measures including: design and implementation of erosion and sediment control measures, and retaining weed-free native topsoil for future use in restoration.
Cultural Resources	**Temporary Construction Effects** • Potential for inadvertent discovery of cultural materials during construction. This impact would be reduced to insignificant with the implementation of work stoppage and immediate initiation of consultation with the Alaska OHA upon discovery. **Direct and Indirect Effects** • None.
Air Quality/ Noise/Energy	**Temporary Construction Effects** There would be minor adverse impacts to air quality, noise, and energy, including:

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
	• Would result in temporary adverse effects to air quality, primarily from dust and vehicle emissions during construction. • Noise levels would be higher during construction. • Increased energy consumed by vehicles and equipment used for construction. These would be reduced to insignificant with the implementation of mitigation measures. **Direct and Indirect Effects** There would be no significant adverse impacts to air, noise, or energy because there are no noise receptors and impacts to air quality and energy from an increase in visitors would be offset by a decrease in vehicle miles traveled. • Improved roads, including a paved entrance road, would minimize existing fugitive dust conditions. • Reduction in vehicle miles traveled within and to the TLRA would compensate for any potential air quality impacts from higher user capacity. • Noise levels may increase or be redirected to new areas associated with new roads, new entrance and due to future increases in visitors; however, there are no residential noise receptors in the project vicinity which consists of recreation and industrial land use. • Overhead power lines would increase energy expenditures; however, this would be a minor increase (approximately 7.2 kV power line). • Bringing power to the TLRA would benefit the management and use by allowing for headbolt heaters for vehicles and facilitate development of the entrance station. The TRRA Improvements Project will not create any new violations, or increase the severity or number of violations, or delay timely attainment of the national ambient air quality standards. FHWA finds that the TRRA Improvements Project conforms with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) in accordance with 40 CFR 93.
Visual Quality	**Temporary Construction Effects** • Construction activities would have temporary localized effects to visual quality. **Direct and Indirect Effects** • Small areas, approximately 8 acres of undeveloped land, would be converted to transportation infrastructure. This represents approximately 0.7 percent of the remaining undeveloped areas of the TLRA. • Impacts to visual quality from overhead power lines would be negative because there are no power lines or utility poles in the TLRA currently.

Resource	Consequences of the Selected Alternative
	There would be no significant adverse impacts to visual quality because native habitats including trees are on both sides of the expanded road footprints, and the new and improved roads and power line are not within a scenic viewshed. The power line may impact visual quality negatively, but this would be considered an insignificant impact due to the location of the power line along the roads in a highly modified landscape. Any temporary construction impacts would be short in duration.
Hazardous Materials	**Temporary Construction Effects** • Potential for hazardous materials disturbance or release during construction. **Direct and Indirect Effects** • Potential leaks, drips, and spills from vehicles during operation and maintenance. • Pole-mounted transformers have the potential to leak oil. There would be no significant adverse impacts from hazardous materials with the implementation of best management practices and permit requirements.
Cumulative or Interrelated Effects	The Preferred Alternative would not be expected to significantly contribute to cumulative effects.

Wetlands Determination

In accordance with Executive Order 119990, Protection of Wetlands, the proposed roadway improvement and its wetlands impacts have been closely evaluated, including submission of a Wetland Delineation Report to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Approximately three acres of wetlands and waters would be converted to roads or other infrastructure for the project.

The Selected Alternative includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands that may result from such use while still meeting the purpose and need of the project and applicable roadway standards. Mitigation for wetland impacts will be detailed in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Clean Water Act Section 404 permit. FHWA has determined there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands.

Basis for Decision

The Selected Alternative meets the purpose and need for the project because it will:

- Establish a new entrance point to mitigate the existing speeding, safety, and dust issues associated with the existing Northlake Lane entrance.
- Construct roadways and other improvements to provide access to the motorized and non-

motorized boat launches within the TLRA that serve as the primary access points to reach the TFTA.

- Connect the swim beach to the extension of South Lathrop Street that will provide access to all TLRA facilities from the new entrance point on South Lathrop Street.
- Install ADA-compliant facilities to provide access to a wider group of recreation users.
- Extend power to the TLRA and install outlets for vehicle headbolt heaters at the boat launch parking areas.

The Selected Alternative, in combination with the project commitments and conservation measures described in Chapter 6 of the EA, will not result in significant impacts on the environment.

Public Involvement

Resource and regulatory agencies, nearby tribal governments, adjacent property owners, and the general public were engaged to provide information and to obtain feedback on the environmental assessment. Chapter 4 of the EA provides a summary of the project's public, agency and tribal outreach activities that were conducted prior the release of the EA.

On June 30, 2021, FHWA published notices that the EA was available for review and comment. The notices for the EA, including notification of the comment period and virtual public open house, were placed online in the local newspaper, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, and provided to agencies, tribes, community groups and on the U.S. Department of Transportation project website. Copies of the EA were publicly available online at U.S. Department of Transportation project website https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ak/fnsb-tanana-1.

