

# Alaska Department of Fish & Game

## Meeting Summary

Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

### Attendees

Greg Lockwood, Project Manager  
Christy Genteman  
Theresa Dutchuk  
Adam Morrill  
Tim Jameson  
Talli Vittetoe  
Roy Churchwell  
Sue Rodman  
Jesse Lindgren  
Mike Hall

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### Introduction

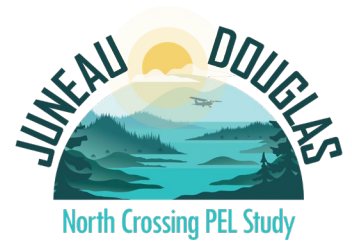
Theresa Dutchuk, DOWL, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and introducing project team members. She then asked meeting participants to introduce themselves. Theresa explained that the meeting format would be free form and thanked Sue Rodman for the letter she sent in early-February. She then opened to meeting for comments and questions from participants.

### Summary of Questions and Comments

Sue Rodman asked why the Refuge Management Plan was not noted in the scoring matrix. Theresa asked if it would be helpful for her to review the process of screening, scoring, and mapping. Sue replied that she understood the categories, but the finer scale details, like access and hunting, were not defined in the matrix. Theresa responded that recreation and hunting are grouped into Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 category, in addition to being delineated into habitat impacts. Sue asked where 4(f) was shown on the scoring matrix, and Theresa pointed it out.

Sue noted the public may not understand hunting and recreation impacts will be considered as part of 4(f), or that those impacts affect scoring. Theresa responded there will be two additional narratives:

1. Narrative of the level 2 screening results to provide further detail on the impact categories.
2. PEL study report, which will go out to the public for comment before it is finalized.



Sue noted the field studies conducted were not consistent with current screening methodologies, and expressed the concern that limited studies are determining which alternatives move forward. Theresa responded originally the study team used the extensive pool of baseline data for documentation but heard from agencies and the public more data was wanted, particularly regarding birds in the Refuge. The study team realizes more research would be needed in the NEPA process. The scoring criteria is based on existing data, and supplemented with the field work that was conducted. Sue expressed she feels like the decades of research done in the Refuge was not adequately represented in the scoring. Theresa asked what the scoring should look like or what was not being represented. Sue responded that the ranking system (-2 to +2) may swallow some of the extensive research that exists when it is compared to other scoring categories.

Roy Churchwell commented that the Sunny Point alternatives should show as having the most impact, which the scoring does not show. Theresa responded that the interchanges proposed for each alternative affect impacts.

Theresa asked Roy if he could clarify which categories he was concerned about. Roy responded he would like further clarification on how important migratory bird habitat and wildlife habitat were defined, as well as the acreage of impacted wetlands in the maps. Theresa responded that wildlife habitat was mostly mapped by vegetation and aerial signatures, and the species that would use the habitat were inferred by the habitat types identified. Important bird habitat was mapped by digitized hotspots with a 500-foot buffer. Roy responded the identified hotspot is likely a tern colony, and 500 feet is not adequate. He suggested using a one-to-two-kilometer buffer for the tern colony and noted vegetated intertidal mapping is important to migratory birds near the Sunny Point alternatives. Theresa then asked Tim Jameson to share the GIS wetland mapping.

Sue asked if there was a way all the comments submitted to the PEL Study could be made available to the public. Theresa stated she would check with the project communications group, but comments received would be adjudicated. Sue asked why comments are not posted to the website. Theresa responded that she would check to see if the PEL study report would include a public log of comments.

Jesse Lindgren asked if the NEPA process would include all current alternatives or if some would be eliminated before then. Theresa responded the scoring would affect the answer to that question.

Roy asked about the acreage difference between Sunny Point East and West. Theresa responded Sunny Point West would add 32.2 acres of impervious surfaces, while Sunny Point East would add 7.9 acres of impervious surfaces. GIS mapping was shown to participants.

Jesse asked if the impact table with values feeds into the scoring matrix. Theresa responded yes.

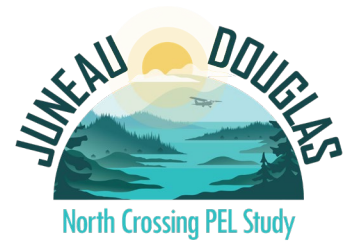
Theresa referred participants to the baseline memos for additional information.

Sue requested the GIS mapper be made available to the public, and the Refuge be shown on the map.

Theresa reminded participants the comment period will close on April 11, 2024, and reminded participants of additional project milestones.

## Question Log

Participant	Question	Response
Sue Rodman	Why isn't the Refuge Management Plan, specifically regarding hunting and recreation, not noted in the scoring matrix?	Recreation and hunting are grouped into section 4(f) category, in addition to being delineated into habitat impacts. Theresa showed where Section 4(f) was noted on the scoring matrix.
Sue Rodman	Will the public understand that hunting and recreation opportunities are part of 4(f)?	There will be two additional narratives coming out: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Narrative of the Level 2 Screening results to provide further detail on the impact categories.</li> <li>2. PEL Study, which will go out to the public for comment before it is finalized.</li> </ol>
Sue Rodman	Why was there so little field work done prior to scoring?	Originally the study team used the extensive pool of baseline data for documentation but heard from agencies and the public that more data was wanted, particularly regarding birds in the Refuge. The team realizes more research will be needed in the NEPA process. The scoring criteria is based on existing data, and supplemented with the field work that was conducted.
Roy Churchwell	Why do the Sunny Point alternatives not show the most impact?	The interchanges that are being proposed for each alternative affect the quantity of impacts.
Roy Churchwell	How does the study team define important migratory bird habitat and wildlife habitat?	Wildlife habitat was mostly mapped by vegetation and aerial signatures, and the species that would use that habitat were inferred by the habitat types that were identified. Important bird habitat was mapped by digitized hotspots with a 500-foot buffer.
Sue Rodman	Can the comments submitted to the PEL Study be made available to the public?	Theresa will check with the project communications group on if the PEL study report would include a public log of comments. Comments received are adjudicated.
Jesse Lindgren	Will the NEPA process include all current alternatives, or will some be eliminated before then?	Scoring will affect the answer to that question, to be determined.
Roy Churchwell	What is the acreage difference between Sunny Point East and West?	Sunny Point West would add 32.2 acres of impervious surfaces, while Sunny Point East would add 7.9 acres of impervious surfaces.



Participant	Question	Response
Jesse Lindgren	Does the impact table with values feeds into the scoring matrix?	Yes.