As stated in the notices, the 30-day comment period on the EA started on June 30, 2021, and ended on August 2, 2021. During the comment period, a virtual public open house for the project was held on July 20, 2021, from 5 pm to 6 pm, via Zoom. There were five comments received during the public review and comment period. The following individual and agencies provided comments on the EA.

1. Laura Price, private stakeholder and TLRA recreation user
2. Alaska Department of Fish and Game
3. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
4. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Table 2 provides a summary of the public comments that were received during the public comment period and includes the FHWA's responses. To review comments and FHWA responses in their entirety, please refer to Appendix A.

Table 2 Summary of Comments and FHWA Responses

Resource	Summary of Comment(s)	Summary Response
General Wildlife and Habitat	**Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)** While ADF&G recognizes that there will be a minimal amount of habitat lost with the proposed access improvement, the benefits of improved public use and access at this site seem a reasonable tradeoff. ADF&G has no objection to the Preferred Alternative as described in the EA. The initial designs do not appear to indicate any work within fish bearing waters, therefore no Fish Habitat Permit will be required by ADF&G. If the scope of work changes, the Habitat office in Fairbanks should be notified for a final determination.	**Response** Thank you for your comments and support of the proposed action, dated August 2, 2021. **EA Revisions** There were no changes to the EA resulting from these comments.
Birds and Bird Habitat	My name is **Laura Price** and I live in Fairbanks, Alaska.	**Response** Thank you for your email comments dated August 2, 2021. The FHWA and FNSB recognizes the importance of the TLRA as a stopover and nesting habitat for migratory birds and bald and golden eagles, as well as the importance of the TLRA for recreational visitors that enjoy birdwatching. **EA Revisions** Please refer to the USFWS response summary below for changes to the EA.

	While I do not object in principle to improvements for humans at Tanana Recreation Area I also want to make sure we do not disturb the bird habitat too much. It is wonderful to see all the bird life at the Recreation Area and I hope that people can continue to enjoy the bird life for a long time.	
Air Quality	**ADEC Air Quality Division** would recommend measures for open burning and disposal of organic debris Any construction activities should follow all reasonable precautions in accordance to 18 AAC 50.045(d) to prevent particulate matter from being emitted into the ambient air. Also, dust control plan should be put in place during the project to mitigate dust issues.	**Response** Thank you for your comments, dated August 2, 2021. The FHWA included the ADEC recommended measures in the EA to avoid impacts to Air Quality. **EA Revisions** Air Quality Mitigation Measures, page 52 If open burning is chosen as the preferred method of disposal of organic debris during the project, the Contractor must use "reasonable procedures to minimize adverse environmental effects and limit the amount of smoke generated," and acquire any applicable permits. Contractor will review the complete description of the open burn information including policies can be found at: http://dec.alaska.gov/air/air-permit/open-burn-info/ All construction activities will follow all reasonable precautions in accordance to 18 AAC 50.045(d) to prevent particulate matter from being emitted into the ambient air. A dust control plan will be in place during the project to mitigate dust issues.

Bald Eagles and Their Nests **Migratory Birds and Their Habitat** **Powerlines** **Invasive Species** **Sediment and Erosion Control** **Compensatory Mitigation**	**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** The project area includes the Service's trust resources such as migratory birds, bald and golden eagles, inter-jurisdictional fish, and wetland habitats used by these species. The USFWS provided recommended measures for migratory birds, bald eagles, invasive species, powerlines, and sediment erosion control.	**Response** We understand that the project may include the Service's trust resources such as migratory birds, bald and golden eagles, inter-jurisdictional fish, and wetland habitats used by these species. The FHWA has reviewed your comments to TRRA EA and incorporated changes to the revised EA in response to your comments. Please refer the pages noted below or to the FHWA letter for a full description of responses and EA changes. In regards to removing Groin 9/Cinch Street, Groin 9/Cinch Street is part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 408 facility (levee system) that protects the city of Fairbanks from floods, thus, cannot be considered as part of the compensatory mitigation plan. In regards to special conditions, the FHWA believes the following measures, which are included in the EA already , sufficiently address the corresponding comments: • On page 46, Store materials (e.g., soil, sand, gravel, vegetation, etc.) at an approved site to be determined prior to construction activities. This includes all materials used for construction and materials to be disposed of (e.g., cleared vegetation) at an approved disposal site. • On page 32, 41, Delineate work and staging areas, and clearly mark clearance and fill boundaries to avoid accidental impacts to wetlands, waters, wildlife, and other habitats from inadvertent access, equipment operation, and clearing of and fill material placement. • On page 32, Contractor will not clear vegetation or operate equipment outside the designated clearing zone. • On page 32, Contractor will not place fill material or debris from clearing or construction outside of the designated construction zone. • On page 41, Contractor will prevent introduction and spread of weeds by using appropriate measures during movement of sand, gravel, borrow, and fill material as well as sourcing weed-free materials. • Contractor will implement measures to keep all equipment working in the project area free of weed seed.

		• Contractor will retain native weed- free topsoil for use on site (e.g., restoring disturbed habitats and maintaining native seed stock), stored at an approved site to be determined prior to clearing and grading. Additional invasive species measures were added to the EA as noted below. **EA Revisions** Nesting Migratory Birds, pages 39-40 FHWA addressed impacts to nesting birds in Section 3.6.2.2 and in mitigation measures. Additional measures were added, including: • Pre-construction nest survey timing and survey area clarification. • Addition of no work buffer areas if nesting birds are found. • Repeat of nest surveys if work has ceased during a period of 10 days or more, during breeding season. Bald Eagles and Their Nests, pages 40-41 Bald eagle preconstruction nest survey area was increased to a 1-mile buffer around the project footprint, limited to areas north of the Tanana River. If eagle nests are found, measures from Determining Whether Construction or Development Activities May Disturb Nesting Eagles and How to Determine the Likelihood of Disturbing Nesting Bald Eagles | Alaska Region (fws.gov) will be implemented. FHWA added measures to minimize visual and auditory impacts associated with human activities near nest sites. USFWS contact information was included for additional guidance should eagle nests be found during surveys. Invasive Species, page 41 Additional measures were added to avoid introduction of invasive species including designating a construction staff member as a certified invasive species specialist to manage invasive species measures. Invasive species management certification available at Controlling Invasive Plants in Alaska course found at.

		http://weedcontrol.open.uaf.edu/ and Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species available at https://www.fws.gov/alaska/sites/default/files/2021-01/Aquatic%20Invasive%20Species%20Prevention%20Guidelines.pdf FHWA added a measure requiring contractor to notify FHWA Contract Officer before entry to allow for equipment inspection. Migratory Birds, Strigiformes, and Raptors, page 40 The FHWA included APLIC measures in the EA. The revised EA included this measure under a new heading, Migratory Birds, Strigiformes, and Raptors, to identify the specific resources. Sediment and Erosion Control Materials, page 45 The FHWA added the following recommended measures to prevent injury to wildlife and habitat. All disturbed, stockpile and fill areas shall be stabilized to prevent erosion. Increased water turbidity and accumulation of sediment in drainages, sloughs, and other wetlands shall be evidence of insufficient stabilization. Natural drainage patterns shall be maintained to the extent practicable by the installation of culverts in sufficient number and size under access roads and trails to prevent ponding, diversion, or concentrated runoff that would result in adverse impacts to adjacent wetlands and other fish and wildlife habitats.
Section 408 Facility	**U. S. Army Corps of Engineers** Excavations of levee may compromise integrity of existing levee and groin crest elevations Encroachments within levee easement are not permitted.	**Response** The project removed all references related to excavation of the levee and groin crests. Power line poles will not encroach upon the levee easement. No culvert will be required for Groin 9. **EA Revisions** References to excavation of the levee were removed from the Executive Summary and pages 5, 6, 7, and 26. There will be no excavation of the levee; therefore, no backfill.

Permits and Approvals

Required permits and approvals will be obtained prior to construction. The following permits and approvals are expected to be required for the Selected Alternative (Table 2):

Table 3 List of Permits and Approvals by Agency

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Clean Water Act Section 404 USACE, Department of the Army Permit
33 USC Section 408 Evaluation of Proposed Alterations, Occupations, or Use of USACE Federally Authorized Civil Works Projects
Alaska Department of Conservation
Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification
Clean Water Act Section 402 Section 301(a) NPDES/APDES
Alaska Administrative Code AAC 18 AAC 83.015 Excavation Dewatering General Permit
Antidegradation Analysis
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
AS 46.15 Temporary Water Use Authorization
AS 38.05.127 Tanana Basin Area RMZ, Easement Vacation
Fairbanks North Star Borough
FNSB 15 Building & Construction Floodplain Permit
Title 15.04 Floodplain Management Regulations
Floodway No Rise Certification
Excavation within 250-feet of Levee Centerline
Alaska Railroad Corporation
Right-of-Way Temporary Construction

Finding of No Significant Impact

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), FHWA as the federal lead agency assessed the environmental impacts of the proposed project. The EA was prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA Regulations set forth in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500 to 1508, including the guidelines for determining the significance of proposed federal action (40 CFR 1508.27), and with FHWA Regulations contained in 23 CFR Part 771. The proposed project also conforms with all applicable federal statutes and executive orders.

The FHWA has determined that the Selected Alternative will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. This FONSI is based on the referenced EA and related documentation, which has been independently evaluated by FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. Comments received through the public involvement and EA review process were considered in this decision. The EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required by section 102(2)(C) of NEPA or its implementing regulations. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the revised EA, which is available online at https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ak/fnsb-tanana-1.

RECOMMENDED BY:

STEPHEN T MORROW Digitally signed by STEPHEN T MORROW
Date: 2021.12.16 13:35:10 -08'00'

Stephen Morrow, Environmental Protection Specialist — Date

CONCURRED BY:

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Date: 2021.12.16 13:15:28 -08'00'

Scott Smithline, Environmental Manager — Date

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Dan Donovan, Chief of Business Operations — Date
Western Federal Lands Highway Division